



Family Nurturing Center
of Massachusetts

NURTURING

NETWORK

news

Spring 2008

Letter from Matt LiPuma, Executive Director

We are a little more than halfway through FY 2008, and I am pleased to report that a great deal of progress has been made on the family support goals we have set with our community partners for this year. In Plymouth on February 7th, the first Nurturing Fathers' Program graduated 12 men at the Plymouth DSS area office (see pg 2).

In Allston-Brighton, our partners and funders gave another year of life to the Allston-Brighton Family Literacy Program, a program that was threatened by devastating federal budget cuts, (pg. 3); and thanks to the ABFN parent council and new funding, a "Tot Gym" program was launched in February (pg. 3).

Now fully staffed, Smart from the Start has begun reaching out to families with young children and implementing programs in Mattapan, Charlestown, and Roslindale, (see below). In Dorchester, three new school-based Play to Learn groups are now available

to parents and caretakers with young children (pg. 3).

FNC Board and staff have been working hard to achieve the organizational goals we set in our most recent strategic plan. In the fall, we had our most successful Ride for Kids fundraising effort to date. As a result, we hired a Development Officer to lead FNC's fundraising efforts (pg. 6). This season's newsletter has the longest list of donors and volunteers in FNC's 14 year history!!

Families are telling us what they need to raise healthy children. Through collaboration and careful planning, FNC is one of many partners across the city working to meet those needs. We offer thanks to all of you who partner with us and support our efforts. As we approach another state budget cycle and a presidential election, please don't miss an opportunity to raise your voice in support of families. ■

S² is off to a Smart Start

The questions were open: "Tell us about the strengths in this community: What is positive? What challenges are you facing? What services would you like to see offered for your family?"

The answers were specific: "safer playgrounds"; "ESL and adult education classes without long waiting lists"; "better access to information about what is happening in our community"; "field trips to the museum, zoo..."; "more activities to keep our kids busy, especially in the winter"; "information about how we can help our children be

ready for school".

After a year of planning, fundraising, and a successful hiring process, Smart from the Start (S²) staff and their Boston Centers for Youth and Families and Boston Housing Authority partners began reaching out to families living in housing developments located in or near a community center in Mattapan, Roslindale and Charlestown. Determined to lead with a strengths-based, positive approach, S² Director Cherie Craft (profile on pg. 6) kicked off this family support and early literacy promotion project in December with focus groups, baby fairs, and "play dates". BCYF and BHA staff in each neighborhood worked closely with Cherie and her staff to spread the word and set up safe, inviting, play spaces for families with young children.

goal: to support families with young children in their role as their child's first teacher. "All families need support in understanding what they can do to get their young children ready for school and off to a healthy start," said Cherie. "Smart from the Start will make this information and programming accessible to families where they live and assist them in accessing other supports as requested."

So far, over 80 families have attended the program's focus groups and opening events, and have registered to participate in S² programming. Programming began rolling out at the end of January and a full menu of activities will be offered by mid-March.

Cont. page 2



Parents and children enjoy the newly renovated Smart from the Start playspace at the Gallivan Community Center in Mattapan.

Well known for its youth development programming, Boston Centers for Youth and Families has made a major commitment to supporting S² by funding Early Childhood Specialist positions and providing space for the programming that will include Welcome Baby home visits, pre-natal and parent empowerment groups, adult/child playgroups, parent education programs, Nurturing Programs, ESL and adult literacy programs, an Urban Gymboree for parents and family childcare providers, and other programming still to be determined. The

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NURTURING programs

First Nurturing Fathers' Program in Plymouth

After working with FNC for several years at the Park St. DSS Area office, Bruce Kantor brought his passion for the Nurturing Fathers' Program to the Southeast Region. With support from Area Director Michelle Mason, her staff, and community partner South Bay Mental Health Center, the Plymouth Office put together a program that started in November. 16 dads walked through the doors last fall to embark on a 13 week journey, and Bruce shared the following with us:

Touching on many issues and feelings that are important but often painful for fathers to face, the trek can prove too difficult for some. The dozen who remained worked

As difficult as it was at times, empathy, humor, and a compelling curriculum helped them to continue on in the program.

past obstacles trying to become the best fathers they can be. They were single fathers who had custody and were seeking custody, dads from intact families and divorced families, young fathers and old.

