

Minnesota Valley Action Council's Head Start Program

Annual Report to Public
June 2010 - July 2011

MISSION STATEMENT

Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. is a community action agency. We are for communities, not for profit. We have served the people of south central Minnesota since 1965. We believe that hard work should be valued and rewarded, that working people are struggling and that MVAC provides solutions. We develop resources and opportunities that empower people in low-wage work to secure affordable housing, viable transportation, employment, training for employment and educational opportunities for children. MVAC provides services in Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan counties.



HEAD START FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Head Start Funds -	467 children	\$2,843,329
Federal Training & Technical Assistance Funds		41,409
Minnesota Head Start Funds -	102 children	742,225
	Total 569 children	
Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - Reimbursement		145,315
ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act) through 9-30-10		<u>195,804</u>
	Total	\$3,968,082
Non- Federal Share (In-kind) Match -	required (including ARRA)	\$770,136
	collected	\$840,239

BUDGET

Wages	63%	Travel	3%
Fringe Total	18%	Supplies	4%
Contracts	10%	Other	6%
Training	1%		

ENROLLMENT

- Total actual enrollment for the year was 667.
- We maintained full enrollment of 569 throughout the year.
- 96% of the children were income eligible.

MONITORING REVIEW

- MVAC's Head Start program received an Office of Head Start Monitoring Visit in October 2010.
- There were five findings and they have since been corrected.
- Our program is scheduled to receive another Office of Head Start monitoring visit in FY2013 sometime after October 1, 2013.

ANNUAL REVIEW

- Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. receives an annual audit. There were no findings.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXAM RATE

- There were 667 children that were enrolled on and off during the year.
- Of this amount 95% children received a medical exam and 86% of the children received a dental exam.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Parent Involvement is the cornerstone of Head Start.
- It is our philosophy that the parent is the first teacher of the child.
- Parents serve as resource persons by being involved in curriculum development. They help plan field trips, multi-cultural experiences, volunteer, serve on their local parent committees, and attend Policy Council.
- At Policy Council and parent committee meetings, parents and staff are involved in planning and monitoring all parts of the program.
- Parents are asked for input into planning, implementing and evaluating the nutrition services through the volunteer meal evaluation form.
- Parents attend and participate in Policy Council, MVAC Board meetings, and sub-committees, and annual Self-Assessment.
- Robert's Rules of Order are implemented at Policy Council and at the Parent Meetings. This helps build skills of parents who are interested in attending or serving on local boards in their community. Parents are provided training and technical assistance in the areas of advocacy, parliamentary procedures, voting rights.
- Parents are provided information by Head Start staff pertaining to current legislative issues and events concerning Head Start, early childhood funding, and the progress of bills through the House and Senate at the state and federal level.
- Interested members from Policy Council are trained to be a part of the Personnel Committee that interviews applicants for Head Start job positions.
- Some programs invite fathers in for a "Game Day" where fathers play board games with the children for about an hour.
- Special projects in the classroom, home visits or field trips are planned based on the interests of the fathers.
- The Head Start Program co-hosted the annual "Fathers and Families Football Event" on October 16, 2010 at Minnesota State University-Mankato. Families were provided with food, free MSU football game tickets, prizes, chances to play games, and enjoy the day's festivities with each other and the community.

- In March 2011, a Wells Head Start Home Base parent received a special recognition, “Minnesota Head Start Heroes” award, sponsored by our MN Head Start Association. Heather was recognized in the category of “Head Start families who have accomplished significant life transformations.” A lovely awards ceremony along with a delicious luncheon was provided at the Science Museum of Minnesota.
- In February 2011 parents were asked to fill out a Parent Program Evaluation. 569 evaluations were given out and 389 (68%) families responded.

• Some of the comments that were written by the Head Start families:

~“Head Start has been great for my family. The staff has helped us find resources in the community to help with our family needs. They even helped us find a mental health specialist in the area for our son. He is now on the right track for social/emotional.”

~“I think the whole Head Start Staff does a wonderful job with all the children and does their best to accommodate all children for whatever disability or other problems they have! YOU GUYS ARE WONDERFUL!! Thanks”

~“My son gets to get out and interact with other children, and learn how to be away from family without anxiety.”

