



Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.

“KID’S COURIER”

Volume 4—Spring 2008



Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.
(CFO) Administrative Offices and
Ellsworth Early Care and
Education Center
18 Avery Lane Ellsworth, ME 04605
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Things you might not know about CFO:

Provides Head Start and Comprehensive Early Child Care/Education Services annually to more than 325 children and families in Hancock and Washington Counties since 1970

Employs 104 Staff

Operates the Resource Development Centers (RDC), also known as “Child Care Opportunities”, in Hancock and Washington Counties.

Deemed a “Program of Quality” by the Administration of Children and Families, Federal Department of Health and Human Services. This status allows CFO families to claim double the child care tax credit on State of Maine returns.

Sponsors Healthy Peninsula, a public health project in Blue Hill.

A BOY’S LIFE

Life has come full circle for Michael Augustine. In 1986 he and his brother were enrolled at the Island Head Start Center in Stonington. Twenty two years later he is an Education Technician aiding a child at the same Center, working alongside his former teacher. Michael’s life has not been easy. He was placed in over 30 foster homes before finally making it back to Stonington at age 16 and living in the home that at age 23, he would eventually be adopted into.



Michael Augustine and Linda Shepard, May 2008

If you ask Michael what he remembers most about being at the Center, it is coming out of his shell and learning to enjoy childhood. Linda Shepard, Teacher, recalls that when he first arrived at the Center he barely spoke, he was so shy. Gradually, through watching other children play and seeing them having fun, Michael realized for the first time that this joy and happiness was there for him too.

Michael took the lessons he learned at the Island Head Start Center and made lemonade out of lemons. He attended and graduated from the University of Maine, married his college sweetheart, moved to California and is now back in Stonington setting up a home. His adoptive mother, a speech therapist at the elementary school in Stonington, gave him a call when she came across a boy who needed his help. Michael took the job and after a year of one-on-one aide to the young boy he is happy to report that the child has progressed and will start kindergarten in the fall better prepared to learn.

Linda has long been an advocate for more positive male involvement among the families at the Center. She notes that Michael’s presence this past year has been beneficial as he has been a positive male role model to all the children, some of whom don’t have that in their lives. Michael didn’t have a father in his life either, no one to teach him to throw a baseball or go fishing, he said. The lack of a role model has taught him the importance of providing one for children. He has worked with young fathers at the Center to help them learn techniques useful in successfully communicating with and parenting their children.



Michael (far right), his brother, a classmate and Linda, 1987.

back, joyful with the thought that he was contributing to a new generation of children, helping them to realize their own happiness.

This spring a grandfather to five of the Center’s children died. During playtime one of the grandchildren came, sat on Michael’s lap and told him that her Grampy was with the angels. Michael sat and listened and eventually the remaining four children wandered over to talk about losing their grandfather. The talk time was sweet, unplanned, and Michael’s gentle questions provided the children with a comfortable environment to share their feelings. When done, all five children went off to play lightened by their opportunity to share and knowing it was alright to have fun. Michael sat

MAINE'S FIRST LADY VISITS THE ST. CROIX EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CENTER AT WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Maine's First Lady, Karen Baldacci, answered a challenge from a local child-care provider in Calais and visited Washington County in early May 2008. While she was attending a luncheon with Washington County Community College (WCCC) Business Management students, she requested a tour of the St. Croix Early Care and Education Center, Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. (CFO)/WCCC childcare facility.

David Sousa, Education Chair at WCCC and Chair of the CFO Board of Directors, escorted her to the center where they met with Center Manager Marcia Rogers, and discussed early childhood education and toured the Center. Mrs. Baldacci noted that she was impressed with the quality of Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. program, facilities and collaboration with Washington County Community College.

Dr. Sousa said he came away impressed with Mrs. Baldacci's knowledge of early care and education. "To say that she is an advocate for children is an understatement. She is very concerned about the future of the State's young children and promoting and preserving quality programming," Dr. Sousa said.



David Sousa and Karen Baldacci visit with children at the St. Croix ECEC in Calais, May 2008.

For enrollment information for any of the Child and Family Opportunities,

Inc. Centers call, Trista Chase, Enrollment Specialist

1-800-834-4378

207-667-2995 x237

www.childandfamilyopp.org



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEANIE MILLS



"Making lemonade out of lemons" seems to be the "buzz" phrase at Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. (CFO) lately. With receding state and federal budgets, CFO, along with so many of our social service and education partners were braced this winter for government funding cuts. Yet at the same time, we were offered an opportunity to expand our programming. So how does an agency grow when funding appears to recede? You find unlikely partners and take some risks.

Coming on the heels of expanding its services to Sedgwick last fall in a three-way collaborative with Peninsula Early Care and Education Center, CFO didn't reject out of hand an opportunity to take on a new program in Machias this spring - - even though it already was operating one in nearby Marshfield. Instead, we set out to make this expansion happen by pulling together partners - - the University of Maine at Machias (UMM), Downeast Community Hospital (DECH), and State Office of Child Care and Head Start. As of June 1, CFO will be operating the Elizabeth C. Flaherty Center, a 25-slot accredited child care center on the UMM campus. The center was slated for closing by UMM when it could no longer sustain ongoing operating deficits. By collaborating (UMM will provide free space and other administrative supports and DECH Foundation will transfer grant funds awarded to the center to assist in subsidizing the costs to parents) CFO believes it can successfully operate the program, complementing services already available in Marshfield.