The program provided for all the fathers an emotional toolbox with options and choices for how to handle inevitable parenting challenges. The men supported one another as they identified the strengths and personal issues that each of

them brought to their fathering role. As difficult as it was at times, empathy, humor, and a compelling curriculum helped them to continue on in the program. For the sake of their children, these fathers came week after week. The graduation on February 7th was a true celebration of accomplishment and hope. ■

Announcing the Dorchester Nurturing Fathers' Program

Great news! FNC, in partnership with Dorchester House and Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club, is excited to announce the start of a new Nurturing Fathers' Program in Dorchester. The program is made possible through a grant from the Children's Trust Fund and will serve both custodial and non-custodial fathers of all ages. We hope this collaboration will result in a Fathers' Program that will be ongoing and will continue to serve Dorchester families, though all fathers from the Boston area are welcome to apply.

The program is scheduled to begin in March and will take place at Dorchester House; the groups will be



held on Wednesday nights from 6 pm to 8:30 p.m. Child-care is provided, so fathers are encouraged to bring their children along if they so desire. Also, we provide dinner and a free Nurturing Fathers' Curriculum Workbook for each participating father. FNC, Children's Trust Fund, Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club, and Dorchester House are committed to helping create healthy families—one father at a time.

This father has participated in both a Family Nurturing Program and a Nurturing Fathers' Program. Dads also nurture their children in our Parent-Child playgroups (see page 3).

Save the Date Statewide Nurturing Network Meeting

Friday, March 28, 2008

11 am–2 pm

Worcester, Mass.

For more information or to RSVP,
call Sue Parker: 617.474.1143 x236

Smart from page 1

S² has contracted with Goodman Associates in Cambridge to deliver a comprehensive program evaluation that will include a six year longitudinal study. Many community partners and other city agencies have agreed to collaborate with S², and the program will closely coordinate its efforts with Boston's Birth to Five School Readiness Initiative (www.bostonbirthtofive.org), due to release its citywide recommendations in March.

This is an exciting time for families with young children and for the entire Early Childhood community in Boston. Smart from the Start is one of many new

initiatives that will be unveiled in the coming months. For more information about S², you can contact Cherie Craft 617.635.4920 or the Early Childhood Specialists for each neighborhood: Mattapan—Makibra Morrell 617.635.5252; Charlestown—Dina Maldonado 617.635.5169; Roslindale—Rayza LaCruz 617.635.5256.

Smart from the Start is funded by: The Boston Foundation, Children's Hospital, The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Family Foundation, John Hancock, The Mabel Louise Riley Foundation and The City of Boston. ■

Jamaica Plain/Allston-Brighton

Countdown to Kindergarten Playgroup Update

As we reported in our Fall 2007 newsletter, Playgroups are sprouting up all over! Through FNC's second year of collaboration with Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), Boston Public Schools have opened their doors to many new families with young children! These preschoolers see Playgroups as their "school"—and they are happy to bring their parent or caregiver along. Last year, the one new pilot site was at the Early Learning Center West in Jamaica Plain. In September, four new Playgroup sites opened—at the Kenny Elementary, the Holmes Elementary, and the Lee Academy in Dorchester, and at the Tobin Community Center in Roxbury. As of mid-January, 193 families and 249 children have attended the new Countdown to Kindergarten Playgroups!

