

HEAD START HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER

WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY ACTION

APRIL 2022

A word for the Director

Happy April, let's hope this weather starts deciding it wants to get and stay warm soon ☺ It has been another busy month in the Head Start world. We are beginning planning for next year, renewing contracts, continually hiring staff, and preparing for the Focus Area 2 for when we receive our notice. Classrooms have been busy with various studies (a few you can see below) and Family Advocates are busy with recruiting for next year.

April will be another month full of child recruitment. All standalone centers will be hosting open house events this month (Denison- April 4th, all others- April 18th). The purpose of these events are to get our name out in the community and allow potential family/children, community members, and potential staff to see what Head Start is all about! Help us spread the word for a successful open house! Remember, recruitment is everyone's business.

Lastly, I wanted to share a quote that I heard recently. Dr. Bernadine Futrell said, "Thank you for the actions that you take every day to partner with children and families and move the Head Start program forward. Head Start work is "heart work." The Head Start idea is that all children, families, and communities — including those who have been adversely affected by persistent poverty, racism, and bias — should have the opportunity to thrive and reach their fullest potential of impact on this world." Head Start work is "heart work", that is so true! I see the heart of each and every staff we have. There are days things weigh on us and that is because of our heart for the work we do. Please know how truly valued your "heart" is.



Danni Segebart, Head Start Director

Education News...

I cannot believe we are in the last few months of the 21-22 school year?! Wow, the year really has gone by so fast! Over the next few weeks, Amy Bollinger will be wrapping up the last of the CLASS observations in the Head Start Classrooms, this data will be compiled and shared out in the next newsletter. Amy has seen and shared out some wonderful things during these observations! Great job to all of you!

As you know, April is a busy month with both Week of the Young Child and Child Abuse Prevention Month. We would love to hear and see how your classrooms/offices celebrate these two occasions! Please submit stories/pictures for the May newsletter to me and Danielle Segebart. For more information on Child Abuse Prevention Month visit:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/>

Week of the Young Child will be celebrated April 2nd-8th. Here is the link <https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc> to the NAEYC website with lots of ideas/lessons that you can incorporate into your week to celebrate the importance of education in the young child's life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that the opportunities provided to all young children are the responsibilities of all Early Childhood Educators. It is also a time to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early environment—at home, at child care, at school, and in the community—that will promote their early learning. Please see WOYC's "themes" of the week for 2022:

Monday: Music Monday

Tuesday: Let's Talk Tuesday

Wednesday: Work Together Wednesday

Thursday: Thriving Thursday

Friday: Family Fun Day Friday

<https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc/plan-your-event> Be sure to share your creativity and celebrations!

Jennifer Duff, Education Manager

Family Service Spotlight

As many of you may know, April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. We work directly with families that have high risk factors of child abuse and it weighs on us professionally. We have all experienced some heart ache for a child and family that we have had to call DHS or known the stress a family has went through when they are in the mist of having DHS involved in their life. Ultimately what we all want is for the families we serve to be happy, healthy, and safe.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to strengthen families to prevent child abuse and neglect. Let's think about that sentence in the terms of Head Start. "Families and Communities working together", Sounds a little bit like Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) to me. This is a holistic approach to the services we provide. When we take the time to look at the whole picture it is so much clearer to see what is going on in any given circumstance. As a society we struggle to speak up and praise others for good things, but quick to complain and notice the things that may not be so great. But, when we take the intentional time to look at the brighter side it can change our attitudes and approaches to things so much better. It can even help with stress management.

I encourage all of you to work towards a strength based approach when interacting with the families we serve. It's so easy to get frustrated when a child is consistently late to school each day and misses those key activities in our classroom. But if we put on that strengths based perspective we can identify the strength that they may be late every day but their actual attendance rate might be really good. We can look at the protective capacity we are offering to that child when they are in class. To bring it back to a holistic approach, we can dig past our own frustrations and identify some of the barriers that family by be experiencing in getting to school on time. If we know the source **we may become part of the solution**. Often the families of the children we care for every day are living in a survival mode due to trauma factors. There thought process may be stuck in how to get through this day. The good news is that the parents

do have protective capacities. They love their children. They do the best they can to every day with what they have. Everyone has potential, strength and capabilities!

Shari Boucher
Family Services Coordinator



Nutrition News

Using Nutrition Activities to provide a variety of Learning Experiences

When you do nutrition activities with children they are learning so many wonderful things. For example: emotional, developmental, language skills, science, mathematics, art and social sciences.

Emotional and Social Development

They are improving their self-image and self-confidence by creating something. They are learning to work together with other children. Learning the necessary for cooking helps one develop a sense of independence. Working together in preparing and serving food develops social skills and sharing foods is a means of communication.

Language Skills

Children learn to identify and name foods. They differentiate shapes, sizes and forms of food. Children are encouraged to learn terms such as to dissolve powder in water, squeeze an orange; Melt butter; Pop - corn; Boil eggs; Knead dough, Peel and apple.

