

# Gold Seal GAZETTE

A Quarterly Publication of  
YMCA Children's Services GOLD SEAL PROJECT

Vol. 1. No. 2

## Participating Programs



**\*Celia Beltran Family Child Care**  
Christie Hatcher Family Child Care  
**\*Renee Hatfield Family Child Care**  
**\*Liz Jimison Family Child Care**  
Terri McWeeney Family Child Care  
Olga Podmarkova Family Child Care  
**\*Faye Sundin Family Child Care**  
Coreen Swales Family Child Care  
Cathy Thomson Family Child Care  
**\*Randee Tolbert Family Child Care**  
Crystal Troyer Family Child Care

**\*Academy of Creative Learning**  
Achievements Learning Center  
Bath & Racquet Club Too, Inc.  
Children First, Inc.

Children First Head Start at Colson  
Children First Head Start at Englewood  
Children First Head Start at Glenallen  
Community Presbyterian Preschool

**\*Discovery Days Preschool**

**\*Early Care Center @ 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist**

Early Learning Center of Sarasota, Inc.  
Englewood United Methodist Preschool  
Grace United Methodist Preschool  
Helen R. Payne Day Nursery – Annex  
Helen R. Payne Day Nursery – Main  
International Montessori Academy  
Kid's Club, Inc.

Lakeside Lutheran Preschool  
Learning Kastle Preschool

**\*Little Pilgrim Preschool**

**\*Pines of Sarasota Child Care**  
The Renaissance Preschool, Inc.

Shamrock Kindercottage  
St. Boniface Preschool  
St. Mark's Preschool

St. Martha's Day Care Center  
St. Paul's Child Development Center  
Trinity Preschool

Venice Christian Preschool  
Venice Presbyterian Early Childhood Center  
**\*Venice YMCA Preschool**

Venice YMCA Jelly Bean Junction

**\*Gold Seal Accredited**

## Recruitment Time!!

Did you know that Sarasota County government has set a goal of 100 accredited early learning programs by 2005? Well, they did! The Gold Seal Project strives to meet that goal by continuing to enroll new sites interested in program improvement toward Gold Seal Accreditation.

It's that time again! We are getting ready to recruit early learning programs in North and South Sarasota County (as well as parts of Charlotte County in The Venice Foundation territory) to enter the Gold Seal Project. Between October and December 2002, we will be mailing out applications and setting up information forums to review the guidelines with interested programs. With newly awarded funding from the Sarasota County Grants-in-Aid and continued funding from the Venice Foundation, we can provide additional program assessment, technical assistance and daytime CDA Equivalency classes to many more programs and staff in Sarasota County.

Help us spread the word and encourage your colleagues to contact us. Applications will be going out in the mail soon.

*Join us as we celebrate...*

*It's hard to believe, but we are preparing to graduate our 3<sup>rd</sup> class of CDA Equivalency students.*

*Please join us on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at the Venice Community Center from 7-9:00 PM as we acknowledge the hard work and commitment of our newest class of graduates from South County.*



*In addition to graduation, we are holding our 1<sup>st</sup> Celebration of Accreditation to acknowledge all of the programs that have received their Gold Seal of Excellence. Come join the fun and commemorate this important community accomplishment. RSVP to Donna at 952-9524 X1073.*

## Accreditation Updates

Congratulations go out to the newest accredited programs in the Gold Seal Project. Receiving **NAFCC** Accreditation for their Family Child Care programs: **Liz Jimison, Faye Sundin, Renee Hatfield, Randee Tolbert** and **Celia Beltran**. Receiving **NAEYC** Accreditation for their center-based programs: **Little Pilgrim Preschool, Discovery Days Preschool** and **Early Care Center** (reaccreditation). In addition to the **Venice YMCA** and **Academy of Creative Learning**, both **APPLE** accredited earlier this year, a total of **10** programs have achieved Gold Seal status while participating in the Project.

