



The Children's Community Head Start & Early Head Start

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The Children's Community Early Head Start Celebrates Successful First Year

(Port Jefferson, NY...) Government officials, community leaders, families, staff and supporters of The Children's Community Early Head Start gathered to commemorate the successful first year of the program. The "First Birthday Party" took place on Friday, June 3 at the Head Start program in Port Jefferson, NY.

The program received funding through a competitive application process under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to begin an Early Head Start Program. The Children's Community Early Head Start, with centers in Ronkonkoma, Port Jefferson and Miller Place, NY, began providing services for families residing in 13 school districts in central Suffolk County in the spring of 2010. Families are eligible based on household incomes that are below the federal poverty line. Early Head Start focuses on programming that fosters healthy pregnancies, healthy growth and development in very young children, and positive family functioning.

The program was up and running under a very tight timetable according to Denise Ferrera, Director of the program. "Within four months we hired and trained a superb staff, developed policies and procedures based on federal standards, recruited 82 eligible families, and opened a new location in Miller Place. It was a tremendous team effort," adds Ferrera. The First Birthday Party for Early Head Start was a way to acknowledge the individuals and organizations in the community who are vital to the success of the program and its implementation.

In attendance at the celebration were: a representative for Congressman Tim Bishop; Brookhaven Town Supervisor Mark Lesko; Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Vilorio Fisher; Town of Brookhaven Councilmember Steve Fiori-Rosenfeld; and Suffolk County Director of Minority Affairs Mel Gaudalupe.

In addition, several organizations received awards to acknowledge their collaborative efforts and support of the Children's Community Early Head Start: The Lions Club; Bethpage Federal Credit Union; Suffolk County Community College; and HELP Suffolk.

For more information about the Children's Community Early Head Start or the First Birthday Party, contact Julie Wexler at (631) 585-2020.

(In the accompanying photo: Mel Gaudalupe, Suffolk County Director of Minority Affairs; Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Vilorio Fisher; Brookhaven Town Councilmember Steve Fiori-Rosenfeld; Denise Karotseris, Director of The Children's Community Head Start; Denise Ferrera, Director of The Children's Community Early Head Start; Brookhaven Town Councilman Mark Lesko; Elizabeth A. Geary, Director of The Community Programs Center of Long Island, Inc.; Stephen Freidman, CEO of UCP of Suffolk.)

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