FNC has supported this expansion by providing training and technical assistance. With the help of CTK staff, FNC created a Playgroup Manual that details all the things a

Playgroup Leader needs to think about, including how to set up space, recruit families to the program, communicate effectively with both parents and children, and how to design age appropriate activities and curriculum. The Manual and over twenty hours of training offered by FNC staff focused on the unique role of Playgroup Leaders and the many "hats" they wear. They are providing age appropriate activities for children, offering informal parenting education and guidance to parents, and helping to connect families to services. Families are gaining exposure to the Boston Public Schools and building connections to other families as the children are making friends. It's a win-win situation for all!

According to Joanna Nelson, Countdown to Kindergarten Coordinator, "The expansion and success of our Play to Learn parent-child playgroup program this year is



Adults and children have fun and learn together at playgroups.

extremely exciting. Families are enthusiastic about the quality of our playgroups, which is significantly due to Countdown to Kindergarten's wonderful partnership with the Family Nurturing Center to provide training, professional development, and ongoing support to the playgroup program and coordinators." ■

Allston-Brighton Parent Council Asks for New Tot Gym Program...And it's Happening!

The Parent Council for the Allston-Brighton Family Network wanted more indoor programming in the winter months for children, when it's too cold to be outside and enjoy the parks. Thanks to funding from the Boston College Neighborhood Fund, ABFN will provide this programming beginning in February.

The recreational program for families with young children will meet during the winter months once a week for two hours at the Jackson-Mann Community Center in Allston. It will be led by a trained Early Childhood Educator. Parents or caregivers will attend the sessions with their children.

In Allston-Brighton, very few options for physical recreational activities are available for young children during the winter months. Gym programs are costly, far away, or for older children. In addition, space in many homes and apartments is limited, and parents often need to be mindful of disturbing the neighbors, so there are many

obstacles to giving young children the chance to do what comes naturally: move!

When children become mobile, they need time, space, and safe and age appropriate equipment in order to develop their large muscles and gross motor skills. The Tot Gym program teaches the habits of a healthy lifestyle to the entire family when the child is young so that the habits become ingrained as a new way of life.

Having a space that allows a child to make choices about what he/she will play on, practice skills like taking turns and following directions, and learn to use his/her body in relation to others is rare. A physical recreation class, especially one provided during the months when parents have no alternative physical activities, is imperative for the sound physical and mental health of everyone involved.

ABFN Parent Council members: Andrea Kamens, Liz Lally, Ellen Krause-Grosman, Sara Alexakos, Susan Ho, Kamala Dansinghani, and Maria DeJesus. ■

Allston-Brighton Family Literacy Program Lives On!

The Allston-Brighton Family Literacy Program is alive and well! In May, we learned that only three of the twenty-two Massachusetts Even Start Family Literacy programs would be re-funded due to federal budget cuts. Fourteen Allston-Brighton families would have had to join long waiting lists for ESL programs that did not offer integrated family support components or chil-

dcare. Thanks to generous Jackson/Mann Community Center (JMCC) donors and a New Balance Foundation grant, this program will continue for another year. The program was modified to accommodate reduced funding but maintained the essential elements, thanks to the efforts of Andrea DeSousa, FNC Family Support Specialist and our dedicated JMCC ESL and ECE

teachers. In November, program participant Genilda Castro, spoke at a Massachusetts Dept. of Education sponsored Family Literacy Event at the Jackson-Mann Community Center about the positive impact this program has on her family's daily economic life and her children's school success. ■

Thanks for Your Help

Thanks to all of our current funders...

Allston-Brighton Boston College
Community Fund
Boston Centers for Youth & Families
The Boston Foundation
BPS/Community Partnerships for
Children
Children's Hospital Boston
Children's Trust Fund
CHT Foundation

Countdown to Kindergarten
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State Street Foundation
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Donors and Supporters July '07 – January '08

*The names below represent the many people and groups who support the work of FNC in countless ways. We want to say special thanks to our Riders (marked with *), who pedaled dozens of miles on a beautiful September day to benefit FNC - and to all of you who contributed by sponsoring our participation in the 2007 Ride for Kids. With your help, we exceeded our Ride fundraising goal! We are always grateful, too, to those of you who give of your time to buy supplies, create handmade items, and assemble baskets for our Welcome Baby program; we can't put a price on what you do!*

We owe our deepest thanks to FNC Board members for the commitment, energy, vision, and resources they bring all year long to helping us achieve our mission.

