



Our mission is to promote the well being of children from birth by supporting and strengthening their families in and with their communities.

Spring 2007

Family Network 330 Laurel Avenue Highland Park, IL 60035 847/433- 0377

HEALTHY, RIGHT FROM THE START

For almost 12 years, the Right From The Start (RFTS) program has been achieving its goal of supporting and educating low-income Latino families in Highland and Highland Park. We are constantly assessing our families' needs and planning new strategies to help fill service gaps encountered by our participants.

We provide our clients with support, parenting education, and ESL classes to help them acculturate to the U.S., get better jobs, and keep up with their school-age children's homework.

We offer jewelry and sewing classes to help our moms channel their creativity, improve their self-esteem, and teach them skills that increase their family incomes.

Encouraging Healthier Lifestyles

In addition to our well attended prenatal groups that help parents prepare for successful deliveries, and our home visits that promote healthy child and parental development, some newer programs that we are very excited about include Fiesta Fitness, yoga, diabetes education, and nutrition education. Our goal is to provide our clients with tools for healthier life styles.

We provide them with several culturally appropriate activities designed to increase awareness of the importance of healthy eating, exercise, and the adverse health consequences of being overweight or obese.

In the nutrition class, a collaboration with the University of Illinois Extension Family Nutrition Program, mothers learn about healthy eating, managing their food budget, making healthy and smart choices when planning their meals, and basic nutrition.

If you stop by Family Network on



Tina Malnati demonstrates improving communication with one's baby through touch to the Mi Bebé Y Yo group.

Tuesdays or Thursdays in the early afternoon you will find RFTS participants engaged in one of our exercise classes.

Fiesta Fitness is a fun and energetic class to attend. The instructor who facilitates this aerobics class uses Latin music, while moms dance and move along to the rhythms of salsa, merengue, reggaeton, and cumbia. This feast of rhythms is the perfect way to burn calories. It sounds exhilarating and it really is!

In the yoga sessions, the instructor helps our moms learn how to stretch their muscles, breathe, relax, and meditate. This class is perfect for helping them to cope with the emotional and physical stress and demands of parenting young children.

Diabetes Prevention

We are also promoting diabetes education and prevention. We had an information workshop about diabetes prevention in which we distributed blood sugar monitors. In March and April, in collaboration with the University of Illinois Extension, we will offer two workshops called Dining With Diabetes, designed to teach families to prepare

meals that can control diabetes. Each session will include tips for managing diabetes, cooking demonstrations, and tasting of healthy recipes.

Mexican Americans are 1.7 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age, and 9.5 percent of Hispanics aged 20 years or older have been diagnosed with diabetes. We want to improve the odds for our families. This is why it is crucial that our young families receive education about diabetes.

In the future, we will be collecting, and, where necessary, modifying, participant recipes to create a bilingual (Spanish/English) cookbook of healthy Mexican dishes.

Family Wellness

A recent addition to our efforts to improve our clients' family health, is our Couples Group. Facilitated by a prevention educator from the University of Illinois Extension, this psycho-educational group promotes family health by strengthening marital relationships while emphasizing the importance of consistent parenting approaches. It has been very well attended and parents like it because it provides them with a non-threatening space to talk about a variety of issues impacting their relationships. Recent topics have included improving spousal communication, and understanding and living with each other's differences.

RFTS is looking forward to continuing to improve different aspects of the Latino family wellbeing. Suggestions and collaborations are always welcome!

*Nora Barquin, PhD, MSW
RFTS Program Coordinator*

RFTS Spring/Summer Calendar

PARENT EDUCATION SPEAKERS

March 27 & April 3

Dining With Diabetes. Barbara Farner, University of Illinois Extension.

April 10

District 112 Preschool Programs

April 17

What You Need to Know About Mental Health. Digna Rivera, Family Services Prevention, Education & Counseling.



RFTS jewelry-making at the Art Cen-

April 24, May 22, & June 12

"Tell Me A Story." Melanie Getto, Highland Park Public Library.

May 15

STD Prevention. Claudia Larson, Lake County Health Department.

May 29

Family Planning. Olivia Aguado, Lake County Health Department.

