



Family Enrichment Network, Inc.

News & Views

January/February 2016 Edition

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From the Desk of the Executive Director... The Year in Review

As 2015 drew to a close, it was great to look back and see all the good we had accomplished; now we're looking ahead for new accomplishments in 2016.

In 2015, we completed a new 3-5 year Strategic Plan to guide us going forward. That Plan and our annual Community Assessment help us streamline our Program Development to actual needs.

The Christmas Holiday season is a time for reflection. Here is what I see:

- Every program and service we provide is consistent with our Mission and Vision.
- We will continue to provide quality services in everything we do.
- We will step up advocacy to increase revenue so we can increase salaries and benefits for our staff.
- We must improve communications internally with staff and externally with the communities we serve.
- We must be prepared to meet new federal and state regulations as they present themselves.
- We need to find a way to attract more staff to our agency.

One thing is certain: we have to be flexible and creative. We can no longer say, "That is the way we always did it and it has worked for us". Everything we do or don't do makes a difference. Every little change we make makes us stronger. We have to take risks, albeit calculated risks.

We are very fortunate to have a tremendously supportive and talented Governing Board; that coupled with a strong organization and staff structure has placed us in a great position for the future.

With the possibility of minimum wage for certain industries and services going to \$15.00 per hour, we must advocate to not be left behind. If our children are important, then we need to pay quality child development staff adequately - at least what we pay fast food workers.

There is a growing sense that there must be a better way to create a new and substantial investment in services to young children. We must develop a compensation initiative that includes wage increases and fringe benefits to include health insurance.

The most important job in the world, caring for our young children, should not be the lowest paid. In child care, "cheaper" is not better. "Cheaper" results in poor quality, high staff turnover, and decreasing numbers of child care workers.

The number of child care centers in the area that have closed this past year is a little disconcerting. There are still more centers that are on the brink of closing in the near future. The long-term solution continues to be a cooperative effort between government, not-for-profits, and the business community.

We could not thrive without the support of the staff, the Governing Board and the entire community. Our staff, this past year, has worked tirelessly to assist us in moving this Agency forward and meet the needs of children and families. We thank you for your past support of our Agency and look forward to future partnership opportunities.

Darrell R. Newvine,

Executive Director

Growing Tomorrow's Leaders Today Enriching the Commu-



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Parent Involvement in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

There are a variety of ways for all parents to get involved in the child's Head Start or Early Head Start experience. Parents can participate in classroom activities or field trips; they can attend parenting, education, or other committees at the Head Start sites; they can fully invest in the family partnership process through their participation in home visiting; and/or they can serve as a member of a Head Start committee such as Menu Planning, Health Advisory, or Policy Council. The focus of this article is on parent involvement in Policy Council.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required by the federal government to establish and maintain Policy Council Groups. Policy Council members are responsible for governing our Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Policy Council is involved in program planning and decision making. The Policy Council works in concert with the Agency's Governing Board to ensure program goals are achieved

In January 2016, our Agency's Head Start and Early Head Start Policy Council will begin their year. They will start by participating in the program's annual self-assessment; they will take part in the Community Assessment; they will participate in Human Resources activities including interviewing and making decisions about program hires; and they will plan for the coming program year.

At the November Parent Committee Meetings, new parent representatives were elected by their classroom's parents to serve on the 2016 Policy Council. These new members participated in their first meeting on December 8th. At that meeting, a slate of officers including Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary were elected by the membership and the new Executive Committee will conduct their first meeting in January 2016.

If you would like to learn more about Head Start and Program Governance, please contact Network offices at (607) 723-8313.



Success Story for Community Services

Our Housing Program, although fairly new, is expanding again. We recently purchased 51 Roberts St. It is a 3 bedroom home slated to house those with developmental disabilities that want to live independently in the community. The initial challenge was getting individuals and agencies on board with the concept of shared living. We scheduled a meeting with local agencies and provided a walkthrough of the home. This sparked immediate interest!

One week later, two gentlemen came for a walk through and fell in love with the home. The men want to live on their own, but would like a bit of support and company from someone other than family. As of December 1, 2015, we have two gentlemen living in the home and embracing the fact that they are living independently in the community. We are currently looking for one more individual to share in this life experience.

The men have begun to develop a friendship. They are now living a lifestyle they had been looking forward to and have worked so hard to attain!

The need in the area is immense and we are looking to move forward with additional housing opportunities in the future.



Children's Health Adapted from Mayo Clinic

Nutrition and fitness are the cornerstones of children's health.

