

**Lewis County Fire House – Super Saturday** By Cheryl Wolfe

Winter 2009

Inside this issue:

Conferences & Tier Information	2
Med. Admin.	
Training	3
WVIT Class Schedule	4
Training Topics	5&6
Training calendar & New Staff	7&8
News Articles	9
Wintertime Activities	10

The place to be for the most exciting trainings, greatest resources, and mouth-watering delicious snacks was the Lewis County Volunteer Fire House on October 18, 2008, for our Fall Super Saturday. We had 52 providers register for this event, but only 30 participants arrived for a fun and informative day.

The day started at 8:30 a.m. with our new trainer, **Tara Bowley**, presenting "All Aboard with Autism!". She gave providers new facts and figures on the research that is being conducted on the growing disorder of autism. A new case is diagnosed almost every 20 minutes, and 1 in 150 children are diagnosed with autism. She gave providers early signs to recognize and suggested activities that they may incorporate into their daily routines.

**Marsha Boyles and Brenda Hinkle** presented (Domestic Violence + Positive Adult Response = Happy Healthy Newborns). They stressed the importance of emotional

bonding with all children, but how it is vital for children who have been exposed to domestic violence to receive this in order not to suffer distinct changes in brain structure.



**Susie Davis** presented half of the training entitled "Hot Seats." She reviewed WV child passenger laws and gave a hands-on demonstration of how to install child safety seats. **The Lewis County Volunteer Fire Department** finished up

the last half of this training with information about fire safety in the home. They gave providers the opportunity to use a fire extinguisher to put out a real fire.



Everyone received a lot of important information in hand-outs and they were also able to leave with learning resources to use in their child care businesses. Special thanks to **Cathy Fisher** from the Lewis County office who provided the delicious snacks and all the other people who made this day a success.

**Center Director's Meeting Scheduled**  
January 16  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church  
Charleston, WV  
Additional information will be sent later

**Mr. Kincaid Retires**  
Larry Kincaid, Region V Child Care Resource and Referral Program Director, recently retired from MountainHeart Community Services, Inc. Mr. Kincaid served as the Program Director for Region V since October 2004. We wish him the best and hope that he enjoys retirement.

**SUPER SATURDAY IN RANDOLPH COUNTY**  
February 7, 2009  
Elkins Days Inn  
1200 Harrison Avenue, Elkins, WV 26241  
8:30-10:30 Communicating & Building Relationships with Families  
10:45-12:45 Firearm Safety in the Home  
1:15-3:15 Fun with Food, A Science Exploration  
Door Prizes will be given away between sessions!  
Register by 2-2-09



## MountainHeart Staff Attend NAEYC Conference By Melodee Price



Melodee Price and Cheryl Wolfe, Early Childhood Specialists, attended the 2008 annual conference for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in Dallas, Texas from November 5-8. More than 20,000 early childhood professionals from around the world attended the conference and expo. They learned up-to-date information related to children, the business of child care and visited many vendors that had displays pro-

moting products and quality child care. One of the vendors, Target, brought their mascot, Bullseye, which is pictured at the left.

Melodee and Cheryl will share the information from the conference through trainings that are offered through MountainHeart. To learn more you can visit the websites at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) and/or [www.mountain-heart.org/ccsnorth.htm](http://www.mountain-heart.org/ccsnorth.htm)

## Tiered Reimbursement for Child Care Providers By Melodee Price

Have you been hearing other child care providers talk about the tiered reimbursement? Have you been wondering what is meant by Tier II? Confused? Well, you aren't the only one. :) MountainHeart will be offering a training this quarter to try and help child care providers through the application process to apply for Tiered Reimbursement. If you are working towards Tier II, this means you are trying to meet certain criteria that will not only improve your business of child care and provide quality care for the children that you work with, but it will also increase your wages that you are reimbursed for the care of subsidized children. The increase would be \$2.00 extra per day per subsidized child.

