

## WELCOME NOTE FROM THE HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Welcome to the first edition of Connecting; a newsletter for parents about parents. The Head Start/Early Head Start Program serves over 7,330 children and their families throughout Miami-Dade County. We have worked hard to provide a premium news bulletin that incorporates parent engagement activities from our programs. We hope you enjoy the read!!

Florreyne "Joy" Vickers

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Community Action and Human Services  
2014-2015 Leadership Training

Engaging families in community advocacy began this year with the 2014 Leadership Training on October 18, 2014, hosted by the Community Action and Human Services Department of Miami-Dade County. Parents and community leaders from Head Start's Policy Council and Policy Committees, the Community Action Agency Board and Community Advisory Committees learned how to advocate effectively for needed services in the community – focusing on services to children and families. Presenters included Mabel Jones of the "Jones Connection," and Robert A. Thompson from the Miami-Dade County Ethics Commission. The Keynote Speaker was then Commissioner-Elect, Daniella Levine Cava. Community Advisory Committee member stated "This training helped me as a Chairperson by giving me the tools to operate with the law."

## VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

## Engaging Families



COMMISSIONER BARBARA JORDAN  
VISITS YWCA COLONEL ZUCKOFF  
HEAD START

On December 17, 2014, Miami Dade Commissioner Barbara Jordan visited the YWCA Colonel Zuckoff Head Start center where she took part in the Christmas Program and gave toys to all of the children in the center. Commissioner Jordan spoke briefly wishing the children, parents, families, and staff a happy and safe Holiday. The Miami - Dade Fire Department was also present along with Santa. The children enjoyed a tour of the fire truck.

## MIAMI-DADE FIRE RESCUE GAVE A TOUR OF FIRE TRUCK



## SUCCESS STORY



I needed to start working and go to school but never had someone to help me with my daughter, until someone referred me to the O’Farrill Learning Center Head Start program. After some time on the waiting list, I received a call to inform me that my daughter was accepted in the program. I cried with happiness. When the school year started I wanted to be a part of everything. As a parent, I volunteered in all activities with the children, I volunteered in the office and classrooms. I was Chairperson of the parent committee for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. I was voted as the Policy Committee Secretary and now serve as the 2014-2015 Governing Board Representative. I had the chance to start working with the school as a part-time tutor in the after school program. I was able to provide for my family while going to school. My daughter is now in kindergarten, but continues to attend the O’FLC after school program. Now that my son is three years old, he is now able to attend the O’Farrill Learning Center Head Start program. I thank them every day for the opportunities they have offered me and my family. Like myself, we have many families that need the help and the opportunities to grow as a person. I am always trying to keep

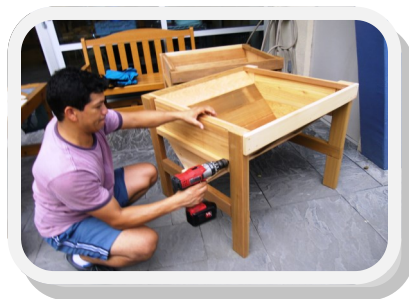
active in the center as a volunteer and always give them the best of me. While working in the After School program I applied for the Family Social Worker position, but not get it. However, I kept working hard and learning everything I could from Maribel Berrios, Family Services Coordinator. November 2014, the position as a Social Service Worker was open again. I applied with all the faith I was going to get it, since I had worked so hard to learn as much as I could in such a little time. I was hired! I love my position and I am working very hard to help families that are like me with goals and dreams that, with just a little push and help, they too can achieve it. I will use my story to help make a big difference in their lives without them noticing, little by little.

I am thankful for the Head Start Program and O’Farrill Learning Center for the opportunities given to me and my family. I will provide families with the best service we can give them.

