

Spring 2013

# ABC

## head start

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**facebook**

We are on Facebook! We invite you to join our group for updates and to connect to other members. Search: "ABC Head Start".



**"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand."**

**Chinese proverb**

Every child a successful learner. Every family a committed partner. Every community a strong supporter.

# Executive Director's Corner

Andrea Hesse

It's been a long snowy winter, but it appears that spring is finally here! This is such an exciting time of year as we see how much all of the children have grown and learned over the year so far. With Spring Break behind us, children will begin looking forward to being outside playing again and new activities such as watching caterpillars turn into butterflies. Spring truly is a time full of new experiences and opportunities for our children.



This is also the time of year when we begin looking forward to next year and planning with you about your child's school placement for September 2013. Our staff will be working with you to ensure that the best possible school placements and transition supports are in place for your children.

It is also the time of year when we begin accepting applications for next year. We began taking applications on March 4<sup>th</sup> and we encourage you to let other families you may know with children who could benefit from ABC Head Start programs to contact us. Sharing the success of your family with ABC Head Start is an important and appreciated

part of helping other families connect with ABC Head Start.

For many of our sites, parent groups are wrapping up as social workers prepare for our new intake season. It is our hope that you felt that your participation in the program was meaningful. We hope that you made some friends, learned something new and perhaps taught us new things as well. It is always our hope that parents have been able to connect with other parents as well as get to know the staff at the site a little better. We also want to thank all of you who participated through parent groups in providing feedback to assist us in our strategic planning process to set priorities and directions for ABC Head Start in the future. The summary of our feedback from parents and other stakeholders titled *Strategic Directions 2013-2020: Community Consultations*, as well as our new Strategic Plan titled *Strategic Directions to 2020 & Business Plan 2013-16* are available on our website at [www.abcheadstart.org/publications](http://www.abcheadstart.org/publications).

Since the warmer weather is here, we hope you and your family are able to get out, explore, learn, as well as, enjoy some much anticipated warmer weather.

Andrea Hesse  
Executive Director



# A Word From Our Board Chair...

Brendan Storey

My name is Brendan Storey and as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 I am the new ABC Head Start Board Chair. I have been involved with ABC for the past three years and feel privileged to help set the direction for the future of ABC.

As I look out my office window and see the beautiful sun shining, my thoughts turn to spring and the balance of the school year for the children and families of ABC Head Start. It has been a wonderful year for ABC with hundreds of families involved in the program.



I am sure it feels like only a short time ago that you were anxiously anticipating what this year and program would be all about. And in another short period of time your child will celebrate the end of the school year with Literacy Back Day! This is personally one of my favorite days of the year. I love visiting a classroom, reading a story to the children and helping give out a back pack to each child that is packed full of goodies. If at all possible, I encourage you to partake in this great tradition. This year it takes place on June 21st.

As you look forward to the beginning of your child's schooling career it is a big

decision to select which school for them to attend. The ABC Head Start staff will help you learn about and make the best decisions for you and your child.

This time of year is also when ABC Head Start begins accepting new families into the program. As parents who have experienced the program first hand, I encourage you to talk to any of your friends or family that have children and you feel could benefit. Please pass along our website address and phone number.

The 2012/2013 school year has seen 386 children enrolled over the year in the ABC Head Start Program at 13 locations. This would not be possible without the support of our funders, volunteers, teachers, staff and all other supporters of ABC. On behalf of the board, thank you to each one of these stakeholders for ensuring ABC's continued success.

Most of all spring is a time to celebrate all that you, your child and the ABC Head Start staff have achieved this year. On behalf of the board, I wish you a wonderful spring!

Brendan Storey  
Board Chair



# Community Partnerships

Ann Babb

## Volunteers Cast a Beautiful Shadow

To Canada's 13.3 million volunteers...THANK YOU!  
To Alberta's 2.5 million volunteers...THANK YOU!  
To Edmonton's 45,000 volunteers...THANK YOU!  
To our volunteers at ABC Head Start...the biggest  
**THANK YOU** of all!

April 21-27 is National Volunteer Week in Canada, marking the 71<sup>st</sup> year that this week has been celebrated. During this week the country pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who donate their time and talents for the common good and the enrichment of our communities.

Volunteering is who we are as Canadians. The Right Honorable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, calls Canada a "smart and caring nation". It's our dedication to community involvement that has given us that reputation at home and around the globe.

- Quote from Volunteer.ca

Volunteers have always been an integral part of ABC Head Start and have contributed in a myriad of ways. At the time of its inception in 1985 our agency only employed the equivalent of 2 full time staff but had 10 volunteers who helped in the classroom as well as making weekly home visits. We would not have been able to operate as we did without the support and dedication of these 10 volunteers, who believed in what we were trying to do and were willing to put in the time to make it happen.