June 5

Immigration Information. TBA



GROUPS

Mondays

Art (at SFAC) 9:30-11:30 am
Toddler Play 10:00-11:00 am
Sewing Class 12:30-2:00 pm

Tuesdays

School Readiness 12:15-1:30 pm
Parent Education 12:30-2:00 pm
Fiesta Fitness 1:30-2:30 pm
Prenatal Education 5:00-8:00 pm

Wednesdays & Fridays

ESL Classes 12:00-2:00 pm

Thursdays

Mi Bebé Y Yo 10:00-11:00 am
Nutrition 12:30-1:30 pm
Yoga Fitness 1:30-2:30 pm
Couples 6:00-8:00 pm

SPECIAL EVENTS

April 28

Dia de los Niños

May 8

Mother's Day Celebration

June (Date TBA)

Annual RFTS Picnic

ASAP Offers A Window To The World

Do you know your geography? The students at ASAP do, thanks to the Educators of Tomorrow group from Highland Park High School. As part of an ongoing series on geography, ASAP students are enlightened about other countries and cultures through a series of interactive talks and discussions. At one recent presentation on Tibet at our Wayne Thomas site, one student asked if this was where Tibetan terriers came from. This wonderful interaction is a prime example of how ASAP, through its community collaborations, promotes global awareness and understanding.

It has been a busy and wonderful winter for ASAP at Indian Trail and

Wayne Thomas schools. The children enjoyed playing outside late into the year, and are looking forward to the return of warmer weather. In the meantime, the teachers have provided extraordinary activities for the children, including working with music, a rope challenge, science experiments, arts & crafts, and cooking projects.

For the first time, Indian Trail joined with Wayne Thomas on some full days. The children enjoyed getting to know new friends and staff, and the fun projects that were offered. ASAP is very grateful for the generous support of families & friends who continue to



donate gifts, materials, and equipment that enhance our programs.

Wayne Thomas student Zoe Gasson shared this beautiful insight about what ASAP means to her: "The teachers are very kind and think about your feelings. They are playful and still have the kid part in them."

All of us want to acknowledge our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to former ASAP Director Lori Levitt who left in late December. Lori did a superb job of both managing and growing the program to what it is today. We wish her and her family all the best in the future.

On March 5th Bobbie Hinden began as the new ASAP Director. A long-time local resident, Bobbie has a master's degree in special education, is an accomplished jeweler, and has been active in a variety of leadership positions in the community. We welcome Bobbie and look forward to her contributions.

We would like to thank the students and parents of ASAP for teaching us so much and choosing to be a part of our program.



Notes From the Parent/Child Center

Terry Beem, MEd
Program Coordinator

As all of us who live in this climate know, winter can be a stressful time for families with young children, with seemingly endless rounds of illness, limited opportunities to be outdoors, and the resulting sense of isolation that parents at home may experience. It is clear that supportive connections with others, "networks" of friends and families, are one of the best ways of improving emotional and physical health for ourselves and for our children.

That's why Family Network was founded, of course – to provide a place where parents can get out of the house, connect with others, and form relationships which will help them to raise healthy families.

I am very proud to be part of such a dedicated network of parents, staff, and supporters who continue to work together to strengthen families in our community.

The Parent/Child Center staff and I are especially grateful to all the parents and Board members who have given so generously of their time, energy and talents this year to renovate our Parent Room, and to support our programs

14th Annual Mother's Day Celebration & Concert

Please join us on Thursday, May 10 from 10:00-11:30 am for our annual celebration of mothering. We will decorate our traditional fancy newspaper hats, followed by a multi-cultural, bilingual concert in the gym featuring our very own talented singer & musician Lia McCoo. Lia's interactive performances are a delight for children of all ages! Grandparents, friends, and family are all invited.



(l to r) Tyler, Mimi, Jane, Noemy, and Grace make snow.

through their fundraising efforts at the Holiday Bazaar and the Stroll the Kohl benefit.

We are excited to be offering two new groups this spring, Baby Beginnings and a Dinner, Discussion and Play Group for Single Parents and Their Children. As we plan for our upcoming 25th anniversary year, we continue to need and appreciate your help in spreading the word about Family Network in your

communities.