Additionally, **13** programs have completed their accreditation self-study and are eagerly awaiting their validator/observer visit or the final accreditation decision. They have invested many hours identifying the strengths and weaknesses in their programs and developing strategies to take their programs to new levels of quality. We are so proud of you!

### South County

Shamrock Kindercottage  
Community Presbyterian Preschool  
St. Mark's Preschool  
Children First Early Head Start at Glenallen  
Venice Presbyterian Preschool  
Jellybean Junction/YMCA  
Hatcher Family Child Care  
Kid's Club, Inc. (School-age in Charlotte County)

### North County

Pines of Sarasota (re-accreditation)  
Children First, Inc.  
St. Boniface Preschool  
Early Learning Center of Sarasota, Inc.  
Trinity Preschool

## Quality of Work Environment for Staff Impacts the Quality of Care Provided for Children and Families

High quality early childhood programs recognize that there is a direct relationship between the quality of the work environment experienced by the teaching staff and the quality of care and education staff provide for children. Prioritizing staff needs to ensure for their well being is a critical task for directors, but often the hardest to provide.

Caregivers who experience high levels of job fulfillment are more likely to express positive feelings toward children. They are also more likely to remain in their positions for a longer period of time. With general operating costs and health insurance increasing faster than tuition income or public subsidies, fringe benefits for staff are generally one of the last budget items to be considered.

While all of you have been examining the "big" benefits for your staff (health insurance, vacation, sick and personal time off and retirement) and know the importance of them (and the expense), other benefits exist that also help build morale. With the help of Gold Seal staff and input from providers during our Directors Support Group meetings, we've compiled a list of helpful ideas that improve the quality of the work environment, build morale and can be considered benefits the next time someone asks you what benefits you provide for your staff.

**Birthday:** Choice of paid day off or single day's pay added to paycheck

**Floating Holiday:** Can be used to celebrate a holiday important to them that your program may not close for (Good Friday, Passover, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, President's Day, etc.)

**Thanksgiving:** Amish pie certificate or grocery store gift certificate

**Holidays:** If holding a fundraiser at holiday time, let parents know that money raised is divided for teachers for holiday bonus

**Paycheck prizes:** In every paycheck there is a small prize not to exceed \$1 (The Dollar stores have large selections)

**Monthly attendance drawings:** To qualify, you cannot call in sick for a whole month. A \$20 gift certificate is purchased and awarded. Local restaurants, bookstores and movie theaters are popular requests.

**Team Player Award:** A framed certificate or ribbon for the person who has gone above and beyond. Find something positive in everyone so you can reward someone each month. This person can also get a special parking space for the month-hang a laminated sign with "Reserved for Miss Kerri, our Team Player for October".

**Length of Service Acknowledgement:** A small stuffed animal (your program's mascot) is posted on the staff person's classroom door (6 months). At 1 year, a plaque for the door with their name on it. For each additional year of service, add something to the plaque (small wooden stars or apples for example).

## ~All About Assessments~

**THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE**, also known as the ECERS, was first published in 1980 by researchers at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in an attempt to measure program quality in early childhood education. The scales were revised in 1998 to update and expand the instrument to reflect changes in the early childhood field that had occurred since the original publication date. During this time, inclusion of children with disabilities and sensitivity to cultural diversity had become important issues in the assessment of program quality. The measurement of quality itself received greater attention through the development of the Accreditation Program of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1984) and the publication of several early childhood assessment instruments.

In addition to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, there are three additional scales, each designed for a different segment of the early childhood field (*Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-ITERS*; *Family Day Care Rating Scale-FDCRS*; and *School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale-SACERS*). Each one of the scales has items to evaluate: *Physical Environment*; *Basic Care*; *Curriculum*; *Interaction*; *Schedule and Program Structure*; and *Parent and Staff Education* and each has proven reliability and validity.

The scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff, children, parents and other adults, among the children themselves and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions. Process quality is assessed primarily through observation.

