

Community Cornerstone

A quarterly newsletter from the Augusta-Richmond County Community Partnership for Children and Families, Inc.



Winter/Spring 2005

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A Message From the Executive Director A New Year, A New You = A Better Community



Robetta D. McKenzie, Ed.D.

January 1, 2005, at one point during that day we all thought about setting a New Year's Resolution. For some it was to exercise, lose weight or enroll in graduate school and for others it was simply to do or be better than last year. When I looked up the meaning of "resolution" I found 11 different definitions, but liked the root word (resolute). It read, "firm or determined; unwavering". Immediately it reminded me of the Partnership and our continuous efforts to make the lives of those living in this community better with new, invigorating activities.

As a Partnership we have already begun working on our New Year's resolution to make 2005 better than previous years by working tirelessly to reach our benchmark objectives. And how is that, you may ask. Well, we began at the Annual Meeting by addressing the status of our benchmark objectives; meeting in January to develop the Partnership's three year Community Strategic Plan; implementing the Abstinence Only Education and after school Social Marketing program at Morgan Road Middle School; continuing monthly Parent Support Group meetings to educate women on perinatal, prenatal and infant health. What a great start! Nonetheless, we still have a long journey ahead of us.

This year began as a wake up call, for me and hopefully for you, by showing how much we need one another and the difference we can make once we take the initiative to do so and work together to make it happen. This is evident in the wake of recent horrific tragedies such as the tsunami killing hundreds of thousands and devastating twice as many; the mudslides in California; the avalanches in Utah; the snow and ice storms in the Northeast; and closer to home, the deadly train wreck in Graniteville, SC. Although these events were sudden and unforeseen, the world and local communities came to the aid of those individuals who suffered losses. As a Partnership, we have eliminated the surprise factor by identifying many of the problems in our community and outlining what must be done to improve these areas.

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Ending the Year to Start Anew

Each year in December, the Partnership holds its Annual Meeting in celebration of its successes, working together and continuing in its efforts to improve the lives of children and families in Augusta-Richmond County. In the spirit of tradition, close to 200 people representing all aspects of the Augusta community celebrated 2004 with laughter, tears of joy and fellowship. This year's theme, Partnering On Behalf of Our Children, was woven throughout the event from the greetings to the special recognitions. Youth displayed their talents showing the importance of the Partnerships work in building future leaders. Health officials, faith and civic leaders stressed the importance of continuing to work together to strengthen our community and accomplish our goals. Individuals were recognized for their outstanding work in the community and with the Partnership.

Ms. Chrystina Head, WAGT Channel 26 anchor, set the tone of the event which began with a warm welcome by Dr. Johnny Hatney, ARCCP Board Chair. Dr. Hatney was followed by two beautiful musical selections by the Academy of Richmond County High School Choir under the direction of Ms. Mollie Baldwin, and greetings from ARCCP Board Members Dr. Elizabeth Gainous, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Ms. Susan McArthur, New Image Marketing, Inc. along with Ms. Marcell Johnson, Georgia Family Connection Partnership. After the greetings, two ARCCP Youth Council members, Miss. Miesha Lloyd and Miss. Duandra Jenkins, grabbed the audience's attention with a spoken word piece about one of the Partnerships benchmark objectives that continues to be a problematic area for youth - drugs. The audience then tuned their ears to listen to ARCCP Board Members, Dr. Frank Rumph, East Central Health District, and Mr. Micheal Firmin, Golden Harvest Food Bank give the meaning of "partnering". Firmin focused on the fact that in order to have a strong partnership and to actually create a better community for the next generation, the players must have two things, belief and trust.

After lunch, the second half of the program began with reflections/plans for the future by Dr. Robetta McKenzie, ARCCP Executive Director. Dr. McKenzie focused on the efforts of the Partnership to include identifying new resources, advocating to pass the Child Endangerment Bill, serving children and families, etc. "All that binds us together as one are our children - and thus their families and our successes on behalf of our children," said Dr. McKenzie. She went on to highlight progress under the goals of improving the lives of children and families, partnering and sustainability and acknowledging areas where success continues to be eluded.

