**SAVE-THE-DATES**

**Family Support Meet & Greet Sessions**

**CITY CENTERS:** East Hills, East Liberty, Hill District Center for Nurturing Families, Hilltop, Homewood, Lawrenceville, Latino, Northview Heights and Providence

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**February 18, 2011**

**Family Support and Pittsburgh Early Intervention Program (EI)**

*Fun and Interactive Agenda!*

**WHO:** Family Support staff (City) to meet with staff from Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Intervention Program

**TIME:** 1:00pm-3:00pm

**LOCATION:** University of Pittsburgh, Office of Child Development, 400 Lexington Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15208 (Lower level – Free on-site Parking)

**PURPOSE:** To enhance the collaboration between Family Support and EI/EC for increased program awareness and better coordinated services to families.

**RSVP:** To Maura Falchetti: mfalchet@pitt.edu or 412-244-5447 by Friday, February 11th

Thank You, Sheila Beasley (FS Outreach Director UVP/OCD)

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**COUNTY CENTERS:** Braddock, Clairton, Duquesne, East Allegheny, Highlands, Lincoln Park, Latino, McKeesport, Prospect Park, Rankin, Steel Valley, Sto-Rox, Turtle Creek, Wilkinsburg, Positive Parenting/F.O.R.

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**Monday, April 19, 2011**

**Family Support and Allegheny Intermediate Unit / DART**

*Fun and Interactive Agenda!*

**WHO:** Family Support staff (County) to meet with staff from AIU/DART Services

**TIME:** 1:00pm-3:30pm

**LOCATION:** AIU, 475 East Waterfront Drive, Homestead, PA 15120

**PURPOSE:** To enhance the collaboration between Family Support and AIU/DART for increased program awareness and better coordinated services to families.

**RSVP:** To Maura Falchetti: mfalchet@pitt.edu or 412-244-5447 by Friday, March 25th

Thank You, Sheila Beasley (FS Outreach Director UVP/OCD)
SPEAKING OF THE AIU...

**AIU Collects 86,093 Cans Of Soup!!!**
A huge THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the AIU's Souper Bowl Challenge!!! Because of generosity and hard work, the AIU was able to collect 86,093 cans of soup! AIU’s counterpart in Green Bay, Wisconsin was only able to gather 8,718 cans. All proceeds will benefit area food banks and food pantries. **Great way to get a win!**

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**FAMILY SUPPORT**

**Public Awareness Day**

**Thursday, March 24th.**

Parent representatives from Community Voices want **ALL** of our Centers to make stronger connections to their community this year by strengthening partnerships and sharing resources that benefit families. On March 24th all Centers are requested to meet, leave materials and outreaching to their churches, schools, clinics, etc. and share how Family Support is a partner resource for families. We want to create a media buzz to highlight the effectiveness of Family Support programs and how Family Support positively changes lives and communities.

**Do your part today to keep lock in the date at your Center and discuss what community connections you will make as a Center.** Additional information will be sent.

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YOU’VE BEEN ASKING ABOUT SOMETHING WE CAN DO FOR THE TEENS IN FAMILY SUPPORT!

Our students are in progress to help us coordinate a face book and Youth Forum at the end of the day on March 24th. Contact Sheila today at 412-244-5301 or sbeasle@pitt.edu with the names, telephone number or Face book address of Center affiliated youth so we can make sure is linked up for the campaign and if you want to help with the Youth Campaign & Forum. 😊
FAMILY SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE MEETINGS TO REMEMBER

**QA meeting:** *(Rescheduled)* March 1, 2011 @ 9:30AM  
**Topic:**  
- Discuss Annual Report  
- Receive and update from DARE on their Project

**FDS Networking Meeting**  
Attendance from 1/26/11 Meeting: 38  
**Topic:** Resource Fair  
**Facilitator:** Regina Jones  
**Objectives:**  
- Be familiar with services offered by:  
  - Mercy Behavioral Health  
  - Milestone  
- Vita  
- Women’s Center and Shelter  
- Humanservices.net  
- Careerlink  
- Be familiar with options available for monitoring the services being provided to families

**Next FDS Meeting:** March 30th 2011  
**Next Site Directors Meeting:** February 23rd 2011  
**Next Family Support Policy Board Meeting:** March 18th 2011

@ Wilkinsburg Family Support Center
With a new Governor, many of our state level leaders will also be changing. We have worked hard to develop relationships and help others understand the importance of family support. Governor Corbett has nominated candidates for Secretary (Director) of three State departments that are important to families. All need to be approved by the Pennsylvania Senate. They will serve as “Acting Secretary” until they are confirmed (or rejected) by the Senate.

For Secretary of the **PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW)**, Gov. Corbett has nominated Gary Alexander. This is the position that Estelle Richman had held. DPW provides services and supports to more than 2.1 million low-income, elderly and disabled Pennsylvanians.

