

**WGCA Interim Report**  
**Submitted by Healthy Families Alexandria**  
**Northern Virginia Family Service**  
**January 30, 2009**

The Women's Giving Circle of Alexandria generous (WGCA) grant provides support to ten families enrolled in the Healthy Families Alexandria Program. Since the submission of the final report for FY08, two family cases have been closed (#5 and #10); support for these families is now being provided to two new families (#5a and #10a). Additional information on all the families can be found in earlier reports.

We continue to be very grateful to our WGCA liaisons, Christine Brown and Jane Downing Knops, for all their many contributions to Healthy Families Alexandria during the reporting period. Both Jane and Christine continue to serve on the Healthy Families Alexandria Resource Development Committee (RDC). Additionally, former liaison Tracy Nickelsburg continues to serve on the RDC, and is now in the position of RDC secretary.

Christine very graciously introduced HFA Program Manager Carol Freeman to St. Anthony's Day School in northern Old Town, which serves children from infancy through pre-school. As a result of Carol's presentation to the school's Scholarship Foundation, a child from HFA has been placed on a full scholarship to the school for the 2008-2009 school year. In addition, Jane has been instrumental in researching information on possible funding sources for HFA and has also coordinated with staff on distributing donations to families.

In November, WGCA member Karen Schwartz met with Jane Knops and program manager Carol Freeman to again offer her creative services on drafting the annual appeal letter. The appeal letter was completed and mailed before Thanksgiving.

We are delighted to be working with such a committed group of colleagues in our efforts to serve the families in need in Alexandria.

**PROGRAM UPDATE**

**Staffing**

Carol Freeman resigned as Program Manager as of November 7, 2008. The position was covered on an interim basis by Beth Schmid, Deputy Director of the Early Childhood Division, until Nanci Pedulla came on board in early December. Up until then, Nanci had been working as the Program Manager for the NVFS office in Arlington, overseeing management of both the Early Head Start and Healthy Families home-based programs. Nanci's new responsibilities will entail management of both office sites with 60% of her time devoted to Alexandria. A brief summary of Nanci's background and experience is included with this report. To assist in this effort, Nanci will be aided by the support of four Program Supervisors: Maria Gonzalez and Hope Schutte (new hire replacing Joyce Yang) in Alexandria and Elizabeth Willingham and Rashanda Butler in Arlington. A complete organizational chart for the Alexandria office is attached.

### **Family Demographics**

From July – December 2008, Healthy Families Alexandria served 179 families with 164 children. Of these participants:

- 73% identified themselves as Hispanic
- 89% were immigrants
- 13% were teens
- 47% had less than a high school education

### **Annual Holiday Party:**

Over 200 Healthy Families participants attended the annual Holiday Party sponsored by NACHRI on December 17. This year's event took place at the spacious First Baptist Church on King Street where adults and children alike enjoyed delicious food served by NACHRI volunteers and a delightful puppet show by a local performer. In attendance from the Giving Circle were co-president Holly Sloan and Jane Knops. A highlight of the event was the graduation ceremony of 3 families officiated by Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille. Also in attendance were Alexandria City Council members Tim Lovain and Rob Krupicka. Mr. Krupicka addressed the families in Spanish and English.

**Funding Status, 2009:** The original FY 2009 budget was \$838,816, which we reduced to \$800,544 to keep in line with the \$799,707 received in revenue to date. Current revenue total does not include the funds the Resource Development Committee expects to raise this spring. Funding sources include: Virginia General Assembly; City of Alexandria Children's Fund; Women's Giving Circle of Alexandria; Freddie Mac Foundation; Rotary Club of Alexandria; William D. Euille Foundation; Alexandria Community Policy and Management Team; Katharine Maddux Memorial Mental Health Foundation; and private contributions. The Freddie Mac Foundation has indicated that it will no longer support the Healthy Families program as of FY2010. HFA is working with the RDC to seek alternative funding sources to offset the anticipated \$50,000 loss of revenue in the coming year.

**REPORT ON FAMILIES**  
**Reporting Period: August 1, 2008 – January 30, 2009**

**FAMILY #1**

**Number of home visits: 7**

**Level 2:** Under most circumstances, this family would have been moved to Level 3 at this stage in the program, but given their need for more intensive home visiting services, they have remained at Level 2.

**Referrals:** Preschools, including Head Start (twins are on waiting list), ALIVE Child Development Center, and Child and Family Network Centers; CATCH; ALIVE Family Emergency Program (food); Reading Connection; Hispanic Committee; ChildFind; Medicaid (for diapers); Open Minds (for mental health counseling); Financial Aid program through INOVA Hospital; Inova Financial Aid Program to help pay for expensive emergency room bill.