The celebration continued with a special recognition ceremony for seven outstanding partners who worked tirelessly in the community and demonstrated unrelenting support of the Partnership. Some speechless, some with tears and some with humor accepted their awards with honor and happiness. Following are the names of the 2004 awardees: Miss. Shakeitric Stokes, ARCCP Youth Council-Youth Ambassador, Ms. Allison Campbell, Richmond County Board of Education-Collaborative Supporter, Dr. Cynthia Nafarette, Santo Nino Clinic and Mr. Brian Mulherin, East Central Regional Hospital-Community Volunteer, Mrs. Marian and Mr. Shaquile Bey-Family Representatives, Ms. Carol Davis, Family Counseling Center, and Ms. Shirley Norman, Augusta Technical College New Connections to Work-Family and Children's Advocate. Congratulations to all of you!



Shaquile & Marian Bey smile for the camera after receiving the Outstanding Family Representative award.

Annual Meeting 2004: Partnering On Behalf of Our Children proved to be a significant event to take the Partnership into the new year on a positive note, with direction, zeal and a hunger to do more.

A New Twist On Teaching Abstinence



Brandon Green (left) and Victor Moli (right) read the script they wrote for the radio PSA.

Walking into Morgan Road Middle School, the obvious is noticed right away-the principal's office busy with the day's events, tasks and paperwork, and classroom after classroom filled with teachers educating their students on various academic subjects. But walking into one of four 6th grade physical/health education classes it appeared that they were learning something out of the norm, an addition to the student's current curriculum. Inside those classrooms students were learning to say "no", not to drugs but to sex until marriage. These students were learning about abstinence and leading a healthy lifestyle.

Beginning in December, 6th graders began an Abstinence Only Education class built around the best and promising practice curriculum, *Choosing the Best*. The class not only informed students on what abstinence is, but it equipped them with the tools they need to remain abstinent. The students were taught how to make smart decisions, avoid unhealthy relationships and situations that may lead to risky behaviors, and the consequences of premature sexual activity. Classroom instruction was supplemented with applicable activities, videos and guest speakers. Students heard testimonies and received hard facts on issues related to or that may lead to sexual activity.

Topics ranged from drugs and alcohol to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. An additional supplemental activity that took place after school was the After School Social Marketing Program.

The After School Social Marketing Program involved a small group of students referred from the Abstinence Only Education classes. Throughout the program students took what they were taught in class and applied it to various media outlets to promote abstinence in the community, and most importantly among their peers. To do this, the students took on a major project, creating and producing a television and a radio public service announcement (PSA). Each student was involved in developing the concept, script/storyboard, slogan and served as actors/actresses in the PSA. As a result of their hard work, there is now a local abstinence media campaign entitled "Wait to Mate". The campaign consist of two television and two radio PSAs geared toward male and female audiences. Aside from the PSA production project, students learned about social marketing and its components, discussed their perceptions of abstinence and sex as seen on television, in magazines and on the radio, enjoyed guest speakers and field trips, and participated in other enriching hands-on activities. At the conclusion of the after school program, parents and families were invited to a sneak preview of the PSAs. Moms, dads, siblings, grandparents, etc. also enjoyed pizza, games and participated in *Helping Your Child Choose Abstinence* training.

Some may say, "what is the big deal, so there are a few kids engaged in sexual activity." Well, a few is too many. In 2003 there were at least 27 10-14 year olds and 230 15-17 year olds who were pregnant in Richmond County (Georgia Division of Public Health, Office of Health Information and Policy) and of those who have had sex, many now have regrets. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy reported, in *With One Voice 2004, America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*, that two-thirds of sexually experienced teens (63% of boys and 69% of girls) said they wished they had waited longer to have sex. When asked about an appropriate number of sexual partners for teens to have, the clear majority of adolescents surveyed (56%) said "none" and a clear majority of adolescents (69%) say they do not think it is appropriate for high school teens to have sexual intercourse. Looking at those statistics, perhaps kids need to be taught about the choice to be abstinent.



After School Social Marketing Program Group 1, teachers and staff smile for the camera on their final day of shooting the television PSA "Wait to Mate".

With continued funding from the Children and Youth Coordinating Council Abstinence Only Education grant, sixth graders that enrolled in the Abstinence Only Education class will be followed through their 8th grade year with age appropriate *Choosing the Best* curriculum, as well as the After School Social Marketing Program.

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Students who were unable to participate during their sixth grade year, due to scheduling, etc., as well as and transfer students will be able to take part in the program during their seventh grade year.



Group II pose with TuTu the Badboy on their trip to Clear Channel's Power 107 studio where they recorded two radio PSAs.

