

Family Time

A publication for Lake County parents

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4-H Builds Leadership

Child Care Experts Seek Solutions To Needs Of Working Families

At a time when many working families in Lake County struggle to cobble together adequate child care and early education for their youngest children while they are at work, nearly 50 area experts and leaders gathered last month in Gurnee to begin charting a course toward building a stronger support system for them.

The Lake County Child Care and Early Education Summit was facilitated by the Illinois Facilities Fund's Building Blocks initiative, a \$3.5-million program funded by the Grand Victoria Foundation. The summit was co-hosted by the Lake County Community Foundation, the Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF), the United Way of Lake County and YWCA Lake County Child Care Resource and Referral.

"A recent IFF study points to pockets of Lake County as areas that may be lacking the basic infrastructure to meet the growing demand for programs including Pre-Kindergarten, Head Start and full-day child care," said Jacques Sandberg, director of community planning for IFF. "We organized this summit to bring together Lake County's community leaders in child care and early education to examine these findings and explore some innovative ways they can address potential gaps in the delivery of services to working families who reside in these underserved

areas. This is a big first step."

Specifically, the IFF study found that the Round Lake Beach area, Zion, Waukegan, Park City, Mundelein, and North Chicago are areas with high concentrations of children who qualify for government-supported early childhood services, but may likely face insufficient programming and facilities to meet their needs.

At the Lake County Child Care and Early Education Summit, Sandberg and Heather Heaviland, IFF Community Initiatives Manager, presented a focused review of IFF's research findings in early child care and education gaps, pointing to a striking reality for underserved working families in Lake County who may have to deal with an uneven patchwork of child care options while they are away at work.

Those in attendance examined where the greatest needs for child care and early education services are, whether existing services are located in the right areas to meet those needs, what underlying needs and resources are already available, and how to galvanize the system by finding and implementing possible ways to fill existing gaps in services.

In her keynote address, Sandy Taenzer, former Early Childhood Director for Schaumburg School District 54, shared strategies and lessons learned from

her work focused on overcoming the barriers preventing families from accessing child care and early education, and to bring together the many programs providing these services to families in need.

Participants then broke out into discussion groups to brainstorm what the on-the-ground needs in their communities are. Based on these reality-based needs, they will continue to collaborate to prioritize a set of recommendations for addressing community needs following the summit. Together, they will formulate a set of strategic recommendations for growing and strengthening child care and early education service capacity in each community area.

The results of the IFF Lake County needs assessment study and these recommendations will ultimately serve as the basis of a community-designed action plan to develop and build an ongoing focused effort that will result in more viable options for working families.

The Illinois Facilities Fund was founded in 1990, to offer a spectrum of financial and real estate resources to nonprofits serving low-income and special-needs communities throughout Illinois. Services offered include community planning, facilities planning, below-market lending, real estate development and management assistance. To learn more about IFF, consult iff.org or call 312-629-0060.

Expanded Reading Program Reaches Out To Waukegan Families

Voyage to Book Island conjures up a tropical paradise where books are plentiful and everyone is reading! In a collaborative effort, the United Way of Lake County's Success By 6™ initiative has teamed with Waukegan Public Library's Summer Reading Club on the Road to expand this innovative program called "Voyage to Book Island."

This voyage reaches far into the community, providing bookmobile service, story time and summer reading club activities for eight weeks this summer at selected locations within Waukegan. The program will begin mid-June. Contact the Waukegan Public Library or log on to www.wplkids.org for a list of bookmobile locations in Waukegan neighborhoods, dates, and times.

The goal of this program is to reach 750 preschool-age children in the Waukegan area, exposing those children to learning concepts necessary for success in school. This critical age targets the children who may have low or limit-

growing healthy families day

Planning ahead for healthy celebrations

Join us on Friday, June 23
for a fun-filled day your whole
family can enjoy!

- From 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Nutrition Projects for Kids
- Gardening for Kids
- Sports Clinics for Kids
- A storyteller sharing stories in both English and Spanish
- Info on Free and Low-cost Health Insurance for Illinois Kids
- Free Books for Kids
- Free Give-aways and Door Prizes



FUN!
Face
Painting
for Kids