The twins will be turning 4 in February. Mom has been fairly consistent with home visits, although she wasn't available during the month of August. During much of this period, the FSW and Mom have been focusing on getting the twins ready to transition to preschool. Mom has been gathering the necessary documentation to enroll the children, including birth certificates and Medicaid information. In addition, she has been working with the children on toilet training and they have made good progress. The twins are now able to use the toilet with only occasional help from Mom.

During home visits, the FSW brought cutting and pasting activities to support fine motor skill development, as well as reading materials to promote language skills. The family continues to participate actively in the Reading Connection Book Club program and receives two free books each month.

**Topics discussed:** preschool; social emotional development; social issues; ChildFind; pretend play; behavior issues; family issues; potty training and preschool; health questionnaire; abuse; how to help your child express himself; doctor's visits; colors; animal names; matching; fine and gross motor skills development.

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**FAMILY #2**

**Number of home visits: 6**

**Level 3:** Moved to Level 3 as of September 1.

**Referrals:** Hispanic Committee; Kindergarten Fair; ALIVE Child Development Center. Child and Family Network Centers; Head Start; Mariah Center; Charity Program at hospital (to help with charges from recent hospital visit)

The oldest child is now three and a half, and the younger sibling turned one in November. The oldest child is on the waiting list for both Head Start and the Children's Network; mom hopes to enroll him in a preschool by next year.

Both parents are very engaged in home visits and are supportive of each other. The FSW continues working with the parents on positive discipline strategies. Mom is particularly receptive to these ideas as the older child has become more aggressive toward the younger child. Mom reported feeling frustrated at times in managing two children but has since relaxed, especially with Dad at home more often to help with the children. In addition to discipline tips, home visit activities for the oldest child have included singing, matching, alphabet games and pretend play to promote communication skills and intellectual development. For the second child, the FSW and Mom worked on feeding skills, fine motor and gross motor development. The younger child's 12-month ASQ was in range as was the target child's 42-month ASQ. This mom is relatively independent. The family participates in Reading Connection program. Mom still intends to study English but finds it difficult to start classes with both children still at home. She said she will register once the oldest child starts preschool.

**Topics Discussed:** Ages and Stages Questionnaire; home safety; language development; fine motor skills; positive discipline; Head Start; pretend play; health coverage; eating habits; self esteem; preschool; finances; social/emotional development; immunizations.

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**FAMILY #3**

**Number of home visits: 11**  
**Level 2**

**Referrals:** none given this period

The child is now 20 months old. The 16-month ASQ and the 18-month ASQ-SE were both within range. Mom does all of the follow-up activities with the child after home visits. Home visit activities have focused on social-emotional development including positive discipline strategies for managing tantrums. In addition, the FSW continues to provide Mom with literacy activities as Mom is keen on helping her child with communication skills. She enjoys talking with her child and reads a lot of book with him. The family is part of the Reading Connection Book Club.

**Topics Discussed:** scribbling, negativism; parallel talk; self talk; stretch talk; book sharing; temper tantrums; child stress; fine motor development; home safety; positive discipline; limit setting; pretend play; self-esteem and self-help; toilet training.

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**FAMILY #4a**

**Number of home visits: 6**

**Level: 3** – Family moved to level 3 as of November 1, 2009

**Referrals:** None

Given family's progress and issues with scheduling, they were moved to a once-a-month home visiting schedule. The target child is now 20 months old. The 18-month ASQ-SE was within normal limits, as was the 20-month ASQ though problem-solving skills were borderline. The FSW will help the parents focus on activities to promote these skills. The family continues to work on acquiring Medicaid coverage. The family is involved with Reading Connection.

**Topics discussed:** Gross motor development, esp walking; safety; sleep needs; learning new words; pretend play; hearing well and receptive language; importance of music; self-esteem; self-help; positive discipline; readiness for toilet training.

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**FAMILY #5a:**

**Number of home visits: 17**

**Level: 2**

**Referrals:** None

This family replaces Family #5 whose case closed. The family has been enrolled in HF since July 2007. Target child is 19 months old and younger sibling is 2 months old. Mom will turn 18 this February and is enrolled in school though she finds it challenging to keep up with her studies now that she has two children. She is determined to finish, however, and would like to continue on to college afterwards. She was tutored at home during the last trimester of her second pregnancy to prevent premature labor; delivery went well. Once the home tutoring ended, mom had some difficulty re-starting classes at school due to challenges finding childcare for her second child. Dad is incarcerated and mom is able to visit him fairly regularly because his family gives her a ride to the jail. Mom is an active participant in the home visits and demonstrates many positive parenting skills. The target child scored within range on the 18 month ASQ and both children are up-to-date on their immunizations.

**Topics discussed:** negativism; language development and autonomy; self-feeding; parallel talk; stretch talk; self talk; temper tantrums; child stress; imitation and social development; memory; positive discipline; home safety; sleep needs; brain development; infant massage; attachment; pretend play; fine and gross motor development; family planning.