To give your child a head start on lifelong fitness, consider children's sports and other kid-friendly physical activities. With your encouragement, chances are a few sports will spark your child's interest. And consider other classic tips from children's health experts, such as promoting activity, not exercise, and setting a good example yourself.

You can also promote children's health by encouraging your child to eat a variety of healthy foods and control portion sizes. Learn which nutrients are necessary, in what amounts and how the guidelines change as a child grows older.

Of course, other children's health issues matter, too, such as vaccines, child safety and school health. Share any concerns you might have about children's health with your child's doctor.



NEW PROVIDERS

Chenango Family Child Care:

Christopher Carnachan

Little Lakers Daycare (Christina Heath)

Brenda Henry

Thompson Tiny Tots (Jamie Thompson)

Chenango Group Family Child Care:

The Growing Years Daycare (Cynthia Bradley)

Broome Group Family Child Care:

Jessica Isaacs

Tioga Family Child Care:

Ashley Toth



Employee Spotlight

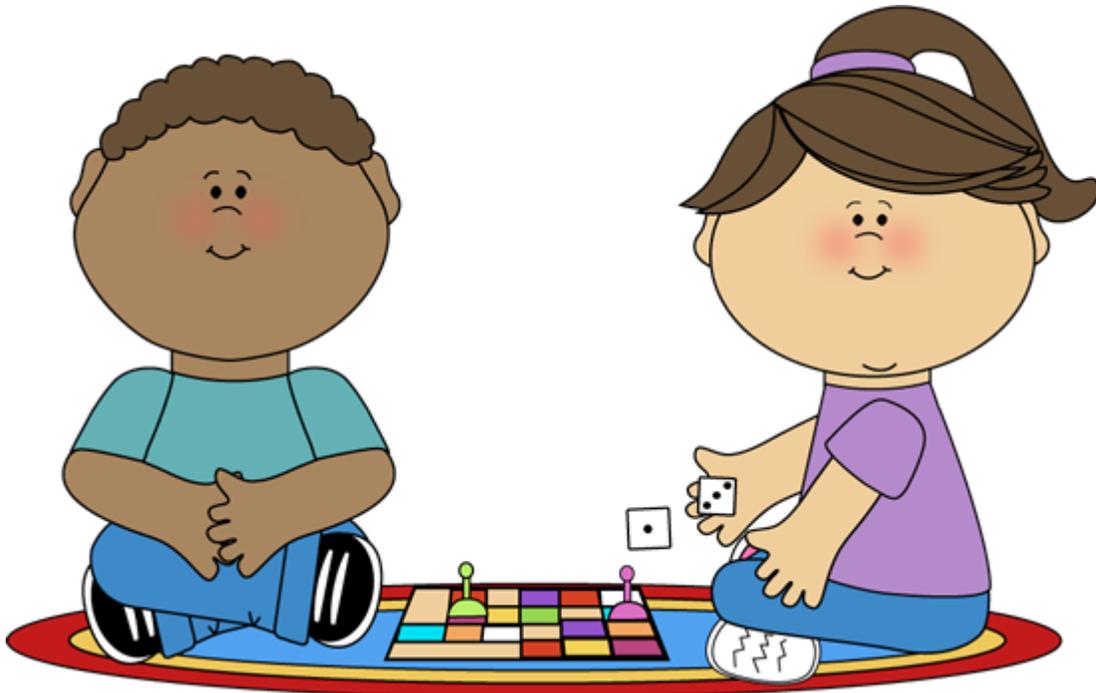
My name is Amber Olmstead. I am currently the lead teacher of the Courthouse Children's Center. I began working for Family Enrichment in September 2014.

There are many opportunities to grow and better yourself within the Agency, and that drew me in. I started out by taking the childcare giver training class with Jean Barnett and then was able to begin substituting in classrooms. Becoming a substitute inspired me to develop a passion for working with children. In November 2014, I became the Assistant Teacher for the Courthouse Children's Center and enrolled in the CDA course offered at FEN.



I am currently working on getting my observation set up to be state certified in childcare development. In September 2015, I became the lead teacher for the Courthouse Children's Center.

I can honestly say that I LOVE what I do and I am grateful for the opportunity to grow as an individual.