It can be hard to come out to a new place, especially for first time parents or newcomers to the area. We encourage you to invite another parent to meet you at drop-in, or to come a special event such as our Mother's Day Celebration & Concert in May.



Dehumidifiers Needed!

If you would like to donate one (or more) in good condition to the Drop-In, please contact Terry Beem at 847/433-0377.



Spring Drop-In Hours

Tue – Fri 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Drop-In Closed

Friday, May 4 for Staff Inservice

Aug 14 - Sep 7 for Summer Vacation

Summer Hours June 19 - August 9

Tuesday-Thursday 9:30-11:30 am

Parent Meetings

April 13, May 11, June 8

Fridays 10:00-11:00 am

Groups

Grandparents Together

TBA

Baby Beginnings

Tuesdays 1:00-2:30 pm

Postpartum Depression/Anxiety Support

Wednesdays 1:00-2:30 pm

Single Parent Dinner/Discussion

Wednesdays 6:00-7:30 pm

Special Events

Wednesday, April 25 6:00-7:30 pm

Spring Family Night t

Wednesday, 4th of July 10:00am

Highland Park 4th of July Parade

Thursday, July 19 5:30-7:30 pm

Annual Summer Picnic



CHERYL'S CORNER

Self Care for the Caretaker

Is Anybody Out There?



Caring for the unremitting needs of young children can be stressful, and at Family Network we often share suggestions for handling stress. Some stress is positive, and can lead us to exhilarating experiences. But stress can also create temporary or lasting negative effects on our bodies and minds.

It is helpful to learn what triggers our own reactions in various situations, and to develop a variety of techniques which can prepare us to cope with feelings of being "out of control." Recently, at the Parent/Child Center, we have had programs on meditation and yoga, practices which promote relaxation and re-balancing. Here are some ideas for nurturing the body, mind, and spirit:

1. Exercise – even a short walk can do wonders for your mood!
2. Learn techniques such as meditation, visualization, tai chi, yoga.
3. Reassess your sleeping and eating habits, and make changes if you can.

4. Dance, sing, listen to a favorite piece of music, watch a favorite movie or read a wonderful book.
5. Talk to a friend or supportive family member.
6. Keep a journal.
7. Reframe negative emotions and thoughts; seek out a therapist if necessary to help.
8. Pamper yourself with a massage, manicure, pedicure, or a luxurious candlelit bath with mineral salts or essential oils.
9. Share child care with friends, or hire a babysitter, so you will have some time for yourself.
10. Savor an ice cream cone, some gourmet chocolate, or whatever you like best - without guilt!
11. Do something playful, even silly, with others or all by yourself.
12. Breathe.
13. Come to Family Network!

PARENT/CHILD CENTER CALENDAR

Speakers

Programs are free and are held from 10:00 - 11:15 am.

BABY & ME ROOM

Wednesday, April 18

Motherhood: Expecting the Unexpected
Join Ruth Sterlin, LCSW, from Jewish Child & Family Services, for a discussion of the complex changes which motherhood brings.

Tuesday, May 22

Breastfeeding Matters

Join Highland Park Hospital Lactation Consultant Cecelia Deslauriers, R.N., for this informative discussion of common breastfeeding problems, weaning, and nursing toddlers.

Wednesday, June 13

Infant CPR & First Aid

This hands-on workshop will review the basics of what to do in an emergency with your infant. Led by Darline Scott, R.N., from the North Shore Health Center in Highland Park.

PARENT ROOM

Tuesday, April 24

Talking About Sensitive Issues:
Words That Work

Ruth Greenthal, Ph.D., will suggest developmentally appropriate ways of talking to children about difficult topics such as death, violence, divorce, or sexuality.

Wednesday, May 9

Massage for Moms

(and Dads and Caregivers, too!)

For our special pre-Mother's Day program, certified massage therapists will provide ten minute chair or table massages.

Tuesday, May 15

Financial Strategies For Your Children
Ron Bernstein, CPA, with CG Financial Inc., will discuss several strategies that will help you plan for your children's education and future security.



