



MOMENTS

A Newsletter for our Employees and Volunteers

October 2009



A Note from Our CEO Rick Doehle

Central Washington is well known for its four seasons. With each season comes a variety of changes. The days get shorter or longer. The days get colder or warmer. There are some people who enjoy the variety that comes with the change, but others find it more difficult going from one season to the next. Like seasons, organizations go through changes. Some of the changes at EPIC will be simple, some more difficult. Yet, with each change there will be people who value the new direction and others who will find making adjustments to the change more difficult.

EPIC is in a new season. We have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many young people and their families. Being a new member of the EPIC team, it has been exciting to see *the organization's potential to have such a large impact* on many families throughout Central Washington. We can better educate young children; help a family make better choices which enable them to live more productive lives. We can help a young person learn how to establish positive life habits. The need for our work is great here in Central Washington. The resources are limited but the desire to make a difference is strong in the people I have met who work for EPIC.

As you will read in this month's newsletter, there has been much work done and accomplished over the past few months. I would encourage you to watch for the changes that will come over the next few

An epic Summer

Summer 2009 has come to an end. This edition of the staff newsletter is dedicated to all of the EPIC events from June through September.

We have had a golf tournament; with the aid of volunteers, we built, painted, moved, and decorated playhouses, two in the Valley Mall in Yakima, one on a trailer for traveling and one at the Central Washington State Fair; been in a variety of parades and events in the Upper and Lower Yakima Valley with the traveling playhouse. In partnership with ESD 105 and the Washington State Migrant Council, EPIC hosted the South Central Washington Preschool/Kindergarten Institute; along with Washington State Migrant Council, EPIC welcomed guests from all over the United States for the quarterly meeting of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association; the EPIC website has been updated; and finally, EPIC held it's annual *Investing in Future Generations* luncheon.

It was truly an EPIC summer! Read all about it inside this edition . . .

months. There will be opportunities for everyone to be involved with moving the organization of EPIC into the future. Do you want to have a say in what direction EPIC goes in the next few years? Stay tuned for the upcoming strategic plan. Do you want to be involved with helping to promote EPIC to our communities? Then get involved with the different fundraising opportunities which allow us to share the good name of EPIC with our communities.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for the hard work that you do each day to make life better for our clients. There are many exciting success stories from children and young people who have had access to the work that we do and have gone on to be contributing members of our society. *Rick*

2nd Annual EPIC Golf

Classic

On Friday June 19th, 15 teams of enthusiastic golfers joined EPIC staff on the fairways of Sun-tides Golf Course for the 2nd Annual EPIC Golf Classic.

A big thank you to all the volunteers! Blanca Mendoza, Lyn Arzaga and Heather Cavaness helped with registration; Rachel Bettles, Lynn Harlington, and Mamie Purdue helped with set up and a bunch of other odd and end jobs; Sarah and Jonathan Cavaness and Jake Olivero were the “gofer” for the day; Kyler Bachofner and Sue Pitman cooked for the barbeque dinner; and Kyler and Laura Bazaldua served as host and hostess for the dinner and the silent auction.

Thank you also to board members Rhea Lewis, Marallyn Schonian, Dave Chaplin, Brent Hudson, Bob Powers, Kevan Montoya and Kurt Labberton for the assistance and support.

It was a fun afternoon and nearly \$3,000 was raised to benefit our Youth Services division.

Planning for the 3rd Annual Golf Classic will soon begin. If you know a golfer looking for an excuse to escape work on a Friday afternoon, keep our golf tournament in mind. There will be more information in upcoming newsletters.





Playhouses on Parade

2009



The Beach Cottage being delivered by Western Materials with help from Joe Farina and Rip Hollingbery.



EPIC employees and friends building the Gingerbread Cottage.



Members of Westside Church building the Cape Cod Cottage.



US Cellular staff after finishing the Summer Cottage.

EPIC's premier event, Playhouses on Parade is underway. Starting in July, groups of volunteers and EPIC employees have given many hours of their own time to assemble, paint, move and decorate three of the four playhouses we are showcasing this year.

Raffle tickets remain at \$2 each and can be purchased at Central office, the Valley Mall information booth and at the US Cellular booth during the fair.

The Beach Cottage, donated to EPIC by Chris Brown and sponsored by OIC of Washington, is on a trailer and has been, to date, at the Moxee Hop Festival, the Yakima Farmer's Market, the Hot Shots 3-on-3 Tournament in Yakima, Wal-Mart, Sportsman's Days and Parade in Naches, and the Sunshine Days Parade in Sunnyside. The Cape Cod Cottage built by Westside Church and sponsored by Heritage University and the Gingerbread Cottage built by EPIC Employees and Friends, are being shown in center court at the Valley Mall in Yakima. Tickets can be purchased at the information booth in the mall.