Science

Children can learn where foods come from; plant, animal or synthetic. They can discover temperature and food – frozen and not frozen; and physical properties of food.

Mathematics

They can learn measurements and timing, the dividing of portions and the setting of the table all involve mathematics.

Art

Children learn colors and shapes through working with food. Apples are red, yellow or green. Pumpkins are orange. Creative expression is inspired by different kinds of foods.

Social Science

They can discover much about their own families ethnic backgrounds through food. They learn that some ways people are alike and in other ways different. They discover the meaning of food in different cultures.

Remember that when you do a nutrition activity you are to send in the Nutrition activity form to the office (to the Nutrition Coordinator) regardless if you need items or not. If you need to purchase items please send a purchase request to me. Please send pictures- klinge@westcca.org or 712-579-6962!

Here is handout that I thought you might like "10 Great Mood Boosting Foods":

Dr. Susan Albers
Eat, Drink & Be Mindful™

10 Great Mood Boosting Foods



Some foods buffer your body against the effects of stress while others contribute to it. Here is a list of 10 foods that may help prevent emotional eating and soothe your mood.

	<p>1. Dark Chocolate: Contains flavonoids and helps release mood boosting chemicals such as dopamine.</p>	<p>2. Oatmeal: The fiber will keep you feeling full for a long period of time and helps regulate your blood sugar. Complex carbs are involved in the release of serotonin which produces a sense of calmness.</p>	
	<p>3. Oranges Oranges are high in vitamin C which boosts the immune system and reduces cortisol levels.</p>	<p>4. Spinach Spinach is high in magnesium—this plays a key role in regulating and lowering blood pressure naturally (blood pressure is often raised by stress!)</p>	
	<p>5. Skim Milk Skim Milk helps to reduce stress-related PMS symptoms and also produces a calming sensation.</p>	<p>6. Salmon Food Salmon contains Omega-3 helps reduce inflammation and pain.</p>	
	<p>7. Black Tea Black Tea naturally reduces cortisol levels, the stress hormone that makes you crave sugary, fatty foods.</p>	<p>8. Avocados Avocados contain healthy fats which keeps you more satisfied and helps regulate nerve communication, which makes you think clearer.</p>	
	<p>9. Almonds Almonds have Vitamin E to boost the immune system and well as B Vitamins. Both nutrients can make you more resilient to stress.</p>	<p>10. Pistachios Pistachios are the lowest fat and calorie nut. They help to keep your blood sugar regulated and your mood stable.</p>	

Today's Motto: "Eat foods that enhance your mood."

Kristine Lingle, Nutrition/ Staff Recruiter Coordinator

News from the Wellness Committee

From the Wellness Committee: Members, Paula Nagel, Family Advocate, Mapleton and Missouri Valley, Patty Nibbe, Family Advocate Madison Avenue, Council Bluffs, Vanessa Hagar, Madison Food Service, Connie Jensen, Associate Teacher, Madison Avenue, Bridgette Laver, Data Specialist, Leadership staff: Jenny Armstrong, Jenny Martinez, Jill Mastin, Shari Boucher, Jennifer Duff, Kristi Lingle, Janice Rosman, Dianne Blum, Stacy Jepsen, Suzette Bates-Leal, Kris Evezic, Amy Bollinger and Ann Stark.

Staff participated in a Wellness Survey Monkey the 2nd week of February. The committee appreciates all the feedback!

-Upon review we learned you had challenges at work with children's behaviors and it was stressful to accomplish all the things you are required to do in a day. You told us you would like to get together in person, have opportunities for team-building, feel appreciated and that work issues and your health caused you to feel conflict.

-We also learned that the majority of you rate your relationship with your co-workers highly!

Some questions made us want more specific answers. Look for follow-up questions to these in the yearly employee survey that will be coming.

Some additional action steps the committee is looking at include a return to in person activities versus remote and a calendar of activities or challenges for next year to promote team building and brainstorming about recognition and appreciation for staff.

We hope the Professional Development Day on 3/21/22 helped with strategies for behaviors and reducing stress.

Health Update

The Federal Government has launched a new, one-stop shop for all things COVID-19! The new website shows where to find a test, to treat location for COVID-19 that can test and provide medication for certain groups that test positive to reduce severity of disease, to order additional COVID-19 tests and high quality masks and provides additional information. The website can be found at this link: <https://www.covid.gov/> Everything in one location!

In-Kind Meter

We have restarted our In-Kind meter as of January 31st. We will restart our in-kind meter next month! Remember the amounts needed are:

Head Start

In-kind Needed: \$532,330

Early Head Start

In-Kind Needed: \$385,875

Staff Shout-Outs

Shout out to [Kyanna Hansen](#) in Red Oak on her CLASS scores! Kyanna unfortunately hasn't had a consistent teacher/assistant in there with her this year and despite that she was able to improve her CLASS scores in EVERY dimension! Kyanna, thank you for working so hard this year and providing amazing care to your kiddos! We are so proud of you!