To download an application for the Tier II reimbursement go to [www.wvdhhr.org/](http://www.wvdhhr.org/). There are 3 different applications according to the level of care you are: Center, Facility, or a Family Child Care Home provider. The application will walk you through what requirements you must meet. If you have questions or need further information, contact Jessica Dianellos, formerly Jessica Crouch. (She recently married). Her phone number is (304) 558-6669 or you can e-mail her at [Jessica.L.Dianellos@wv.gov](mailto:Jessica.L.Dianellos@wv.gov)

**"Children need your presence more than your presents."**  
-Jesse Jackson

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### National & Regional Conferences for Early Childhood Professionals

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)  
Annual Conference  
June 25 – 27, 2009  
Baltimore, MD  
For more information, go to [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)  
Annual Conference  
January 29 – 31, 2009  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
For more information, go to [www.southernearlychildhood.org](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org)

Celebrating Connections  
February 25 – 27, 2009  
Charleston, WV  
For more information, go to [www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org)

## Medication Administration Trainings

Medication Administration training is being offered in our region. As per center licensing requirements, staff members who work in child care centers or Head Start and who administer medication must have medication administration training. These trainings are conducted through the WV DHHR Early Care and Education office & are WV S.T.A.R.S. approved. Training dates and sites are as follows:

- January 12, 2009 (Monday) at 4:00 p.m. in Elkins (Youth Health Service, Inc.)
- February 9, 2009 (Monday) at 11:30 a.m. in Martinsburg (MountainHeart office)
- February 14, 2009 (Saturday) at 10:00 a.m. in Kingwood (Wesley UM Church)
- March 16, 2009 (Monday) at 11:30 a.m. in Ranson (Lion's Club)

Class sizes are limited. Slots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. You **MUST PRE-REGISTER at least five (5) days in advance of the training session** by calling the Elkins MountainHeart office at (304) 637-2840 or 1-877-862-3103 (toll free).

**Space is limited. Only twelve participants per class will be allowed.** If all spaces are taken, you may place staff members on the waiting list in the event that a slot becomes available. If the minimum number of participants is not met for a training session, the session will be cancelled.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Staff members must be registered on the WV S.T.A.R.S. Career Pathway before taking the medication administration training.** You will not be permitted to attend the training session if you are not currently on the S.T.A.R.S. Career Pathway. **All participants will need to bring their S.T.A.R.S. Pathway certificate with ID number and/or their feedback letter from WV STARS stating that they have been approved and their certificate will be mailed soon. If staff attend the training and are not on the S.T.A.R.S. Career Pathway, the training will not count towards licensing requirements.**

The training session is 4 ½ hours long (including two 15 minute breaks).

Participants must pass the Medication Administration competency test with 80% accuracy in order to pass the training and obtain a certificate.

**Each participant must bring the following materials to the training:**

- Pencil or pen
- Paper
- 1 pair of non-latex gloves
- 1 doll baby

**Reminder: Children may not attend the training session.**

### **MCFRN—Mineral County FRN Training**

**“The Ins and Outs of Circle Time”**

Monday, March 9, Keyser 7pm –9pm

Thursday, March 12, Frankfort 7pm –9pm

Call the WVU Extension Service to register:

304-788-3621

**“In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure.”**

**Bill Cosby**

Do you work with children birth to 35 months of age? If so, the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Professional Development Program for Caregivers (WVIT) is for you. Come network with other providers as we learn about the importance of caring for yourself, developing positive relationships with families, supporting children's development and providing a quality program for infants and toddlers. WVIT is a 50 hour (10 sessions) course. Participants must be registered with STARS **prior** to beginning class and work at least 20 hours per week with children under age three. Upon completion, participants will be eligible for free resources for use in their child care home or center. Administrators are required to attend a one-time session prior to sending staff through the WVIT class and must also be registered with STARS.

Please call the Elkins office at 1-877-862-3103 or 637-2840 by **March 6, 2009** to register or if you have any questions.