-Enmely G Rodriguez



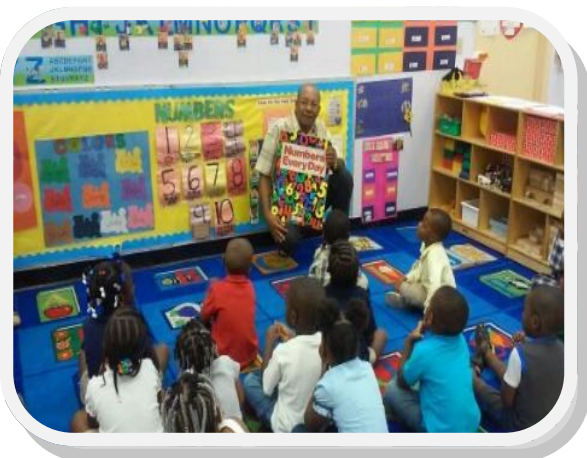


**GARDENING**


Parents and children at the United Way Center of Excellence built flower beds for growing flowers and vegetables at their annual Gardening Event. Each year in October, children and families partici-

pate in a different projects. This year, fathers helped create and paint a water drum to catch rain water. Rain water is then used for watering the ground using environmentally sustainable practices. When the vegetables are ripe, children and teachers harvest them to use in cooking activities. Parents and children love to participate. Parents are especially excited about being a part of their child's learning experiences. The Gardening Event teaches children the science of

living things and the growth process with hands-on experiences.


**“DAD TAKE YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL” DAY**


“Dad, Take Your Child to School Day” occurred on September 16, 2014 throughout the CAHSD Miami-Dade Head Start community. Take Your Child to School encouraged fathers to be involved with their child's education. Jean-

Claude Castor, FCCA A Children's Place Head Start father said, “Bringing my child to school is an important everyday ritual.” “Take Your Child to School” certificates were given to fathers that participated.

**CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

Head Start/Early Head Start values and respects the different cultures within our communities. This October, Allapattah Head Start celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. Classrooms displayed decorations and toys



from different Hispanic cultures while children and parents wore clothing from their heritage. Parents also shared stories with children about their culture.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

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- ♦ JANUARY 20, 2015 - APRIL 30, 2015 - HEAD START OPEN ENROLLMENT
- ♦ JANUARY 30, 2015 - HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MIAMI AND OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY RESPONSE CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI BANKUNITED CENTER, 9:00AM - 12:30PM. Register at <https://hunmiami.eventbrite.com>
- ♦ MARCH 23-24, 2015 - HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START 13TH ANNUAL INFANT TODDLER CONFERENCE . For more information, contact Angella Malave at [malka@miamidade.gov](mailto:malka@miamidade.gov)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### KELLOGGS ECHOS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Miami-Dade County Head Start is establishing a network of Early Childhood Hands-On Science (ECHOS) model demonstration centers. The model demonstration centers provide a unique opportunity to engage families of diverse cultures and differing socio-economic contexts to learn science in a non-threatening environment. Parent Leaders direct small groups of children in ECHOS activities designed to reinforce weekly lessons, train other parents for ECHOS activities at home, coordinate classroom ECHOS volunteers, and encourage children and families to participate in family activities at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science. The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum was awarded a prestigious grant award from the Kellogg Foundation to implement these model centers. This collaboration and partnership with the Museum is teaching science to our future doctors, engineers, and computer experts.

### STEP UP MIAMI IS COMING TO SOUTH DADE!

Catalyst Miami is proudly hosting the next cohort of "Step Up Miami" and "Step Up Kids" in South Dade. The cohort is scheduled to start on February 4th, 2015. Free dinner and childcare.

"Step Up Miami" is a 12-week, intensive leadership development program that aims to generate a critical mass of neighborhood leaders interested in addressing poverty in Miami-Dade. The program guides participants through an examination of current best practices in community development, the sharing of personal experiences, an exploration of diverse community development approaches, and hands-on application of problem solving strategies.

Participants are able to enroll their children, grades K-5, in our "Step Up Kids" program, which runs parallel to "Step Up Miami". Children will become effective leaders who are able to recognize, acknowledge and empathize with peers who are dealing with troubling circumstances.

To apply, contact [Metris Batts](#) at [metrisb@catalystmiami.org](mailto:metrisb@catalystmiami.org).