

*Hatred darkens life;
love illuminates it.*

*- Martin Luther
King, Jr.*



UPK Dates—2009

ECERS Classroom Observations from Feb.—April

**2/2-6 Distribution of
RECAP forms:**

Early Childhood Parent Survey
Family Involvement Questionnaire

2/26 Wolf Trap
see page 2

3/9 RECAP forms due

3/12 Wolf Trap

**3/20 Superintendent's
Conference Day**

** see January newsletter*

4/2 Wolf Trap

4/15 Spring Seminar
see page 2

**4/27-30 Distribution of
RECAP forms:**

T-CRS, COR, P-CRS, Parent
Questionnaire

6/5 RECAP forms due

Collaboration: A Key to Success in Rochester UPK

Collaboration is one of the keys to the success of the Universal Prekindergarten Program in Rochester. Prekindergarten students in the Rochester City School District have benefitted from the myriad of collaborative efforts that exist within our system of early care and education. The mutual commitment of our district leadership, city leadership, Board of Education members, community partners, college and university partners, and city residents to the provision of quality care and education for young children have resulted in the development and ongoing provision of Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) programs that continue to rank among the highest documented systems in both the United States and Europe as measured by Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP) data.

The collaborative work that has occurred at all levels of leadership around our Rochester Universal Prekindergarten programs characterizes our shared commitment to providing quality educational experiences for young children in Rochester. Through the combined efforts of the Rochester City School District and the Mayor's Literacy Council the goal of increasing Universal Prekindergarten enrollment was achieved. This year our enrollment in Rochester UPK programs increased by twenty-four students despite the impact of childcare sub-

sidy cuts that occurred prior to the fall semester. Collaborations between agencies, schools, and family childcare providers create opportunities for students to participate in the Universal Prekindergarten Program.

The prekindergarten to kindergarten transition is a current area of focus for the development of increased collaboration. This year an opportunity will be made available for a limited number of kindergarten teachers to participate in the March Superintendent's Conference Day professional development program with prekindergarten teachers from our elementary schools and community based organizations. Other opportunities for collaboration between prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers are currently being discussed in a variety of forums including the UPK Professional Development Committee comprised of early childhood educators and directors from the district and community based organizations. We have a significant challenge before us as we advance our agenda of increased collaboration between prekindergarten and kindergarten staff in our schools and agencies; however we possess the combined knowledge, skills and shared commitment to achieve our goal. Our youngest students are depending on us to plan for their future success.

- Submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper

Celebrating our Success and Dr. King's Birthday in UPK

In order to celebrate Dr. King's birthday, the integrated Pre-K class and the UPK class at number 8 school had a birthday party! We read the book Have A Dream, illustrated by Jeff Terreson, which is an excerpt from Dr. King's most famous speech. We made birthday crowns and a mini-book entitled Our Friend Martin to take home to share with our families. We also made rainbow people, which can be seen on our school's bulletin board, to represent the fulfillment of Martin's dream. We ended our celebration by singing "Happy Birthday" and M'Lou's song, "Martin Luther King, Jr. Had a Dream" and eating delicious birthday brownies! *- submitted by Debra Kiefer, Jessica Shapira and Esther Suro-Berrios.*



April 15, Spring Seminar with Valora Washington, PhD

Through the Eyes of Valora Washington: Leadership in Early Care and Education



An Honest Look in the Mirror

"The field of Early Childhood is on a treadmill instead of a pathway."

"We are willing to tolerate poor performance by our colleagues."

"We hesitate to improve ourselves and our programs."

"Early care and education lacks the capacity to meet the public's expectations."

OUCH! These are quotations from Valora Washington's book *Ready or Not* that is shaking up the world of early childhood. A recognized authority in early childhood care and education, Valora Washington, PhD, has organized and developed initiatives targeting policy change in different areas of early care and education, including higher education and local, state or federal government.

We think of ourselves as committed and passionate about early childhood. Valora Washington tells us that we'd better look in the mirror a little closer. When we do, we will see the reflection of leaders who tolerate mediocrity and professionals who have shirked responsibility. As a result, children have missed opportunities, particularly children of color and those from low-income families.

As we acknowledge the truth of what she has to say, we also need to listen to the ways that Valora Washington says we need to mobilize, build consensus, and hold ourselves accountable. Read her book, which is included in the price of registration, and come to the Spring Seminar on April 15. Your life as an early childhood professional will be forever changed.

There are three options for obtaining your copy of Valora Washington's book, Ready or Not: Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education.

1. UPK staff attending the March 20th Superintendent's Conference Day at MCC, may register for the Spring Seminar on this day and pick up your copy there.
2. During the week of March 23rd, from 8:30—4:30, the Children's Institute will distribute books at the reception desk to those registered by 3/20.
3. The remaining books will be distributed at the Seminar.

Registration form is available at www.raeyc.org.

February 26 Wolf Trap Workshop: Modeling Kindness

Modeling Kindness in the Early Childhood Classroom *presented by Wolf Trap Artist, Karen Teagan.* Experience hands on activities that introduce and explore the concept of kindness with young children.

Workshop will be offered on February 26, from 4:00—5:30 pm at the Phyllis Wheatley Public Library. Certificate granted for 1.5 hours training. Registration is limited. Please complete and return this registration form by February 13.

Last Name

First Name

School/ Agency

Position

Age Served

Day/Work Phone

Evening/Home Phone

Email Address

Fax to 262-8273. Confirmations will not be sent unless the session is oversubscribed.

Active Learning in our UPK Integrated Classroom at #33 School



Kathy Eppeira conducted circle time in **Rachel Taber & Sheila Murphy's** class at Florence S. Brown Pre-K at #33 school. The children acted out the story Mrs. Wishy Washy. Through this the children were exposed to sequencing, vocabulary, repetition, opposites, and phonemic awareness.



The children in **Rachel Taber & Sheila Murphy's** integrated class are exercising their large muscles during the winter months at Florence S. Brown Pre-K at # 33 School.

Submitted by Sara Devine





Rochester City School District
Department of Early Childhood
131 W. Broad St.
Rochester, NY 14614



Phone: 585-262-8140
Fax: 585-262-8273
jeanne.herrick@rcsdk12.org
www.rcsdk12.org/PreK

MOVEMENT TIDBIT *from Moving Minds*

submitted by Carol Bedenik-Carmel, PT and Andrea Gerhardt, OT, RCSD

- Marcie Cup's preschool class is talking about, playing with, and making spaghetti!
- Water Table set up with red-colored water for tomato sauce, yarn for spaghetti, ping pong balls for meatballs
- Children used tongs, a colander and their hands to pick up the spaghetti and meatballs
- Additional ideas:
 - o Using a turkey baster to blow the ping pong balls around the water and pick them up
 - o Different sized tongs
 - o Empty parmesan cheese container
 - o Different sized and weighted balls: marbles, golf balls, rubber balls (cat toys), super balls
 - o Styrofoam peanuts to simulate other kinds of pasta
 - o Use of pasta ladles
 - o Plastic plates



Using tongs to pick up objects, children develop their hand strength and coordination. Activity can be set up to also include other learning objectives such as matching colored ping pong balls to same colored plates.