

# The Metropolitan Action Commission 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Action Honorees (2005)

## Executive Director's Action Award Honorees

*In addition to receiving partnership awards, the following honorees also received special recognition by the Executive Director, Cynthia Croom, for the level of service they provided to the agency. There are only 4 awards given at this level.*

**Dot Shell-Berry, Metro Human Resources**-Mrs. Shell-Berry has supported the efforts of this agency in many ways both as a past member of the Board of Commissioners and as a partner within Human Resources including advocating for more equitable salaries for our staff. She has proven to be an advocate both for the customers that we serve and the employees that serve Metro Action.

**Francine Batson, parent North Head Start**-Ms. Batson is being nominated for her quality time she gives to this agency. She volunteers ungrudgingly. She has 2 grandchildren and a great-niece who attends North Head Start. She participates on field trips and in the classrooms. The most motivating thing that Ms. Batson has done that stands out is re-scheduling her Radiation treatments to help classrooms on field trips. She understands how important it is for the children to experience different outings and how important it is for the teaching staff to keep their commitments.

**Mary Richardson, retiree of the Metropolitan Action Commission**-Ms. Richardson untiringly and unselfishly donated her time and efforts to supporting the Head Start program in the area of Health and Disabilities after she retired from the agency in June 2004. Realizing just how short staffed we were and despite comments from others that questioned her dedication to herself she continued to display a total commitment to this program. She assisted the new Health Coordinator with screenings and assisted with completing paperwork. She also physically visited sites to make sure screenings were going well, even when she did not feel her best. Ms. Richardson epitomizes the dedication and commitment to quality while displaying an unprecedented love for this program and its growth and future development.

**Janet Coscarelli, Head Start Collaboration Office**-The state rolled out the Imagination Library Project in Nashville this past Spring. The project enables children from birth to 5 years old to receive a book each month until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. In addition to the children receiving books at home, Janet coordinated the purchase of the entire set for all 78 Head Start Classrooms. Each set has 85 books, which equates to 6,630 books for the Nashville Head Start program. Children will be able to read their favorite book at home as well as at school.

# Partnership Awards

## Metro Partnership Honorees

**David Haney, Cameraman for Metro Channel 3.** David always has a pleasant personality when it comes to filming our early childhood education conferences. He also gives sound advise during the set up stage in order to capture the best shot and to record the best information for viewing on Channel 3.

**Randall Lantz, Metro Parks.** Randy provides flowers and other greenery for conferences, press conferences and meetings sponsored by Metro Action. The plants adds to the festive atmosphere and professional appearance of our events. Randall has come through for the Metropolitan Action Commission on several occasions, even with very little lead time. He and his staff always have an attitude of willingness and go the extra mile when it comes to getting the job done and meeting challenging accomodations.

**Lt. William Cunningham, Metro Police Department-**The Ross Head Start site and residents in the area were experiencing traffic woes from motorists speeding pass the school as well as cars being illegally parked, which caused unsafe crossing situations for arriving Head Start children and their parents. Lt. Cunningham created a plan that curtailed the traffic problems by sending unmarked police vehicles to the area to issue traffic tickets to offenders. Speed cones were also placed in the area. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement of traffic at the Ross Head Start Center and complaints from the Head Start families and neighbors were reduced significantly.

**Jerry Spence, Metro Real Properties-**Mr. Spence was instrumental in locating and overseeing the acquisition of the property on Cotton Lane, which has been identified as the site of the New Antioch Head Start facility. Jerry was also instrumental in the acquisition of the second site of another new Head Start facility that will be located on the Berry School property. The two sites will be the first newly built Head Start facilities in the history of Nashville.

**Andy Bedlack, Wackenhut Corporation-**Mr. Bedlack was instrumental in helping us on short notice to provide additional security for our Kurdish Families at two of our Head Start centers during the Iraqi Elections. His officers went above and beyond their responsibilities to make sure the staff and the children were comfortable with them being in the center and even developed a very positive relationship with the children.