Wednesday, May 30

Setting Limits: A Family Affair

Christina Sofiakis, LCSW, brings an holistic approach to this always-relevant topic.

Volunteer Energizes RFTS Moms

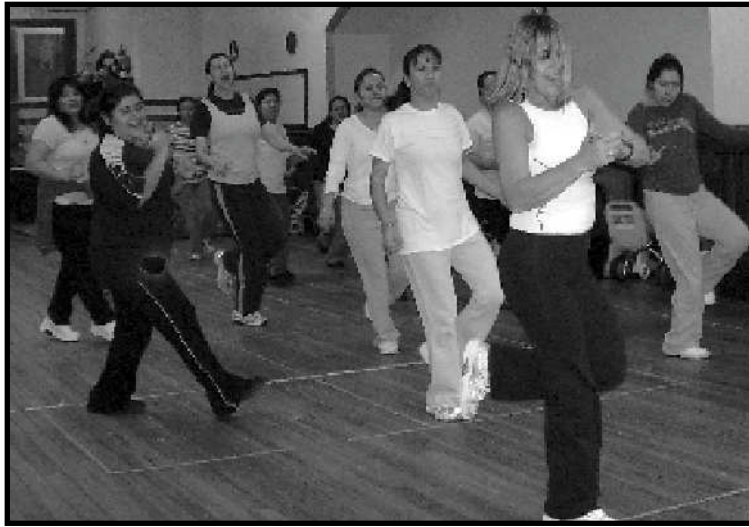
Cristina Persico says she enjoys “the energy that goes back and forth” when she leads the weekly Fiesta Fitness class for mothers in the Right from the Start program.

An engaging beat fills the church gym where Family Network holds many of its events, as more than Cristina (in white tank top) leading the Fiesta Fitness group. a dozen participants

follow Cristina as she waves her arms, pumps her legs and sways her hips

“I have a passion for movement,” Cristina explained. Born in Buenos Aires, Cristina has been dancing since she was four and was a professional Latin American folk dancer before she and her husband moved to the Chicago area in 1987.

Cristina believes that expressing herself through movement, music and exercise has allowed her to meet the challenges in her life. Her husband died in 2001, a year before the death of her 10-year-old daughter from cancer. Cristina is proud of her son, 22, a graduate of Emory College who works for Merrill Lynch in Atlanta, and of her daughters, 18 and 13, who live with her



in Winnetka.

When Nora Barquin took an exercise class with Cristina at the Wilmette Park District, the RFTS coordinator knew that “our mothers would love it, too.” Cristina said she’d be happy to lead the group as a volunteer.

As in all RFTS programs, child care is offered while the mothers dance to stay fit. The program is as successful as Nora predicted. Maria Ramirez said the program “helps take away my stress,” while Elizabeth Gonzalez likes “relaxing and dancing and working together.” For Laura Rios, Fiesta Fitness is important because it is a chance “to take time for ourselves.”

Carol Brusslan

Director's Column

Jordan Friedman, MSW, LCSW

Although it has been a chilly winter, we have all been kept warm inside by the presence of happy and engaged children and families participating in our programs.

The Parent/Child Drop-In Center has been busy with new groups, outreach efforts and special event offerings including a recent intergenerational Valentine’s concert by Nelson Gill. His performance got everyone up and dancing to the scintillating rhythms of the Caribbean.

The Right From The Start program continues to grow and be responsive to the needs of their participants. In addition to the couple’s support series, RFTS offers toddler activities and a kindergarten readiness group.

The ASAP program has been flourishing with stimulating enrichment activities offered at each site. Children, families and staff enjoyed pizza and each other’s company at the Family Nights held at both schools.

On March 3rd family, friends and staff gathered to unveil the new Marisa Ness Memorial Parent Lounge. We are grateful to Marisa’s family and friends who donated resources and time to enhance the space. A dedicated group of Marisa’s friends and other Family Networkers planned and carried out the renovations in late summer of last year. We thank Marisa Ozburn, Kirsten Laurie, Michelle Holleman, Tracy Segal, Martha Abelson, LeeAnn Delli and John Moore for their time, energy and talents. Marisa will be missed, but we take comfort in knowing that her legacy and spirit will remain in the place that helped foster so many important relationships in her life.

