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Newsletter for Employees of The Children's Collective, Inc.

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Why Special Ed Is Special

Think of the last time you looked out the window to see what sort of day it was going to be. Or the last time you went for a walk through the woods, on the beach or in the park. Or the last time you listened to some of your favorite music, danced to your favorite song, or even hummed your favorite melody.

For many children, the memories of these events have yet to be etched into their minds. For many of them, they can only imagine the simple beauty of the sky or a tree or of water running of pebbles in a stream. Many of them can only picture what it is like to run, to hold an object in their hand, or to simply walk – common day occurrences that we take so much for granted each and every day of our lives.

So often, these children have been placed into a category labeled, “No, they can’t.” Cast aside because they are not the proper cogs to fit into society. But thanks to the efforts of dedicated individuals who have committed their careers to special education, the outer cloud of “No I Can’t” is being evaporated by an inner pride that says, “Yes I Will.”

“A career in social services, especially in the area of addressing children with special needs, is not for everybody,” says Darin Tokunaga, Program Coordinator for

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It's that most wonderful time of the year. Children laughing people passing, greeting holiday smiles; Yuletide carols being sung by a choir; Jack Frost nipping at your nose; walking in a winter wonderland; and the halls are decked with boughs of holly. In the air, there's a feeling of Christmas.

It's during the Christmas season that we are harboring the memories of Thanksgiving. We reflect on events that shaped the year we are finishing and make plans for the new one to come. It's the time of the year that people will go to the malls, the city sidewalks, and houses of worship just to be around others and experience the spirit of the season.

It's during the Christmas season that, despite the many differences we all have - be they along lines of race, religion, culture, or social background - we find we are a little kinder to each other, a little more amiable to one another, and a little more accepting of each other. It is the one time of the year that we uncover that essence of goodness within our hearts and share it with others.

Those who work in the area of human services know this essence that many others recognize only during the Christmas season. It's that sense of the joy and fulfillment, which comes as a result of knowing the world is made better because of their existence. And those who work with children know that the destiny of the world is brighter because they have touched the future through their deeds. They do more than simply celebrate the aim of Christmas; they do more than simply respect the meaning of Christmas; they live the spirit of Christmas, and they live it throughout the entire year.

Through all of the ups and downs and life's thick and thins, they never wane or lose their focus on developing the talents and skills of tomorrow's leaders, and providing our children with the faith, the hope, and the love they will need in order to meet the responsibilities of their generation. No gift could be any more important to possess, or any finer to share for the human spirit.

"And so, I'm offering this simply phrase, for kids from one to ninety-two. Although it has been said many times, many ways, Merry Christmas to YOU!"

MARK ANTONIO GRANT

CHILD CARE'S ECONOMIC IMPACT IN CALIFORNIA

The National Economic Development and Law Center has published a new report, "Child Care and Its Impact on California's Economy." It demonstrates that the child care industry creates jobs and generates revenues, making it a critical part of the infrastructure supporting California's economy. Key findings of the study include:

- California's licensed childcare industry (including centers and family-based care) generates between \$4.7 and \$5.4 billion in gross revenues;

- The licensed childcare industry directly employs over 123,000 people in California and creates 86,000 indirect jobs; Childcare enables working parents in California to earn \$13 billion annually. These earnings generate nearly \$5 billion in tax revenues and support 1.1 million jobs.

These data reflect the economic contributions of the licensed child care sector only; the numbers would undoubtedly grow if the informal sector were included.

The report finds that licensed childcare supply meets only 21 percent of the estimated, state-wide need, preventing many parents from entering the workforce. Since data show that by the year 2010, 85 percent of the California labor force will consist of parents, it is crucial that state and local government, as well as business, take action to support a strong, quality child care industry. The report estimates that labor shortages created by an inadequate child care infrastructure could set off a disastrous chain of events, including tens of thousands of lost jobs and billions of dollars of lost income.

The report recommends that economic development planning at the state, county, and local levels include childcare and that childcare capacity be expanded to protect the industry's economic impact.

A copy of the executive summary of the report is available free of charge at <http://www.nedlc.org/publications/recent.html>. For the complete report, contact NEDLC at (510) 251-2600.

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SAFETY TIPS FOR TOY BUYING DURING THE HOLIDAY

Look for age labeling and instructions to guide the purchase and use of toys.

Select toys and to suit age, abilities, skills, and interest.

