

UNI-PRES



Kindercottage

Home of the Busy Bees!

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ILLINOIS VOICES for CHILDREN

By Brenda Crisp, Executive Director

On Friday, Oct. 22nd, I attended a symposium sponsored by the Illinois Voices for Children. This was the first time that the agency symposium has been held in East St Louis. Their topic was "What can our community do to help our children," a topic I have tried to get others to engage in and have been unsuccessful. Here was the answer to my question, I thought.

The panel members were from Illinois State Board of Education, Children & Family Services, Mental Health, District 189, Ameren UE, the church, and of course, Illinois Voices for Children. Those in attendance were from many different organizations working with children. Finally, I will get answers to my question of how to help our children.

I patiently listened to the panel, heard a lot of statistics about the East St Louis community, such as 31% of children in St. Clair County receive food stamps, child poverty exceeds 20% in 33 counties of Illinois and St. Clair County has a 25.2 % child poverty rate. In East St. Louis, more than one half of the children live in poverty. The unemployment rate of St. Clair County is 10.6% and in East St. Louis it is 18.2 %.

We know that children living in poverty are more likely to struggle in school, repeat grades and have behavioral problems. All data, from all researchers, points to the need to invest appropriately and accurately in the education of children. Yet, the State of Illinois continues to cut the budgets for education, health and human services and public safety programs.

If we are going to address the conditions of the children, we have to address the conditions of the parents first. We must stop writing off the parents. The cost of childhood poverty can be measured in terms of lower adult earnings, higher crime rate and diminished quality of health throughout their lifetime.

I heard again and again, "Each community must take responsibility for their own community." This isn't the time to place blame. It is time to take responsibility for the children in our communities, whether it's the children next-door, across the street or around the corner and in doing that, we are taking care of our children in Illinois. Here is where I see Uni-Pres Kindercottage working. Our ministry is taking the responsibility for our children and parents. This is done with your help and without you, we won't be able to continue.

Did the symposium really answer my question? No!! What they did was reaffirm my belief that what we do here is extremely important and very much needed. Uni-Pres Kindercottage meets the need but we can only do so much, we need you and others like you to continue helping. There is still much to be done! Thank you for your continued support.

If you would like to learn more about Illinois Voices for Children, please go to www.voices4kids.org.



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Mission Statement:

Uni-Pres Kindercottage is a quality early childhood program in East St. Louis serving low-income families with at-risk infants and preschool children six months to five years old.





On the Road for Kindercottage

By Glenn A. Mullins, UPK Board Member

In one's youth, memories are recorded and on occasion fondly recalled. Recently this happened to me on my way to speak on behalf of Kindercottage in two difference churches, Friedens UCC in Farina, Illinois and St. Paul's UCC near Bible Grove, Illinois. As Pastor Bill Causer led

the way to Bible Grove from Farina, up Route 37 and through the country, we approached St. Paul's. Suddenly there appeared a "picture" stored in my memory from childhood. I was again a child riding the early morning school bus by this prairie church – remembering its grandeur when surrounded by glistening winter snow and drifts, by the emerald grass and flowers of spring and by the wonder of fall's colorful foliage. This country

church is like one we might see on a Christmas card – with long lanes, snow drifts, gleaming windows, a bright star above the stretching spire, a horse drawn sleigh full of presents and a Christmas tree.

What surprising joy I found years later as an adult, on the road that September morning, heading to that church to tell the story of Kindercottage—a story of success and opportunities. It gave me the opportunity to go "home", revisit my youth, share stories with old and new friends, and enjoy a potluck dinner. I was privileged to express gratitude to St. Paul church members for their faithful mission gifts in the past and appreciation for their continued future partnership with Uni-Pres Kindercottage. Priceless moments such as these make life a pleasant journey.

(Editor's note: One never knows what memories such a visit might bring to mind. If you would like a board member to share the Kindercottage story in your church, please contact Judy Brickey at 618-345-4889.)

Computers for Kindercottage!

Several years ago, a university donated several used computers to Kindercottage. For a time, those PCs served the Kindercottage employees and families well. But one by one, they broke and repair costs exceeded the value of the computers. Finally this spring, Kindercottage had only one PC available for families to use to search and apply for jobs, write resumes etc. Judy Brickey, our Kindercottage Board secretary and IBM retiree, knew of an IBM Community Grants program that provides funds or IBM products to eligible community organizations and schools where IBM employees and retirees are active volunteers. IBM volunteers must work an average of eight hours per month for five consecutive months to be eligible for either a cash or equipment grant. Judy completed the requirements and requested a grant to purchase two PCs to replace the broken ones. That grant was approved and the two PCs have been purchased. THANK YOU, JUDY!! If others who believe in Uni-Pres Kindercottage know of such programs through their employers, we'd be happy to work with you to meet their requirements..