**Classes will be rotated between Mineral and Hardy Counties.**

**We will confirm location information upon registration.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session</u>
March 12, 2009	Thursday	Administrator Session
March 26, 2009	Thursday	Session 1
March 31, 2009	Tuesday	Session 2
April 2, 2009	Thursday	Session 3
April 7, 2009	Tuesday	Session 4
April 23, 2009	Thursday	Session 5
April 28, 2009	Tuesday	Session 6
April 30, 2009	Thursday	Session 7
May 7, 2009	Thursday	Session 8
May 12, 2009	Tuesday	Session 9
May 19, 2009	Tuesday	Session 10

**Tentative schedule for future WVIT classes**

WVIT will be offered three times per year. If you are interested in participating in the WVIT program, please contact the Elkins office at 1-877-862-3103. The county with the most providers interested will likely be the county/ counties in which class will be held.

July-October- Berkeley, Jefferson, Morgan, Hampshire, and Mineral county area

November-February-Barbour, Lewis, Preston, Taylor and Upshur county area

March-June-Grant, Hardy, Pendleton, Randolph and Tucker county area

## TRAILS TIPS

By Janet Aitchison, TRAILS ECS

### ***Playing Outdoors***

Children need fresh air and sunshine (vitamin D). They also need to run and use those large muscles. Make a poster of outdoor clothing in the order that it needs to be put on. If art is not your thing, cut pictures from catalogs. When children see the snow pants before the coat, they won't put on their coat first and then look bewildered about getting into snow pants! When getting children dressed for outdoor adventures, have them lay their coats on the floor in front of them, zipper up, at their feet. Have them put their arms in the sleeves and flip the coat over their heads. Independence! Also have them start with the bottom when buttoning up their coats and jackets for a better chance of having all the buttons line up. Don't forget to visit the bathroom before the process begins. So bundle them up and take them outside, even if just for a short time.

## Interim Care Policy By Leann Andrew

Interim Care is to be used for customers who are on a break from school that is not more than 45 days long such as Spring Break and Christmas Break, it can not be used in the Summer. A provider can bill for this interim care use whether the child attends or not, Interim Care has to be put on the sign in and out sheets for this time. The child can only be billed for their regular time in care, for example: if a child goes to care three days a week, you can only bill for three days a week during interim care. The day care fee would remain the same for this time. Interim Care can also be used for customers who are laid off from work at regular times during the year such as a plant closing down the week of Christmas every year. It can not be used if a customer is laid off indefinitely. If you have any questions regarding Interim Care please feel free to contact your local MountainHeart office.

## Training Topics offered January-March 2009

**All Aboard with Autism!** Core Competency: Child Growth and Development. Tara Bowley will teach this two hour training on autism. The training will offer child care providers basic information on autism, and how they can modify regular activities to successfully engage children with autism. (Tier I)

**Characteristics and Needs of School Age Children.** Core Competency: Child Growth and Development. Tara Bowley will teach this two hour training on dealing with the physical, social-emotional, and cognitive needs of school age children. (Tier II)

**Child Abuse and Neglect: What is My Responsibility?** presented by Shelly Nicewarner

**Stop the Abuse!** presented by Melodee Price

Core Competency: Health, Safety, and Nutrition. Both classes will count towards child abuse and neglect training. Learn what is included when being a mandated reporter, your requirements under the law, definitions of abuse and neglect, the reporting procedure, what is done after a referral is received, and response times. (Tier I)

**Communicating & Building Relationships with Families.** Core Competency: Program Management. Peggy Johnson and Kelly Rayfield from Youth Health Service, Inc. will teach how to work cooperatively and communicate effectively with co-workers, families, children and others. Their many years experience in the field of working with families will give you expert ideas. This training will count towards the tiered reimbursement system requirements for center based staff needing communicating and building relationships with families and will only be offered at the Super Saturday in Randolph County on February 7<sup>th</sup>. (Tier II)