Don't buy toys with small parts that can pose a fatal choking hazard for infants, toddlers and all children who still put objects in their mouths.

Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly-secured eyes, noses and other potential small parts.

Don't purchase toys with sharp edges or points or electric toys with heating elements for children under age 8.

Avoid toys with loud noises, cords, strings and projectiles.

Immediately discard plastic wrappings that can cause suffocation.

Throw away broken toys that may pose a risk of injury.

Consider avoiding toys and games that can promote violence or stereo-types by race or gender.

Remember, traditional items such as blocks, paint, books and board games still represent some of the best toys and gifts ever.

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the Child Care Support & Training Project. "It's very rewarding but it does take a lot of patience. It's not about the money, which is quite obvious, but rather it's about the impact and changes you bring about for the child." Darin, a six year veteran in the field of social services and a graduate of the University of Southern California's Master's Degree Program in Social Work went on to say, "I find myself being fulfilled in the children's accomplishments; even the seemingly smallest ones like picking out the right colors. It brings, for them, a sense of achievement and, for me, a sense of joy."

"You've got to love being around kids, and love what you do," says Quinet Ginyard, Research Therapist and Child Development Specialist with the TCCI Prop. 10 Program. "There's a sense of joy and fulfillment that comes from watching a child develop and knowing that you've been a part of that progress. Too often, kids think it's their fault that they have the difficulties, which require special attention. What we do is work on addressing, not only those areas that need observance, but also labor to build their sense of self esteem and self respect."

Both Darin and Quinet are part of a world of special people who have special gifts, sharing them with other special people who have special needs. It's easy to see why special education is so special.



A Tribute to HIV/AIDS Heroes

On December 1, World AIDS Day, The African American AIDS Policy and Training Institute will launch *Heroes in the Struggle*, a photographic tribute to 20 African-Americans who have made outstanding contributions to fight against HIV/AIDS. The exhibits honorees, which include Hollywood celebrities, grassroots activists, physicians, community organizers and elected officials, have changed the way we deal with this epidemic and have led us in willing sacrifice and keen vision. Examples include Hydeia Broadbent, a 16 year old AIDS activist, actress Whoopi Goldberg, Irvin "Magic" Johnson and Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA).

The exhibit will debut in Los Angeles and travel to Black museums, historically Black colleges and universities and similar venues around the country throughout 2002. It will feature original work by four celebrated Black photographers: Kwaku Alston, Mark Baptiste, Barron Clayborne, Darien Davis and Mathew Jordan Smith, who have profiled many of today's most acclaimed Black personalities.

For more information on exhibit tour cities and dates, contact the African American AIDS Policy and Training Institute at (213) 353-3610 or phillw@aaainstitute.org

Bulletin Board

1. TCCI's Annual Holiday Meeting will be held Friday December 14, 2001 at The California Yacht Club in Marina Del Rey from 9a. — 4p.
2. Congratulations Our New Ground Harvest State Pre-school is scheduled to open Monday December 3, 2001.
Regina Mayo is the acting Lead.
3. King/San Pedro's Preschool will be hosting their Christmas Program Monday December 17, 2001.
4. All secret Santa participants: the spending limit for gifts is \$.
For further information please contact; Mrs. Richardson

PERSON OF THE MONTH



Shirley Tyus

She's never met a stranger; she always made a new friend. She's never cared for another's person's child, she always added a new member to her family. For nearly two decades, Shirley Tyus has been a sage for The Children's Collective, Inc. First, as a parent volunteer for the State Pre-school Program at Florence and later as a Teacher Assistant and finally as a Teacher for the YOU Infant Toddler Center, where she currently carries out her duties to the joy of her students and the delight of parents and co-workers alike.

She serves as an incandescent presence, lighting the fuses of enthusiasm for all those around her. Mary Anne Moore, Site Supervisor for the YOU Children's Center says of Shirley's impact, "She just opens up the joys and benefits of not only working together, but of working cooperatively. She is such a positive presence for these children, for their parents and for the other members of the staff. And that goes beyond those of us here at YOU. I don't think that there is anyone who, having met Shirley, didn't take an immediate liking to her. She's just that kind of special individual. And we're lucky to say she works with us."

Shirley's impact on the children at such a young age provides the nurturing that serves as a difference between a child who grows to create disturbances and distractions, and the student who develops through thirsting for knowledge and understanding. She has been that difference with a consistency that has been guided by commitment, compassion, and love. And that is why she is our

Person of The Month.