Lastly I wanted to acknowledge our sincere gratitude to Lori Levitt who left Family Network in December. Lori’s contributions to the formation and administration of the After School Activity Program are too numerous to mention. Although Lori now has more time to dedicate to her own family, she will always have a community of Family Networkers available to her.

Stratego Champ



After three grueling rounds, a winner was declared for the Wayne Thomas ASAP Stratego Tournament.

Congratulations, Joey!



President's Column

Marisa and I decided that our unofficial theme of the year would be collaboration. We used the word when we sent out our first mailing informing people of our decision to become co-presidents of the Board of Directors. Collaboration was important because neither of us felt we could do the job alone, but with the help of one another we could be effective and successful.

Interestingly, collaboration is also what our parent organization, Family Focus, highlighted at its annual Board of Directors meeting this past January. In 2006, Family Focus collaborated with hundreds of organizations in each of the communities it serves. Without community, Family Network would not

*Kirsten Laurie, Co-President
Family Network Board of Directors*

be able to provide the vast array of services it offers. The agencies with which we have collaborated, and which have allowed Family Network to increase and diversify its programming, were acknowledged in the Fall 2006 Family Networker.

Our continued success is based in large part on our collaborative efforts. Family Network continues to grow and build connections with families because of all of the people who contribute their time, money, and resources. Thank you all for helping us make Family Network thrive and working with us to provide great programs that reach beyond our own capabilities.



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HELGA SCHRIMMER Teacher
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JULIE WENDT Teacher

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ELVA VELEZ Teacher
MELISA LARSON Indian Trail Coordinator
LIA MCCOO Teacher
MARINA SHUBIN Teacher

THE KOHL EXPERIENCE



Gwen is enthralled by the Water Works display during Family Network's 5th annual benefit at the Kohl Children's Museum. This year's parent-run benefit, which raised over \$10,000, was attended by 60 families and was the most financially successful ever.

Welcome New Board Members

Family Network is proud to introduce some of the newest members of our increasingly diverse Board.

Alicia De La Cruz is the Fair Housing Coordinator for the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs. A resident of Highland Park and Mexican immigrant, she is an active volunteer with both FN and the Latino Leadership Project.

Jeanette Ramirez's (not pictured) involvement with FN began with son Jared attending ASAP at Indian Trail. She is National Director of Discover

Financial Services, and was impressed both by Jared's experiences and FN's other family support offerings.

Michelle Holleman, former FN mom and co-founder of FN's Kohl fundraiser, holds a master's degree from Northwestern University and works as full-time mom and part-time communications consultant.



Candidates interested in joining our exciting board, please contact Jordan Friedman at 847/433-0377 x 302 or jordan.friedman@family-focus.org.

Tribute Cards

In Memory Of

In Honor Of

Lawrence Incorvia
 Angela & Fredric Goldboss

Marisa Landa Ness
 Patricia M. Bliss
 Marianne Chao
 Lorraine & Terrance De Mars
 Diane & Glenn DeBell
 Lois Falberg & Brian Sinder
 Jennifer Feinberg
 Karl J Landa
 Michelle & Thomas Holleman
 Wendy & Douglas Klatt
 Christine & John Peschier
 Gina Schmeling & Alani Golanski
 Gail & Lewis Segal
 David Sullivan
 Dana & Charles Teeter

Beatrice Shapiro
 Renee & Gerald Kane

Phil & Anna Smith
 Suzanne & Robert Weiseneck

Terry Beem
 Julie & Marc Levin

Susan & Geoffrey Grossman
 Nancy & Alan Goldberg
 Michael D. Miselman

Dr. Lester D. Kaplin
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Geraldine Krasner
 Andrea & Gerald Whitman

Isaac Alarico Krasner
 Geraldine & Ronald Krasner

Patty Pell
 Karen & Michael Bashkin
 The Coleman Family
 Ilene & David Deyoe
 Barbara & Richard Hinden

Audrey Rosenheim
 Jill & Joel Hurwitz

Sonia Swanson
 Joyce Abrams
 Devra Eisen
 Phoebe & Ely Liebow

Cheryl Schultz
 Julie & Marc Levin

Caryn Platt Tatelli
 Eva & Arthur Helwing

Tributes provide an opportunity to honor loved ones. Please call the office (847/433-0377) for details.