**Helen Payne, Coordinator of Field Operations-Metro Nashville Board of Education,** The Food Service Staff assists the Metropolitan Action Commission during the Summer Food Service Program, which provides free breakfast and lunch to approved youth camps and other youth related programs in Davidson County. The food service staff supports

MAC with the preparation of nutritionally balanced meals. Ms. Payne is directly responsible for the supervision and routing plans for more than 100 sites. She also helps with transition exercises with the Head Start children, which allows them to be exposed to the school that they will attend next school year. The Head Start children attend a Kindergarten class and go to lunch in the cafeteria with the class.

**Gloria Jackson-Campbell, Metro Water Services-** Ms. Jackson-Campbell is a Supervisor with Metro Water and provides assistance to the Division of Community Services with customer inquiries. In addition, she ensures corrections are made to alleviate customers being over billed for services.

**Princess Martindale, Metro Water Services-** Ms. Martindale is a customer service Representative. She provides assistance to MAC by investigating customer inquiries and directing Community Services staff to the appointed person within Metro Water to properly assist our customers with billing or repair issues.

**James Bradford, Metro Criminal Court Clerks Office-** Mr. Bradford has been extremely efficient in providing the background checks for our Agency, which is a requirement for all employees and volunteers. Even though the amount requests are higher than most departments, Mr. Bradford is mindful of the urgency in receiving a prompt response. Because of Mr. Bradford's timeliness, we are able to expedite our new hire process.

### **Head Start Parent Partnership Honorees**

**Ericka Cook, parent East Head Start-** Ms. Cook attends and conducts all of the center parent club meetings. She called other parents in an effort to get them involved with the center's parent club. Because of her active recruitment, the East site has had a significant increase in parent involvement at the center. Although she is the policy council alternate for the East Parent Club, she has represented the center at most of the policy council meetings each month. Ms. Cook goes on many field trips to assist and help meet adult-child ratios. She volunteers in the classroom as well. We are very proud to have Ms. Cook as a representative for East Head Start.

**Carolyn Jackson, parent Ross Head Start -**Ms. Jackson has been a Head Start parent for the past 4 years. Ms. Jackson has served as parent club president and policy council member. Ms. Jackson has shown her commitment to education by completed her Masters Degree in Biology from TSU in December 2004. Ms. Jackson is a proud parent and values Head Start greatly. Ms. Jackson can always be counted on and is highly favored by staff and parents. She is certainly a cornerstone for Head Start and sets an example for parent involvement. Ms. Jackson goes above and beyond the call of duty to represent this agency as well as humble and very willing.

**Kimberly McKnight and Willie Young, parents Ross Head Start-**Ms McKnight and Mr. Young helped to sponsor the Ross Head Start Winterfest activities by purchasing and delivering wrapped children's gifts. They secured a visit from "Santa." They are great

parents and always participate with school activities. They also share the love with their children and others that they meet in this program. They can be counted on the help with any events at the Ross center.

**Francine Batson, parent North Head Start**-Ms. Batson is being nominated for her quality time she gives to this agency. She volunteers ungrudgingly. She has 2 grandchildren and a great-niece who attends North Head Start. She participates on field trips and in the classrooms. The most motivating thing that Ms. Batson has done that stands out is re-scheduling her Radiation treatments to help classrooms on field trips. She understands how important it is for the children to experience different outings and how important it is for the teaching staff to keep their commitments.

**Toshiba Stafford, parent Dudley Head Start**-has been helpful in our classroom this year. She is always someone that will volunteer in the classroom as well as on our field trips. She is also very involved with her son Marcus McCord's learning. She communicates with the staff to find out what activities she can do at home that will reinforce what Marcus is learning at school. She is very thoughtful when it comes to holidays and celebrations. The staff can always count on Ms. Stafford when help is needed. She is willing to make many sacrifices to be committed to her son's school and classroom. (Dudley)