From these beginnings the essential value of volunteer involvement has never been questioned and, in fact, is entrenched in the third pillar of our vision statement, "every community a strong supporter".

Program volunteers contribute in very many rich and valuable ways; classroom assistants, office support, board and committee members, maintenance, fundraising, advocacy and much more. Some volunteers come to us for only a few months, others for years and even decades but they all bring unique talents and leave a legacy in the story that is ABC Head Start.

Thank you to all our amazing and dedicated volunteers on National Volunteer Week and every week.



**If you know any of the following volunteers please pass on a thank you for the wonderful work they do to help build positive futures for children and families in our community.**

We apologize if we have left anyone off this list, please know that your contributions are most appreciated.

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Joyce Powell      | Michala Jeffries |
| Leona Riddle      | Rachelle Renaud  |
| Michelle Koey     | Martine Dupuis   |
| Stephanie Padayas | Jane Wilson      |
| Germaine Chau     | Maryann Case     |
| Daniel Reed       | Sharon Ferguson  |
| Heather Smith     | Ann McCluskey    |
| Allison Kariel    | Alice Heaton     |
| Sun Joo Hur       | Gerry Landro     |
| Manasi Rajagopal  | Shelley Jones    |
| Sandra Barnes     | Samantha Vertone |
| Avery Lein        | Vicki Wheeler    |
| Arafo Nour        | Pamela Fong      |
| Lindsey Lenihan   | Lara Newman      |
| Bev Sheilds       | Alexis Wontoniuk |
| Colleen Ouellette | Esther deBoer    |
| Henry Resta       | Jessica Ussher   |
| Rick Gorman       | Shawna McKay     |
| Terry McLaughlin  | Hui Yan          |
| Michala Roman     | Jessica Karpa    |

# Community Partnerships

Ann Babb

Allana Maltais  
Sarah Percival  
Sandra Nordstrom  
Shannon Miller  
Brianna McLaughlin  
Darolyn Hunter-Fry  
Amanda Kobly  
Sydney Shewchuk  
Jordan Milligan  
Shannon Paton  
Matthew Cheung  
Alexandra Nadeau  
Amy Kwan  
Lupita Bello  
Bethany Miller  
Sonia Jose  
Carole Nyquist  
Rick Babb  
Cyril Balitbit  
Melissa Mosorocean  
Mike Abray  
Selene Tash  
Shirley Guest  
Megan Stoppler  
Brendan Storey  
Jason Tessier  
Wallie Wilson  
Liza Wold  
Will Griffins

Consuelo Rivera  
Bonnie Aelick  
Brenda McClelland  
Scott Cuthbert  
Heather Gillis  
Doug Silverberg  
Michelle Craig  
Alisa Desilets  
Gerry Desilets  
Anne Hanson  
Robyn Couture  
Barb Ewan  
Brenda Erickson  
Darryl Plunkie  
Jaye Lee  
Lynne Timinski  
Harry Timinski  
Michelle Spring  
Nola Smith  
Shelley Budinski  
Stewart Webster  
Rick Babb  
Bev McConnell  
Scarecrow Volunteers  
Staff members  
Arlene Cuthbert  
Bev Ingram  
Derry Ingram  
One World Preschool

## Hockey in Edmonton

Although this professional hockey season was a bit frustrating this season, starting off with a player's strike, it has become quite exciting lately with the Oil Kings in the playoffs and the Oilers starting to show their potential. In spite of these early season challenges, both teams continue to show their support of the community through the donation of tickets to children and youth who, due to family financial challenges, would never get to see an Oiler's or Oil King's game.



Through the generosity of both organizations, many times throughout this season ABC Head Start families have been offered the opportunity to enjoy an evening out watching great hockey. In addition, 15 guests, including parents and their children, were privileged to participate in an evening of fun at the March 20<sup>th</sup> Oiler's game, courtesy of Horcoff's Heroes. Horcoff's Heroes is an initiative of Shawn and Cindy Horcoff to ensure that children whose families have low incomes have the opportunity to enjoy a hockey game. The children and families are treated to a meal, a visit from Shawn himself and some fun activities before they make their way up to their seats to enjoy the game.

Thank you to the Edmonton Oilers Foundation, Seats for Kids program, the Oil Kings organization and to Shawn and Cindy Horcoff for their generosity in offering these amazing opportunities to our children and their families.



# The Kitchen Project

Ann Babb

The St. Alphonsus site Kitchen Project started its humble beginnings with the involvement of Teresa Ebbert, one of our site supervisors, attending meetings of the Schools as Hubs initiative started by Edmonton Catholic Schools. One of the outcomes of this initiative was the remodeling of the old St. Patrick's School building to create One World One Centre, a hub for community programs. Part of these renovations included a beautiful new teaching kitchen.



