Dear Friends,

The 2010/2011 program year was one of change, loss, and resiliency for the Child Care Council. It was a challenging year that we got through with a little help from our friends. It was also a year of anniversaries. The Child Care Council celebrated 35 years of services to Contra Costa’s children and families and Kate celebrated 25 years as the Council’s Executive Director.

We want to recognize and thank Parent VOICES for taking immediate legal action when Governor Schwarzenegger cut funds for over 600 low income Contra Costa families receiving child care assistance on Stage 3 with only three weeks’ notice. We also want to thank First 5 Contra Costa for stepping up and granting the Council a bridge loan, which allowed us to continue services for children under six years of age until the state legislature could reverse the Governor’s devastating actions. We want to thank our state legislators for their votes of support on this issue. Assembly Members Susan Bonilla, Joan Buchanan, and Nancy Skinner along with State Senators Mark DeSaulnier and Loni Hancock were among the first state legislators to stand up for our children and families. And, lastly, we want to thank the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department, especially Rebecca Darnell and Joe Valentine, for moving quickly to allow many of these families access to another child care program so the parents could continue to work. It was heartwarming to see all of these groups do everything they could to help these children and families. It was truly a community effort.

In response to budget cuts, the Child Care Council was forced to take additional measures to reduce costs. These measures included downsizing our staff and facilities. By the end of the year, we had said goodbye to many of our friends and co-workers. We still miss them.

Throughout it all, the Council’s staff remained strong, resilient, and true to our mission of serving children and families. So this year’s Annual Report is dedicated to the Child Care Council’s employees. In addition to updating you on the work of the Council, we have sought to give you a glimpse of the work we do through the eyes of our staff. Throughout this report, you will find their stories about what they do on a day-to-day basis and what this work means to them personally. We are sure you will begin to understand how truly amazing these women and men are, and how privileged we feel to have the opportunity to work with them.

Barbara Grillo
President, Board of Directors

Kate Eitz-Berger
Executive Director
In the Spotlight:
Subsidy Counselor

A parent named Amanda came in for her yearly recertification for child care subsidy eligibility. She stated that she wanted to come in early because she would be starting her new job soon where she had completed her internship as a dental assistant. Amanda had been in school for the past two years and completed her school work with good grades.

As we sat down to complete her recertification, she said, “Dina, I would like to thank you for encouraging me to attend school. I have now completed school and been offered a job. I was afraid to begin school. I knew I had to work in order to support my family. However, attending school has been a great experience and well worth it. I am so thankful for your help and the help that the Child Care Council has provided for me and my children.”

I felt good inside knowing that I have made a difference in the life of this family.

Dina Samaniego
Subsidy Counselor
East County Office

“…attending school has been a great experience and well worth it. I am so thankful for your help and the help that the Child Care Council has provided for me and my children.”

— Amanda, parent
In the Spotlight:
Resource & Referral

Mr. Perez came to the Child Care Council in June 2011 in hopes of receiving child care services for his children. He is a widower. His wife had been battling cancer since 2009 and lost her fight at the age of 30 years old. She passed away in 2010. Mr. Perez was left with five children ranging in age from 12 years old to 1 year old. He heard about Child Care Council services through one of his local church members as the church offered great support to him and his children.

When Mr. Perez came to the Child Care Council, Elizabeth Cortez was the Subsidy Counselor, and he shared his story with her. Elizabeth consulted with Clarissa and Ronda who happened to be at the West County Office that day. They both felt strongly that they had to figure out how and under which program they can enroll the children.

The father was originally enrolled in the California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) subsidy program under Seeking Employment. During the summer, we were able to authorize child care for all the children. Mr. Perez struggled to secure employment and was in the process of losing his child care as his Seeking Employment eligibility was coming to an end. Elizabeth consulted with Clarissa to advocate for the father and his family. We were able to continue child care for the children as we moved to another funding stream for subsidy in our Child Care Fund. Due to staff’s collaborative effort, Mr. Perez was able to continue child care services and was more than appreciative.