**Shauntel Gordan, parent Dudley Head Start** - has been very involved in one of the Dudley classroom this year. She has always volunteered to go on all field trips and takes the time to work out her job schedule to make herself available to be involved with her daughter Dariona Gordon. She has been very thoughtful of the teachers in her daughter's class by giving the teachers Christmas and Valentine cards. She is always willing to participate when the classes at Dudley has a holiday celebration by donating refreshments. (Dudley)

**Teresa Michael and Timothy Michael, Sr., parents Berry Head Start** attends every field trip of their child's class. When Mrs Michaels can not attend, Mr. Micheal will attend. One day their son was sick and Mrs. Michael came on the trip while Mr. Michael watched their son at home. The parents have been a tremendous help to the classroom. They even coordinated a trip to the marionette show at the downtown library. The mother and father team has really helped the classroom especially during field trips. (Berry)

**Hawa Farah, parent at Berry Head Start**-Ms Farah is a very helpful and resourceful parent. In addition to attending every field trip, she helps with translating classroom instruction for the Kurdish children and helping them with learning the English words. This is especially helpful with new children as they are becoming familiar with their school and the classroom helping them to transition smoothly.

## Community Partnership Honorees

**Angie Herdman, former Early Childhood Specialists with the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth-** Mrs. Herdman is a true advocate for the education of young children. She has demonstrated her love of education and her desire to link the various agencies throughout Nashville to create an incredible network for the children of Nashville. Mrs. Herdman was instrumental in assisting the Metropolitan Action Commission in hosting over 600 teachers for the Pre-K Standards Project, which established for the first time a best practices manual for pre-school teachers in an effort to prepare their children for increased requirements of Kindergarten.

**Sgt. First Class Joseph Gilbert, United States Army-**Sergeant First Class Gilbert participated during the Week of the Young Child in explaining the importance of community partners to children at Ross Head Start and how they help the community. He came dressed in his military uniform and allowed the children to ask questions about what he did and the various tools he used. The children were extremely engaged in the various aspect of being a part of the military and the commitment to the safety of America.

**Marci Butler Holt, Greenlight Entertainment-**Ms. Holt is a professional entertainer that visited children of Ross Head Start to sing to them and lead them in all sorts of activities during Career Day this spring. She also read stories to them that reinforced the story of the songs that she sung. She was well received by the children.

**Maurice Dunham-** Mr. Dunham served as a volunteer tax preparer for the Metropolitan Action Commission during this past tax year, which was a part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program . He assisted customers from January 24<sup>th</sup> through March 1st. He completed over 22 volunteer hours each week.

**Miko Nkungula-** Mr. Nkungula assisted Head Start parents as a volunteer tax preparer during the 2005 tax season. He dedicated 22.5 volunteer hours from February 24<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup> to MAC.

**Cornell Randle, director of Surgical Studies at Centennial Medical Center-**Mr. Randle approached one of the Family Services Specialist at Dudley stating that he was interested in involving those he worked with in his area in a community service project. Because it was leading into Christmas, he pulled together enough presents for one of the classrooms at Dudley Head Start. He worked with the teacher to obtain the sizes and toys they would like. He then set up an Angel Tree in his department at the hospital for the employees to pick from. On the day of the Winter Celebration at Dudley, he and 25 of his staff came to the center bringing coats, clothing, toys, bicycles, and food items. Every child received what they asked for and more.

**Mimi Manzler, Belcourt Board of Directors & Book 'Em-** Ms. Manzler is a very dedicated volunteer from the Book 'Em Organization and on the board of directors for Belcourt. She volunteers every Tuesday and Wednesday. She reads stories and engages the children in a variety of finger plays and songs. Her connections with the Belcourt Theater have proven to be very resourceful. All of the 3-year-olds at Richland are able to go to the Belcourt Theater on a monthly basis to view a number of children's movies.