Thanks to...

The Highland Park Presbyterian Church for providing our home.

Lisa Gansberg, chairperson of the Stroll at the Kohl 2007 committee.

Stash's for discount on dinners for the Single Parent Group.

Great Harvest, Once Upon a Bagel, & Sunset Foods, for donating baked goods.

Piero's Pizza for discount on pizza for Family Nights, ASAP and the Single Parent Group.

John Moore for handyman services.

Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission for funding the Nelson Gill Concert.

Trillium Foundation for support of Single Parent Group and ongoing ASAP support.

Sandy Incorvia for Valentine balloons.

Staff & Administrators at Wayne Thomas & Indian Trail schools.

Educators of Tomorrow Club at Highland Park High School.

Dr. Maureen Hager, Superintendent, North Shore School District #112 for ongoing ASAP support.

Staff & Students at the Firehouse North Shore School District #113 for providing ESL teachers and staff.

The Arts Center of Highland Park for RFTS group collaborations.

Our office and program volunteers.

The families who donated Cheerios and toys.

Sharing Traditions In The Parent Room



Lisa Beth Gansberg (l), Fabiola Toledo (r), and her mother were among the parents who created beautiful (and delicious) holiday cookie art during the monthly activity on Thursday's Dual Language mornings this winter. As part of our ongoing efforts to increase mutual understanding of our diverse cultural backgrounds, parents and staff are encouraged to share their own traditions in the coming months.

Family Networker Contributors

Martha Abelson, Kohl photo
 Julianne Brand, photos
 Carol Brusslan, photos
 Sonia Calles
 Bertha Chávez, photos
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 Charity Scott, advertising

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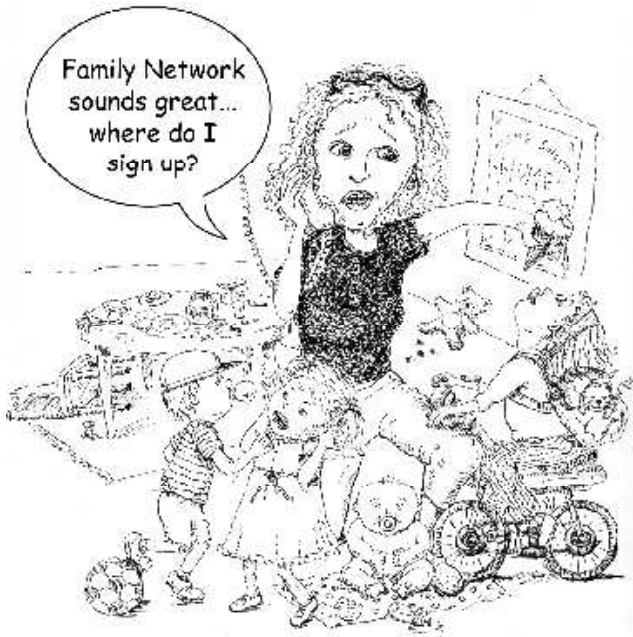
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Wine-tasting Benefit

June 9, 2007 4:30 - 7:00pm



On Saturday, June 9th, at 4:30 pm, Family Network's Board will host its Annual Spring Gala Event, at the Highland Park Community House. Family Network is pleased to honor the Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park for its many years of generously supporting the Right From The Start program. Like last year, the event will be a food and wine pairing. We will be pouring spectacular wines from: Kistler, Ramey, Sherrer, J Vineyards & Winery, Thomas Fogarty, Kendall-Jackson, and Prager Port Works. These unforgettable wines will be perfectly paired with foods from local restaurants.

Tickets cost \$80.00 per person, and are available in advance or at the door.
Please call 847/433-0377 for reservations and additional information.