The scales define environment in a broad sense and guide the observer to assess the arrangement of space both indoors and outdoors, the materials and activities offered to the children, the supervision and interactions (including language) that occur in the classroom, and the schedule of the day, including routines and activities. The support offered to parents and staff is also included.

The Gold Seal Project Partners, while investigating best practices and delivery systems to measure quality, included use of these scales to collect information at the onset and throughout the program improvement process.

An increase in a program's ECERS scores directly correlates to the overall program quality and their readiness for accreditation. Assessment results are reviewed and developed into Action Plans so teachers, FCC owners and directors can create a timeline to make necessary changes to their programs. Generally, once a program averages a "5" on their assessment, they are ready to begin a comprehensive self-study process working toward accreditation.

For more information on the Environment Rating Scales, visit the Frank Porter Graham, University of North Carolina website at [www.fpg.unc.edu](http://www.fpg.unc.edu) and click on the Rating Scales tab.

## Recognizing Special Needs

The Gold Seal Project's Inclusion Specialist, **Debbi Bowler**, provides on-site support, training and technical assistance to child care providers to promote inclusion of children with disabilities and/or developmental delays.

### **What does the Inclusion Specialist do?**

- ❖ Observations and feedback with teachers and families
- ❖ Classroom and care giving guidance
- ❖ Family partnership support
- ❖ Guidance for working with therapists
- ❖ Training and workshops
- ❖ Information and referrals

### **Who should be referred and how is the referral made?**

Any child with a known or suspected disability, impairment or delay that affects one of more of the following areas:

- ❖ Motor skills/perception
- ❖ Vision/hearing
- ❖ Cognition
- ❖ Communication/Speech
- ❖ Sensory integration
- ❖ Social interactions
- ❖ Self Help

**Who can access these services?** Services are available only in South County to programs participating in the Gold Seal Project as funded by the Venice Foundation. Debbi Bowler holds a M.A. degree in Early Childhood Counseling and Development from Boston College and has worked with young children with special needs and their families for over 13 years. She is not only new to the Gold Seal Project, but also to the state of Florida, recently relocating from Massachusetts. We are thrilled to have her on staff!



## Dear Goldie...

**Q.** I submitted my Program Description in December and have been waiting for my Validation/Observer visit for over 10 months! What's the hold up and what will I have to update? WAITING WANDA

**A.** Dear Wanda: Due to the popularity of accreditation at this time, some of the accrediting agencies are experiencing lengthy delays getting validators/observers out to the sites. Since it is a volunteer-driven process, each accrediting agency relies on someone to offer to conduct the site visit at their convenience. Feel free to contact your accrediting agency to discuss the long wait as well as your mentor who may already be looking into the matter. Some documentation will need to be revised, especially if turnover has occurred, such as staffing patterns and any certificates submitted may have expired (such as CPR and First Aid) which will need to be updated. This will vary by accrediting agency as well. Hang in there. Keep up the quality. It will happen!

**Q.** I am a Family Child Care Provider working towards NAFCC Accreditation and I am nearly ready to send in for an Observer visit. I feel pretty good about the quality improvements I have made and confident that I offer a great program to my families. The children love all the activities and the parents are treating me with respect since I present myself more professionally. I have all the training and documentation together and my place looks ready. Here's my problem - I am so scared and nervous that the kids will choose the day of the observation to present me with some of their more challenging behaviors. Sometimes when we have a visitor, some of them seem to have a different personality! What should I do? NERVOUS NELLIE

**A.** Dear Nellie: First of all, RELAX! You sound very well prepared, and should be proud of all the effort you have made this year. If you are presented with some challenging behaviors, remember that the Observer has experience with Family Child Care and with children. They are expecting some misbehavior! They are not there to examine the child's behavior, but they *are* there to observe how you deal with challenging behaviors. Part of being a professional provider is setting the stage for the children to be able to interact appropriately by setting up a schedule that you follow every day, providing enriching activities, caring for their health and safety and teaching them by modeling appropriate interactions. So don't be horrified if someone has a meltdown or toys get snatched because those are normal things that can happen in a child care setting. You have practiced many times the proper intervention techniques, so focus on those rather than the behavior. If you have made quality improvements that are part of your every day routine, the Observer will know by the children's reactions what your program is about, and she will be able to see your level of consistency. Best of Luck!

