

NEK-CAP News Summer Edition ~ June 2016

Serving Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Jewell, Leavenworth, Marshall, Mitchell, Nemaha, Osborne, Pottawatomie, Republic, Riley, Smith, and Washington Counties.

NEK-CAP's Mission

We provide comprehensive education and social services to low-income community members through collaborative partnerships focused on promoting family development, empowerment, and economic security.

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



#BeCommunityAction

Helping People, Changing Lives.



From the Executive Director's Desk

Submitted by Jeanette Collier, Executive Director

Wishing each of you a wonderful summer!!

Key findings from *The National Survey of Children's Health* conducted by the Rural Health Research Center from 2003-2012 are:

- Rural childhood poverty is increasing;
- Population demographics are changing with an increasing population of Hispanic children;
- There is an increasing number of children with special care needs;
- Insurance coverage has increased for children in poverty;
- African American children are well covered;
- There are significant disparities in Hispanic children's coverage;
- Medicaid is more important for rural children;
- Preventive medical visits lag for rural children in poverty;
- Overall there are significant gaps for all children in poverty;
- Preventive dental visits lag and was a greater lag for poor children;
- Most parents report healthy

children yet poor parents report much less so;

- Less than 70% of parents report excellent or very good condition of children's teeth and the worst condition was reported by rural parents.

The purpose of rural health reform has been to increase access to health care services, improve overall health status of rural residents, and assist rural communities in securing adequate, affordable, high-quality health care services.

Achieving these goals is a significant challenge in Kansas due to decreased funding for all safety net programs in the state; the financial struggles that many rural hospitals are facing; a lack of and decreasing number of preventive medical and dental providers; and a reduction in provider reimbursement. NEK-CAP, Inc. is committed to developing innovative strategies to address these disparities in access to health care and reducing the increasing poverty rate for Kansas children. Please join us in our commitment of ensuring that all Kansas children have the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life.

Comments/Questions: please contact Linda Grier, Data/Office Coordinator, lgrier@nekc.org

Letter to the Editor

Submitted by Ralph Martin

It is truly amazing what NEK-CAP has accomplished since I drew up the original application papers and applied for and got funding to organize NEK-CAP now over 50 years ago (November 1965) I was elected the first President of the then nine county organization and we hired the original staff. I also secured the first NEK-CAP office on the third floor of the Atchison County courthouse from the county at no cost.

You put our story of how we did it in a recent NEK-CAP newsletter. It was an effort that was successful and has helped thousands of families work their way out of poverty and has helped their children get a head start in life which has and is enabling THEM TO SUCCEED in spite of their lack of money that most middle class FAMILIES HAVE .

I just celebrated my 90th birthday and I am still in good health. My wife Toni and I attended our Atchison High school

reunion last October and enjoyed visiting the NEK-CAP office downtown and especially the head start children and staff at the center on the Benedictine college campus south where Toni attended and graduated from when it was called Mt St Scholastica.

Keep up the good work. The rewards for what you all have done and are doing is well worth all the time and hard work efforts your staff and volunteers are putting out to accomplish the goals of helping low income families and their children succeed. I am very proud of all of you. NEK- CAP has been and is a real asset to the people of Northeast Kansas. Keep up the good work!

God bless all of you,
Ralph Martin
First President and organizer of NEK CAP,
1965

Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by NEK-CAP, Inc. staff members

Jackson County Head Start and Community Action office have had the wonderful opportunity to work with several great individuals this year to expand our services and teach out to Hispanic families within our community.

Hector Sanchez at the EUM Church in Holton is excellent at making families aware of our Head Start program and how it can benefit their children. He generously makes himself available to introduce families to staff and assist in translation for application and orientations. Additionally he is available for families throughout the year to provide translation with our staff.

Gladis Gomez, also of the EUM Church, graciously assists our staff with unplanned translation via phone. With her help we have been able to assist non-English speaking families with translation for Emergency services, explain our Early Head Start program, and assure communications between staff and families are clear.

Both Hector and Gladis have assisted us in translating notes home to parents, certificates, fliers, and agency documents.

Additionally, one current Head Start parent, Lizbeth Avalos, and one former parent, Lorena Sucedo, volunteered their time and service to assist a non-English speaking family this year. Each took on the task of providing translation services for a family. During the year these ladies made themselves available for translating paperwork, assisting with communications between staff and the family, opening their own homes to families to meet with staff or complete forms and even providing transportation or childcare.