The last playhouse is the Summer Cottage, built and sponsored by US Cellular. It will be at the US Cellular booth in the Sun Dome at the Central Washington State Fair September 25th through October 4th.

The raffle drawing will be held at center court in the Valley Mall in Yakima on October 10th at 3:00 p.m. US Cellular will be holding a children's carnival prior to the drawing.

As always, there is plenty to do and we hope you can find time in your schedule to donate to this event. Please contact Rachel (rachelb@epicnet.org 509/249-9111) or Heather (heatherc@epicnet.org 509/249-9108) for scheduling volunteer time.

Thank you once again for being a part of this fun event. It couldn't happen without all of you.!



South Central Washington Preschool/Kindergarten Institute *One System: Many Faces*

EPIC joined forces with ESD 105 and Washington State Migrant Council to host the South Central Washington Preschool/Kindergarten Institute. Ready by Five, Toppenish School District, Yakama Nation Head Start and the Yakima School District were partners in the venture.

Over 200 preschool and kindergarten teachers along with school and school district administrators from the 14 school districts within ESD 105's boundaries attended the two-day conference August 4-5 at the Clarion Hotel in Yakima, sponsored by Lakeshore Learning Materials and Scholastic Books.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a conduit for schools and early learning providers to collaborate and align efforts in easing young students into main-stream kindergarten education.

The event started off with the CEOs of EPIC, ESD 105 and Washington State Migrant Council addressing the attendees in a joint communication stressing collaboration and teamwork. Keynote speakers were Dr. Bette Hyde, Department of Early Learning Director who reminded the participants that we are all in this together; that we are one system with many faces. Several other presentations were delivered the first day dealing with children with disabilities, developmental and behavioral screening tools, the power of play-based learning, culturally and linguistically diverse families, family literacy, and family involvement.

Garrison Kurtz early learning advocate and facilitator from Dovetailing Consulting facilitated the events of day two. The participants were put

into small groups which consisted of a school district and the schools and early learning institutes that preside within the school district. There were facilitators assigned to each group that helped guide the groups conversation and assist with creating a strategic plan that would help the group align their services. ESD 105 provided an \$800 incentive for each team's collaborative efforts. While at the institute, each team was to develop a proposal to further work on the collaborative and alignment efforts. Each team was to have a minimum of a

Special Education teacher or director (early learning or elementary), an ECEAP/Head Start or community-based preschool teacher, and a kindergarten teacher. The \$800 each team earned is to be used to further develop, initiate and/or continue the team's strategic plan.

When an event of this magnitude is held, the organizers look at several different factors to see if it was a success. At the end of this event, by all indications, it was a HUGE success. The

educators came away with a strategic plan that will benefit the children and families they work with. Ideas were exchanged and new friendships and working relationships were formed. Over 20 different community resource vendors gave the educators a sampling of available resources for their students and families. And last but not least, this small institute was heralded by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for its vision and success. Next year's event will be hosted by the OSPI and will include all school districts and early learning centers in Eastern Washington.



Lexi Caitlin of the ESD 105 addresses the participants at the recent South Central Washington Preschool/Kindergarten Institute



On August 7th and 8th 26 members of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association, from as far away as Florida, gathered in Yakima for its quarterly meeting. The meeting was hosted by Manuel Villafan and the EPIC Early Childhood Education staff and in partnership with Washington State Migrant Council.

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) is made up of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start CEO's, Directors, staff, and parents, that meets regularly to discuss issues and concerns unique to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) children and their families. NMSHSA is made up of representatives from 4 affiliates being parents, staff, CEOs, and Directors of MSHS. Biz Steinberg is the president and Yvette Sanchez Fuentes is the director and CEO of NMSHSA. Both are from Washington D.C.

Manuel has been a member of NMSHSA for 6 years, serving as a vice-president and board member for the past two years.

Because of Manuel and his association with NMSHSA, EPIC has a voice when NMSHSA membership meet with Senators and giving EPIC a unique opportunity to express our own needs and strengths of our organization. EPIC is its own best advocate; no other organization would represent us as well as we do ourselves. Organizations that do not have representation in NMSHSA are not able to be a part of the important discussions and discussion making process.

During the conference Manuel received a



personal invitation from Sandra Carton, the Chief Executive of the Migrant Head Start Branch to be one of six people in the country to sit on her advisory committee to establish clear definitions for the areas of ERSEA for the MSHS programs across the country.

