

Cam-O-Gram



CommunityActionMarin

CAM-O-GRAM, Volume 1, Issue 13

December 20, 2010

New CAM Central Kitchen

Don Smith
Dick McKee
Co-Editors

PROGRAM NOTES:

- The LIHEAP program is seeking new participants, particularly from our own program. We have ample funds to help your clients meet their winter heating bill—if they have not already participated this calendar year. Please call Jose at 526-7553 for more information in English or Spanish. If you need help in Asian languages, please call Vinh Luu at 491-9677.

On the brink...

Of Opening!!! Community Action Marin's new Central Kitchen will be preparing food for our kids on December 20th. This incredibly beautiful kitchen was purchased in November, and provides us with an impressive resource for food services, which may include partnerships with other entities, micro-enterprise opportunities and additional program space. This 3,100 square foot facility has all the built-ins, including freezer and refrigerator storage, dry storage, a commercial dishwasher, enormous exhaust hood and all the appropriate plumbing and gas fixtures. So, after several years of searching for a home for our food services, we found a site which exceeded all of our wishes. We will host an open house at the kitchen in January 2011.

Haiku—

**a new winter friend
up the year's steep
sloping
our flow of words**

Anon



KCE News

As the year wraps up, the KCE program would like to thank all of the administrative staff whose support throughout the year makes our program possible. Our fall fundraiser, the KCE Dinner-for-Two raffle was held on Friday Dec. 10th at 2 p.m. in CAM's upstairs conference room. I am happy to report the winners:

3rd prize (Noah's breakfast) - Brandy Bulawsky, KOFY TV, producer/director

3rd prize (Noah's breakfast) - Morris Knight, KOFY-TV on air talent

2nd prize (Pacific Catch) - Whitney Hoyt from the CAM Board of Directors

1st prize (Sabor of Spain) - Russ Hamel, CAM's Director of Development

Congratulations to all the winners, and thank you for raising awareness of the KCE program.

I would also like to share some photos from my performing arts volunteer time at Marin Head Start. These photos are from Nan at Short School. Thank you, Nan. Enjoy!



—From Shar Carlyle, KCE Director (CAM is fiscal agent for KCE)



CAM-O-GRAM

Executive Director's Message

Please Welcome New Prosperity Partners Director Christine Poremski!

Christine Poremski has been selected as the new Director for CAM's Prosperity Partners Program. She joined the CAM Team last month, replacing Jenna Churchman, who assisted in establishing the Program and served as its first director. Although we will miss Jenna, we are excited about Christine and the experience that she brings as the Program continues to expand and serve more clients throughout Marin.

Prior to joining CAM, Christine served as Development Director for several non-profit organizations, including social service agencies Youth and Family Enrichment Services in San Mateo County, and Westside Community Services in San Francisco. In that role she helped design and fund a wide variety of programs designed to help individuals, children and families address mental health, substance abuse, and interpersonal issues. Through this work Christine gained valuable experience building community awareness and support for programs, and she learned the importance of providing wrap-around services to people who are struggling with multiple issues, focusing on participants' own goals and motivations, and incorporating outcome measurement into program design.

Christine started her career in the for-profit sector, spending seven years working in media and account management for advertising agencies Foote, Cone and Belding in New York City, and Saatchi & Saatchi in San Francisco. After earning her MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA, she combined her love of marketing and technology with stints at Netscape Communications and an e-commerce startup company. She also founded a technology training company that helped entrepreneurs learn how to use the Internet to reach new customers and sell their products online. As part of that venture, Christine worked with an expert on consumer credit issues to create a hands-on credit repair guide, which left her with a strong desire to help people navigate personal finance issues.

Christine is passionate about strategy and communications, and is excited to learn more about how the principles of behavioral economics can be applied to asset development.

Learning Center News

As we come to the end of 2010, we reflect on this past year at our school. Due to the budget crises our community became even closer. Working together to raise money for classroom supplies, etc. (through a garage sale, tamale sales and donations from friends of our teachers) our families willingly gave us what they could of their time and money. With the pre-K's book writing project and sale starting soon, we feel we'll be able to get some of the materials we want and go on the field trips we have planned for the year.

We observe daily sacrifices many of our parents make in order for their children to have a better life and a good education. It's quite humbling and most gratifying to be in a place to serve them. Fund raising takes so much planning, time and effort, and continuing to teach while fundraising has been hard work. I applaud everyone who has helped.

Talent shows continue to be popular at our school, and every child is appreciated for his/her effort, with an enthusiastic applause from their friends and teachers. We plan to add a fashion show to the mix, using dress-up clothes. I can't wait to see what a sparkly pink tutu looks like with a leather vest and wool scarf combo! The children not only get acknowledgement, but gain confidence getting up in front of others to share their creativity. When I've talked with the pre-Ks before they graduate, and they tell me what they are going to miss after they leave, the talent shows are near the top of the list, right after their friends and teachers.

The staff at the Learning Center send all of you our wishes for a healthy and happy ending to 2010, and a great beginning to 2011. We are reminded daily of why this work has chosen us, and we continue to be grateful to be a small part of bringing joy into the lives of our children and families.