**Cultural Diversity.** Core Competency: Family and Community. Design an environment that reflects sensitivity and acceptance of diverse family structures, values, cultures and languages. Hands on, make and take activities to use with the children that you work with. Come to this training with Melodee Price and share your experiences with diversity in the classroom. This training will count towards the tiered reimbursement system requirements. (Tier II)

**Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS).** Core Competency: Program Management. Melodee Price will guide family home providers through this introductory course. The course will focus on the basic components of quality care, what the FCCERS is, what it is designed to do and how it can be used to evaluate and improve your program. This training will count towards the tiered reimbursement system requirements. (Tier II)

**Firearm Safety in the Home.** Core Competency: Health, Safety, and Nutrition. Randy Chapman will be the instructor for this 2 hour interactive training. He has won national awards, been on television, and has over 30 years experience related to being a firearm instructor and a concealed weapons trainer. Learn how to observe and act to avoid problems before they occur, adjusting supervision to meet different ages, abilities, activities, and environments. Gun safety locks will be given away to participants. This topic will only be offered at the Super Saturday in Randolph County on February 7<sup>th</sup>. (Tier II)

**Food Allergy Facts.** Core Competency: Health, Safety and Nutrition. Melodee Price will teach this 2 hour session on food allergies; who are most susceptible, what are the symptoms and causes, where can you find current information about food allergies, when should you be tested for allergies and why should you keep up to date on food allergies. (Tier I)

**Fun with Food, A Science Exploration.** Core Competency: Curriculum. Jennifer Lipscomb from the WVU Extension office will offer ideas and experiences for participants to engage children in cooking activities that support scientific thinking. Have you ever thought of cooking as science? By encouraging children to observe and describe, while helping in the kitchen is considered scientific thinking.

This training will count towards the tiered reimbursement system requirements and will only be offered at the Super Saturday in Randolph County on February 7<sup>th</sup>. (Tier II)



## Training Topics offered January-March 2009 continued

**Head Lice and other Parasitic Infections.** Core Competency: Health, Safety, and Nutrition. Sarah Hicks RN will teach head lice recognition, treatment, and prevention based on the latest recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Information about scabies and intestinal parasites will also be discussed. (Tier II)

**How to Tier II.** Core Competency: Professionalism. A tiered reimbursement system offers higher subsidy payments to programs that demonstrate they meet higher standards of care. Would you like to receive more pay for the quality care of children who are in the subsidy program? Melodee Price will teach you how to develop a plan and compile information to submit your Tier II application. (Tier II)

**Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS).** Core Competency: Program Management. Shannon Nichols will guide you through the ITERS. This evaluation of your program will help you to provide the best possible learning environment for the infants that you work with. This training will count towards the tiered reimbursement system requirements. (Tier II)

**Introduction to Child Observation and Assessment.** Core Competency: Child Observation and Assessment. Jim Weber will teach this two hour program. It will be an introduction to six basic types of assessments and their importance in child care settings. This class will qualify for the professional development in child assessment in which child care providers need to move up on the tiered reimbursement system. (Tier I)

**Let's Talk Trash.** Core Competency: Family and Community. Instructor Cheryl Wolfe. "Let's Talk Trash" is not a training where we will be talking about our neighbors and friends. This training will be 2 hours of how each person can make a difference in preserving our good earth. If everyone, big and small, starts recycling we can save energy, reduce pollution, and slow down global warming. We want our grandchildren and great-grandchildren to have green grass to play, fresh water to drink, and fresh air to breathe. Please come and learn how you can start recycling and encourage your young children to see the benefits of reducing, reusing, and recycling trash topic. (Tier II)

**Making the Most of Meetings.** Core Competency: Positive Interactions and Relationships. This training will help participants learn how to accomplish more work in less time and have more fun in the process. Tara Bowley will provide this training for center directors, assistant directors, and owners of facilities. (Tier II)

**Talk, Talk, Talk.** Core Competency: Positive Interactions and Relationships. Communication is key to any successful relationship. This training will offer insight and tips on maintaining the fun times and delicate relationship between providers and parents. Janet Aitchison, instructor. (Tier II)

