



Winter 2010

News and Information for Parents, Educators and Donors

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Helping Children Thrive - Even in Tough Economic Times

At Southwest Human Development we help young children build strong foundations upon which to grow. Unfortunately the children we see every day are continuing to feel physical, mental, and emotional effects of the economic downturn in ways that compromise their early development. We see families without a safety net worry about job security, housing, and health care.

When parents are preoccupied with meeting their children's basic needs, it is extraordinarily difficult for them to attend to other aspects of their healthy development. Yet we know that a child's social, emotional and cognitive development are just as important as physical development in building the strong foundation needed for success in school and in life.

Here's one case study demonstrating how just a little help can make a big difference. "Carl" and "Marie" are participants in our Healthy Families child development and abuse-prevention program. The couple have three young children and in the last year have found their ability to take care of their children severely challenged. Carl is the sole bread-winner for this family of five; and because of the troubled economy, his employer has drastically reduced his work hours.

Carl and Marie are now having difficulty paying their monthly expenses. The family has made adjustments and sacrifices to ease this situation. They have done everything they can to creatively stretch the few dollars they have; but with Carl on call and only working a few days a week, the couple doesn't know from one day to the next if, when, or where he'll be working.

During the hardest times, the enormous stress overshadowing the household could be seen in Marie's eyes as she imagined losing everything and becoming homeless.

Relationships were strained as Carl tried to find additional work that just didn't (and still does not) exist and Marie tried to put on a brave front for the children. But we know from research and practical experience that children are impacted by their parents' stress, despite best efforts to protect them.

Southwest Human Development's family assistance fund provided a one-time cash contribution to pay for a security deposit to help Carl and Marie move into a smaller, less expensive apartment. This assistance helped the couple remain financially afloat. The family is still struggling, but their stress level has greatly decreased, allowing them to again focus on the healthy development and well-being of their children.

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**SOUTHWEST
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT**

*Southwest Human Development
is the Easter Seals affiliate for
Central and Northern Arizona*

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Letter from the CEO

Ginger Ward, MAEd

As we enter 2010, I'd like to touch on some of the highlights that made 2009 a year to remember.

Throughout this economic downturn Southwest Human Development has remained a strong source of help for our community – indeed for our entire state. Yes, state funding was cut and this did impact our programs and the families we serve. On the other hand, we received new funding from First Things First, Arizona's tobacco tax initiative to support early childhood programs, allowing us to enhance services and introduce several new programs including coaching and consultation for child care centers and Raising A Reader.

In 2009 Southwest Human Development successfully launched two inaugural events, Walk With Me and Portraits of Opportunity. You'll find more information in this newsletter about both events including save the date information for 2010.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and please take a moment to visit our web site as well. I am proud of Southwest's dedicated staff and our recent achievements in improving the lives of our community's children and families. Of course, these achievements would not be possible without the support of the individuals, foundations and corporations who are also committed to creating a positive future for young children. ★

Helping Children Thrive *cont. from pg. 1*

In this economic climate, Southwest is called upon more and more frequently for this kind of assistance. At the same time, the state government is cutting funding, leaving children even more vulnerable. To cite merely one example, studies have shown that incidences of abuse increase during economic downturns; yet funding for child-abuse prevention programs like Healthy Families is being slashed. And poverty, we know, is the number-one predictor of poor outcomes for children.

Despite these challenges Southwest Human Development is continuing to make a difference

in the lives of the children we serve, including Carl and Marie's. Often just a little financial assistance, combined with advice, education and support from our child development experts, allows us to lessen the stress of these families and enable them to focus on their young children's healthy development—social, emotional, cognitive and physical. We would like to thank all of our donors for helping to make this possible, and helping to create a positive future for children during these troubling times. ★

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Walk With Me

Form your walk team now! You can register on our web site at www.walkwithme.org or call 602-266-5976 extension 6190 to speak with Lindsey and start recruiting your team today. All proceeds will benefit Easter Seals Southwest Human Development's services for children with disabilities.

