

Congregations & Early Childhood

From the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a collaboration between Durham's Partnership for Children & End Poverty Durham

Third Edition

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SECTION 1: FAITH COORDINATOR NEWS

Rev. Mel Williams, Watts St Baptist Church, has secured a **\$25,000 challenge grant** from an anonymous donor for this initiative. This challenge grant must be matched dollar for dollar by June, 2011. We invite your congregation to help us match this grant so we can continue our efforts to reach our birth to five population through congregations in Durham. For questions in regard to donations, please contact Ted Whiteside, Fund Development Specialist, at ted@dpfc.net or 919-403-6960 or send donations to Attn: Durham's Partnership for Children, 1201 S. Briggs Ave, Suite 210, Durham, NC 27703 with a note on the check: Child Poverty Faith Initiative.

Contact Winnie Morgan for questions or to speak to your congregation at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

SECTION 2: RESOURCES & MATERIALS

The Sea is so Wide and My Boat is so Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation by Marian Wright Edelman is an interesting read. (<http://www.childrensdefense.org/about-us/leadership-staff/marian-wright-edelman/the-sea-is-so-wide-and-my-boat-is-so-small.html>) In Chapter 4, "A Letter to Faith Leaders" Edelman appeals to faith leaders "to make our nation a safe harbor for every child and to end poverty. I extend a call for your stronger partnership and unwavering voice in building a movement to ensure that not even one of our little ones is lost and that ALL children are able to live the life our Creator intends". Another useful Edelman book is Guide My Feet which includes prayers & meditations on working with children. We encourage you to include our youngest population in your congregation.

Don't forget to use the handout: *Faith in our Future: Congregations and Children Birth to Five* (<http://dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx>). Created locally & available in English & Spanish.

SECTION 3: QUOTES

Do you have "white space" in your newsletters or bulletins that you could insert a quote?

Give me the children until they are seven and anyone may have them afterward. **St Francis Xavier**

Every baby needs a lap. **Henry Robin**

It is better to bind your children to you by a feeling of respect and gentleness than by fear. Terence
Children are our living messages we send to a time we will not see. John Whitehead

SECTION 4: SHARING IDEAS

If you conducted **Children's Sabbath activities**, please let me know. I would like to feature your activities in future newsletters.

Music & Birth to Five in Congregations: In "Building Baby's Brain: The Role of Music", research tells us that singing, listening music, and/or learning an instrument in our early years can create new pathways in the brain related to spatial reasoning. Music is one method of connecting our brain cells in the early years of life. Read more by going to the web site below on **Building Better Brains for Babies**. Do your programs for early childhood include music? Here are a few ideas.

First Presbyterian Church in Durham has roving story-tellers and troubadours who pop in during the Sunday School hour to read a story, teach a finger play, do a craft, or sing a song with the young children. Sometimes the volunteer troubadour comes bearing rhythm instruments to accompany the singing, and sometimes he/she uses the little color-coded handbells (Kids Play Chromatic Handbells) appropriate to 3-5 year olds. The kids love the handbells, and the adults are in awe of the little music-makers. For more info on this program, contact **Marilyn Hedgpeth**, Associate Pastor, First Presbyterian, m.hedgpeth@firstpres-durham.org

The toddler, preschool, and kindergarten classes, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, begin each Sunday school hour singing interactive Bible songs with "Mr. Guitar Man". "It is wonderful to see a room filled with young children (and a handful of parents) energized and joyful in song", said **Nancy Rozak** Director of Christian Education. When "Mr. Guitar Man" is out of town, the teachers bring out a bag filled with children's percussion instruments or rely on "Mr. Trumpet Man". "The show must go on! Music is such a universal means of bringing children and adults together in a 'spirit filled' way," said Nancy. Contact Nancy for more information at: nancy@wpcdurham.org

Healthy Families Durham works with young parents with multiple stressors such as social isolation, depression, substance abuse, and history of trauma. Family Support Workers offer home visits to teach child development, health, and safety. Case management is also provided to help stabilize the family. Many of the parents that we work with are young, isolated, and overwhelmed. Many do not have family or friends in this area, so there is no one in their social circle to celebrate their birthdays. Some of these parents have **never** had a birthday party or a birthday cake. A beautiful birthday cake could bring joy to them on their birthday, a time that has previously accentuated their loneliness. Contact Jan Williams, jan.williams@duke.edu if you can help.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx;

www.endpovertydurham.org;

www.heckmanequation.org; www.developingchild.harvard.edu;

Better Brains for Babies (<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/bbb/factSheets.php>)

To **unsubscribe** or for **more information**, contact **Winnie Morgan** at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

We would appreciate your feedback on this newsletter and ideas to be shared with others on birth to five and their parents in congregations. Please forward this newsletter to appropriate persons on your staff or submit their e-mail.