Council staff also helped this family find housing and enroll the children in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program by giving the father all the needed resources and information. Elizabeth and Remi are now trying to find an agency that can help this family during the holidays.

Parvin Pourasef, MSW
Resource & Referral Team Supervisor
West County Office
Jayden is a 4½ year old boy who was diagnosed with Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). When he started child care, the family child care provider immediately requested inclusion support for children with special needs. Jayden was previously expelled from two other center-based programs.

I feel that it is my obligation to help parents and their children with special needs to navigate this difficult journey and a most complex system.

— Nina, Council Staff

While supporting Jayden, I noticed that his 15 month old sibling, Jackson, was showing similar signs of disabilities. I referred him to the Regional Center Early Intervention Program. Later, his mother, a recent immigrant from Ghana, reported that her younger son was also diagnosed with a developmental disability and would receive early intervention services.

This was an emotional case for me. I feel that it is my obligation to help parents and their children with special needs to navigate this difficult journey and a most complex system. When I help a family in need, I feel gratified and purposeful.

It is essential that I respond to families’ needs as quickly as possible, because I know how important it is to act early and build a relationship with trust. I feel that I can make a difference because of my personal experience and professional knowledge about disabilities.

Nina Hinman
Inclusion Specialist

In the Spotlight:
Inclusion Program
Council Programs Benefit Children & Families in 2010–2011

- 17,667 parents received child care referrals or parent consultations on subjects ranging from child development, toilet training and homework to housing and food needs
- Over 500 parents attended 33 parent workshops on topics such as Kindergarten Readiness, The Importance of Screening Young Children Early, Nutrition for Infants with Special Needs and Learning Through Play.
- On average, 28 children with special needs received support from the Council’s Inclusion staff each month to assist them, their parents and caregivers with their transition to child care
- Over 400 family child care providers and the 3,500 children they serve participated in the Council’s Child Care Food Program receiving child health and nutrition training and education, as well as monthly reimbursement for serving nutritious meals to children in their care
- More than 2,000 families and 4,000 children received child care subsidies enabling them to access quality child care
- Over 400 early learning educators and parents attended the Council’s 17th Annual Early Learning Conference: Exploring the Transition to Kindergarten
- On average, over 3,800 children were on the Child Care Eligibility List each month awaiting assistance with the cost of child care
- 100% of the Child Care Council’s Board of Directors and staff supported the agency financially
- 474 children, 227 parents and 84 early childhood educators participated in the Kaiser Permanente and Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund garden project, Growing a Healthy Future, visiting a local community garden and learning about where produce really comes from
I spoke with my client, Alyssa. She called me because she needed to talk. It was clear that this parent was in crisis. I stopped what I was doing and made myself available. I asked if she would like to come to the office and she said yes. The parent came 30 minutes later. We sat in the office and she began to share some of the things she was going through. She was having a hard time with losing the father of her child to violence. He was killed in January 2011.

I was in the grieving process as well and I was able to listen and share helpful tips with her. Before she left the office, she wiped her eyes and said, “thank you, I feel like I can make it now.” She said that she really felt like she was going to lose her mind. I gave her more tissue, a book on how to survive parenting, and a hug. I let her know that I’m glad she trusted me enough to share what she was going through.

I called Alyssa a week later just to check on her and she stated that our talk really helped her. Little did she know that she helped me as well.

Regina Alexander
Subsidy Counselor
East County Office

“thank you, I feel like I can make it now.”
— Alyssa, parent
Child Care Fund

The Council’s Child Care Fund provides sliding scale subsidies to low income families so their children may attend child care while the parents work, seek employment or engage in work related training. Last year, an average of 1,700 families and 2,790 children participated in the program each month.

The Preschool Makes a Difference (PMD) Scholarship Program enjoyed its first year with full funding from the Thomas J. Long Foundation. It was a year of enrolling many new children in the program and continuing to iron out the kinks with our collaborator First 5 Contra Costa of this innovative and exciting initiative. The PMD Scholarship Program offers sliding fee scale subsidies to low and moderate income families so their three and four year old children may participate in quality early learning programs. Once enrolled in the program, parents may choose from a list of centers and family child care homes that have been evaluated and met certain quality standards. The child care programs also participate in rigorous ongoing quality improvement activities and professional development.