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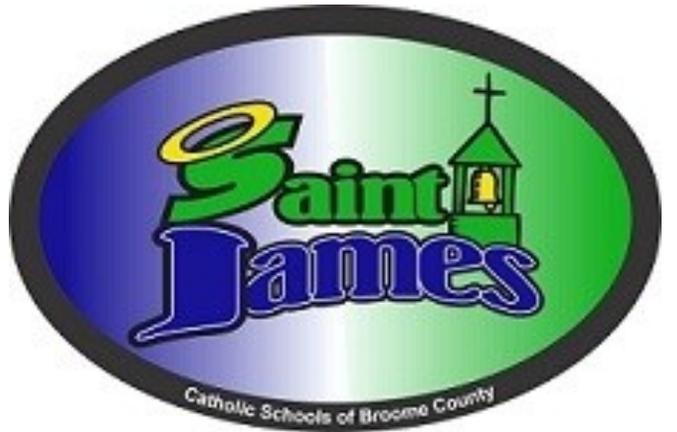


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Bags of Love

Pam Augustine, a former kinship aunt, started her own not-for-profit organization called “Bags of Love” in response to her experience as a kinship caregiver. Kinship caregivers are adults who take over the responsibility of raising someone else’s child. In some cases this may be a short term situation or in other cases it may be for years.

Pam sews soft colorful material bags that she fills with donated items for kinship children. The Bags of Love contain age appropriate personal care items, toys and clothing and are designed to welcome a child into their kinship family. Pam wants to make sure that kinship children have something new to call their very own.

At the beginning of December, Pam donated 18 new Bags of Love to the kinship program and we want to give her a BIG Thank You for her care and concern for kinship children.



A few of our recent Bags of Love

If you are raising someone else’s child and would like to learn more about resources and support the kinship program can provide, please contact us.

In Broome County, please call Diane at 607-723-8313 x 831.

In Tioga County please call Sarah at 607-765-0425



Holiday Turkey Donations for Kinship Families

Larry Holdredge, President of Vietnam Veterans Association 896, delivered 20 turkeys for Kinship families.

The VVA 896 has been a wonderful supporter of the Kinship Families Program for at least 5 years. One of their members is a Kinship caregiver, this prompted the group to help support other Kinship care families in our community by distributing turkeys purchased by Dave Watson in honor of his father who is also a Vietnam Veteran.

Over the years at Thanksgiving and Christmas, this group has delivers 20 frozen turkeys to be shared with Kinship families enrolled in our Kinship Program.

Kinship Families are those where an adult is raising someone else's child. This is often a grandparent, but could also be an uncle, aunt, sibling, great grandparent, family friend or even neighbor or teacher.

The Kinship Family Program would like to send out a BIG THANK YOU to VVA 896 and Dave Watson for helping make the holidays special for our Kinship families.

If you know anyone who needs assistance with Kinship or you have any questions about this program please call 607-723-8313 x 831.



DID YOU KNOW...

- Our Adopt a Family program gave 400+ children a very Merry Christmas; a **BIG Thank You** to all the wonderful sponsors who made this possible!
- We had another successful Coats for Kids drive; a **BIG Thank You** to local businesses for partnering with us to keep kids and families warm!
- We have fantastic staff in every department who strive to make a difference every day in every way; a **BIG Thank You** to each and every one of you!
- We have a terrific Governing Board and Policy Council who work hard to help us serve our community; a **BIG Thank You** to all the members for another year of service!

**That's how we're Growing Tomorrow's Leaders...
Today**



Calendar of Events

January Events

Child Care Resource and Referral

7	6:30-8:30pm	Provider Training: What's New and Planning Ahead	Owego
12	6:30-8:30pm	CACFP Training: Minding Our Peas and Cues	JC
19	6:30-8:30pm	Provider Training: SBS & Safe Sleep	JC
20	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Whistle While You Work	Norwich
21	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Whistle While You Work	Greene
25	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Whistle While You Work	Sherburne
27	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Small Talk: Marketing Your Business	JC
30	8:00-10:00am	Provider Training: Caring For Your Business	Norwich



February Events

3	6:00-9:00pm	Provider Training: CPR/First Aid	Norwich
9	6:30-8:30pm	Provider Training: Recordkeeping and Taxes	JC
9	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Boogers, Belchers, and Bottoms	Norwich
10	6:00-9:00pm	Provider Training: CPR/First Aid	JC
11	6:30-8:30pm	Provider Training: Keeping Children Safe	Owego
22	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Boogers, Belches, and Bottoms	Sherburne
23	6:30-7:30pm	Provider Training: Provider Talks: Boogers, Belches, and Bottoms	Greene
24	6:30-8:30pm	Provider Training: Small Talk: Healthy Snacks	JC
27	8:00-10:00am	Provider Training: Creative Kids in the Kitchen	Norwich





Family Enrichment Network
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