Prior to being nominated as DPW secretary, Alexander served as the Rhode Island Secretary of Health and Human Services. Rhode Island has approximately 200,000 less people than Allegheny County and approximately the same rate of poverty. While in Rhode Island, he made significant changes to the Medicaid program. He also reformed the state’s cash assistance program to focus on “work first” and engage clients in employment. These efforts resulted in a 30 percent reduction in Rhode Island’s TANF (and some other programs) population over the past two years. Advocates continue to be concerned that a reduction in TANF rolls does not necessarily mean a reduction in poverty or that people have found jobs. Sometimes it means that it has become so difficult to get help that families give up.

Dr. Eli Avila was nominated by Governor Tom Corbett to be **Secretary of Health (DoH)**. As Pennsylvania's top health regulator, Avila will be responsible for carrying out the Health Department's mission to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent injury and disease.

Governor Tom Corbett announced that he intends to nominate Ronald J. Tomalis, 48, of Clarksville, Md., as **Secretary of Education**. Gerald Zahorchak was the previous Secretary of Education. Tomalis is currently a consultant to numerous nonprofit education groups and foundations, along with for-profit education related companies. He is an experienced aide in Republican administrations at the federal and state level. From 1995 to 2001 he was executive deputy secretary of education in Pennsylvania and championed vouchers for “school choice” and charter schools. The Republicans in the state legislature have made “school choice” legislation a top priority. “School choice” is a broad concept, but generally involves opportunities for families to leave failing schools and choose other schools with the child’s education funding following their choice. This is a controversial topic due to its impact on school funding and other issues. We will learn more as this important issue develops.

In the meantime, the importance of “telling the story of family support” through our joint advocacy work is more important now than ever.

Fatherhood Style at Sto-Rox Family Center

Father, Stewart Brown with Daughter, MaKayla Brown

Sto-Rox center family activity celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King

Lincoln Park Parent Council

Green Tidbit

What are signs of February? If you’re in Pittsburgh, one answer might be snow and another might be Groundhog Phil! If Phil sees his shadow and predicts six more weeks of winter, then let’s prepare for another snowstorm in a “green” way. Even though salt is a naturally occurring mineral, it can leach heavy metals and contaminate waterways, build up in the soil and prevent plants from absorbing moisture, harm our pets, cause potholes, and damage vehicles. Avoid any salt that contains sodium chloride or potassium chloride. The most eco-friendly way to maintain your property is to shovel regularly, but if you’re shopping for a new snow blower, go electric! If you’re concerned about traction, try spreading down sand or even bird seed – it doesn’t have an environmental impact like salt does, and you’ll make some new feathered friends! Also, let your Valentine know you care about them and the environment; look for shade grown, organic, fair trade certified chocolates for a special treat on February 14th.
Advocacy, ADVOCACY AND MORE ADVOCACY!!

Twenty-eight parents from across the county gathered to kick off a new Parent Advocacy Committee (PAC). Elaine Harris-Fulton, Chair of Community Voices as well as chair of the Policy Board Advocacy Committee took a few minutes to have us reflect on our common purpose.

Elaine writes,

“We are here today to bond under a common mission with an ultimate vision. Our foundation at this point is the creation of the testimony booklet that I hope everyone will agree and join together to create. It will be our building point as we work on the big picture concerning family support. Family Support has been around for a long time. Our centers as they exist today are by no means the beginning. We can go all the way back to what were originally called ‘settlement houses’. But today the baton is in our hands. Programs do not sustain by themselves. There is always a group or sometimes one individual who advocate moving the cause forward. We need advocates like you all who are here today to make family support a priority for yourself and for others who can help sustain and grow family support. We are here today to carry on all the greatness of family support. I know our centers are not perfect and just like me we all may have some changes we would like to make. But this is not the time. We have Community Voices and everyone is welcome to be there the third Friday of every month. But today our thoughts should be about the question, “Would our communities be better off without our centers?” I am sure the answer is a resounding ‘no.’ That is why today we need to do our part to sustain and grow family support. After all we can not change what we do not have.

The concept is good, and we can work on how people implement it at Community Voices. Our fight now is to preserve it.

Many of us are beneficiaries of family support. We know what happens when family support works. Our families improve; our neighborhood improves; and our communities become a better place to live.

Things are changing from the Governor all the way down. We are going to have to identify new key players and work to make them champions of family support. Family Support is doing okay now, but we need to move before we are connected to life support. The best way to save someone who might drown is to keep him out of the water. When the cuts come in we do not want to be on the list. This not an easy task that we are about to undertake. Everyone is fighting to stay out of the water. That is why today I am hoping that everyone in this room will adopt the mission to help as we work to sustain and grow family support. This mission will last 11 months, ending with a celebration on 11/11/11 and an acknowledgement and review of our accomplishments. If we all work together I am sure there will be many accomplishments to celebrate.

Now let’s get to work.”

The Parent Advocacy Committee will meet the second Tuesday of each month at OCD at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join or attend at any time. A light lunch will be served, but please RSVP each month to 412-244-5447 so we can plan.