Another opportunity came knocking when Bill Webster, the superintendent of schools at the Schoodic CSD called wanting to partner to expand services to young children in the Sullivan, Sorrento and Franklin communities. CFO's Sullivan Head Start will be moving to the Mt. View School in Sullivan in the fall and its teachers will be partnering with a public school Pre-K Teacher to expand services to 17 more preschool children.

Using Head Start Performance Standards and the state's Early Learning Guidelines, the program will be open to

CHILD AND FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES, INC. 2007 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUES:

CACFP Food Program	307,513.00
Child Care Slots	277,009.00
Client Fees & Co-pays	546,631.00
Municipal and Private Donations	63,400.00
Federal Early Head Start	248,218.00
Federal Head Start Medicaid Reimbursement	1,724,827.00
Healthy Peninsula Resource Development Center	289,165.00
State Head Start	234,631.00
Voucher Program	193,334.00
In-Kind	393,276.00
	786,343.00
	199,203.00
	\$5,263,550.00

EXPENDITURES:

Salaries/Benefits	2,833,238.00
Employer Taxes	301,186.00
Child Care Vouchers	649,980.00
Contractual	176,707.00
Educational Materials	74,941.00
Provider Food Reimb.	136,926.00
Occupancy	447,333.00
Food	94,586.00
Other	246,345.00
Parent Activities	4,636.00
Training	35,750.00
Travel/Transportation	62,719.00
In-Kind	199,203.00
	\$5,263,550.00

Head Start-eligible 3- and 4-year-olds from all over the Schoodic Peninsula and will also be available to all 4-year-olds living in Sullivan, Sorrento and Franklin.

Jeanie Mills, has been with Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. for 19 years, 14 of which she has served as the Executive Director.

A CFO SCRAP BOOK OF LEARNING THROUGH FUN

Alison at Peninsula ECEC displaying her healthy pizza, May 2008.



Eileen King, a substitute at the Ellsworth ECEC, introduces Kelly to a rabbit. King and her husband brought in a variety of animals for Center children to enjoy in March 2008.

In April 2008 Mary Beth Dorsey, a CFO Board of Directors Member and the Children's Librarian at the Ellsworth Library, visited the Ellsworth ECEC with her home school group. The group performed a play for Center children, complete with beautiful homemade costumes.



Children enjoyed Winter 2008 in the playground at St. Croix ECEC.



A Stonington ECEC student took pleasure in the spring day, May 2008.



Anson, of the Moose-A-Bec ECEC in Jonesport enjoyed the Winter Carnival in March 2008.

PLANTING SEEDS OF GROWTH THE FIRST YEAR PENINSULA ECEC AT SEDGWICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Peninsula Early Care and Education Center at Sedgwick Elementary School is an exciting partnership between Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. (CFO), the Sedgwick Elementary School and St. Francis By the Sea Episcopal Church in Blue Hill. The program for 3- and 4-year-olds provides an array of services to young children in the form of child care, Head Start and preschool services for Peninsula-area children and families.

Ellen Savage, CFO Health and Family Partnership Manager, oversees the Center and notes that through the challenges of starting a new collaboration has come a valuable lesson: communication is key and teamwork is essential. The partnership is a picture of teamwork at its best, Don Buckingham principal at the Sedgwick Elementary school has embraced the program, truly understanding the importance of quality early care and education. The volunteer program, many of whom are St. Francis By the Sea Church members, consists of help with grounds work, laundering naptime bedding and leading singing and reading sessions. This volunteerism teams with already strong CFO educational programming to create an innovative learning center for children in the Blue Hill Peninsula.

The first year has seen exciting visits and activities. In September 2007 the Center opened and celebrated its partnership with the planting of an apple tree, a gift from Healthy Peninsula. Through a grant from the Maine Nutrition Network, Healthy Peninsula was able to visit throughout the year, providing programming to increase nutrition education for children and parents.



AG Steve Rowe talks with Alison while visiting the Peninsula ECEC in November 2007

Maine State Attorney General Steven Rowe, a strong advocate for early childhood education, visited in November 2007. Having given a talk at St. Francis By the Sea Episcopal Church, he wanted a chance to meet Center children and staff. Rowe chatted with children and staff, impressed with the quality of the program.

Peninsula ECEC will use the lessons and experiences of the first year to grow the program and collaboration well beyond year two.

WHAT'S THE LINK BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING AND PUBLIC HEALTH?

Community-based early childhood education (ECE) programs are the perfect settings to provide children and their families with preventive health. Quality ECE programs are built on strong, trusting, non-judgmental relationships between parents and caregivers. Parents using CFO services are usually very involved in their child's program, visiting daily at drop off and pick up times and discussing the most intimate details of their child's, and even their family's lives. This has poised CFO's staff to tackle such public health concerns as childhood obesity, drug abuse, domestic violence, affects of second hand smoke, asthma, mental health concerns for a child or family members.

Through collaborative relationships with several area Healthy Maine Partnership programs, CFO has found recent success in educating parents and children on the importance of good nutrition and exercise to ward off childhood obesity, helping parents learn how to budget for and make simple, yet healthy family meals, and in reducing children's exposure to second hand smoke. We are grateful for our relationships with these vital community-based health promotion programs.



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Healthy Peninsula - 207-374-3257
www.healthypeninsula.org
Child Care Opportunities,
Resource Development Center - 207-667-2467;
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HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN TO CFO**

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the services offered by Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.,
please contact *Martha K. Bayer* at 1-207-667-2995 ext. #223;
*marthab@childandfamilyopp.com***