Child Health & Nutrition Program

The Council’s Child Health and Nutrition program continued to receive state and national attention for its ground breaking work in developing tools and training programs for child care programs to assist them in assessing and strengthening their health and nutrition policies and practices. Council staff provided training throughout California, their work was highlighted in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s newsletter and New York State has adopted our Child Care Health and Nutrition Self-Assessment tool for their own programs.

Locally, Child Health and Nutrition staff continued to work with child care centers and family child care homes to refine the assessment and training tools, share best practices and help them improve their own approaches to child nutrition and physical activity. Our messages of better child nutrition and greater physical activity was brought to over 450 family child care providers and all of the centers throughout the county through our monthly newsletter, the Nutrition Edition, and Directors’ workshops, Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment: An Essential Step for Change. Feedback overwhelmingly indicated that most had not previously known where or how to begin in developing their own child nutrition and physical activity efforts. Now they felt that they had the tools they needed and it appeared doable.

(continued on page 11)
Message from Client

I went to see you almost two weeks ago to talk about my fees and other stuff and even though I never wrote to you to “thank you” for listening to me, I haven’t forgotten. I wanted to apologize for crying there and getting all depressed, but at the same time to let you know how well it made me feel to talk to you. I was a different person after I left. Thanks for listening.

Thank you very, very much again for everything.

Jennifer
Child Care Provider

In the Spotlight:
Resource & Referral

This is a Spanish speaking provider who was having some problems and, as we were talking, she broke down because she was being made to feel her rates were too high by some parents (which because of the economic times we are in, happens a lot).

What I wanted her to hear was that she was worth what she was charging. She has the training, the skills and, more importantly, the heart. She didn’t need to feel bad about crying. Part of what we do at this agency is to listen to parents and providers who are struggling. Sometimes we can help through suggestions or resources. But, sometimes, all we can do is listen. Not having time to listen is not an option.

This recognition from the provider, for me, is like money in the bank because I am wealthy beyond dreams when I know that just listening made a difference in someone’s life. I am so grateful to the Council that I am able to do these kinds of things for our clients. I am one of the very lucky ones to have a job that meets what I need to be who I am.

Kathi Hamilton
Resource & Referral Supervisor
Central County Office
Within days of each other, two families contacted me to report they were homeless. Both families were in the process of losing their child care services for various reasons. They were frantically looking for housing and wondering where their children were going to go while they also looked for work, went to school and/or worked.

After initially receiving some help elsewhere, they turned to the Child Care Council to see if we had any additional resources. While meeting with the clients, I was able to offer them “The Housing Rag”, which is a list of housing resources. Together we went through the list. Some resources they were familiar with and some they were not. Meeting with the families gave me an opportunity to really get to know them and their backgrounds. Per their request, I was also able to give them internet resources to look and apply for work.

Considering the circumstances, I was able to enroll both families into our Child Care Fund. Their child care services were saved and they were able to continue with their daily routines. Both families were extremely appreciative of the help they received; both mentioned that, without the help of the Child Care Council, their lives would have been turned upside down.

It means a whole lot to me to help a family in need especially when something unpredictable happens. Being able to save a family’s child care services so they can become self-sustaining means a great deal, and to hear how appreciative the families are makes everything worth it.

Denishia Taylor
Subsidy Counselor
East County Office
Resource & Referral

The Council’s Resource and Referral Counselors spent untold hours listening to parents’ stories, concerns and problems. They offered child care referrals, advice and information, referrals to appropriate community resources and, most of all, a sympathetic ear.

The R&R Program’s Road to Success Project assisted 117 clients to become licensed family child care providers. R&R staff members walk potential providers through the licensing process, offer workshops on how to establish a family child care business and developmentally appropriate practices, and provide technical assistance and support to these fledgling businesses.