Community Champion Award

GREAT NEWS!!! We have received word that Brenda Crisp, Executive Director of Kindercottage, will receive a Community Champion Award, presented by the Institute of Family Medicine, on November 13 at the Ballpark Hilton in St. Louis. This award is intended to honor individuals and organizations that have made significant and often unheralded contributions to the health and well being of poor and disadvantaged people in the St. Louis Community.

All associated with Kindercottage know that Brenda is a champion for the rights of poverty level families. In this, her 40th year of affiliation with Kindercottage, we congratulate her on the receipt of this award. We're very proud of you, Brenda!



The Holidays are Approaching.....

By Brenda Crisp

The ghosts and goblins have left Uni-Pres Kindercottage and plans are underway for Thanksgiving and Christmas. As many of our families deal with unemployment, all would welcome Thanksgiving baskets. As Christmas nears, the staff asks if churches again plan to adopt children. I responded that some have already called but more are needed. So please let me know your plans. We would like to have gifts no later than December 17th so that we can check our list and the party will be December 22nd. By the time you read this newsletter, each church should have been sent at least one picture and description of a child to adopt for Christmas. If more are wanted, you will need to contact us at 874-6505 or unipres@sbcglobal.net.

Metro-East Patriots' Day

By Brenda Crisp

The 7th Annual Patriots' Day was held at Jones Lake in East St. Louis. This event is held each year on the Saturday closest to September 11 to honor First Responders and their families. Patriots' Day was founded in 2004 by and is chaired by Kindercottage Executive Director, Brenda Crisp. An "Hour of Honor" is held at which time as many as 45 First Responders from various agencies are honored with a Certificate of Appreciation. Vendors from Social Service agencies are present to help families. Activities such as horse riding, face painting, bounce houses, etc. are available as well as a "hot dog meal." The biggest event of the day, however, is the Fishing Tournament for children ages 4-13. No adult help is allowed. Fish are donated from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and all participants are required to attend educational demonstrations on how to cast for fish, tie knots, fishing safety and the types of fish in this area. Drawings are held for donated items as well as prizes, including bikes, being given away. 330 children attended Patriots' Day this year.



Also, by the time you read this article, elections will have been held. Today, all agencies are holding their breath, waiting to hear what and how much money they will lose this time. I pray that it is not as bad as before. We can't lose more money and survive. Please keep us in prayer as you are in ours.

On a different note I want to have an Advisory Board for Uni-Pres. Are you interested? If so, please contact me at the center.

As always, I thank you for all you have done for the mission of Uni-Pres Kindercottage and pray that your generosity continues in 2011.



Kindercottage Golf

The first Annual Golf Tournament sponsored by Uni-Pres Kindercottage, Trinity Outreach Center and the Southern Illinois Regional Wellness Center was held at Locust Hills Golf Course in Lebanon, IL on September 17th. 8 teams participated. Although the tournament had a modest start this year, it was profitable for each of the organizations and we learned much. Watch for the 2nd Annual Tournament to be held next year.



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**564 Veronica Avenue
East St Louis, IL 62205**

PHONE:
618.874.6505

FAX:
618.874.6535

E-MAIL:
unipres@sbcglobal.org

WISH LIST

- Sheets for portable cribs
- Diapers—Pampers, Huggies, Luvs, generic diapers sizes 2-6
- Pull-ups for both boys and girls sizes 4-6
- Baby wipes, baby lotion, and baby shampoo
- Air freshener plug-ins
- Baby formula—Similac, Infamil, Isomil
- Rubber backed bibs for girls and boys
- Baby bottles—plastic only
- Sippy cups
- Baby cereal—oatmeal, rice, assorted, multi-grain
- Baby foods—fruits and vegetables, stages 1, 2 and 3 (when purchasing baby foods, please try to get as many as 6 of the same flavor)
- Assorted flavors of infant juice—again, remember the quantity
- Blocks of all types
- Area rugs or carpet squares
- High Chairs
- Baby gates
- Cases of copy paper
- Ink cartridges 96,97,36,37,21,22
- 8 x 11 brown envelopes
- File folders
- Various types of tape
- Cleaning supplies—bleach, disinfectant, toilet bowl cleaner, Comet, window cleaner
- Kleenex, paper towels, bathroom tissue
- We also need people who are interested in joining the Board or a newly formed Advisory
- Board—Friends of Kindercottage. You must have a love for children and for Kindercottage!