Special thanks to Morgan Road Middle School Principal Janie Norris; Physical/Health Education teachers Lori L. Banquilan, William K. Phillips Sr., Carl B. Robinson III, and Evalissa Young; Special Subjects teacher James Learnard; guest speakers: James Elam and his team with the VA Substance Abuse Prevention Program, Raul Valequez and Myra Howard with the Richmond County Health Department Epidemiology Branch, Richmond County Health Department T.R.I.B.E. and chaperone Sandra Heard, Coleman O'Donnell president of Amphibious Productions, and Jerome Turner Senior Account Manager with Power 107; parents; and the After School Social Marketing program students: Alexis Anderson, Candance Bennett, Ja'Coya Bennett, Bria Birt, DaShan Brodus, Destiny Bynes, Cameron Christian, Labria Davis, Diara Diamond, Brandon Green, Ashley Lanier,

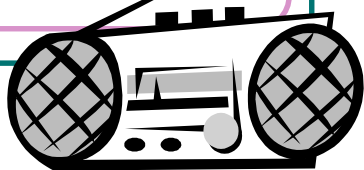
Victor Moli, Corey Moore, Rafael Ramos, Kenneth Rayford, Derrick Ross, Gabriel Sualevi, Deontaye Shavers, Ka'ne'dres Shields, Labrall Smith, TaNeisha Sturgis, William Neal, Carla Valero, Cameron Webb, and Althea Williams.



Group I students work with Coleman O'Donnell, Amphibious Productions President, to develop their television PSA on abstinence.



Tune into WBAU 23, WJBF News CHANNEL 6 and Power 107 to see and hear the "Wait To Mate" PSAs.



Co-stars (from left to right) Cameron Christian, Carl Robinson III, and Diara Diamond finish the morning scene of "Wait to Mate".



Students anxiously await their turn to bowl on their trip to the Fort Gordon Bowling Lanes.

Executive Directors Message continued from cover

Everyday a child is being abused, an infant is born premature, a teenager is experimenting with drugs, someone is hungry, and so forth. Knowing these things, why not do something? Let us not wait until there is a tragedy to make a difference. Let us prepare for the storm today. It can be as simple as continuing to partner to improve results, making a donation, and/or volunteering your time to support the local efforts of organizations/agencies. Sure the New Year has technically passed, but it's never too late to take charge and make this year the best ever. An individual can start a movement and a movement can change things. It starts with you.

To Your Health

Lowering Preterm Births

On Wednesday, January 12, 2005, the March of Dimes awarded the ARCCP \$2,250.58 to enhance its education services for high risk women by strengthening its in home health education program to reduce preterm births. More specifically, the ARCCP will focus on two areas: first it will provide high risk pregnant and interconceptional women with specific information related to preterm labor and the risk factors associated with it, and secondly it will develop a preconception checklist allowing women to assess their medical history and its potential impact on their future pregnancy and birth outcomes.

Defined by the March of Dimes as when a woman going into labor before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy, preterm birth can lead to many unhealthy outcomes for the baby. Such outcomes include respiratory distress syndrome, apnea, anemia, infections, etc. Outcomes also encompass a long standing area of concern for the Partnership – low birth weight and infant mortality. In Richmond County, statistics show that in 1999-2002, 12.4% of all births were preterm and 2.4% were very low birth weight. According to the Georgia Division of Public Health, Office of Health Information and Policy, in Richmond County the low birth weight rate was 10.9% in 2003 and infant mortality was 12.3% in 2003. This is a significant increase from 2002 statistics that showed low birth weight at 9.6% and infant death at 10.5%. There is also a huge racial disparity in this community, with African Americans accounting for 13% of all babies born with low birth weights and 16.5% of all infant deaths. A woman's risk of having a preterm birth is increased if she uses alcohol, tobacco and/or other drugs; has diabetes, high blood pressure, history of preterm birth or an STD; and/or is stressed, abused, overweight, or lacking prenatal care, to name a few.

Such factors accounted for the ARCCP's action to take a further step in reducing preterm labor in this community by focusing on an important preventive measure, education. Although education may not solve all the problems associated with perinatal health, it is the first step in empowering people, giving them the tools to change, and improving their lives.