Once again, the walk will be held at Steele Indian School Park and will be a great event for the entire family. Reserve May 1, 2010, now and plan to join us for a leisurely morning walk followed by food, fun and games all ages will enjoy. ★



Save the Date!
May 1st, 2010

Easter Seals
DISABILITY SERVICES

WALK WITH ME

SOUTHWEST HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Presented by: **Willis & HUMANA**

Portraits of Opportunity: A Memorable Evening



Last fall eight volunteer professional photographers joined with eight families from Southwest Human Development's programs to tell the personal story of each family and emphasize the importance of early childhood development programs. The result was Portraits of Opportunity, Southwest's inaugural benefit for the children and families we serve.

Held at Steele Indian School Park's renovated Memorial Hall, the exhibit was a huge success. The family stories and photographs were the dramatic focal point

of the evening, and guests lingered as they returned again and again to the exhibits.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the many volunteers, donors and sponsors who made Portraits of Opportunity possible. A special thank you goes out to the eight families who were willing to share some of the most intimate aspects of their lives with us and to our team of Valley photographers: Sherrie Buzby, Duane Darling, Rick Gayle, Don Johnson, Phyllis Lane, Jeff Newton, Wayne Rainey and Dan Vermillion who shared their time and talents with us.

The photography and unique atmosphere combined with good food, beverages and friendly conversation all contributed to a successful friend raiser as well as fundraiser. Closing the evening to rave reviews, the departing guests were already asking about the next Portraits of Opportunity.

Plans are underway for the 2010 exhibit, which will be another night to remember and one you won't want to miss. Mark your calendar now for October 28, 2010... one night that will help children for a lifetime. ★

Early Literacy - Opening the Door to a Bright Future

Imagine all of our preschoolers sitting with their parents and eagerly requesting, "Read to me!" Then envision these same children arriving at kindergarten, ready and eager to learn. Thanks to Southwest's early literacy programs and the emphasis on literacy throughout all of our services, more and more young children are doing just that.

From the well-established Reach Out and Read program, to the newly-arriving Raising

A Reader, providing books and education for families with young children is an agency priority. Research has shown us, and we see first-hand, just how important this is to a child's entire future.

Community volunteers, leaders in their fields, are also seeing the value of these

programs and joining our efforts. Strong support from leaders like Paul Groves from JPMorgan Chase and Chuck Powell from 98.7 The Peak radio is helping to raise awareness about this early childhood development issue and the strides we're making at Southwest Human Development. ★



Chuck Powell from 98.7 The Peak radio read to a Head Start class, blogged about the program and named us as their featured charity of the month on the station's website.



Paul Groves, from JPMorgan Chase, recently volunteered to read to a Head Start classroom. From the many smiles shown here, it's hard to tell who enjoyed it the most...Paul or the children.

Other News & Upcoming Events

Birdies for Charity

Once again Southwest is participating in Birdies for Charity, a program presented by Thunderbirds Charities. Between now and the end of the 2010 Waste Management Phoenix Open (formerly the FBR Open) on February 28, 2010, you can help children by pledging 1¢ or more for every birdie made by the PGA Tour players.

Southwest Human Development will receive 100% of the collected pledges made in our name. Your 5¢ pledge can turn into a \$75 gift to Southwest. In addition, Thunderbirds Charities will add a 10% bonus match for every pledge we receive. ★



Southwest Meets All 20 of the BBB's Standards for Charity Accountability

Southwest Human Development is pleased to report that it meets every one of the Better Business Bureau's 20 Standards for Charity Accountability. These standards were developed to encourage fair and honest solicitation practices, to promote ethical conduct by charitable organizations and to advance support of philanthropy. Read more about the Better Business Bureau's standards and Southwest by visiting www.bbb.org. ★

Southwest Human Development is a non-profit organization.

To make a tax deductible contribution please call 602-266-5976 or visit us online at www.swhd.org.