



HEAD START HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER

WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION

NOVEMBER 2024



A word for the Director

Hello November! I am so excited it is finally starting to feel like Fall ☺ How did you celebrate Head Start awareness month? Check out some of the ways your peers celebrated in the Head Start Happenings section of this newsletter. I just want to give a huge shout out to you all for working hard on those community connections and getting them involved with the agency and within your classrooms! Keep sharing these picture and stories!

In October we wrapped up the 45-day deadline for students who enrolled on the first day of school. We also conducted a majority of the CLASS, TPITOS, and TPOT observations, and conferences. Classroom staff will be finalizing their first checkpoint soon and family Advocates have been busy with their family strengths and needs assessments as well. I am also very excited to announce that our Mills County Head Start classroom opened on October 31st. ☺ Shout-out to all the staff down there for all their hard work to make this happen; Michaela, Linda, Barb, Laura- thank you! October was also our first Policy Council with the newly seated members, and we have a great turn out to the meeting. The Council was able to do a little bit of Head Start training, learn about fiscal reports, learn a little about the new Head Start Performance Standards and passed a vote to submit our Head Start grant. We also got a full executive committee on the first night! Thank you and shout-out to the Family Advocates, Home Based Teachers, and all staff that helped recruit our Policy Council members! We look forward to having another engaged Policy Council this year!

Finally, as we enter November and a time to be thankful, I want to urge you to reflect on what you are thankful for. I know there can be tough times, or rough days, but continue to look forward and move one step at a time. Remember, sometimes it's just the little things! I challenge you this month to find one thing each day that you are grateful for and share it with someone!

Danni Segebart, Head Start Director

Education News...

October has flown by and we are onto November, what a busy month it has been! A few reminders for the month of November, I wanted to remind you of the upcoming Teaching Strategies GOLD deadline for teachers as the GOLD Resource Guide states is as follows: All GOLD data should be entered by November 8th and finalized by November 15th. The FALL data is incredibly important as it gives an in depth look at our children's development and learning and is the base line data for our children's growth over the entire school year. The leadership team also uses this data to see areas of need for staff training and development as well.

Lastly, I continue to see amazing teamwork and collaboration within our program, and I am proud to work for Head Start and all of you who are so dedicated to making a difference in the lives of the children and families we serve each day. As a program, we will continue to grow and develop our abilities to be leaders within our communities. As the old saying goes, "it takes

a village", this program would not be where it is without you, and I hope you all know how important your role is to the children and families we serve.

Jennifer Duff, Education Manager

From the Nurse's Desk...

First Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee Meeting for 2024-2025

The Health Services Advisory now formally the Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee met on 10/24/24 with 7 community partners from Public Health, AEA, Full Circle Therapy, a Pottawattamie County parent, and Health and Support Services Coordinators in attendance.

Program updates were given including the work to bring more forms on-line in Child Plus and other policy and procedure updates that will be rolled out in the coming weeks. Data from enrollment was shared, 83% of EHS children and 85 % of HS children had health insurance at the beginning of the year. 54% of EHS children and 38% of HS children had a medical home. 91% of EHS children and 77% of HS children were up to date or had all immunizations or exemptions. 54% of EHS children and 36% HS children had a dental home. It was explained that families are assisted in obtaining insurance, a doctor, and dentist and the nurses are notifying parents of needed immunizations. The committee was informed these reports will be audited in November and updated as they are several other times during the year and discussed at a data review day. It was also reported that all centers have received 45-day screenings provided by our partners from Lions and AEA, and that I-Smile Coordinators are visiting centers to screen children and apply varnish, and silver diamine.

An overview was given of the nutrition component including Company Kitchen as the meal vendor for breakfast, lunch, and snack in the majority of the classroom centers and the breakdown of children in the underweight category. 10 were underweight, 105 healthy weight, 27 overweight, and 35 were in the obese category. One of the action steps the team is working on is to bring "I'm Moving, I'm Learning" Curriculum back to classrooms. It was also shared how we accommodate special diets and a breakdown of the type of dietary restrictions with 15 no dairy restrictions being the most. It was announced that we have a new partnership with Hannah Karnes as our Nutrition Consultant to work with the program on special diets, meals review, and provide feedback on health and nutrition questionnaires and other services as needed.

Jill Willenborg reported updated policies and procedures to be in line with the new performance standards to integrate mental health in all areas. She is also working with the Wellness Committee to cultivate a culture of wellness. Part of the efforts include having Full Circle Therapy meeting with staff. There are two Behavior Specialists that are helping in classrooms to support teachers. An Expulsion Policy is in place and mental health consultants and parents participate in these plans.

Dianne reported that all centers have received 45-day screenings provided by our partners from Lions and AEA, and that I-Smile Coordinators are visiting centers to screen children and apply varnish and silver diamine.