~“It is more interactive learning (very involved and hands-on).”

~“That my son comes home happy and can’t wait to tell me all about his day. And I am glad that he is outgoing, and talks to others more then before.”

~“I like that they come to the house.”

In addition to parent involvement and education services, Head Start also provides services in **health, disabilities, mental health, nutrition, social services** to prepare children for kindergarten.

HEALTH

- The Minnesota State University, Mankato’s Dental Hygiene Department provides dental assessments and complete fluoride treatments on all the children with parental permission. This is a special service to the Head Start children.
- An educational component is completed with the children on the day of the assessments and parents are invited to attend.
- Minnesota Valley Action Council is a member of the National VSP Sight for Students Program. Participating members provide eligible applicants with vouchers to receive a free eye exam and, if necessary, a pair of glasses annually.
- Head Start families received 48 vouchers for this program.
- In the spring parents are provided with an End of the Year Health summary that includes information on immunizations, screening results, and the date of most recent developmental, physical and dental exam and an Education portfolio to share with their next school setting.

DISABILITIES

- Head Start staff regularly attend school district IEP/IIIP meetings with Head Start parents to help with questions and advocating for their child.
- Head Start staff encourage relationships to be built with Head Start family/child and Kindergarten/school staff.

MENTAL HEALTH

- The Mental Health Advisor has worked with the state on developing system-wide mental health care coordination.
- In the last year, MVAC’s Head Start program has hosted DC: 0-3R and ECSII training for therapists. With these systems in place, Head Start families will be able to have sustainable mental health resources in their community after they have left the Head Start program.

- In addition, MVAC's Head Start program has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with Counseling Services of Southern Minnesota to work collaboratively together to develop access and availability of medically necessary mental health for children and families.
- Collaborating with social services and district personnel will provide seamless services while families are in Head Start and as they transition out of Head Start.
- The Mental Health referral system continues to increase in the capacity to serve Head Start children and families.

NUTRITION

- In September 2010, 19 Head Start staff took part in a ServSafe Course through the University of Minnesota Extension Program.
- 17 staff successfully completed the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination and were eligible to apply for their Food Manager Certification through the State of Minnesota.
- Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, Head Start partnered with the local University of Minnesota Extension's Simply Good Eating Program to evaluate the Nutrition Assessments completed for each Head Start child.
- The Extension staff reviewed the nutrition assessments and recommended nutritional information to give to parents based on the needs cited in the nutrition assessment.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Family Partnership Agreements were planned with 616 families.
- A variety of goals were set based on the needs of the parent such as obtaining a GED and post secondary education, finding a medical home, finding better housing, and setting dental and/or medical appointments.
- Staff have been trained in Financial Literacy and offer support resources to families looking to better their credit reports, budget planning, importance of saving for the future and obtaining checking accounts.

EDUCATION

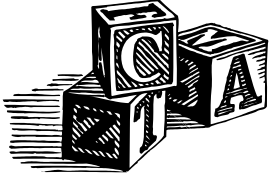
- Parents are provided education and training to help prepare them to exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the school settings.
- Parents receive information about questions they can ask at their child's kindergarten conferences. Staff also provide information to parents about possible elementary school involvement i.e. PTO, Title 1, classroom volunteering, etc. Parents are kept informed about their community's Kindergarten round-ups.
- There were 343 kindergarten aged children that transitioned from Head Start in May 2011.
- The AmeriCorps MN Reading Corps program placed 5 members in our Mankato Head Start site, Fairmont site and another in our Waseca center program. These READS members provide early literacy enrichment and reading support to Head Start students who are not being served by Early Childhood Special Education.

AGENCY'S EFFORTS TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

- MVAC's Head Start program uses the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment, IGDI's (Individual Growth & Development Indicators) and the New Portage Guide to show growth & progress of an individual, classroom and the total program.
- Various data from the Teaching Strategies GOLD can be collected to use and plan activities for children in small groups and for individual children.