**Have a question for "Goldie"? Send it to:**

YMCA Children's Services  
Gold Seal Project  
One S. School Ave. #401  
Sarasota, FL 34237

## GOLD SEAL of EXCELLENCE

**In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care Program for child care facilities and family child care homes. The purpose of the program is to acknowledge early learning facilities that are accredited by nationally recognized associations and whose standards reflect quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children. The Gold Seal Quality Care Program includes the following accrediting associations at this time:**

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**  
(800) 424-2460 [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

**National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)**  
(800) 359-3817 [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)

**National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)**  
**Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)**  
(727) 734-7096 [www.acsi.org](http://www.acsi.org)

**Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE)**  
(800) 322-2603 [www.facem.com](http://www.facem.com)

**National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA)**  
(617) 298-5012 [www.nsaca.org](http://www.nsaca.org)

**Montessori School Accreditation Commission (MSAC)**  
(707) 938-3818 [www.montessori-msac.org](http://www.montessori-msac.org)

**Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS)**

**National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education (NAC)**

**National Accreditation Council for Early Childhood Professional Personnel and Programs (NACECP)**

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools (SACS)**

**All accrediting associations include standards for each of the 10 domains below:**

1. Interactions between teachers and children
2. Curriculum
3. Relationships among teachers and children
4. Staff qualifications and professional development
5. Administration
6. Staffing, including adult-child ratios and group sizes
7. Physical environment
8. Health and safety
9. Nutrition and food service
10. Program evaluation

**A self-study process is part of the accreditation system and includes the following:**

1. Involvement of parents, staff members and administrators
2. Use of valid and reliable self-study instruments
3. Use of questionnaires, focused observations, narrative descriptions and work products demonstrating how the standards are met

**Additionally, each includes a process for verification of the program's self-study, which includes**

1. Trained validator or validating commission to review the self-study documents for completeness
2. On-site visit by one or more validators depending on the size of the program, observing all domains
3. Interview by the validator of the program administrator and informal interviews with staff

**And finally, each accrediting association includes a renewal process for child care providers not to exceed three years.**

# CDA NEWS

Our CDA Equivalency program continues with 25 students enrolled in North County and 19 students enrolled in South County.

Recently, students in the infant/toddler track in South County took a field trip to Cyesis, a NAEYC accredited center serving infants and toddlers. Students received an overview of the program and toured the classrooms. The next tour, for the preschool track, was to First Presbyterian Preschool and Discovery Days Preschool, also NAEYC accredited, to observe the many activities and positive interactions between teachers, children and parents. And last, but not least, our family child care CDA students visited Sundin FCC, a NAFCC accredited program to witness home-based environments that are providing high quality care. THANK YOU KATHY KOURAPIS, NANCY LINDSLEY, FAYE SUNDIN & MARIAN RUTKOWSKI for your hospitality. It was quite a learning experience for all.

Relationship building and trust are two of the most important components to successful learning. Our CDA instructors also serve as on-site advisors to their students, providing the opportunity to follow classroom content to practice; mentoring and modeling strategies to continuously improve the classroom environment and address situations as they arise. Having a staff of qualified, competent teachers is an important benchmark in reaching accreditation and maintaining professional standards. New CDA Equivalency classes will begin in January 2003 in South County and November/December 2002 in North County.

## Welcome Aboard!



Please join us in welcoming new staff to the Gold Seal Project!

**Sherri Mills** joins the South County Project as Team Leader and Trainer. Her background as a Parent Educator at Forty Carrots Family Center and Special Education teacher makes for a great fit. Also joining the South County team is **Debbi Bowler** as our Inclusion Specialist (see "A Child in Need" for details).