### Ranson Lion's Club—Super Saturday By Janet Aitchison

The Jefferson County Lion's Center in Ranson was the happening place September 27th for the Eastern Panhandle's Super Saturday. The day began when Dana Keplinger, from MountainHeart's Petersburg office, presented "Policy Problems". She addressed policy as it affects providers and many said they weren't aware of the subsidy program process from the parent's side. Dana also reviewed the billing process and answered questions. "Policy Problems" was followed by "Ready to Learn Media Literacy" brought to us by Debbie Oleska and Denise McIntire from PBS. Everyone enjoyed their upbeat, hands-on introduction to the "View, Read, Do" learning triangle and free book. We had pizza, grapes and cookies for lunch thanks to Nicol Earp from Jefferson County. Nicol not only arranged for the room, she received contributions from Martins, Walmart, and six local pizza parlors to provide breakfast breads and juice as well as lunch. Nicol has a facility, Middleway Munchkins, and is the coordinator of the Jefferson County Providers Association. Jefferson County is very fortunate to have her. Our final training, "What Do I Do?" addressed the professional ethical dilemmas providers face every day. Paula Marrone Reese, regional food program coordinator, talked about the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and we presented some possible solutions to those ethical issues providers often face.



We had over fifty participants from four counties and everyone left with new information and a door prize. Thank you to all who presented and participated to make Jefferson County's Super Saturday a success.



# Training Calendar for January-March 2009

**Barbour County**

<b>Barbour Co. DHHR: 209 South Main Street, Philippi, 26416</b>		
Making the Most of Meetings	1/26/09 (Monday)	1:00-3:00
<b>Kid Care Child Development Center: Rt. 1 Box 165 B, Philippi, 26416</b>		
Characteristics and Needs of School Age Children	3/9/09 (Monday)	6:00-8:00
<b>Philippi Baptist Church: 107 Church Street, Philippi, 26416</b>		
How to Tier II	1/29/09 (Thursday)	6:00-8:00

**Berkeley County**

<b>Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church: Rt. 11 &amp; Runnymede Road, Bunker Hill, 25413</b>		
Child Abuse and Neglect: What is My Responsibility?	1/20/09 (Tuesday)	6:00-8:00
<b>Jack &amp; Jill Preschool: 37 Preschool Court, Inwood, 25428</b>		
Child Abuse and Neglect: What is My Responsibility?	3/12/09 (Thursday)	1:00-3:00
Head Lice and Other Parasitic Infections	3/27/09 (Friday)	1:00-3:00
<b>Martinsburg MountainHeart Office: 891 Auto Parts Place, Martinsburg, 25403</b>		
Let's Talk Trash	2/21/09 (Saturday)	10:00-12:00
Talk, Talk, Talk	2/21/09 (Saturday)	1:00-3:00
<b>St. Luke's United Methodist Church: 700 New York Avenue, Martinsburg, 25402</b>		
Making the Most of Meetings	2/3/09 (Tuesday)	12:00-2:00
FCCERS-Revised	2/17/09 (Tuesday)	11:00-1:00

**Grant County**

<b>Teddy Bear Daycare: Keyser Avenue, HC 30 Box 11, Petersburg, 26847</b>		
Stop the Abuse!	1/8/09 (Thursday)	10:00-12:00
All Aboard with Autism!	1/17/09 (Saturday)	10:00-12:00
Making the Most of Meetings	1/17/09 (Saturday)	12:30-2:30

**Hampshire County**

<b>Bank of Romney: 95 East Main Street, Romney, 26757</b>		
Talk, Talk, Talk	2/11/09 (Wednesday)	6:00-8:00

**Hardy County**

<b>Hardy Co. Public Library: 102 North Main Street, Moorefield, 26836</b>		
Let's Talk Trash	2/20/09 (Friday)	10:00-12:00
ITERS	3/5/09 (Thursday)	12:00-2:00

