

Developments



Summer 2009

News and Information for Parents, Educators and Donors

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A Lifeline for Lyla

Southwest Human Development's continuum of care is not only unique, it has repeatedly shown its effectiveness when caring for young children. One such case is that of Lyla who was only four months old when she first entered Southwest's early intervention program; a service for children with developmental delays or disabilities who are three years old or younger.

At that time Lyla was only eating four or five ounces of food a day, not every four hours as the typically developing child would, and she screamed for hours as if she were in pain.

Southwest's early intervention team conducted Lyla's initial evaluation and assessment and was able to help her parents advocate for medical tests. Tests that helped lead her doctors to the diagnosis of a rare white blood cell disorder which caused Lyla's intestine to swell whenever she ate anything, even breast milk; therefore she never wanted to eat.

Shortly after this diagnosis, eight month old Lyla and her parents Jena and Charlie came to Southwest's Infant Toddler Feeding program. Introduced to the feeding program by her early intervention specialist, Jena describes it as "The lifeline that made all the difference in the world."

The only one of its kind in Arizona, Easter Seals Southwest Human Development's feeding program uses a multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled professionals from the disabilities, mental health and medical fields. The team helped these parents understand Lyla's disease, gave them useable and practical suggestions about how to feed Lyla more successfully and comfortably, helped with

questions to ask the doctors and assisted them in putting together the various pieces of information given by the professionals in their child's life. Critically, working with the team raised the family's self-confidence enabling them to better help and advocate for their child.

Jena feels very strongly that if it wasn't for the feeding team, Lyla would have been placed on a feeding tube; a small tube that provides food and medication directly to the stomach. All indications

are that the combination of the feeding team's efforts, the mother's strong advocacy with Lyla's doctors, and the pediatrician's efforts, kept Lyla from having to use a feeding tube.

In talking about the feeding program Jena says, "Working with the program's entire team has been a very positive experience. The program has been a great support system and my lifeline to the triangle of her doctors."

Jena tells us, "Lyla is up to 30 ounces a day of formula now from the five ounces a day she used to take. Lyla used to be in pain and screaming all the time, now she's a whole different child. She wasn't sitting up or moving; now she's pulling herself up, moving and active."

Lyla's story is just one example of Southwest's continuum of care. In this case, the specialized early intervention team helped with a good evaluation and assessment and referred her to the multi-disciplinary team feeding clinic. The Infant Toddler Feeding program supported the child and family and now is continuing to provide home-based intervention services, and to

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

2850 N. 24th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85008
(602) 266-5976
www.swhd.org

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Letter from the CEO

Ginger Ward, MAEd

Two special programs are featured in this edition of our newsletter; the Infant Toddler Feeding program and the Arizona Early Education Emergent Leaders program. Both are excellent examples of how Southwest is expanding to meet the needs of our community and how fortunate we are to have corporate partners who believe in and support our work.

The Infant Toddler Feeding program is supported by CVS Caremark and Thunderbirds Charities. Part of our Easter Seals Disabilities Services, this comprehensive program helps infants and toddlers who have difficulty eating; a condition that can have serious short and long-term consequences for their physical, developmental, and social/emotional well-being. It can also constitute a major stress on families, interfering with virtually every aspect of daily life. Now these children are receiving the services they need to truly make a difference in their future.

The Arizona Early Education Emergent Leaders program is supported by JPMorgan Chase and the Helios Education Foundation. Chase has been a partner since the program's inception in 2004 and the Helios Education Foundation recently came on board with a commitment to a three-year partnership. The purpose of Emergent Leaders is to increase the quality of child care centers by improving the leadership skills of center directors. Skills are increased through training, networking and technical assistance and helping directors actively create, support and advocate for quality early childhood programs.

With new partners and supporters, the success of our first annual Walk, and the Portraits of Opportunity event coming up, a lot is happening here at Southwest Human Development. Our accomplishments, however, are only possible because of the support of individuals, foundations and corporations who are as committed as we are to creating a positive future for young children. I sincerely thank you and hope you enjoy our newsletter and take the time to catch up on the latest agency events and news by visiting our web site at www.swhd.org. ★

A Lifeline for Lyla *cont. from pg. 1*

coordinate with her various medical providers.

A large number of young children experience significant problems with feeding and swallowing, which can have serious short and long-term consequences for their overall well-being. To date the Infant Toddler Feeding program has seen over 100 children, with an average of 40 children in the program at any given time.

When Easter Seals Southwest Human Development began the program, it was only able to work with a very limited number of children. Now it's accepting referrals from pediatricians, therapists, parent support groups and community programs.

"There are so few professionals of any discipline who specialize in or have a good understanding of feeding. Eating is a complex skill, and involves all systems of the body. When young children are having problems, they really benefit from a comprehensive multi-disciplinary team approach,"

says Torie Keyes-Hackett, feeding program coordinator. Torie further states, "Easter Seals Southwest Human Development's Infant Toddler Feeding team members all have special training and expertise in the area of feeding problems, and the program is the only one of its kind in Arizona."