HEART Beats in Augusta

Blacks Against Blacks Crimes, Inc is poised to begin to make an impact on the troubled aspects of African-American life. By combining efforts with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and community representatives, Blacks Against Blacks Crimes, Inc. has developed an innovative project called HEART (**H**Health, **E**ducation **A**ugusta **R**ichmond **T**ools).

HEART is the product of a pilot grant from the Southeast Community Research Center Tools for Change Project. Tools for Change is a statewide project, funded by the Healthcare Georgia Foundation, which focuses on those communities suffering most under the negative effects of the disparities in health outcomes and treatment (African Americans and Latinos) (www.cbpr.org/Proj_TFC.htm). Activities are centered around HBCUs in Georgia. As a Tools for Change Project, HEART will prioritize health issues, research and collect data, and implement effective programs that will improve health disparities in the black community. It will address the following issues: environmental pollutants and waste sites created by local industries, high rates of cancer and other illnesses, poverty, crime, violence, and racism, and access to acceptable healthcare. "HEART is crucial to the health and future of the African-American Community. I am convinced that the Tools for Change project will help make our city a better place in which to live." commented Ms. Barbara Thurmond, Blacks Against Blacks Crimes, Inc. president.

Currently, there are three other Tools for Change sites in Georgia -Albany, Fort Valley and Savannah. "A project of this importance needs continuing community support and together we can make a difference in the lives of a substantial number of people," said Ms. Thurmond.

For more information about HEART, contact Ms. Barbara Thurmond, Blacks Against Blacks Crimes, Inc. president at 706-737-0054 or Bthurmond1991@aol.com.

Spotlight On Outstanding Partners in 2004

To continue our Spotlight series, we take a look at seven people who have made significant contributions to and have worked diligently within this community and the ARCCP. These seven people were awarded for their hard work during the 2004 Annual Meeting.



Shakeitrice Stokes

Award: Outstanding Youth Ambassador

Profession: Senior at AR Johnson High School

Contributions: Representing the ARCCP at various community activities and youth leadership conferences. Serving as a member of the ARCCP Youth Advisory Council, Rosa T. Beard Debutante Club, Teens in Action with Goals. Volunteered at the Augusta Urban Ministries, Medical College of Georgia Children's Medical Center, McDuffie Woods Community Center and Eisenhower Army Medical Center. Participant in the School-to-Work program at Savannah River Site.

What Others Say: "Over the years, Shakeitrice has developed from a seemingly shy and quiet person into a responsible, talented and motivated young woman who sets goals, has a positive attitude, and possesses excellent communication skills. She is also fun loving, charming and enthusiastic. She is one of our community's future leaders." Alicia Sanchez, ARCCP Outreach/Adolescent Program Manager.

Allison Campbell

Award: Outstanding Collaborative Supporter

Profession: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Analyst, Richmond County Board of Education

Contributions: Impacting the lives of school aged children and the community by implementing drug and violence awareness and prevention programs. Additionally, she has extensive experience working with families through the Department of Families and Children Services (DFCS); the Workforce Investment Act (formerly JTPA) and providing counseling to service members as a Drug and Alcohol specialist with the United States Army. She works diligently in the community as a trainer for the University of Georgia's Office of Adolescent Health and Youth Development department, RIMTACC (Reducing Infant Mortality Through a Christian Community) and Lutheran Services of Georgia's Child Care Referral Resources Organization.

What Others Say: "She is a very confident young lady full of fresh, new ideas and always interested in helping and getting the job done." Carol Roundtree, Richmond County Board of Education Guidance, Testing & Research Director.



Cynthia Nafarrete, MD

Award: Outstanding Community Volunteer

Profession: Pediatrician, Santo Nino Pediatric Clinic

Contributions: Providing care (including medicines and vaccines) to those in need regardless of their ability to pay and services to those in need through St Vincent DePaul Latino Health Services and the 30906 Neighborhood Improvement Project Clinic. She supports the ARCCP's outreach to Spanish speaking clients via health education and other services.

What Others Say: "A loving person, especially of children" and says that is why she chose to specialize in pediatrics. She likes helping others and that is why she provides free services for those who cannot afford it." Alberto Nafarrete, Loving Husband

Brian Mulherin

Award: Outstanding Community Volunteer

Profession: Public Relations Officer Volunteer, East Central Regional Hospital

Contribution: Served on the Board of many community organizations, advocates for many community organizations to include the ARCCP, and has been the recipient of numerous awards recognizing his volunteer efforts and successes. Co-chaired the fundraising committee to build the Madonna wing at St Joseph's Hospital, raised funds for the United Way, serves as the Disaster Chairman for the American Red Cross and played Santa Claus for a number of community organizations, to name a few.