Community updates include Shelby County Community Public Health will be doing immunizations audits (all centers should keep their Health binders up to date as they are emailed updated immunization records), and they provide lead testing once a month in addition to immunizations. A trend in the increase of religious exemptions was noted for immunizations and Public Health is seeing children that previously received immunizations switching to a religious exemption. Staff are advocating for well child exams so parents can have conversations about immunizations with their child's doctor. There is also a new adult vaccine schedule and Public Health can provide adult immunizations for those that do not have insurance if needed. A Lions representative reported that KidSight fall screenings are continuing with over 10,000 screenings being done across the state so far. Lions usually do over 40,000 a year with just over 400 Lion volunteers. The policy has changed a bit this year on screeners. Anyone (a non- Lion) who has

gone through online KidSight training and is working under the supervision of a certified Lion screener can screen children. This opens more opportunities to do more screening. They already have a team of trained screeners who are Creighton University students who can work with a Lions Club.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, 4/24/25 at 1:30 p.m. via zoom.

Order Your 4 Free At-home COVID-19 Tests
Every U.S. household is eligible to order 4 free at-home tests.
Need help placing an order for your at-home tests?
Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).
Ordering tests is easy and takes only a few minutes. Visit COVIDTests.gov and have over-the-counter tests delivered right to your mailbox.

In Kind Update...

Here is an update to our In-Kind goal and where we are. Remember, our goal is to hit \$250,000! Let's collaborate, for the next newsletter please share some ideas for how you are collecting in-kind!





New Employee Spotlight

Katie Maschmeier started as the new food service for Council Bluffs Head Start. "I am 44 years old and a mother of two adult boys and a grandma to my 2-year-old grandson. I love kids of all ages and love spending time with them. I have worked in food service for over 20 years. I enjoy it and can't wait to meet the kids in Council Bluffs Head Start!"
Welcome Katie!



Makenzi Hazen-Dingman started as a substitute for Council Bluffs area. "Hello! My name is Makenzi Hazen-Dingman. I am 27 years old, and am a current student working on my degree in Early Childhood Development and Education. I have two daughters, Emerald, 5, and Raven, 3. I was also recently married this last June to their wonderful father, Daniel. In my free time, I enjoy playing music, and learning new instruments. I am an active member of the IWCC Bands. I also enjoy reading anything and everything. I am so excited to work with everyone and to bring a curiosity and love of learning to our students!" Welcome to the team Makenzi!



Staff Shout-out's



Shout out to Rose Urich. Rose was in a room that wasn't the norm and the teacher had to step out for a bit. Rose took over and it was like it was Rose's every day classroom. Rose didn't know where things were but the children didn't know it and Rose kept them engaged and learning the whole time! Way to go Rose!

I want to give a shout out to the CB HS staff. The staff at CB Head Start have all been great and it's been fun getting to know them all. Thank you all for being so understanding & helpful during my time in the kitchen.

Shout out to Bridgid Nichols- she has been awesome to work for. She is always checking in to make sure her staff are doing well. She wears many hats and deserves a big shout out! 😊

I want to give a big shout out to Bridgette Laver for driving all over the 10-county area this past month to provide education to our families on in-kind at our family nights. 😊 Thanks for all you do!

Staff shoutout to Katie Cannon and Annette Helle- They are both so engaging and happy to jump in and help wherever is needed. They are both so positive and bring a smile every day even if they are not feeling the best.

I'd like to give a great big "shout out" to the staff at both in Red Oak Head Start and Red Oak Early Head Start, as well as Suzy Lyons and Amber Shutters for all the help making the Family Night in Red Oak a success; and a huge shout out to Brigette Laver for making the drive to train parents on In-Kind. You are all proof, "Teamwork makes the Dream Work"; I appreciate all of you!

We love seeing all the wonderful shout-out's and positive things happening in the program. If you have a shout-out you want to give in the next newsletter, send to dsegebart@westcca.org.

A word from your Wellness Committee...



Winter Door Decorating Contest

Time to get crafty and decorate your doors for our annual winter door decorating contest! During the month of December decorate your classroom or office door for winter. Send in your photo submission to Mandi Plumb (mplumb@westcca.org) by December 20th. Winners will be announced at the January Professional Development Day.



Work Anniversaries

Gretchen Bonsall- 17 years

Danielle Jessen- 9 years

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication over the years!



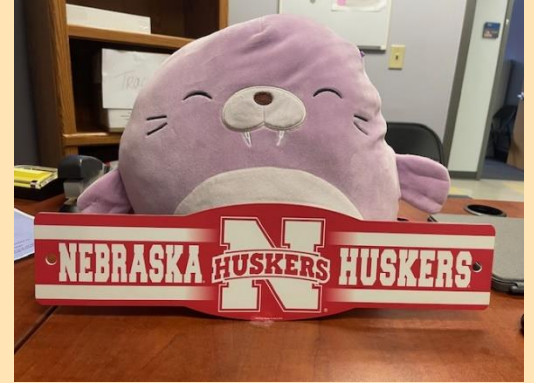
Starling Minds

Did you know that our program is a member of the National Head Start Association?! One of the “perks” that we received in this membership is access to **Starling Minds** for ALL Head Start Staff AND their families! Starling Minds Mental Fitness is a self-guided digital program that is available 24/7. It's immediate, private, and tailored for Head Start staff (and their families) through NHSA membership. In three simple steps a day, you can proactively build daily habits that will help you better manage stress, anxiety, burnout, or depression and take control of your life and wellbeing—on a phone, tablet, or computer.