Shout out to [Sapphire Dimas](#) in Harlan HS! When I was doing CLASS Sapphire did an amazing job following children's lead during breakfast and turning it into learning for them! A conversation about the zoo and animals we see at the zoo turned into Sapphire teaching how dinosaurs are extinct but we can see their bones in a museum!

Shout out to [Paula Nagel](#) for doing an amazing job with recruitment! Paula has done a wonderful job thinking outside of the box for recruitment ideas. She has also done amazing making connections within the communities she serves to help recruit children. While doing all this, she has still been able to support her current families. Great job Paula!

New Employee Spotlight

We welcomed a new Assistant Teacher Floater for the Denison area this month, McKenzie Anschutz. McKenzie says, "I am a full time mom to my son Hudson and a wife to my husband, Terry. I've stayed home with Hudson up until now and he will be one in May! In my free time I love to be with my friends and family. I have previously worked at two daycares and I love to be around children. I am excited to start this job and grow connections with all the children and staff." Welcome to the Head Start team McKenzie, we are so happy to have you!

Special Staff Recognition

I want to take a moment to recognize a very special Head Start staff member, Stacy Jepsen. Stacy has been with West Central Community Action since August of 2000 and in April she will be moving on to pursue another dream and being the Director of the Schleswig Child Care Center. Through Stacy's years in the program she has held multiple positions and made huge contributions to the program and agency. Stacy, you will be truly missed, you have touched the lives of many children, families, and staff members! We will miss you, best of luck in your new endeavors!



Head Start Happenings.....



Suess Spirit week winners: Atlantic Head Start!



Missouri Valley celebrating Dr Suess with green eggs and ham!

Missouri Valley enjoyed Raspberry- Apricot smoothies. A creative way to introduce a new food!





Missouri Valley is currently studying water. The children have demonstrated their learning with water colors!



Denison EHS feeling green!



Council Bluffs 3 having some fun!

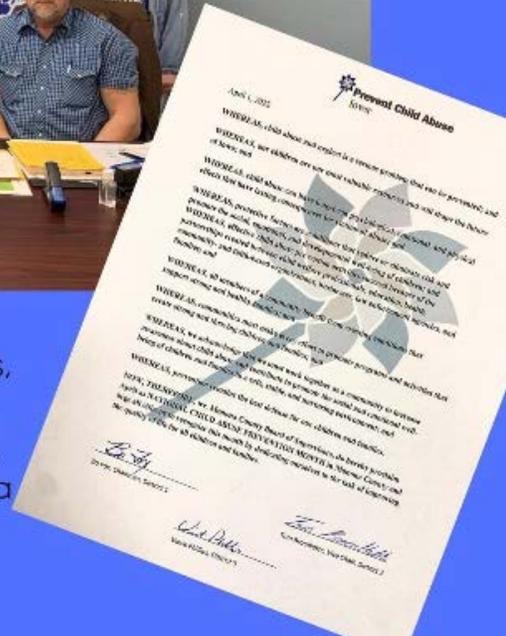


More fun with CB 3!





Front Row-Board of Supervisors: Vincent Phillips,
Tom Brouillette, Bo Fox
Second Row-Kaylee Kirkpatrick, Paula Nagel,
Lindsea Cole, Adam Hadden, Debie Lahr, Sara
Keenan



Paula Nagel was a part of the Prevent Child Abuse declaration signed in her area! Way to go Paula!

Staff Birthdays...

April 4th- Jenny Armstrong



**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!

Upcoming Events/ Dates to Remember

April 4th- 12:30 Dismissal

April 4th- Denison Head Start & Early Head Start Open House

April 11th- 12:30 Dismissal

April 15th- Holiday

April 18th- Open House (all other locations)

April 25th- 12:30 Dismissal

If you have any pictures, thoughts, or things to share in the newsletter, please submit to Danni Segebart by April 27th! Remember, you all make this newsletter great! 😊

Open Positions:

Early Head Start Teacher(s)- Madison Avenue Early Head Start

Teacher Head Start- Glenwood

Assistant Teacher Head Start- Glenwood

Denison Education Support Coordinator

Denison Family Advocate

Council Bluffs Floating Food Service

Red Oak Assistant Teacher

Missouri Valley Assistant Teacher Floater

Council Bluffs Family Advocate

Harlan Head Start Assistant Teacher

Harlan Early Head Start Teacher

****IF YOU KNOW OF ANYONE INTERESTED, ENCOURAGE THEM TO APPLY AT
[HTTPS://WWW.WESTCENTRALCA.ORG/CAREERS](https://www.westcentralca.org/careers)**