The Infant Toddler Feeding program is now two years old. What started as a pilot funded exclusively by CVS Caremark is now so successful, and in such demand, that increased funding was required for expansion. Thanks to continuing support from CVS Caremark and the new Thunderbirds Charities funding, Easter Seals Southwest Human Development is able to continue and grow this program.

For more information, please contact Torie Keyes-Hackett or Susan Raymond, feeding program coordinators at 602-468-3430. They can also be contacted by email at vhackett@swhd.org or sraymond@swhd.org. ★

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Emergent Leaders: Improving Child Care In Our State

Most directors of child care centers come to their positions with limited experience or education to prepare them for running a high-quality child care center. Yet years of research have shown that the director is key to a center's quality.

New directors find themselves in a position that demands they not only manage the administrative, business and supervisory functions, but also meet the educational and social needs of the young children in their centers. At the same time, they're called upon to assist families with questions and concerns about their child's development or even parenting skills. Balancing all of these tasks leaves the director with little opportunity to plan for the future of their program, staff development, or even their own professional development.

The Early Education Emergent Leaders program works to improve the quality of early care and education by building the leadership, management, advocacy and child development skills of child care center directors. The program is intensive, focused on professional development and leadership skills, and is committed to the creation of a cadre of leaders who will serve as role models, advocates and leaders in communities throughout Arizona and the early education field.

Through this program, over 130 Emergent Leader participants from throughout the state have shown significant improvement in key leadership areas including



administration and management, knowledge of state resources and creating a network of professional support. Comments from graduates include:

“Definitely, the quality of care that has been provided to the children has increased many fold. With more programs like this, the future can only be brighter for our children. Programs like this have the ability to increase the outreach to many other centers.”

“The program gave me the skills I needed to move to the director position. People in this position tend to be isolated in their own centers but the program teaches us we’re not alone, where to go for help and how to work within the system.”

“I am eternally grateful for the leadership and intense focus on self-realization and quality that Emergent Leaders has allowed me. The ripple effect goes beyond anything we may see immediately. Investing in a human being is an investment that can not be quantified for the

impact is never ending.”

“The ability to meet and serve with so many talented early childhood leaders, educators and advocates is priceless. What my center, teachers and children gained from that experience continues to make an impact daily.”

Since the program's inception in 2004, JPMorgan Chase has been a key corporate partner as part of their ongoing commitment to supporting professional development opportunities that improve child care environments for young children. The Helios Education Foundation added their support in 2009 with a three-year commitment as part of their early childhood initiative.

When told about the new partnerships for Emergent Leaders, a past graduate says, *“I’m very glad to hear the program is continuing on because it would be a huge loss without it. The program literally impacts hundreds of children for every person who goes through the program and it has a huge ripple effect with results that won’t be entirely seen for years.”*

With sincere appreciation, we would like to thank our Early Education Emergent Leaders partners:



Mark Your Calendars for *Portraits of Opportunity*



A portrait of opportunity.

Photograph by Phyllis Lane

Plan to join us for this unique evening featuring a professional photography showcase of the lives of children and families who have been helped by Southwest Human Development. Through photographs by well-known valley photographers, the children's and families' stories are told, bringing to light the needs of young children, the importance of early childhood development and Southwest Human Development's role as a leader in this field. *Portraits of Opportunity* is a one-of-a-kind event in the valley, with all proceeds

supporting critical programs for young children. As one father who has used Southwest's Birth to Five Helpline put it, “Our family is completely changed because of your help.”

October 15 is the date you want to remember. Memorial Hall at Steele Indian School Park from 6:00 – 9:00 pm is where you'll want to be.

For more information or to become a sponsor, please visit our web site at www.swhd.org/events or call Gayle Tanber at 602-266-5976 x2150. ★

Other News & Upcoming Events

Walk With Me

A sincere thank you goes out to all of the volunteers, donors and participants who made our inaugural Easter Seals *Walk With Me* a great success. The weather was ideal and the location, distance and pace were perfect for walkers of all ages and fitness levels.

With over 1,000 registered walkers and 82 teams, more than \$71,000 was raised to benefit services for children with disabilities. The planning committee, the volunteers at the event, the fundraisers and the walkers all combined to make it a memorable day and we thank all of you.

Mark your calendar now for the second annual *Walk With Me* scheduled for Saturday, May 1, 2010 at Steele Indian School Park. ★

American Academy of Pediatrics 2009 Community Partnership Award

At a recent seminar in the lovely red rocks of Sedona, Southwest Human Development received the prestigious 2009 Community Partnership award by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Arizona Chapter. The award was given in recognition of the agency's dedication and excellence in all they do to improve the lives of young children. Ginger Ward, founder and CEO, was present at the seminar to accept the honor. Southwest Human Development was commended for creating and sustaining valuable partnerships with Arizona pediatricians.

Sue Baraga, executive director of the Arizona Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics said, "We congratulate them on this well-deserved award and applaud their efforts to increase child literacy, provide quality disabilities services and improve training and educational resources for parents and professionals." ★

Southwest Human Development is a non-profit organization. To make a tax deductible contribution please call 602-266-5976 or go to www.swhd.org.

The Developments newsletter is produced by the Development Department at Southwest Human Development:

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