**Lewis County**

<b>Board of Education Office: 239 Court Avenue, Weston, 26452</b>		
Stop the Abuse!	1/6/09 (Tuesday)	6:00-8:00
Head Lice and Other Parasitic Infections	2/13/09 (Friday)	1:00-3:00

**Mineral County**

<b>Mineral County DHHR: 18 North Tornado Way, Keyser, 26726</b>		
Characteristics and Needs of School Age Children	2/12/09 (Thursday)	12:00-2:00

**Pendleton County**

<b>Tiny Tots Daycare Center: 312 Pine Street, Franklin, 26807</b>		
Cultural Diversity	1/13/09 (Tuesday)	5:30-7:30

**Preston County**

<b>Preston County DHHR Office: 410 Kingston Road, Kingwood, 26537</b>		
Intro. to Child Observation and Assessment	3-2-09 (Monday)	1:00-3:00

**Randolph County**

<b>Days Inn: 1200 Harrison Avenue, Elkins, 26241</b>		
Super Saturday	2/7/09 (Saturday)	
Communicating & Building Relationships with Families		8:30-10:30
Firearm Safety in the Home		10:45-12:45
Fun with Food, A Science Exploration		1:15-3:15
<b>Discovery Corner: 601 Wilson Street, Elkins, 26241</b>		
How to Tier II	1/22/09 (Thursday)	6:00-8:00

# Training Calendar for January-March 2009

continued

**Randolph Co. DHHR: 1027 North Randolph Avenue, Elkins, 26241**  
 All Aboard with Autism! 1/12/09 (Monday) 9:00-11:00  
 Food Allergy Facts 2/10/09 (Tuesday) 9:30-11:30

**Tygart Valley Community Library Rt. 219/250 Mill Creek 26280**  
 FCCERS - Revised 2/19/09 (Thursday) 6:00-8:00

**Taylor County**

**MountainHeart Office: 4 Harman Center, Grafton, 26354**  
 FCCERS – Revised 2/21/09 (Saturday) 10:00-12:00

**Taylor County Public Library: 200 Beech Street, Grafton, 26354**  
 Making the Most of Meetings 1/22/09 (Thursday) 5:30-7:30

**Tucker County**

**Board of Education/Annex, 501 Chestnut Street, Parsons, 26287**  
 Intro. to Child Observation and Assessment 3/4/09 (Wednesday) 1:00-3:00

**Tucker Valley Elementary Middle School: 100 Crest Avenue, Parsons, 26287**  
 Characteristics and Needs of School Age Children 2/17/09 (Tuesday) 6:00-8:00

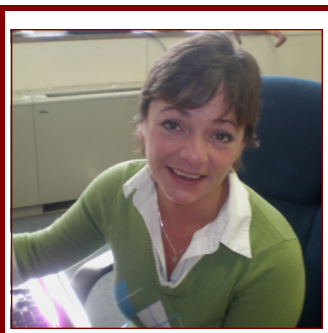
**Upshur County**

**Child Development Center: 20 Camden Avenue, Buckhannon, 26201**  
 All Aboard with Autism! 1/6/09 (Tuesday) 6:00-8:00

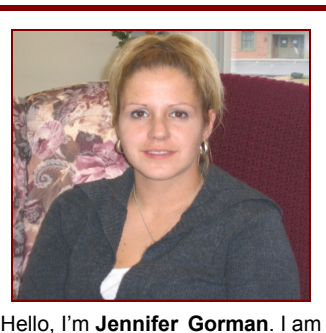
**Little Ones Place Christian Child Care Center, LLC: P.O. Box 686, Buckhannon, 26201**  
 Food Allergy Facts 2/11/09 (Wednesday) 6:00-8:00

**Upshur County Public Library: Rt. 6 Box 480, Tennerton Road, Buckhannon, 26201**  
 ITERS 3/3/09 (Tuesday) 5:45-7:45

## New Staff at MountainHeart



**Becca Sainato** is the new Case Manager in the Elkins office. She is originally from Randolph county. Becca graduated from Marshall University with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology, and has numerous years experience assisting individuals with needed services. She is excited to be able to work for such a positive program in West Virginia.