What Others Say: "Brian Mulherin believes in helping his community through leadership in local organizations and hands-on volunteer service. Mr. Mulherin's sense-of-humor is his trademark. With wit and wisdom, he has served many community organizations." Jo Endres Maypole, President of the United Way of the CSRA



Marian & Shaquile Bey

Award: Outstanding Family Representatives

Profession: Medical Administrative Clerk & Juvenile Probation Officer

Contribution: Untiring devotion to healthy family living and their support of the mission and vision of the ARCCP to improve the lives of children and families, eager to learn all they could about having a healthy baby and sought all the education they could to help them nurture their baby before and after the birth. Even though they both worked, they found the time to attend sessions together.

What Others Say: "Marian's words best describe the type of person that she and her husband are... 'We really want to be a part of what you all are doing, more than just as parents. Our kids in the community really do need the help and you all (partners) are doing a lot to help'." Mary Kay Sykes, ARCCP High-Risk Case Manager.



Carol Davis

Award: Outstanding Family and Children's Advocate

Profession: Therapist, Family Counseling Center

Contribution: Provided social work and counseling services to families in every conceivable context (extended families, families headed by grandparents and other relatives, seniors and incarcerated family members). Member of the Augusta Unit of the National Association of Social Workers and was recognized as its Social Worker of the Year in 1998. Affiliated with a number of community agencies such as the Area Agency on Aging, Prevent Child Abuse Augusta, and the Safe Communities Coalition.

What Others Say: "Carol is a tireless advocate for children and families. She is a very qualified and talented therapist with a very encyclopedic knowledge of community resources." Danny Wright, Executive Director, Family Counseling Center



Shirley Norman

Award: Outstanding Family and Children's Advocate

Profession: New Connection to Work Program Coordinator, Augusta Technical College

Contribution: Member of the Membership Council's Family Functioning Committee and served on the ARCCP Board of Trustees

What Others Say: "There are some people in this world who truly believe that: there is good in each of us; that each of us is special; and that each of us, with a bit of a push, can be all that we want to be. Shirley is one of those people. It is no wonder that she is so committed. You see, she is the eldest of seven children." Robetta D. McKenzie, ARCCP Executive Director.





353 Telfair Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901

Mark Your Calendars

May 17, 6 PM - 8 PM

Real Life. Real Talk.

To be held at Augusta State University, Washington Hall Room 116. For more information contact Shanie Scott at 706-724-5550.

May 19, 3:30 PM

Children's Week Meeting

To be held at the Department of Family and Children Services. For more information contact Barbara Pignotti, 706-721-4900.

May 21, 10 AM - 2 PM

Use Your Brain, Just Abstain... Choose Abstinence!

To be held at Tubman Middle School. For more information contact Mary Stacy, 706-721-5853.

May 24, 12 PM - 1:30 PM

Membership Council Meeting/ Building the Children's Agenda

To be held at the Boathouse. For more information contact

Barbara Pignotti, 706-721-4900.

June 6-July 22, 4 PM - 8 PM

MACH Academy Summer Camp

Fleming Tennis Center. For more information contact Betty Jones, 706-796-5046.

June 16, 3:30 PM

Children's Week Meeting

To be held at the Department of Family and Children Services. For more information contact Barbara Pignotti, 706-721-4900.

August 23, 12 PM - 1:30 PM

Membership Council Meeting

Location TBA. For more information contact Barbara Pignotti, 706-721-4900.

Visit us at www.ARCCP.net
for a complete listing of
upcoming events and
information.

Special Requests from the ARCCP....

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers and interns are always welcome at the ARCCP. We need help in various areas such as data entry, event coordinating and other administrative tasks. For more information, contact Chavone Glover at 706-721-1869.

ADOPT A FAMILY

Would you like to adopt a family? There are many families in Richmond County that are in need of food, clothing, blankets and other essential items. By providing a family with items they need, you are helping them get through a difficult time in their lives. For more information, please contact Katrina Aaron at 706-721-4884.

Questions, comments or submissions* should be directed to:
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*For the next issue, please submit articles and events by June 15, 2005.



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