Topics discussed at the quarterly conference held in Yakima were grant applications for MSHS monies, different uses of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus money, expansion applications, potential NMSHSA fundraisers, and who will replace Senator Ted Kennedy, who was he was a huge supporter for our programs. They assigned individuals to meet with a variety of senators at the NMSHSA conference in Washington D.C. Planning for the 2010 NMSHSA conference in Washington D.C. was also discussed.

It wasn't all work for the conference participants. They took time to tour of the Yakima Valley. They visited KDNA radio station in Granger, Washington State Migrant Council's Wapato Early Learning Center, EPIC's Parker Heights Early Learning Center, the Loftus Ranch Hop Farm, and the Moxee Hop Festival. Manuel stated that it was wonderful sharing our beautiful valley with so many people from different MSHS programs around the country. Many left wanting to move here. Manuel was a great tour guide and was able to fill them in on the history of the Yakima Valley and how Yakima and Moxee were established. They were very impressed with the high quality facilities and staff during their center visits.

Congratulations and thank you Manuel.

IT Manager Tony Esteves has been hard at work updating our internet and intranet web pages. If you get a chance, go check them out.

Both pages are easier to read with larger text and easy to follow links.



The internet pages take the visitor on a journey through our agency, showcasing all of our programs and events as well as employment opportunities.

The intranet pages (available only to EPIC employees) has an audio address from Rick Doehle, our CEO, which is updated quite often; links to all the various forms used by the agency; employee benefits information; EPIC logo files; a survey which changes periodically dealing with issues that are important to the agency; past newsletters and so much more.



Investing in *Future Generations*

On September 8th, over 150 people gathered at the Yakima Convention Center to hear EPIC's story.

Below are the stories of the two featured speakers.

Thank you to Dave Dion and his committee for their hard work at making this event successful!

Daniel Garza was a child of the fields. His parents settled in the Toppenish area in 1971 and were seasonal workers in the fields of Yakima Valley. His mother heard of a program called Head Start and enrolled Daniel in it.



Daniel believes that the lessons learned in that Head Start class so long ago helped him to learn the value of an education and were the beginning steps to a bigger world that would include working in the White House as a liaison to Latino communities for President George W. Bush.

Daniel now heads a center in Southern Texas that helps high school students reach higher education. Field work and family obligations kept Daniel from his classes and high school graduation. He later earned his GED and attended Central Washington University, became a Toppenish police officer, served on the City Council and was GOP activist, who in 2000 hosted George P. Bush, nephew of the future president, at his Toppenish home.

When he first started in the White House he felt "scared to death." He was surrounded by very important, highly educated people and was not sure he had much to contribute. It wasn't long before Daniel realized the value of his experience growing up as a farm laborer. "Knowledge comes from all corners of our nation," he said. "I got to the White House because my mother and father picked pears, peaches and apples."



Tiffany Jones is the oldest of seven children. While growing up in the Seattle area, Tiffany's mother battled drug and alcohol addiction. At times Tiffany and her siblings would be removed from their mother's care by CPS. Tiffany's educational

journey was often filled with obstacles and setbacks. "As the oldest, my priorities were survival and taking care of my siblings. At any given point we lived in shelters, abandoned houses and even our car." Tiffany stated many times that if it had not been for the support she received from a tireless mentor and programs such as EPIC's Youth Services, her life could have easily turned in a different direction.

By the time she graduated from high school, Tiffany had attended fifteen different schools. With determination and support, she ultimately earned her Bachelor of Arts from Western Washington University and is currently pursuing her Master of Education at the University of Washington.

Tiffany is passionate about increasing awareness of college opportunities and uses her experiences to help encourage students who are from similar backgrounds to follow their dreams. She is currently employed by Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA), a regional non-profit student loan grantor.

Tiffany was the first in her family to receive a college education, but not the last. "My mother has been clean and sober for 10 years. She went back to school and earned her GED and recently received her Associates of Arts."

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start

6

Family Night—Sunnyside

8

Family Night—Prosser
Family Night—East Wenatchee
Family Night—Bridgeport

28

Family Night—Castlevale

29

Family Night—Parker Heights



Region X, Early Head Start & ECEAP

1

Family Night—Tieton
Family Night—CCP, Jefferson

6

Family Night—Jefferson
Family Night—Fairview

7

Family Night—West Valley

8

Family Night—East Wenatchee
Family Night—Union Gap
Family Night—Terrace Heights

9

Family Night—Parker Heights
Family Night—Toppenish

13

Family Night—Sunnyside

14

Family Night—Castlevale
Family Night—Brewster
Family Night—EHS, Castlevale

15

Family Night—Prosser

21

Family Night Bridgeport

Submissions for the November EPIC Moments newsletter are due October 20th.

Submit stories and ideas to suep@epicnet.org