**Debbie McMillin** joins the North County Project as an Accreditation/Quality Improvement mentor. Many of you know Debbie from her previous position as Center Specialist with the Quality Enhancement Department. She has worked at YMCA Children's Services for over 4 years. Working closely with Debbie is

**Wendy Biasetto** who joins our team assisting with program assessment and providing training and mentoring related to business practices and staff development. She owned and operated 3 NAEYC accredited centers in California and is the author of The Ultimate Guide to Forms for Early Childhood Programs and Wonderscience: A Developmentally Appropriate Guide to Hands-on Science for Young Children. She recently moved here from Colorado. **Nancy Tulloch** also joins our team providing much needed administrative support. Nancy's prior work experience was with EIP, SMH Child Care Program and Manatee Children's Services as Administrative Assistant.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Florida Children's Forum**  
11<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference  
Orlando, FL October 21-25  
[www.fcforum.org](http://www.fcforum.org) for details!

~CHECK IT OUT~

### Director's Connection

Monthly Support Meeting  
12:45 - 2:15 PM

**South County**  
Seaboard Office Park-Venice

October 23, 2002  
November 20, 2002  
December 18, 2002

**North County**  
Kane Plaza - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

October 23, 2002  
November 20, 2002  
December 18, 2002

WORKSHOP: Beyond  
Discipline by Alfie Kohn

~ FREE~FREE~FREE~

Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup> 7-9:00 PM  
USF Sudakoff Center; Sarasota  
RSVP to Donna at 952-9524x1073

YMCA CONFERENCE:

"Developing Character &  
Bringing Back Integrity"

Madelyn Swift

Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 8:30-4:00

Ramada Inn, Osprey

For info call 1-800-317-4599

~Scholarships Available~

NAEYC CONFERENCE

November 20-23, 2002

New York, NY

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

School Readiness Coalition of  
Sarasota County, Inc. Conference  
January 25, 2003

## **Gold Seal Staff**

Donna Kmetz  
*Gold Seal Project Director*

Sherri Mills  
*South County Team Leader/Trainer*

Nancy Tulloch  
*Administrative Assistant*

Marla Yaegers  
*South County CDA Instructor/Advisor*

Chris Sturdevant  
*Family Child Care Accreditation Mentor*

Kerri Dieffenwierth  
*Early Childhood Accreditation Mentor*

Cindy Hicks  
*Early Childhood Accreditation Mentor &  
Program Assessor*

Susan O'Carroll  
*North County CDA Instructor/Advisor*

Debbie McMillin  
*Early Childhood Accreditation Mentor*

Wendy Biasetto  
*Early Childhood Accreditation & Business  
Mentor*

Jody Goodwin  
*Emotional Development Specialist  
South County*

Debbi Bowler  
*Inclusion Specialist  
South County*

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Caryn Driscoll  
*Vice President  
YMCA Children's Services*

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## **How To Reach Us:**

### **North County**

One S. School Ave., Suite 401  
Sarasota, FL 34237  
Phone: (941) 952-9524 X1073  
Fax: (941) 954-4709

### **South County**

Seaboard Office Park  
312 East Venice Avenue #101  
Venice, FL 34292  
Phone: (941) 483-4622 X0  
Fax: (941) 483-4542

[www.sarasota-ymca.org](http://www.sarasota-ymca.org)

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## **Thank you to our Project Funders**

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The Venice Foundation  
William G. and Marie Selby Foundation  
BOA Foundation/UWA Success By 6®  
Expansion Initiative  
The Sarah Greer Mayer Fund of the  
Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
YMCA Children's Services  
School Readiness Coalition  
of Sarasota County, Inc.  
Child Care Executive Partnership Program  
Sarasota County Grants-in-Aid

## **Gold Seal Project Partners**

Forty Carrots Family Center, Inc.  
Children First, Inc.  
Parenting U International  
United Way/Success by 6® Sarasota

YMCA Children's Services  
Gold Seal Project  
One S. School Avenue, Suite 401  
Sarasota, Florida 34237

