

Dear friends,

Exciting developments continue to unfold at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education as we continue our march towards elevating the quality of early care and education for all children. We're making progress on so many fronts: new partnerships that focus on how young children think and learn as well as trainings for early education professionals on these innovative curriculums; professional development for child care providers that lead to higher quality child care centers; engagements with national foundations and business leaders on the critical role of policy in improving the quality of early education and how to inform and influence policymakers; and ongoing visits from early education advocates, anxious to learn more about our work here in Miami. Following are just some of the highlights of the last few months in support of our mission:

### **Harvard professor brings visible thinking program to Center**

Dr. David Perkins, senior professor of education at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and director of Project Zero, gave a keynote speech at the Center on Thirteen Ways of Making Thinking Visible, a research-based approach to learning that helps children communicate their thought process through pictures and creates cultures of thinking in classrooms. Over the years, Dr. Perkins has developed several strategies to enhance learning, thinking, and creativity, as well as humanistic and scientific disciplines, which have been applied in schools throughout the world. Now, Dr. Perkins and the Center are collaborating with Florida International University and five local Miami early care and education centers to continue discussions about the development of visible thinking routines for the early years as part of Project Zero.

### **Cisneros Foundation partners with Center on arts education program**

The Cisneros Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with United Way to bring its international flagship visual arts education program, Piensa en Arte/Think Art, to the Center. This innovative program provides teachers with a methodology to guide students in the exploration of artworks. Like the visible thinking program, this, too, will be the first time that the Piensa en Arte program has been implemented at the early education level.

### **Buffett relationship continues to grow and benefit Center**

The Center's relationship with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund continues to provide outstanding professional development opportunities for staff. Over the summer, various staff attended three different national meetings. The Buffett Business Engagement met as part of United Way of America's Community Leaders Conference where the focus was on successful strategies to engage business leaders in improving the quality of early childhood education. Other Center staff attended an infant/toddler training discussion group centered on improving quality practices as well as a working with children with challenging behaviors. Another group participated in a Buffett Early Childhood Fund sponsored Birth to Five Peer Advocate roundtable focused on learning, practicing and sharing early childhood advocacy efforts.

## **First Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute class graduates; second class begins**

69 participants completed the first Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute, a year-long management and business leadership training program, and, in doing so, satisfied the educational requirements for the Advance Level Child Care and Education Administrator Credential. The three college course program is a partnership between United Way, The Children's Trust, the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and Miami Dade College. In September, the Center launched its second Early Childhood Program Administrator's Institute, with 90 participants enrolled in the program.

## **Federal Reserve execs and Atlanta Early Childhood Education Steering Committee and Commission visit Center**

Dennis Lockhart, president, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and Dr. Beverly Tatum, president, Spelman College, visited the Center along with Tim Smith, community relations officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and United Way board member Juan del Busto, vice president and branch manager, Federal Reserve Bank, Miami Branch.

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. Mr. Lockhart and Dr. Tatum are co-chairs of the Atlanta Early Childhood Steering Committee and Commission, a group of high-powered, corporate led people who will determine the direction of how they are going about changing public awareness and knowledge surrounding early childhood education in Atlanta.

## **Demonstration School begins second full year of classes**

We started our second full year of classes at the Demonstration School on Wednesday, August 20, 2008. Although Tropical Storm Fay delayed our start by two days, we opened the Demonstration School on August 20, 2008. On that day, we welcomed 126 children and 43 teachers to the school. We're anticipating another exciting year, rich in learning experiences for our children and staff.

## **Congratulations to University of Miami . . .**

The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine has been selected by the National Institutes of Health as the study center in Florida for the wide-reaching National Children's Study, an unprecedented look at the health of children in the U.S. that examines both environmental and genetic factors. Research shows that good health is a critical factor in children learning. University of Miami is a key partner of the Center's and this study will have far-reaching benefits to all who strive to help children get off to the best possible start in life.

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,



Harve A. Mogul  
President & CEO