**FAMILY #6**

**Number of home visits: 7**  
**Level 3**

**Referrals:** Hopkins House; Child Network Centers; Head Start; PIE;

Mom has been a consistent participant in the program, meeting regularly with the FSW on a monthly basis. Mom has support from the father's extended family; the grandmother ensures that Mom and the FSW have privacy during home visits. The oldest child is now 42 months old and his younger brothers are 20 months and 9 months old. The mom does all the activities that the FSW brings with her on home visits with all her three children. The oldest child began going to Head Start as of November and has transitioned well. Mom has been concerned about her second son's language development. The 20-month ASQ results were within normal range though the communication as on the low end of normal. A referral was made to PIE for further assessment. The third son's 8-month ASQ and 6-month ASQ-SE were within normal range. Mom's goal for herself is to return to school to get her GED.

**Topics Discussed:** Language development; preschool; importance of routines; getting ready for school; early math concepts; sorting by color.

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**FAMILY #7**

**Number of home visits: 14**  
**Level 2**

**Referrals:** Family Fun Day at John Adams Elementary School; Multicultural Health and Community Day; Playgroup; passport information; ALIVE! for furniture; HF Holiday party

The family has been participating regularly at the biweekly level this period. The target child is now 19 months old. The 20- month ASQ was within range though on the low end of normal in communication. Both Mom and Dad have been participating in the home visits this period though Dad has been more available due to the fact that he has been out of work. Mom has expressed concern about finances including unexpected hospital bills. In addition to parent-child activities, the FSW has been working with the parents to seek solutions for their financial issues. The educational focus of the home visits has been on language development and limit-setting.

**Topics Discussed:** Language development; hearing and receptive language; importance of music; fine motor development; brain development; book sharing; gross motor development; temper tantrums; child stress; imitation and social development; safety for

toddlers; positive discipline for toddlers; sleep needs; pretend play; value of play; playing with others.

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## **FAMILY #8**

### **Number of home visits: 3**

**Level 4** Family moved to Level 4 as of October 1, 2008. FSW and Mom discussed graduating from the program this summer because of family's excellent progress.

**Referrals:** Reading Connection; childcare assistance; Campagna Center; Network Preschool; Head Start

The baby is now 42 months old and continues developing well. The results from the 42-month ASQ were within range in all domains. The mom continues to be very engaged in her child's development and activities. Mom intends to enroll the child in preschool when he turns four; he is on the wait list for Head Start and Network Center. Current family goals include saving money to buy a house and helping the target child in the area of self-control.

**Topics Discussed:** preschool readiness; reinforcing positive self-esteem; self-control; positive discipline; overall developmental milestones.

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## **FAMILY #9**

### **Number of home visits: 11**

#### **Level 2**

**Referrals:** Family Fun Day at Johan Adams Elementary School; Salvation Army; Birth records in Richmond; Childcare services; Annual Healthy Families Holiday Party

The oldest child is now 30 months old. The results of the 30-month ASQ and 30-month ASQ-SE were in range in all domains. Mom delivered her second child on July 29, 2008. The FSW will administer the 4-month ASQ in February 2009.

Initially, Mom and Dad were working well together on parenting their two children but, recently, problems have emerged and Dad has indicated that he will move out. Mom is seeking a new place to live. Both parents have been concerned about financial issues. They continue to demonstrate great affection and concern for the well-being of their children. The FSW continues working with both parents on positive discipline strategies with the oldest child.

**Topics Discussed:** Language development; sentence length understanding and complying with requests; matching, sorting and classifying; different sizes; different colors; dressing oneself; throwing, catching and kicking; fears and feelings; positive discipline; limit-setting; problem-solving; social-emotional development; fine motor development; building with blocks; finger play; breastfeeding and infant nutrition.

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**FAMILY #10a**

**Number of home visits: 10**

**Level: 2**

**Referrals:** HF Holiday Party; PIE

This family replaces Family #10 whose case closed. This family has been enrolled in HF since July 2007. Mom lives with her child who is 20 months old; Dad lives in a separate home but is involved in his child's life in a limited way. The outcome of the 18-month ASQ was within normal range for all domains except in communication, which indicated a borderline result. The 16-month ASQ was out of range in communication. The 18-month ASQ-SE was within normal limits. The FSW and Mom have been discussing a referral to PIE for an evaluation on the child's communication skills, but Mom is undecided if she wants to pursue this option.

**Topics Discussed:** Parallel talk; self-talk; stretch talk; book sharing; carrying, pushing and pulling; language development; child stress; temper tantrums; fine motor development; imitation and social development; memory; intellectual development; emotions and frustration; safety for toddlers; positive discipline; play with others; value of play; hearing well and receptive language; limit-setting; importance of music; routines.