They also regularly offer trainings and webinars that may be of interest to Head Start staff. To find out more about Starling minds, visit the website here: <https://nhsa.org/resource/starling-minds-mental-fitness/>. Ready to join?! Click sign up on the link and select West Central Community Action for agency. I hope you take advantage of this additional benefit!



Winnie the Wellness Walrus made a trip to Tracy Reed's (ESC for Harlan, Mapleton, Atlantic) office this month! Remember Winnie encourages and looks for staff who have stellar wellness practices. Where will Winnie go next?!



Your Wellness Committee

Head Start Happenings.....



Red Oak Head Start had a visit from their local librarian. Always a great way to get in-kind and bring fun, new books in for the kiddos!

Fire Safety & Prevention Month

October was Fire Safety & Prevention month, how did you celebrate?

Red Oak invited a variety of first responders to visit with the children throughout the month, they even got to see inside a squad car! They had a few fire fighters come in and talk about fire safety. The fire trucks were busy so they let us tour the ambulance and told us what they do.





~Hidden Newsletter Trivia~

If you have found this hidden trivia and know the answer, please email to Danni for a prize ☺

In what year did Head Start begin and under what president?

Mapleton Head Start celebrated by inviting a variety of first responders to their Family Night. Families got to go inside an ambulance and explore fire trucks!





Council Bluffs Head Start and Early Head Start had the Council Bluffs Fire Department speak with families at the Family Night! Great learning opportunity for all!



Kiwani's out of Atlantic has been a tremendous support of the Atlantic Head Start program. This month they even came and helped the children with a craft. Shout out to Lori Glissman for building and fostering this wonderful relationship!



All Things Fall...

Exploring pumpkin in Red Oak EHS



Red Oak EHS fall stamps!

All about pumpkins! Red Oak Head Start got to explore, touch, and smell the pumpkins!





Red Oak Head Start baked and taste-tested their own pumpkins! Delicious!



Lori, Amber, and Suzy recruited at Trick or Treat on the Trail!





Red Oak found some rakes in the shed and decided it was about time they made a leaf pile!



How did you celebrate Head Start Awareness Month?





Red Oak Head Start starts their mornings off with music and movement and we LOVE that our parents stay and do these activities with us every day! 😊



Atlantic Head Start had great turn out at their Fall Family Night! They got to learn about in-kind!





Red Oak Head Start completed the pet study this month! They found lots of way to involve their community in their study! They had a community member volunteer to have us keep there pet hamster for this week for our pet study. She's going to come in and help them do the hamster chores each day. 😊 They also had nuisance officer of Red Oak bring us a three-legged cat he rescued, and talked about what he does for his job. He also let the kids explore the area where he puts the pets when he picks them up.



Trick or Treat o





Red Oak Early Head Start made and TASTE their own butter! ☺



Home Base had great turn-out
Socialization in Red Oak.





Red Oak children brought their favorite storybook and dressed up like a character from it! We had the police, Southwest Iowa Squadron of Heroes, and families join us in a walking/running parade around our circle drive!





Science is
soo much
fun!



Mandy and Amber recruiting in
Page County.



Events/ Dates to Remember

November 6th- Early Dismissal

November 11th- Veteran's Day- All Classrooms/Offices Closed

November 13th - Early Dismissal

November 20th - Early Dismissal

November 27th - Early Dismissal

November 28th & 29th- Thanksgiving - All Classrooms/Offices Closed

Staff Birthdays...

November 1- Gretchen Bonsall, Denison 2 HS Teacher

November 3- Hannah Smith, Red Oak Assistant Teacher

November 8- Suzanne Lyons, Home Based Teacher (Atlantic)

November 21- Dianne Blum, Nurse (Harlan)

November 21- Janice Rosman, Nurse (Harlan)

November 27- Lori Glissman, Atlantic & Red Oak Family Advocate



**If you notice that I have missed you, or someone else's birthday, please let me know. That means it is not in our Child Plus system correctly. Thanks for your help!

Open Positions:

Red Oak Early Head Start Teacher

Council Bluffs Food Service

Mills County Assistant Teacher

Missouri Valley Assistant Teacher

Health and Nutrition Specialist

****IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE INTERESTED, ENCOURAGE THEM TO APPLY AT**

[HTTPS://WWW.WESTCENTRALCA.ORG/CAREERS](https://www.westcentralca.org/careers)