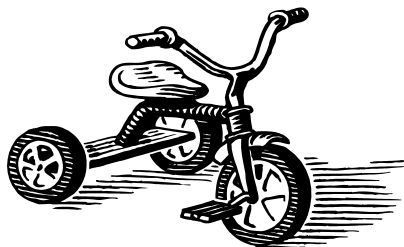
**MVAC's Head Start Program
Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Data
for the 2010-2011 School Year**

The charts below show the percentage of children who have met developmental and cognitive goals by Spring.



3 and 4 year olds	
Spring 2011	
Social Emotional	85%
Physical	93%
Cognitive	90%
Mathematics	74%
Language	84%
Literacy	90%

Literacy Skills	3 and 4 year olds
Demonstrates phonological awareness	86%
Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet	84%
Comprehends and responds to books and other texts	90%
Demonstrates emergent writing skills	96%
Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses	92%



0-3 HIGH RISK HOME BASE

- MVAC also receives State monies to operate a 0-3 High Risk Home Base program.
- This option was started in November 2009 and serves pregnant women, children ages birth to 3 years old and living in Blue Earth County.
- We have focused specifically on providing Head Start services to those in homeless transitional housing, teen parents, child protection cases, refugees/immigrants and/or abuse shelter.
- This program uses the Growing Great Kids curriculum. Beginning prenatally, Growing Great Kids is a comprehensive curriculum that supports the development of nurturing and empathetic parent-child relationships for 0 to 3 year olds.
- It provides Early Head Start programs with materials and strategies for offering a fully integrated, seamless approach to families participating in their home visiting and center-based programs.
- The Growing Great Kids Curriculum has a built-in family service element providing step-by-step guides for assisting parents in identifying their values, using their personal assets to reduce stress, learning how to solve problems, utilizing community resources and re-focusing on their children during difficult times.
- Home Visitors learn how to motivate parents to be their child's favorite teacher within the context of their family's values, traditions and culture.

- In the fall of 2010, Head Start received 10 IBM Little Tykes Young Explorer computer systems for the classroom sites as part of an exciting venture to promote technology and early learning from SMIF (Southern MN Initiative Foundation). Classroom sites that received the computers this year included: Mankato, Winthrop, Fairmont, Wells, New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, LeCenter, and St. Peter.
- The Head Start Program was awarded a \$10,000 Home Visiting matching grant from SMIF (Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation) in January 2011 to be used to enhance our relationship based Home Base model through Reflective Supervision with staff, using an outside consultant.
- The community has contributed over \$813,386.17 to our Head Start programs through in-kind match.
- We ensured that 845 children were screened for vision and hearing through our Head Start program.
- We provided 150 picture & story books for the children in our 0-5 High Risk Home Base program. The books were courtesy of a grant from SMIF (Southern MN Initiative Foundation).
- We provided 51,064 bus rides to children in center, combination and home based programs through Head Start.
- MVAC Head Start's collaboration with Minnesota Reading Corps resulted in the award of 5 Member slots in the Fairmont, Mankato and Waseca classrooms. Members serve for one year as a Literacy Tutor, helping children develop literacy skills. Minnesota Reading Corps is a statewide initiative to help every Minnesota child become a successful reader. MRC is an AmeriCorps program, often called the "domestic Peace Corps."
- A collaboration between the Head Start program and Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation provided 4 Social/Emotional AmeriCorps Members to help children in the classrooms located in St. James, St. Peter, New Ulm and Waseca. The AmeriCorps Members work with children to build social/emotional skills to prepare them for Kindergarten, by helping them learn how to regulate their emotions and behaviors.
- We provided 1064 low-income children with quality pre-school opportunities through the efforts of Head Start.
- We have gotten 1704 volunteers to contribute their talents to serving south central Minnesota people who are struggling with poverty.
- In February 2011, MVAC received a grant from the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety for 25 child safety seats. There are two requirements with this grant: the seats must be distributed to low-income families and the recipient of each seat must attend an educational component presented by a current Child Passenger Safety technician. The Transportation & Nutrition Advisor conducted training for parents to fulfill the requirement.

**Head Start WORKS for
children, families, & communities!**