Congratulations
Employees of the Month

January 2016
Ms. Charlsie Stine
WCSCO

February 2016
Ms. Dawn Bommarito
Heber Springs

March
Ms. Abby Gonzales
Conway
Head Start

Beebe Head Start

At the end of January, we celebrated a sports theme, culminating the week with male involvement: “Football with Dad”. We traveled to the football stadium and basketball arena. Males that are involved in the children’s lives came and played football with our kids during outdoor play.

In February we celebrated Black history month by learning about our diverse world. Some of our teachers brought other cultures alive in the classroom by bringing in African ritual clothing. We learned about MLK, Harriet Tubman, amongst other famous African American’s that helped shape our world.

Greenbrier Head Start

We have been up to amazing things for the 2015-2016 school year! Our most recent activities have been our PACT meeting with the kissing hand theme. One of our parents read the book “The Kissing Hand” by Audrey Penn to the children, followed by a friendly craft.

Our foster grandparent Mrs. Shirley is always an inspiration! She not only interacts with our children, she also provides encouragement and creativity for each
Conway Head Start

Has experienced several changes over the past few weeks. New staff, new students, and new community helpers! We are super excited to be working with the ShineXpress again this year! We welcome Coach Raymond who comes to our center on Fridays to engage the children with different exercise techniques. He has introduced the children to some very complex trails to follow. This requires them to use their listening ears and thinking skills to stay on task. The kids are enjoying the activities and having conversations about them throughout the day! We're grateful for the opportunity to partner with Sonshine Academy and the Shin-eXpress! They are giving our children an experience some may not have otherwise had.

Mills Migrant & Seasonal Head Start

We are glad to see so many of our families returning this season! Welcome back! Our year is starting off with full enrollment at the center. Our excited teachers are planning fun, active learning for the children. We also have interesting topics, selected by the parents, to explore at our monthly parent meetings. Soon we will be enjoying our new playground equipment being installed on the preschool playground! Safety is important and the fall zone will be new and fresh for safe running and jumping. Come join us and show your children how much you value their learning as well as for yourself. We are planning to have a great year at Mills Head Start and welcome you to experience all it has to offer!!!
Having good oral health is an important step to keeping healthy! Without good oral health habits, a person may develop cavities and tooth decay, which can lead to severe complications like chronic pain, broken or lost teeth, weight loss or nutrition problems from painful eating or chewing, or even a tooth abscess. The good news is tooth decay and cavities are preventable! See below for some tips!

- Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day and after eating or drinking!
- Visit your dentist regularly! This helps prevent and catch tooth decay and other problems early.
- Drink some tap water! Most public water supplies have fluoride added, which helps to strengthen and repair teeth!

Avoid frequent snacking and sipping! Frequent snacking and drinking keeps sugar on the teeth for a longer time. This gives bacteria more time to create acid and can increase cavities!

### The Importance of Reading Aloud

Giving young children a foundation for success. Reading aloud helps children acquire early language skills.

- Reading aloud is widely recognized as the single most important activity leading to language development. Among other things, reading aloud builds word-sound awareness in children, a potent predictor of reading success.
- "Children who fall seriously behind in the growth of critical early reading skills have fewer opportunities to practice reading. Evidence suggests that these lost practice opportunities make it extremely difficult for children who remain poor readers during the first three years of elementary school to ever acquire average levels of reading fluency." Torgeson, J. Avoiding the Devasting Downward Spiral, American Educator. (2004)

- Reading aloud to young children is not only one of the best activities to stimulate language and cognitive skills; it also builds motivation, curiosity, and memory. Bardige, B. Talk to Me, Baby!(2009), Paul H Brookes Pub Co.

Reading aloud stimulates language development even before a child can talk. Bardige, B. Talk to Me, Baby!(2009), Paul H Brookes Pub Co.
Ways to Promote Baby Development

Baby development begins well before an infant is even born. A child's neurological system starts to form in the first week of gestation and is basically in place by the time the mother reaches four weeks of pregnancy. By 17 weeks a fetus can hear. It’s never too early to start reading and singing to your baby and engaging in other baby activities to help stimulate development. To guide you in helping your little one develop language and motor skills and reach crucial milestones, here are some ways to promote baby development and nurture your bond with your newborn:

- **Connect with your baby.**

  Starting as soon as a baby is born you can help your baby develop motor skills and language. Holding the baby close to you, talking or singing to the baby will stimulate hearing. It’s also important to motivate baby’s sight. When the baby is awake make sure she can see your face. Research shows that babies prefer objects and designs that resemble the human face. When the baby reaches 2 to 3 months, smile a lot so she can reciprocate.

- **Excite the senses.**

  In the second and third months of baby development, infants begin to explore and learn more about their environment. At this age, allow your baby to experience different textures. Let her touch a variety of surfaces and expose her to a variety of sights and smells. Take her hand and rub it on things that are rough, soft, smooth, cold, warm and talk about what she’s feeling. This kind of detailed exposure will not only teach the baby about her environment but will also help develop her motor skills and language.

- **Give ample “tummy time”.**

  Spending time on her tummy is essential to a baby developing a strong body for movement, including head and trunk control. You can help your infant develop motor skills by initiating tummy time at the end of your child’s second month. Start by placing your Baby on your chest or lap or holding your baby in your arms. You can then move on to putting your baby on a blanket on the floor. Tummy time isn’t a baby activity that infants are generally fond of, so when your baby gets fussy, tummy time is over.