The staff at Jackson County would like to extend their immense gratitude to all of these volunteers and their generous contribution to our agency and our community. *Submitted by Kori Anderson, Family Development Advocate, Jackson County*

I also have another Head Start single mother who is raising her three children, she was able to get a job at Head Start as a program assistant and has done well with that. *Submitted by Soni Moranz, Child & Family Advocate, Atchison County*

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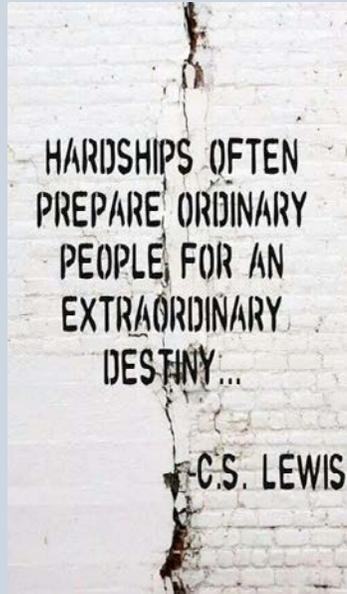
Serving the counties of:
Atchison, Brown,
Doniphan, Jackson,
Jefferson, Jewell,
Leavenworth, Marshall,
Mitchell, Nemaha,
Osborne, Pottawatomie,
Republic, Riley, Smith
and Washington

services vary per county

Imagine
With all
your mind.
Believe
With all
your heart.
Achieve
With all
your might.

Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by NEK-CAP, Inc. staff members



NEK-CAP, Inc.'s Vision:

One by one
all families and communities
become self-reliant.

*NEK-CAP, Inc. is an equal
opportunity provider
and employer.*



Last June, a former colleague of mine from PAT referred a family to me. With a waiting list I was not able to get them into my caseload until September. When they started with EHS, mom was homebound with two autistic children. During our home visits I encouraged her to file for disability on behalf of the children. She did and was accepted. With that she was able to purchase a used van and no longer homebound, her goal to have a van was for multiple reasons, but one reason was to attend socializations. A much needed activity for her children with disabilities.

Today was their second time to attend since mom got the van. The first socialization the children were overwhelmed with the newness of it all. Mom was determined to attend again and not be discouraged. Mom brought them to socialization today, and how exciting to watch them "bloom". They were not overstimulated today. Both children played! For the first time the older child used crayons. Not only did she color, but she was totally engaged. She would take my hand to help her make the marks on the paper with the crayon. The younger child, rocked on the rocking boat for most of the playtime, but was engaged while he rocked the boat. They went from crawling and standing on the tables during the first socialization, to being actively engaged in play and learning. It may not seem like much, but for children with autism, it was a fantastic day of milestones!

Today was a good day; for the children, for the mom and for me. It is affirming to be a part of a program that makes a difference in the lives of families. *Submitted by Rhonda Mitchell, Child & Family Development Advocate, Jefferson County*

After living in rental homes and moving many times one of my Hispanic families was able to purchase their own place to call home! The family has lived and worked in the United States for many years, but they are not eligible to become U.S. citizens due to regulations. This factor limits the resources that they are able to access. Mom approached me on a home visit and asked if I knew how down payments worked on mobile homes. I told her that I was unsure and suggested that she set up an appointment to go talk to the bank where they have their vehicle loan. The following week Mom called to see if we could reschedule our home visit because she

had gone to the bank and they were going to approve her for the loan to purchase the mobile home! She needed to go in and sign the paperwork. The family was able to negotiate with the sellers to lower the price a little bit if they painted it and cleaned the carpets on their own. (The sellers had planned to do this before it sold) I am so proud of the hard work and determination this family shows, even when things are tough. They continue to strive to do better for their children and reach goals they never thought were possible. *Submitted by Angie Hobbs, Child & Family Advocate, Pottawatomie County*

In the Western counties, we have been networking with county agencies and organizations as our primary goal is to assist families in need. I am happy to report that in the last 30-45 days, we have established over 50 connections with management and liaisons who now have an awareness of NEK-CAP in the public health, city, family service, mental health, housing and educational sectors. Most of the liaisons that I met with were pleased to know that a community action program was now available to them to utilize.

We are striving to narrow the gap between the services being offered as we collaborate and work together towards a solution on how we can help to combine our resources and expertise for better service. We have visited a majority of the communities in Republic, Jewell and Washington Counties to promote NEK-CAP and gather information on what resources are available.