Melanie Kidder, Coordinator of Schools as Hubs, approached Teresa to offer time in that kitchen space for our families to access as part of our parent program. Teresa took the idea of a "community kitchen" to our then executive director, Kathy Lenihan, who approved the project. Next step saw Teresa approaching Paula Jaramillo, St. Alphonsus site Social Worker, to see if she would be interested in spearheading this project with her parent group. Paula immediately saw the advantages this project would bring to her parents and their families and the work of planning began.

Over several months Paula and Teresa planned the project, worked out all the details and at the end of October, 2012 the first group of parents showed up at the centre to participate in a morning of cooking and socializing. They were each able to take home a meal for their families for that evening.

The project assists parents in learning how to cook low cost, delicious and nutritious meals

for their families as well as having the opportunity to connect with other parents and hopefully, continue the concept of group cooking with each other after the school year ends.

To ensure the success of the project it was determined that transportation and child care for the parents was essential, in addition to the cost of the groceries. Initially, the project was supported through the parent group budget and money from a small emergency fund, however, we knew that we would have to ensure more sustainable funding to continue the project into the next school year and eventually, to expand the opportunity to more parents at other sites. Teresa, once again, threw her energy and considerable talents into writing a proposal to EPCOR for funding. That first application was denied but Teresa was determined to forge ahead and, with help and encouragement from the wonderful people at EPCOR's Community Essential and Sponsorship group, the next application was approved and EPCOR committed to supporting the Kitchen Project to the tune of \$6911.44.

The cheque was presented to ABC Head Start on Friday, March 22 at the One World One Centre kitchen while parents were preparing lasagna for their families.



# Community Partnerships

Christi Lein

## ABC Head Start Nominated For Edmonton Award

Did you know ABC Head Start has a blog? It is a place to catch up on the highlights of ABC Head Start and current events relating to the work that we do. It is published weekly by our Development Manager, Christi Lein, on the ABC Head Start website as well as the Edmonton Journal website. And even more exciting news, our blog has been nominated for a Yeggie! What is a Yeggie you ask? It is Edmonton's New Media Awards. Christi and the ABC Head Start blog have been nominated in the category, "Best in Non-Profit." The awards show takes place May 4 at the Shaw Conference Center. We wish Christi the best of luck on the nomination!



## Little Kitchen Project, Off to a BIG Start

What started as a small project at the St. Alphonsus site has become a big hit in the community. Social Worker, Paula Jaramillo and Manager of Program Operations, Teresa Ebbert started up a monthly cooking project with some of the families at the Edmonton Catholic Schools One World One Centre. It has been a huge success! Families look forward to the monthly event and the rewards

of learning to cook nutritious healthy foods for their family is just the beginning. The parents are creating lasting connections and most of all having fun! The project is creating quite the buzz, being featured in Metro, the ABC Head Start Blog and EPCOR's Community Newsletter. A big thank you to the EPCOR Community Essentials Council for funding the Kitchen project. It's through collaboration with community supporters like ECEC that we are able to promote strong communities and strong families. What's our hope for next year? To expand the program to more sites across the city!



# In the Classroom

Margareta Odor

## Writing Journals



they even collaborate on and expand each other's narratives! On parent group days, parents are encouraged to read the journals with their children and then write a new story together.



We have seen many benefits of journal writing in the areas of pre-literacy, fine motor and social and emotional development. We look forward to seeing where the story writing journey takes us by the end of the year!

The children at Lymburn site have been writing journals since last November. Every morning they are asked to 'tell us a story'. They start by drawing their ideas and teachers try to transcribe and record children's words as closely as possible. The journal writing process is open ended and children are encouraged to take ownership of their stories and their development. The journal writing is interactive as it happens in a social context of a small group. Children often talk to each other about their stories and share their observations and impressions. Sometimes,



## ABC Head Start Endowment Fund

Do you want to leave a lasting contribution, ensuring families will be able to connect to services they need?

Consider ABC Head Start. You may wish to support financially through our Endowment Fund. It is a simple way for you to leave a lasting legacy within our organization and in your community. You help secure a future for families through good planning.

If you would like to speak with us about arranging a contribution to ABC Head Start, we look forward to having a conversation with you. Ann Babb will be able to speak with you at your convenience.

Ann      [annb@abcheadstart.org](mailto:annb@abcheadstart.org)  
**780-461-5353**

### Registrations for 2013-2014

On **March 4, 2013** we started taking applications for the 2013/2014 school year. Please call the main office at (780) 461-5353 to apply. You can also submit an application (available at [www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org)) by mail, fax, or save it to your computer and e-mail it to us at [abchs@abcheadstart.org](mailto:abchs@abcheadstart.org)!

### Start Pre-school in September!

FREE early learning program for  
families with low income

- 4 half days per week
- FREE transportation and nutritious snacks
- Family Support
- Sites across the city including Francophone
- Children must be 3 1/2 by September 1

Our office will be closed from  
June 28, 2013– August 29, 2013



Call us!

**780 461-5353**

[www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org)