

COMMISSIONER MONESTIME, DEAR FRIENDS...

IT'S A PLEASURE TO JOIN YOU TO OPEN THE LILLIE M. WILLIAMS HEAD START CENTER HERE IN ARCOLA LAKES.

I KNOW MS. LILLIE IS WITH US THIS MORNING...

AND THIS BEAUTIFUL BUILDING IS A TRIBUTE TO HER LEGACY AS A PIONEER IN THE MOVEMENT TO END THE RAVAGES OF POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

MS. LILLIE, YOU WERE ONCE ASKED WHAT LED YOU TO DO THIS WORK, AND YOU SAID HOW "I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT GOD HAS HAD A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE AND THAT IS TO SERVE THE POOR.

I DO IT AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO IT BECAUSE IT IS WHAT GOD WANTS ME TO DO."

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY POOR CHILDREN...

AND WHEN YOU WOULD APPEAR BEFORE THE COUNTY COMMISSION, YOU WOULD ALWAYS SAY "I HAVE 2000 CHILDREN - I HAVE 5000 CHILDREN - I HAVE 7000 CHILDREN..."

TODAY, YOUR CHILDREN HAVE A BRAND NEW HOME!

AND YOU DESERVE A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ALL THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

MAKING SURE THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED HAS BEEN A TOP PRIORITY OF MY ADMINISTRATION.

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE CRUCIAL FOR THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN POVERTY.

STUDIES SHOW HOW FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN CHILDREN, WE RECEIVE A \$7 RETURN RATE WITH THOSE CHILDREN PERFORMING BETTER ON STANDARDIZED TESTS AND A HIGHER PERCENTAGE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

THIS BRAND NEW HEAD START CENTER IS JUST ANOTHER INVESTMENT IN OUR CHILDREN, AND IN THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

WE HAVE SOUGHT WAYS TO MAXIMIZE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED BY HEAD START, AND WE HAVE DONE SO WITHOUT PLACING ADDITIONAL BURDENS ON OUR GENERAL FUND.

AND ALL OUR PROGRAMS ARE MAXIMIZING AND LEVERAGING VARIOUS FUNDING STREAMS TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY AND RESPONSIVE CARE TO THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

TODAY, WE SERVE OVER 7000 CHILDREN AND PREGNANT MOTHERS THROUGH 17 COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

IN THE PAST YEAR WE IMPROVED OUR EFFICIENCIES, ALLOWING US TO SERVE UP TO AN ADDITIONAL 500 CHILDREN.

AND WITH THE OPENING OF THE NEW LILLIE M. WILLIAMS CENTER, WE WILL ADD NEARLY ANOTHER 100 CHILDREN WHO WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START.

THIS MEANS THAT WE WILL REDUCE THE WAITING LIST OF FAMILIES WHO NEED THESE SERVICES.

THE LILLIE M WILLIAMS BUILDING WILL ALSO HIRE A NUMBER OF RESIDENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY, CREATING JOBS AND IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT OF THIS AREA.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE DOING ALL OF THIS WITHOUT INCURRING ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS.

MS. LILLIE, YOU AND EVERYONE HERE WILL BE PROUD TO KNOW THAT THIS BUILDING IS A STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN...

AND THIS IS A "GREEN" BUILDING THAT WILL PROVIDE A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT FOR THE TEACHERS, INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO WILL BE USING IT.

COMMISSIONER MONESTIME WILL BE SPEAKING A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THE BUILDING ITSELF...

BUT I DO WANT TO POINT OUT THAT AS PART OF THE PROGRAMMING FOR THIS CENTER, WE WILL INCLUDE AN EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT DEVOTED TO SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH - STEM - FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE GROWING OUR FUTURE DOCTORS, ENGINEERS, AND INVENTORS.

I ALSO WANT TO NOTE THAT THE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM THAT WILL SERVE AS A MODEL TRAINING SITE FOR THE HEAD START PROGRAM IS NAMED AFTER MS. JANE MCQUEEN.

JANE IS THE FORMER HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START DIRECTOR WHO DEVOTED 17 YEARS TO THE PROGRAM AND WAS A TIRELESS ADVOCATE FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

JANE, PLEASE STAND UP SO WE CAN RECOGNIZE YOU FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING WORK.

LET ME CLOSE BY THANKING MR. JEFF FREDERICKS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERSIGHT FOR THIS PROGRAM.

LET ME ALSO THANK COMMISSIONER MONESTIME FOR HIS LEADERSHIP IN THIS DISTRICT.

THANK YOU TO THE MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY ACTION & HUMAN SERVICES FOR MAKING HEAD START A SUCCESS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

AND A BIG THANKS TO THE ENTIRE TEAM AT OUR INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT - ISD...

DIRECTOR LESTER SOLA, PROJECT MANAGER TIM WRIGHT, ARCHITECT JOSE REQUEJO, INTERIOR DESIGNER ROBERT HEMINGWAY.

THIS CENTER IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND TO BE DESIGNED ENTIRELY BY IN-HOUSE STAFF OF THE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES DIVISION IN ISD - CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL!

THE LILLIE M. WILLIAMS CENTER ILLUSTRATES AND REINFORCES OUR COMMITMENT OF SERVICE TO OUR CHILDREN...

TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING OPPORTUNITY, BUILDING POTENTIAL, AND BUILDING THE FUTURE OF OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY, ONE CHILD AT A TIME.

WE REMAIN FIRMLY COMMITTED TO HELPING ALL OUR CHILDREN GET THE RIGHT START IN EDUCATION AND IN LIFE.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!