During the last 30-45 days, we have helped over 20 families with resource information. Filling the Gap, our Youth Summer Feeding Program, also kicked off with an increase in family participation as compared to last year as projects are full speed ahead. Filling the Gap programs are being utilized in Jewell, Mitchell, Osbourne, Republic and Smith Counties. We are happy to report that we are now serving Washington County as we have 14 children that we are providing services to. In the horizon, we will work with local banks and financial institutions with the Kansas IDA program and home repair incentives. Our focus in June and July will be to develop sound practices to ensure today's success and tomorrow's future. *Submitted by Chris Brent, Community Development Advocate*

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Achievements ~ Accomplishments ~ Successes

Submitted by NEK-CAP, Inc. staff members

Learning your rights as a parent of a child with an identified special need can be a tough task. Parents look to professionals to help guide them through the process. Every parent wants to feel they have been heard and that the needs of their child are being met. A child on my caseload currently has an IFSP and receives services through Infant Toddler Services. He will turn 3 years old towards the end of summer. Mom decided that she would like her son to attend their local Special Education preschool classroom for an observation to see if he would qualify for an IEP or if he would be dismissed from Special Education. The observation period was only scheduled for 3 days. After the 3 day observation period Mom was told when the meeting was to find out the results. I met Mom at the meeting and her Infant Toddler Home Visitor attended as well. The meeting was very short and not many details were shared other than he didn't qualify for the classroom because he did so well. Mom inquired about the role model positions that are offered to the preschool, but are limited. The Special Education teacher stated that he could apply for one of those spots possible if she brought him through a Child Find Screening in July. After leaving the meeting Mom was extremely unhappy with the way things had gone. She did not feel that her son was fully evaluated nor that her voice was heard. Mom had already been struggling with her Infant Toddler Home Visitor and we had discussed her calling and talking to Infant Toddler Services about her concerns. After the meeting Mom finally made the call! Her Home Visitor was changed. Infant Toddler Services discussed with Mom her right to request a full evaluation on her son. At that point she had no idea that she had this right as his parent. The full evaluation was scheduled. The little boy attended the classroom again for a longer period. On the last day Mom was handed a "Notice of Meeting" packet. The teacher told her to sign it waiving her right to 10 day notice. She was told when the meeting was. Mom brought the paperwork home and I met with her the same day for our home visit. Mom expressed that she would like her new Infant Toddler Home Visitor as well as myself to attend the meeting. I looked at the date/time of the meeting and told her I would have to try and rearrange my schedule in order to make it. I advised her to call her Infant Toddler Home Visitor and make sure the time worked for her before signing the paper and returning it. I

explained to Mom that if this meeting time wasn't going to work for everyone that she had the right to request a new meeting time. Again, this had not been explained to her in any of the Special Education meetings. Each time she was offered her parental rights handbook, but as we know it is very long and can be confusing to understand. As it turns out the meeting time was not going to work. She took the paperwork in and marked that the time would not work and requested a new meeting. The teacher told her that there were no other times available. Mom wasn't sure how to respond, so she left the classroom and sent a message to the Infant Toddler Home Visitor as well as myself. She was advised to contact the Director of Special Education. She made the phone call and shortly after the Special Education Teacher called her and said the meeting time had been changed to a time that Mom had requested. In the end the little boy still did not qualify for the classroom, but Mom walked away feeling like she was heard. She felt that through all the evaluation reports each specialist saw her child as an individual and accurately described him. The process has helped Mom to understand that she has rights as his parent and she is more comfortable speaking up for herself and her child. *Submitted by Angie Hobbs, Child & Family Advocate, Pottawatomie County*

I have a mother of eight children who has been working on her Bachelor Degree since her three year old entered the Head Start program and this May she graduated with her Social Worker degree. She has gained employment. I am proud of her accomplishment. *Submitted by Soni Moranz, Child & Family Advocate, Atchison County*

I work with a family who has a little girl, Lilly, who just turned three years old. She waits for me by the door to arrive and waits by the door as I leave her driveway. Recently, we have been working on name and letter recognition. Mom has been trying to teach her that her name begins with the letter "L," but Lilly insists that her name starts with the letter "E." One evening, Lilly ran to her mom and said, "Lilly starts with an 'L,' mom!" Mom was very excited to share the news with me! *Submitted by Jessica Mendez, Child & Family Advocate, North Brown County*

What your child
learns before age 5
is the key to
success!

Enroll your child
now in
NEK-CAP
Head Start!!

Applications always
accepted!



The Head Start tomato plants we had planted out front last year in front of the Administrative Office have left volunteer plants mixed in with the marigolds. So now we're waiting to see if we will get some tomatoes. So far there are at least 4 plants growing! (Now to keep the bunnies off the leaves!) *Submitted by Belinda Estes, Housing Continuum Care Coordinator*

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