**Aletha Pottinger , Program Director Senior Citizens, Inc. Program-**Ms. Pottinger has supplied the Head Start program with very reliable seniors which has fostered a very valuable partnerships for the Head Start program. The grannies and grandpas that she has sent to Richland and Tom Joy Head Start center has provided a lasting friendship and experience for our staff and children. They work very closely with the classroom teaching staff, providing one-on-one attention to many of our Head Start Children. They also participate in story time and with meals. Head Start is a curriculum-based program, which places great emphasis on individualization. The grannies and grandpas are able to give the children loving and nurturing attention that only a grandparent can provide.

**Tahir Hussain, Nashville Kurdish Forum-**Mr. Hussain has helped to establish valuable relationships with the Metropolitan Action Commission and the Kurdish community. He has provided the agency with many opportunities to share our work with this community as well as assistance with understanding the needs of the Kurdish families that are a part of community. He also encourages members of the Nashville Kurdish Forum to be as equally committed and devoted to the efforts of this agency.

**Morning Star Baptist Church-**During the Christmas season, Kewanna McDowell (parent of a child at Dudley Head Start) saw a need at Dudley. She went to her pastor, Gregory Powell and asked for the congregation to "adopt" the center for the holiday. The church formed "teams" so that each child would receive clothing and toys. Members of the church brought the gifts and additional refreshments for the children. They also arranged for a visit from "Santa."

**John Hilley, Executive Director Community Impact-** Mr. Hilley was instrumental in assisting MAC in participating at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site assisting Head Start parents with free tax preparation. The focus of this program is to prevent low-income families from incurring tax preparation and check cashing fees, which decreases their refunds.

**Samantha Hamerik, Nashville Wealth Building Alliance Campaign Coordinator-** Ms. Hamerik made a presentation to Head Start parents regarding the about the purpose of the Nashville Wealth Building Alliance and the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). As a result many parents were able to properly apply and receive refunds from the IRS.

**Yvonne Joosten, United Way of Middle Tennessee-** supports the communities of Nashville by providing Family Resources Centers. These centers are designed to meet the needs of communities. In addition, United Way's Family Resource Centers participates in "211 telephone System" which provides one-stop-shop information to residents of Davidson County on program services that assists with various needs such as rent and utility assistance, clothing, food, shelter, and health care.

**Pam Quayson, Internal Revenue Service-** Ms. Quayson served as a trainer and provided technical support to the Metropolitan Action Commission's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program site during this past tax season. Laptops were loaded with the appropriate tax software to allow for taxes to be filed electronically.

**Yulonda Flippen, Internal Revenue Service-** Ms. Flippen served as a volunteer trainer to assist members of the Metro Action's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Ms. Flippen made sure that each volunteer was trained appropriately which aided in the accuracy of information submitted to the IRS.

**Patsy Nelson, Nashville Gas Company-** Ms. Nelson is a credit representative with Nashville Gas. She provides assistance to the Division of Community Services regarding inquiries of our customers. She also provides assistance with correcting billing problems.

**Gary Dennis, Love Joy & Associates-** Mr. Dennis, along with the members of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge #1 has actively sponsored activities and events at the Ross Head Start Center. They have also sponsored and participated in the annual Easter Egg Hunt, securing toys for Head Start children for Christmas. Mr. Dennis participated in the National Week of The Young Child by reading stories and participating in outdoor activities on the final day during the week-long celebration. He has worked with Head Start boys who exhibited behavioral issues. Mr. Dennis has expressed a desire to be a part of the new Head Start Fatherhood program in the fall.

**Josias Arteaga, Harding Place YMCA-**Mr. Arteaga has been instrumental in helping Hispanic families and children of Head Start in learning the English language. In addition to working with them, he has also set up a weekend class at Belmont College to help them with the English language. Mr. Arteaga is also the coordinator of the Hispanic Achievers Program, which assists young people with securing college scholarships.

**Terry Hogan, Woodbine Community Center-** Mr. Hogan comes in contact with many Hispanic families in Nashville due to the location of the Woodbine Center and the reputation it has in the Hispanic community. Mr. Hogan on many occasions have identified Hispanic families with Head Start age children and referred them to the Head Start program. He has also helped many families from our program with their legal status for residency or citizenship in the United States.