

Dear friends,

As the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education reaches its two year anniversary, we celebrate our continued progress in making great strides towards elevating the quality of early care and education for all children. We enter into this new year with excitement, optimism and anticipation, particularly surrounding our new President's evident understanding of the importance of providing quality care and education to our youngest citizens. As mentioned in a December New York Times article, President Obama has not only pledged \$10 billion for early childhood education which amounts to the largest new federal initiative for young children since Head Start began in 1965, but he has, on several occasions, described it as being among his highest priorities. We are thrilled to see that both our mission and vision align with that of the nation's leader. The following are some Center highlights of the last few months:

### **First-ever Family Childcare Conference brings together childcare providers in the community**

The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education hosted the first-ever Family Childcare Conference for family childcare providers of Miami-Dade. The conference was a great success with 115 family childcare providers in attendance. The primary focus of the day was on the importance of curriculum selection and implementation for family child care programs. Diane Triester Dodge, renowned early childhood author and expert, delivered the keynote speech. Elevating the standards of all kinds of early education and childcare providers is essential to the Center's vision that ALL children will have the best possible start in school and in life.

### **Buffett relationship continues to flourish**

The Center's relationship with the Bounce Learning Network continues to flourish and provide opportunities to work together to reach our shared goal of raising quality standards in early childhood education. In the spring of 2008, the Center joined the distinguished Bounce Learning Network, a consortium of programs funded by the Buffet Early Childhood and Ounce of Prevention Funds, which are referred to as Educare Centers. As an official Educare facility, the Center joins a network of early care centers committed to continuously improving the quality of early care and education throughout the United States.

Over the last few months, Center staff attended national meetings focusing on leadership, the implementation of systems to ensure children's needs are being met, and engaging volunteers and business leaders in early childhood education advocacy. Together, we are pursuing a national early childhood education and care policy agenda with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund affiliate, the Birth to Five Policy Alliance, a network of early childhood policy advocates around the country sharing expertise and experience in early childhood state policy. This past January, key Center and United

Way staff gathered together with members of the Bounce Learning Network in Chicago to participate in this year's Birth to Five Peer Advocate Roundtable. The group's goal is to develop strategies at state and national levels that serve to shift the odds for our youngest, most vulnerable children so they can grow up eager to learn and ready for success in life.

### **Corporation for Public Broadcasting execs visit Center**

The Center continues to welcome visitors from an array of likeminded organizations. Most recently, representatives of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting visited the Center in an effort to witness, firsthand, the impact the Center is having on elevating the quality of early childhood education and to explore opportunities for future collaboration. The Center and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting share a mutual mission of helping children be better learners.

### **University of Miami Frost School of Music partners with Center on implementation of early childhood music program**

Demonstration school teachers received training on the implementation of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music's U-Move program in the Infant/Toddler classrooms. The program's second year at the Center began this February. At the Center, music is an integral part of the curriculum for every age group. Research shows that regularly exposing young children to music enhances their listening skills, helps them develop their vocabulary, teaches them to distinguish between sounds and pitches, develops creative memory, and, in the first three years of life, encourages optimal brain development. This partnership enables us to demonstrate this concept to Center visitors and adult learners.

### **Parent training expands**

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Research shows regular interaction and open communication between families and staff is crucial to quality childcare. For these reasons, we are pleased that we continue to see growth in our parent training component. In recent months, attendance has increased by nearly 100% including not only Demonstration School parents but members of the community at large. Trainings offered range from family budgeting to the art of storytelling.

### **Barnes and Noble helps to improve performance in literacy**

Having selected the Center as the recipient of donations for their annual holiday book drive, Barnes & Noble donated 1,000 books to the Center which will be distributed to other early care centers needing to improve performance in literacy. Emergent literacy skills are they key foundation for later reading, writing and content learning.

### **Prada embraces the season of giving by supporting the Center**

Prada at Bal Harbour Shops opened its doors for an evening of fun and philanthropy. The boutique sponsored a special cocktail and shopping event to support early education programs in South Florida. Hosted by United Way board members Laurie Jennings, anchor, WPLG/Channel 10, and Norma Quintero, publisher, Social Affairs Magazine, the event included a select group of community leaders, United Way supporters and Prada customers.

A percentage of the evening's sales benefited the Center. We are grateful to organizations like Prada that have embraced and become advocates for early childhood education as their participation enables us to access important audiences that we may not otherwise reach.

As always, we appreciate your continued advice and counsel as we work together on this important mission. Remember, the Center is always open to receive visitors - if you have yet to visit the Center or know someone who should, please contact us at (305) 646-7100.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harve Mogul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Harve A. Mogul  
President & CEO