“A Chance for Every Child”

Message from the Executive Director

In our last issue, I promised to keep you informed of the Center’s continuing efforts to meet the diverse needs of children and families in our community. Today, I’m delighted to share our newest initiative: El Paso HOPES – Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support. This project seeks to prevent child abuse and neglect through a broad-based community collaborative that will focus on raising public awareness and strengthening families with children under age 6.

The project’s direct services will strengthen families with young children through high quality home visiting, parenting education, child development training, and the delivery of an integrated set of “wraparound” services that are tailored to each family’s unique needs and circumstances. The El Paso HOPES partners include the El Paso Center for Children, the Child Crisis Center of El Paso, Avance - El Paso, the Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, and the United Way of El Paso County.

Project HOPES grants were awarded to eight Texas Counties by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Our Center serves as the grantee and Lead Agency for a $1.6 million award, providing administrative support to the other team members. The Child Crisis Center serves as the Wraparound Case Management provider. United Way, working through six other site sponsors, will bring the Parents As Teachers home visiting model to 235 families. Avance, working through 16 local public schools, will bring the Parent Child Education Program model to 165 families. The Children’s Development Center will bring the Incredible Years parenting education program to 90 families.

We are proud to be a part of this model program that combines community collaboration, reliance on evidence-based practices, and a focus on prevention and family strengthening.

Sandy Rioux

Runaway Shelter Gets Landscaping Makeover

El Dedon Verde Garden Club and Home Depot joined forces to give the Runaway Shelter a much needed facelift in June. Home Depot employees, garden club members, staff from the Center and youth from the shelter rolled up their sleeves to lay pavers, build picnic benches, and plant flowers and shrubs. Volunteers were treated to a delicious cookout on the Center’s new grill donated by Home Depot.
Leadership Changes
As summer comes to a close, many changes are happening at the Center for Children. We want to thank Veronica Lowenberg for leading the Healthy Opportunities for Marriage Enrichment (HOME) program for the past 2 years. Veronica will take over as Director of the Therapeutic Foster Care Program. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Jesus Diaz as the new Program Director for HOME. Jesus is not new to the program. He worked as Operations Manager for the program and we know his leadership will guide the program into a successful future. Congratulations to Veronica and Jesus!

Did you know…..
The Center has been in our community for over 80 years. Its roots began in 1919 as St. Margaret's Center for Children, an orphanage in the lower valley; and in 1928 as an orphanage in central El Paso known as Southwestern Children's Home. The two orphanages merged in 1982 to form the El Paso Center for Children.

HOME Update
HOME spent the month of August regrouping and strategizing for the fall. Jesus Diaz, Rosalie Montoya and Miguel Valdez went to Washington D.C. to meet with other Healthy Marriage grantees at the Annual Grantee Meeting. It was an informative and productive meeting with like-minded organizations.

Regular workshops will begin in October and a handful of life-advancing booster sessions are planned for the month of September. As always, all workshops are offered free of charge in English and Spanish with on-site childcare provided!

Safe Place is a national youth outreach program that educates thousands of young people every year about the dangers of running away or trying to resolve difficult and threatening situations on their own. This initiative involves the whole community by providing safe havens and resources for youth in crisis. Youth can easily access immediate help at all fire stations, recreational centers, all Metro buses and businesses displaying the Safe Place sign. Once the child contacts one of these sites, a staff member from the Runaway Shelter is immediately dispatched and the child is brought to safety. Services are available 24/7.

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