Peace to us all,
Mahealani Bernes

Focus on Hamilton

Last month I wrote about Indian Valley College, one of our newest sites. This month the focus is on one of our oldest sites, Hamilton, which is located on Nave Drive in Novato. Hamilton is our largest site, serving 76 children and their families, and is an exciting and busy site with several different program options. We share the Hamilton campus with the CAM Child Development Program's Novato Children's Center. They have four portable buildings and we have four portable buildings.

Our Building #1 houses our Novato Head Start Home Visitors and the Family Advocates for this site. Home Visitors each have ten families that they visit once per week, supporting parents in their efforts to be their child's first teacher and optimizing those teachable moments that they have while doing things such as folding laundry, going to the grocery store or playing in the park. In addition to this home visit the children and their parent(s) are brought together at least twice a month to play and learn as a group. The Family Advocates work with the parents of the children enrolled in our Center Base options—helping families set goals and gain resources and skills that build on what they already know to promote self sufficiency.

Building #2 houses one of our Early Head Start classrooms. Sixteen little children ranging in age from just a few months to almost three years old, come to this site to play, learn and to be cared for by their Primary Caregivers/Teachers. We have four teachers each of whom plan individualized care/ curriculum for four children based on the child's level of development and the parents' goals for their child.

Building #3 is a part-day part-year Head Start classroom and building #4 is a full-day full-year classroom. Both classrooms have twenty children aged three to five. The teacher, associate teacher(s) and aide work together to plan and implement a curriculum that supports children in gaining the social, academic, and physical skills that will lead to their future school success. Recently one young boy proudly told me he was painting an "abstract painting and that the colors represented things" demonstrating his recollection of a lesson he learned last year in his classroom.

One special thing about Hamilton is that the pre-school staff are part of the Pre-K to Three Initiative; a grant funded by the Marin Community Foundation. As recipients of this grant, Hamilton Head Start staff along with Hamilton Elementary School staff (and North Bay Children's Center) partner to dramatically improve school readiness and student achievement for low-income students and students of color. The Hamilton partnership is following the Foundation's strategies of early learning success, both through school readiness and performing at grade level by third grade. The MCF Initiative draws on the Foundation for Child Development's (FCD) approach which highlights: 1) the crucial role that children's social emotional development plays in supporting cognitive development and later academic achievement and 2) the alignment of systems across all grades from pre-school through third grade and for stronger linkages between teachers, children, and their families.



One of our Babies



Preschooler hard at work



Hamilton's Parent Work Day

Canal Center News

Canal has been partying! That's what the kids call harvesting their very own garden vegetables, preparing soup and sharing it with everyone. The children are having fun learning about nutrition at the same time. Last week it was Jerusalem artichokes, AKA sun chokes. On December 16 the children made a kale and sun choke soup to serve their families at the annual health education night. Thanks to funding from the Clarence E. Heller Foundation the garden is generously contributing to the health of the whole center.

Save the Redwood League sponsored a bus trip to the awesome and sacred West Marin forest this month. After studying trees in the classroom for the past two months, the entire Center, along with volunteers and some parents and siblings, spent the day in Samuel P Taylor State Park climbing into trees and hiking through the dark forest. Some kids were frightened at first! Later everyone sipped hot chocolate and roasted marshmallows. It is easy to want to save the redwoods after a day like this. For information about the League and free educational materials, see their web site at SaveTheRedwoods.org.

—From Zeva Longley, Director, *Children in Nature Program*



Could One of Your Clients Use \$5,000?

There are many ways low-income Marin residents can save money this tax season! Far too many low- to moderate-income residents do not claim their Earned Income Credit (EIC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), which means **they're leaving anywhere from \$457 to \$5,666 on the table**, depending on how much they earned, whether they are married, and whether they have one or more children. And that's not the only way they can save money on taxes. Many residents are not aware of the free tax preparation services that are available to them through Marin's **Earn It! Keep It! Save It!** program, and they end up paying anywhere from \$100 - \$300 to have their taxes prepared. That buys a lot of groceries!

Last year the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Marin program helped individuals and families claim over \$900,000 in Earned Income Tax Credit, and returned over \$3 million in total refunds to Marin County.

If you have clients who earn under \$48,000/year, please encourage them to come to the **SparkPoint Marin Center** or one of the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! free tax preparation events, so that we can save them money on preparing their taxes, prevent them from paying high interest rates, and claim the EIC and CTC tax credits they earned in 2010. Stop by the *SparkPoint* Marin Center or contact Rebecca Saar, our fabulous AmeriCorps VISTA member, at 415-526-7533 or taxes@camarin.org for more information on free tax preparation.

—From Christine Poremski, Director, *Prosperity Partners*



29 Mary Street
San Rafael, CA 94901
www.camarin.org

Editor's Message

Please share this edition of the monthly Cam-O-Gram with your program community, friends, and the greater Marin community by forwarding to staff, friends, and CAM supporters. For key CAM program staff: please electronically distribute, and **print/post** this issue at your work site for everyone to see.

The Cam-O-Gram is published monthly, typically on the "fourth Friday" of the month, with the "third Friday" the deadline" date for submission of articles by staff and others. We may occasionally alter this schedule due to vacations and other pre-planned absences. Keeping this in mind, Cam-O-Gram articles may be submitted to me at any time (e-mail to dsmith@camarin.org), and, as necessary, an old format (e-mail attachment Word document) "Special Edition" may be issued if an important event date, etc, precedes the anticipated monthly next publish date.

Don Smith, Co-Editor