Parent VOICES

Parent VOICES is a parent led grassroots organization which offers parents, especially low income parents, the opportunity to advocate collectively for their children and families. The Contra Costa Chapter of Parent VOICES, which is sponsored by the Child Care Council, has been fully engaged in protecting child care subsidies since its inception in 1996.

Over the years, Parent VOICES has developed close working relationships with our elected officials, who frequently turn to Parent VOICES for the parents’ perspective on the child care issues before them.

The past year posed the greatest challenge to date for these passionate, committed and remarkable parents. The Governor vetoed funding for a major child care program. Over 600 families in Contra Costa alone were scheduled for termination from the program within just weeks. However, Parent VOICES moved immediately to file a law suit to delay the termination date and won the parents an additional two months to make other arrangements. Parent VOICES then joined with other child care advocates to convince the state legislators and the new Governor to restore the funds. Restoration of this critical child care program finally occurred in the Spring of 2011.

Learning Institute

The Learning Institute’s Innovations in Quality Project assisted 54 child care programs participating in the Preschool Makes a Difference Program to improve the quality of their services to children and families through workshops, one-on-one consultations, technical assistance, intensive coaching, mentoring and mini-grants.

Over 400 attended the Council’s 17th Annual Early Learning Conference. This year, the conference was titled “Exploring the Transition to Kindergarten” and included workshops, such as School Readiness Begins at Birth, Concerns Latino Families Have When Their Children Start School, Early Literacy and Life Success and Revitalizing the Math Program at Your School. Workshops were offered in English, Spanish and Farsi.

The Inclusion Project assisted 120 children with special needs to have a successful child care experience. Our highly trained Inclusion Facilitators worked directly with the children, their parents and caregivers to make sure these children’s needs were met and they were engaged in learning. Individual consultations, training, and adapted toys and equipment from our Inclusion Library were all offered to the participating programs. Thanks to a grant from the Raising A Reader organization, Inclusion staff also worked with First 5 Contra Costa to adapt books to better serve this very special group of children.

With the support of a federal grant received through the efforts of Congressman George Miller, we were able to offer training, technical assistance and support to a group of child care programs, centers and family child care homes interested in improving the quality of their programs. The Innovations in Quality Project allowed us to design and test new strategies for working with child care programs on quality improvement. These efforts have proven to be very successful, with each program improving an average of 50% when measured with national assessment tools.
In the Spotlight:
Staff Appreciation

The staff has so much compassion when working with clients or families who come through the door with a question. Even though everyone is dealing with a high caseload, they make it a point to spend quality time with their clients by giving them step-by-step instructions on how to complete their paperwork for our programs or how to enroll in a training program at Optic, a community college, or another organization.

On several occasions, the Subsidy Counselors sat with their clients for a few hours giving them referrals, going over the program rules or regulations, or listening to them talk about their everyday struggles.

The Child Care Council is helping the East County Office “family” everyday by allowing us to be able to touch the lives of others.

The staff loves going the extra mile to help other people. They have a lot of compassion in their hearts and that makes them very special people.

Tracy Muldrow
Subsidy Team Supervisor
East County Office

The Child Care Council is helping the East County Office “family” everyday by allowing us to be able to touch the lives of others.

— Tracy, Council Staff
The annual audit of the Contra Costa Child Care Council’s financial statements was conducted by Vasin, Heyn & Company an Accountancy Corporation, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S.A. and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in the Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In the opinion of the auditors, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Activities, and the Statement of Cash Flows present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Child Care Council, as of June 30, 2011, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. A complete copy of the audit statement is available for public inspection in our main office.

* Infrastructure expenses include: administration, accounting, human resources, information technology, web site, public education and advocacy, volunteer services, communications and development. Infrastructure expenses are allocated across programs and services.
Thank You! The Contra Costa Child Care Council’s programs would not be possible without its friends and supporters. Thank you for helping the children.

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We make every effort to thank all of our supporters. If there is a misspelling or omission, please let us know so that we can include you in our next publication.
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