- **Talk to your baby.**

  In the first to two months imitate your baby’s beginning sounds, talk to your baby using “motherese”-soothing, upbeat talking with exaggerated facial expressions and listen for differentiated sounds and cries that indicate needs. When your baby is 4 and 5 months old you can work on her development of language and communication skills by listening for and imitating beginning babbling, like “ba-ba” - “ga-ga” and “da-da”. Use your child’s name or other cue words. Conversations don’t have to be complex to help babies develop language, describe what you see, hear and smell.
Community Programs

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program kicked off its 2016 year on January 4th. The program is open once in the winter and once in the summer to assist with utility bills. During the summer, only electric bill assistance is provided. During the winter, assistance for both electric and gas bills is available. Two programs are offered in Li-Heap Utility Assistance: Regular Assistance Program and a Crisis Program. The Regular Assistance Program is income based, in which a person can receive a benefit amount that will apply to their bill as a credit. The Crisis Program provides assistance for persons who have a disconnect or shut-off notice. Other programs that may assist with utility bills as funds are available and the LiHEAP program is not operating are; Conway Corporation funds, Power to Care (Entergy) and Good Neighbor Fuel Fund (Centerpoint). As donations are available we also operate a Fan Program.

For more information:
- In Faulkner County, please contact Kayla Taylor, Community Services Coordinator at (501) 329-3891 or at 707 Robins St. Suite 700 Conway, AR 72034.
- In Cleburne County, please contact Debbie Gilmer, Community Services Coordinator at (877) 699-6924 or at 305 W. Searcy St. Heber Springs, AR 72543.
- In White County, please contact Lisa Smith, Community Services Coordinator at (877) 699-6962 or at 1132 Benton St. Searcy, AR 72143.

Do You Need $? Enroll in our IDA Program!

Our Individual Development Account (IDA) program is a matched savings accounts that helps people with modest means learn to save money for a specific purpose such as: the purchase of a home, home repairs, starting a small business or continuing their education. Individuals commit to saving a minimum of $27.79 per month until they have saved $667. For every dollar saved, CAPCA will match it with $3.00 up to $2,000! Through specialized training materials, clients will have the opportunity to learn money management techniques, financial control, how to put their money to work for them and achieve financial freedom. To be eligible you must live in Faulkner, Cleburne or White County, your household must be at 185% of the Federal poverty line set by the US Department of Human Services and have a child in the home 18 years old or younger.
Resources

Free Tax Return for Qualifying Taxpayers

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who generally make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals.

In addition to VITA, the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program offers free tax help for all taxpayers, particularly those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

**Before going to a VITA or TCE site**, see Publication 3676-B for services provided and check out the [What to Bring](#) page to ensure you have all the required documents and information our volunteers will need to help you. *Note: available services can vary at each site due to the availability of volunteers certified with the tax law expertise required for your return.*

**Find a VITA or TCE Site Near You**

VITA and TCE sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls and other convenient locations across the country. To locate the nearest VITA or TCE site near you, use the VITA Locator Tool or call 800-906-9887.

When looking for a TCE site keep in mind that a majority of the TCE sites are operated by the AARP Foundation’s Tax Aide program. To locate the nearest AARP TCE Tax-Aide site between January and April use the AARP Site Locator Tool or call 888-227-7669.

At select tax sites, taxpayers also have an option to prepare their own basic federal and state tax return for free using Web-based tax preparation software with an IRS-certified volunteer to help guide you through the process. This option is only available at locations that list “**Self-Prep**” in the site listing.
Thank you parents, staff, policy council, governing board and community members for your partnerships and support of our Head Start Programs. We could not do it without you! Your volunteer hours, donations of supplies and space make the program possible! Every minute and every hour help! A special thank you to Quitman and Heber Springs Centers and staff for working closely in the community to receive donations of storm shelters which ensure the safety of our children! Way to go above and beyond!

Head Start has a 20% non-federal share (in-kind) match. What does this mean? For each Head Start grant we receive the federal government gives us 80% of the funds to run the program. We are required to obtain the additional 20% of funds through in-kind.

In-kind can be a donation of anything we would otherwise be allowed to purchase with federal dollars. Not meeting the nonfederal match could mean paying non federal dollars back to the federal government or in severe cases, loss of the Head Start grant. Thank you for helping us meet our match and continue running a high quality comprehensive early childhood program.
Heber Springs 2016
Thank you to the Quorum Court of Cleburne County, Judge Holmes, the Cleburne County Community Foundation, Cleburne County road crew, Johnson’s concrete, staff, parents and volunteers for your part in making the shelter a reality!

Quitman 2015
A special thank you to Tiffany Grice for being instrumental in making this project a success! With the work of the parent committee, the staff and the community our children now have a safe haven!
Thank you to Johnson’s Concrete, NLS (Dirt Work) Bobby Kennedy and Cleburne County Road Dept. Thank you to the many supports who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you to Sonic and Amy Lowe Dance Co. Thank you to many local business who supported and a special thank you to Mayor Cyndi Kerr for your support!
Greenbrier Head Start Centro empezó el año con una visita del Oficial Keith Robinson, la escuela Oficial de Recurso. El le enseñó a los estudiantes sobre el peligro extraño, repartió estampillas y dejó que los niños vieran su auto de policía. Los niños estaban contentos y hicieron preguntas muy interesantes tal como si los oficiales ponían “gente mala” en sus autos y los llevaba a la cárcel. Oficial Robinson respondió que “sí, el lo había...