Hello, I'm **Jennifer Gorman**. I am Janet Aitchison's new associate with TRAILS. I really enjoy this job. I love working with and helping children, so this gives me a chance to do that every day. I have worked with kids in a day-care setting and a pre-school setting. I was born in Hagerstown, MD and have lived in Berkeley County all my life. I have two kids of my own, both boys, Jordan 7, and Ethan 3. They are my pride and joy. I enjoy art and painting and spending lots of time playing with my kids. Thank you for this opportunity to work at MountainHeart.



My name is **Cheryl Banks**. I am a Case Manager in the Martinsburg Office. I am originally from Lancaster Co. PA, but have lived in the Panhandle for 23 years after marrying my husband. I graduated from Bridgewater College with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Ed. and have a certificate in Early Childhood Education. I have worked many years in a child care environment as a teacher and Assistant Director. I am looking forward to continuing to work with families and children in the panhandle region.

**NEW SUPERVISOR IN MARTINSBURG OFFICE**

My name is Valerie Gorman. I have been employed with MountainHeart for two years as a case manager. I was promoted to supervisor of the Martinsburg office in October 2008. Prior to working at Mountain-Heart I worked at Potomac Case Management, an agency that provides services to clients with mental illness, as the supervisor of the Senior Mental Health program. I also held the position at City Hospital as the Crisis Response Worker with Emergency Psych Services for the psychiatric floor. I graduated from West Virginia University in 2003 with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. I am originally from Keyser, WV. Currently, I reside in Martinsburg with my husband, Thomas. We are expecting our first child in March 2009.



## What Are Parents Looking For Anyway? By Shannon Nichols

Caregivers, like children, come in many different sizes, shapes, colors, and personalities. They also have many different values, beliefs, and behaviors that set them apart from other caregivers. So, what is it that parents want from their caregiver?

Parents want a caregiver that is clean, provides a safe, healthy environment with plenty of fun learning experiences, is friendly, kind and loving, is trustworthy and shares similar beliefs and values. While all of these characteristics are important, research by Ron Lally, co-director of the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies in California, found that there are three main qualities parents look for in an early childhood professional. Those qualities are: **understanding**, **competence**, and **honesty**.

They want to feel they are being heard and respected.

Parents need to feel that their caregiver **understands** what it means to be a parent of an infant or toddler and appreciates what they are

going through. This is done by being sensitive to parents' needs. They want to feel they are being heard and respected.

A **competent** caregiver is able to carry out their job responsibilities and support the parents in their role. Parents often come to child care feeling very nervous about the caregiver's ability to know what to do and when to do it with their child. Being able to demonstrate your skills, allowing parents to observe you with other children, maintaining low ratios, providing appropriate materials and attending a variety of trainings are all ways to show that you have the necessary skills to adequately care for their child. Parents may also look to you for advice or information on how to handle a challenge they are facing with their infant or toddler.

Parents also need caregivers to be **honest** about what is happening in their child's life. They need to feel comfortable with asking questions and knowing they will get a

straightforward answer rather than simply telling them what the caregiver thinks they want to hear. Caregivers aren't expected to know the answer to every question, but it is expected that they be honest when they don't and then be willing to find out the answer somewhere else. It is also important to discuss the happenings of the day with parents. *(Remember to provide at least two positive statements for every negative statement. If all a parent ever hears are the bad things, they aren't going to want to talk at all.)* An open door policy tells parents their caregiver has nothing to hide and will help them feel that they are trustworthy and honest about what they will or will not do with their child.

Take a look at yourself and evaluate whether or not you possess the three key qualities parents are looking for in a caregiver. Parents and children will surely appreciate your **understanding**, **competence**, and **honesty** and will feel much more confident and comfortable with the care you provide.

