

Dear friends,

I wanted to take a few minutes to update you on all the exciting developments at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education. We're off to a great start in 2008. Let me share with you some highlights:

Adult's and children's libraries open

January 29 marked the opening of the Resource Library and Training Center, designed for adults, and Storyville, the children's library. The children's library, a lending library for parents and students of the Demonstration School, is stocked full of story books and other educational materials geared towards children, ages six weeks to five years.

Opened to the community at-large, the Resource Library and Training Center offers parents, educators, child care providers and students an opportunity to access relevant resources including videos, reading and workshop materials and resources that range from innovative learning toys to books to developmentally appropriate pre-school curriculums.

Storyville was underwritten by United Way Women's Leadership and the Resource Library and Training Center by Donald Soffer.

More than 6,000 attend trainings in first year

While the library component of the Resource Library and Training Center just opened, the training side of the house has been in operation since last summer. To date, more than 6,000 adult learners – parents, caregivers, administrators, educators and others – have attend trainings at the Center. The Center partners with colleges and universities throughout the country – including Miami Dade College, Florida International University, University of Miami, University of Florida, Florida State University and Harvard University – as well as other organizations, particularly The Children's Trust, to offer a wide range of mentoring and training activities.

Buffett Early Childhood Fund holds national meeting at Center

Forty United Way professionals and volunteers from seven states gathered at the Center to participate in a two-day conference. Funded by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the meeting focused on ways to engage business leaders in advocating for early childhood legislation and raising public awareness about the importance of quality early care and education.

United Way public policy agenda focused on early childhood issues

In January, 2008 the board voted to support two specific early childhood policy issues:

- Continued funding for the Florida T.E.A.C.H. program to increase the capacity of the early childhood workforce by improving early childhood teacher qualifications and teacher compensation and reducing turnover rates. T.E.A.C.H. is a public-private partnership and the only state-supported early childhood quality improvement initiative.
- Quality improvements to the Voluntary Universal Prekindergarten (VUPK) program.

The board also voted to continue monitoring additional public policy issues affecting young children, including adequate subsidized child care slots; enhanced quality and increased accreditation of early care and education programs and facilities; and increased KidCare enrollment.

United Way Women Leaders speak out in Tallahassee

A group of prominent Miami women traveled to the state's capital to meet with several of Florida's key elected leaders including Governor Charlie Christ, Senate President Ken Pruitt, Speaker of the House Marco Rubio, Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink and many others. On the agenda: urging legislators to continue funding the Florida T.E.A.C.H. program as well as continued quality improvements to VUPK. Each visit also included an invitation to come to Miami and learn more about the work of the Center.

U. S. Treasurer visits Center

Anna Escobedo Cabral, the 42nd Treasurer of the United States, was the keynote speaker at an Alexis de Tocqueville luncheon held at the Center. Prior to addressing the audience, she toured the Center. She began her remarks by applauding United Way's commitment to changing the way early education is delivered in this country and the best practices being demonstrated at the Center. She urged that the work in Miami be replicated in other communities across the country. The Federal Reserve Bank is a strong advocate for investments in high quality early education programs as research has demonstrated that those who participate in such programs have greater skills than they otherwise would, and are able to contribute productively to their local economies.

Center sponsors School of Education forum at UM

Noted education economist Henry Levin, the William Heard Kilpatrick Professor of Economics and Education at Columbia University's Teacher College, was the keynote speaker at a recent UM School of Education forum titled, "The Financial and Social Returns on Educational Investments." The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education was one of the sponsors of the event.

Levin noted that people who achieve educational success are more likely to be less of a burden on the nation's health care, public assistance and criminal justice systems.

Bounce holds orientation at Center

The Bounce for Learning Network, a joint effort of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, held a two-day orientation session for Center staff, volunteers and partners which included a presentation on the Bounce for Learning Network National Research Project, presented by the University of North Carolina, and an initial introduction and training on its Educare program. The United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education is the Bounce for Learning Network's sixth Educare center in the country.

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, written in a professional style.

Harve A. Mogul
President & CEO