

Fall 2012

ABC Head Start: Opening doors for families

# ABC head start

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

**It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.**

**Leo Buscaglia**

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

# Executive Director's Corner

Andrea Hesse

Welcome to ABC Head Start! I'm sure for many of you and for your children beginning this new adventure at ABC Head Start has been both a time of excitement and a little nervousness. As the new Executive Director at ABC Head Start, I have shared these feelings with you as we began our new year, but I know that by working together we can have a great and successful year.



On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of ABC Head Start, we look forward to keeping you up-to-date on the newest happenings at our agency and in our programs. I also want to welcome all of you joining us for the first time and those of you who we have

had the pleasure of having in our programs before. At ABC Head Start we believe that healthy children start with healthy families and that we can only be successful as a program with parents as our partners in the work we do.

During this year, I hope that you will get to know the staff at your site as well as other parents and children. We are excited about getting to know you and your children as we move through this school year, as well as to building relationships with your family.

ABC Head Start is a registered charity. We offer classes 4 days a week to 386 children and 24 weekly parent groups in 13 locations. We have over 130 staff and 60 volunteers. Included in our sites is a Francophone Head Start program that offers services for those children and families who have French as their first language.

On behalf of myself and the staff of ABC Head Start, I would like to wish you and your child the best of everything as the 2012/2013 year unfolds. I know that it will be a year of excitement and learning for all of us!



# A Word From Our Board Chair...

Michelle Craig

Welcome to ABC Head Start! As another year begins it is an exciting time for the ABC Head Start children, families and staff. It takes a bit of time to get to know each other and to learn the new routine, but soon it will all be 'old hat'!

One of the things that makes ABC Head Start a great experience for children is the involvement of their parents. Not only are parents every child's first and most important teacher, but parent involvement at ABC Head Start helps us provide a program that best meets your needs. We invite and encourage all parents to participate in ABC Head Start. There are many ways you can be involved such as attending Parent Group, volunteering, and most importantly working with ABC staff to give your child the best possible school start.

Another way to be involved is to participate in the ABC Head Start Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November. As a parent you are a member of the ABC Head Start Society, which means we work for you! The AGM is your chance to learn how the agency is doing – and talk to staff, supervisors and Board members. Talk to your site social worker to find out more about the AGM.

This October will be the last Scarecrow Festival. You can help by volunteering or coming out to join the fun. We want to make this Scarecrow festival and fund raiser the most successful ever – and you can help us do that!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you all a wonderful school year!



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

## Parent Survey Highlights 2011-2012

Parents are a very important part of our ABC Head Start program. Last year, ABC Head Start worked with 410 families. At the end of the year, we invited parents to tell us what they thought about the ABC Head Start program through a survey. We asked parents to tell us how their child benefited from the program, how they themselves benefited from being involved, and what we could do to improve the work we do.

Over 160 parents and caregivers responded to our survey questions. Here are some highlights from what these parents and caregivers said about ABC Head Start last year.



98% of the families were satisfied with their ABC Head Start experience and would recommend the program to other families.

96% of families said: "being involved in ABC Head Start has benefited my child."

Over 98% of families said that their child shows greater interest in communicating with them and greater interest in school related activities.

96% of parents indicated "I have a better understanding of how to help my children develop and learn," and 89% of families indicated "I have learned about new resources for my family."

Some parents commented: "[ABC Head Start] is a great program. There is nothing like it. Head Start really commits to the kids and helps the kids develop confidence, friendships and get ready for kindergarten. ... It also connects parents to resources and helps build family and community connect- edness. ... Head Start is an amazing support system for both child and family."

In the upcoming year, ABC Head Start will continue engaging families in a meaningful way. We will be inviting parents to help plan for the future, and share their ideas on how ABC Head Start can best continue to meet the needs of children and families. We will continue to work with parents and community partners on services that are most helpful to families, and on making information more accessible to families through our website and other ways.

A special thank you to all the families that have contributed their time and energy towards making ABC Head Start a strong part of so many Edmonton communities!

# Volunteers

## ABC Head Start + Volunteers = Success

The importance of volunteer engagement in ABC Head Start is reflected in our Vision Statement;

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

Volunteers bring an extraordinary richness to our agency, of value far beyond the work that they take on as classroom volunteers, board members, fund raisers and donors.

They become ambassadors to the community on our behalf, sharing the ABC Head Start story and increasing awareness in the community of the necessity of programs such as ours.



They bring a message of hope, acceptance and commitment to the children and their families.

They bring their skills and their vision of a vital community, filled with strong and healthy children.

ABC Head Start is extremely fortunate that individuals choose to offer their volunteer time to us, some for many years, some for only a few months but all of them valued.

September is a major volunteer recruitment time for our agency. We would love to have a volunteer in every classroom every day, that would be 96

volunteers. Our phones have been ringing but we have a way to go to get to that magic number.

Please call us if you would like more information on becoming a classroom volunteer or pass on our contact information to anyone who may be interested.

For more information please visit our web site at [www.abcheadstart.org](http://www.abcheadstart.org) or contact Ann at 780-4615353, ext, 229 or by email at [annb@abcheadstart.org](mailto:annb@abcheadstart.org)

Thank you to our sites for the wonderful pictures.