## VITA / EITC Program By Dana Keplinger

VITA is a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program in which volunteers are trained to file income tax returns through an IRS program called TaxWise. MountainHeart staff are proud to be volunteers again this year. This program is not limited to MountainHeart staff. Anyone can become a volunteer. Volunteers are needed for all aspects of the program—from being greeter/screeners to being tax preparers.

This service is free to the customers having their taxes filed. There is no charge for preparing the taxes or for filing the taxes. This program offers the option of having your return direct deposited which results in quicker access to your refund. The return does not have to be direct deposited if the customer does not wish to use this option.

Because this is a volunteer program, the preparers are waived of liability issues. Also

because of this being a volunteer program, the preparers are focused on the "simple" returns. Volunteers are not expected to learn complicated returns such as self employment and other complex situations.

If you would like to volunteer with this program or would like to use this service, you may contact any of the MountainHeart offices for additional information.

## Volunteers Sought for Training Advisory Council

If you are interested in participating on the Training Advisory Council or would like more information, please call the Elkins office at 637-2840 or 1-877-862-3103 (toll free) and ask for Amelia or Willetta. Those signing up to participate on the committee will be notified of the meeting dates, times, and locations of the meetings.

## School Age Success By Tara Bowley, EC Specialist

All school age children have physical, social, cognitive, and emotional needs. These needs are also different for every child. The physical needs of school age children can be met by providing them with a wide range of things to do. Nutrition is also an important part of a child's physical needs. Providing nutritious snacks for children after school is very important, because for many children, it is a long time between lunch and dinner. Social needs of school age children can be met by making sure that every child has friends. Providers can do this by creating activities that will invite children to work together. If you want to learn more, consider signing up for the "Characteristics and Needs of School Age Children" training this quarter.



Experts tell us that the winter can be a depressing time. The days are shorter, the sun is not as strong, and we spend more time in the confinement of our homes. Mood changes can occur and these often are connected to the lack of sunlight and limited social interaction. Behavioral issues may arise at these times as the idle atmosphere can lead to boredom and the need to seek negative attention. We may allow ourselves to be victimized by the season, or we may decide to take advantage of it. Many parents have found that winter offers great opportunities for together time with children. Both outdoor and indoor activities during the cold winter months can build memories that strengthen relationships among family members. Here are some activities that are simple and fun.

Hiking in the snow can be a fun activity as family members take turns leading the way through drifts of snow and around trees. The goal of the game is to follow the leader wherever that person takes the group. Tubing and sledding can be fun as well. The hills of West Virginia provide ample and safe sledding locations. An old inner tube, plastic disc, or the wooden flyers from yesteryear can contribute to an afternoon of unforgettably fun memories.

What about building snow persons? All it takes is the right consistency of snow, the power to roll it into a ball,

and the strength to stack one ball on top of the other. Finishing with an old hat, scarf and something for the eyes, leads to a final work of art. Snow painting is fun. All you need are water bottles with squirt top, some water and food coloring. Once combined, you can head outside for a creative activity that is limited only by your imagination and the amount of snow on the ground.

If outdoor activities are not to your liking, how about baking cookies? Family members can work together mixing the ingredients (a good opportunity to learn about numbers and measuring) and decorating the cookies. Nothing smells quite like cookies baking in the oven, and nothing tastes quite as good as a fresh cookie with a glass of milk or warm cup of cocoa. What wonderful memories can be created by this activity.

If you are not into domestic activities, build an inside tent by draping blankets over chairs. Pretend you are camping in the wilderness and tell stories about the things you did as a child during the winter months. Think of the family history and patterns that can be passed to the next generation.

Don't be discouraged by the weather. Use it creatively with your children to create bonds of connection that will last for years to come.

By James Weber, Behavior Consultant

## Winter Time Activities



"Children are our future..."

And our future looks promising"

### MountainHeart Offices:

Grafton  
1-877-811-5437

Martinsburg  
1-888-915-7653

Weston  
1-866-232-9227

Petersburg  
1-877-211-5437

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1-877-862-3103

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