# Scarecrow Festival

Plan to take your children and show that Edmonton really does S'care for kids one last time!

Admission is \$4, Kids under two are free!

Hours of Operation: **Friday, October 12, 9:30 am—8:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, October 13, 10:00 am—8:00 pm**

**Sunday, October 14, 10:00 am—5:00 p.m.**



After 20 years of S'caring for Kids, Edmonton's Scarecrow Festival, in support of ABC Head Start, will make its final appearance this October 12-14, 2012. The decision to end the Scarecrow Festival was not an easy one, but after careful review of the resources needed to host such a large event, it was decided that the 20th year would also be the final year.

The Scarecrow Festival started in 1992 with the belief that a fun, family oriented event would not only raise funds to support the work of ABC Head Start, but it would also raise awareness of the valuable role the agency plays in the community.

Funds raised through the Scarecrow Festival over the years have allowed ABC Head Start to initiate and sustain some pretty important programs. A great example of the direct impact that the Scarecrow Festival has had on kids is the Literacy Backpack program. Every June, each child in the program receives a backpack filled with literacy tools such as books, crayons, pencils and craft supplies. The kids love it!"

Helping kids learn, grow and have fun is a vital aspect of ABC Head Start and is what has inspired the family oriented activities at the Scarecrow Festival through the years and the finale will be no different. As a tribute to the many people who have been involved over the years and all the kids for whom the Scarecrow Festival has been a special Halloween tradition, we are working hard to make it the best year yet.

# Fundraising

## Plentiful Penny Campaign

In the spring of 2012, the National Mint announced that they would no longer be manufacturing pennies, so we decided to take advantage of this end to the penny and invite hoarders across the city to share their buckets of pennies with ABC Head Start.

We had no idea that both individuals and community groups would respond so positively to this opportunity to get rid of their pennies and soon we were overwhelmed with buckets (and bags and jars and cans!) of pennies, most needing to be counted and rolled. During the last few weeks of June, our office was filled with the happy sound of clinking and clanking as pennies got dumped, sorted, counted, and rolled.

We don't have a final number yet but do know that well over \$1000 was raised in just a few weeks!

Some highlights:

Dave Couture, an employee of Bartle and Gibson and husband to a staff member, made it his mission to engage his company in this project and brought jars of pennies into the office every week and sometimes more often than that. His enthusiasm and passion for the project has generated hundreds of dollars. Thank you so much Dave and the employees and customers of Bartle and Gibson!

Liza Wold and the employees of Bryan and Company LLP also did an outstanding job of collecting pennies.

We learned so much with this little adventure:

Pennies weight much more than you think they do, \$100 worth of rolled pennies fit in a shoe box but are impossible for a regular sized woman to pick up and carry to the bank

Pennies are not worthless, every penny counts just as our mothers taught us (see the breakdown on the next page)

American pennies are fatter than Canadian pennies

Pennies are NOT clean!

ABC Head Start supporters are amazing!!!!!!!

Even though the campaign has officially ended, we would gladly keep accepting your donations of pennies. Watch for final numbers in our next newsletter.

**For all of you who choose to be a part of this project in any way we thank you.**

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# Fundraising

**What difference can a few pennies make, you ask? It's amazing really... every penny matters!**



**100 pennies (2 rolls) = nutritional snack for 1 child for 1 day**

**400 pennies (8 rolls) = nutritional snack for 1 child for a week**

**1600 pennies (32 rolls) = nutritional snacks for 1 class of 16 children for 1 day**

**6400 pennies = (128 rolls) = nutritional snacks for 1 class of children for 1 whole week**

**6 750 000 pennies (135 000 rolls) would feed all 370 children for the whole school year!**

Join us at the 2nd Annual

*Magic & Masquerade*

Friday  
October 12  
2012

6:00 PM - Cocktails

7:00 PM - Three Course Seated Dinner

Entertainment · Silent Auction

Door Prizes

- Fantasyland Hotel -  
West Edmonton Mall

Ample Free Parking

Tickets  
\$100<sup>each</sup>

Limited Seats Available



## Mark Your Calendar 2012-2013

**Note: There are no classes on Mondays**

**October 8, 2012**

Thanksgiving— No classes

**October 12 - 14, 2012**

Scarecrow Festival at Northlands

**November 11, 2012**

Remembrance Day—No classes

**November 27, 2012**

Annual General Meeting

**December 21, 2012**

Last day of classes before  
Christmas Break

**January 8, 2013**

Classes resume

**February 18, 2013**

Family Day—No classes

**February 28 & March 1, 2013**

PD Days—no classes

**March 4, 2013**

Start accepting referrals for  
2012-2013

**March 22, 2013**

Last day of classes before  
Spring Break

**March 25 - 29, 2013**

Spring Break

**April 2, 2013**

Classes Resume

**May 22, 2012**

Victoria Day—No classes

**May 27, 2012**

Appreciation Luncheon

**June 21, 2012**

Literacy Backpack Day

**June 27, 2012**

Last Day of Classes