Diane Abate Corporation
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Jacqueline Olds, MD	Stephen Robichaud	Sophia Snow Monday Craft Group	Laura Weisel	

Along For More Than The Ride: Profile of an FNC Volunteer

The first time we met Alinda Bostick was the day she got on her bike and rode 25 miles for FNC in the 2006 Ride for Kids. Alinda's mom, Zelma, who'd been serving families through our connection with Cradles to Crayons, had heard we were looking for riders and offered us her daughter. Alinda enjoyed the Ride so much, she did even more fundraising and joined us again last fall. Now she's going the proverbial "extra mile" by volunteering with us one day per month!

A Dorchester resident who grew up in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain, Alinda went to Boston Technical High School and decided she wanted to become an architect. In 1996, she graduated from Howard University, and she now works as a Space Planner/Project Manager in the state's Division of Capital Asset Management. When the opportunity to volunteer through Governor Patrick's SERV (State Employees Responding as Volunteers) Program came along, Alinda knew just where she wanted to help out. "The people are so nice at FNC, that you just want to be part of the team! They are doing great work to support families. I feel lucky to have come from a good family myself, so I want to give back."

Alinda is assisting with keeping our FNC database current, getting mailings out, and keeping records of families served, but she's also using her talent as a photographer

to capture great nurturing moments on film. Thanks, Alinda—we know your mom is proud! ■



Rider and volunteer Alinda Bostick and mom Zelma are all smiles following the 2007 Ride for Kids.

Meet Smart from the Start Director, Cherie Craft, MEd

Cherie is a native of inner city Boston. She comes to the Smart from the Start partnership with extensive experience working directly with diverse, inner-city families in the Department of Developmental Pediatrics at Boston Medical Center, where she was Director of the Family Support Program. As a consultant for the New England Regional Head Start Office in Boston, she worked with early childhood programs on evaluation, staff development, and quality assurance. Most recently, Cherie was the Boston Regional Director of Peace Games in Boston, where she worked with schools and community organizations to promote peacemaking among area youth. Her broad experience with families, community-based organizations, and state and national agencies positions her well to lead this exciting project.



Cherie Craft



Valerie Bean

Valerie Bean, New FNC Development Officer

Valerie Bean, FNC's Business Manager since 2000, has accepted a new position at Family Nurturing Center. FNC is thrilled that she has agreed to take on the job of Development Officer, where she will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of FNC fundraising activities. As many of you know, Valerie, in addition to managing all of FNC's finances and human resource needs, has also been the "voice" of FNC, the lead staff person for our Rodman Ride campaign, the lead for our newsletter, and the "go to person" for just about anything else that needs to get done. Valerie will gradually transition into her new position as we search for and hire a new Business Manager (see job description at www.familynurturing.org).

Cape Verdean Nurturing Program Gets Results

We knew it all along—that families were changing. We see it and we experience it weekly in our Nurturing Program sessions with parents and children. It always helps to have data to support it. The Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2) is a valid and reliable inventory designed to assess the parenting and child rearing attitudes of adult and teen parent and non-parent populations. There are five constructs that are measured in this inventory: inappropriate expectations, lack of empathy, physical punishment, role reversal, and power and independence. A program is thought to positively impact a particular construct when the mean difference from pre- to post-test is positive and statistically significant. Participants of the Cape Verdean Programs increased their sten scores from the pre- to post-test in each of the 5 AAPI categories, with the mean difference reaching statistical significance in each of the categories.

Forty seven participants completed pre-post surveys
94% were female (n=44); and 6% were Male (n=3)
The Mean difference in Sten Scores were:

	Mean difference	Percent Change
Inappropriate Expectations	1.21	87%
Lack of Empathy	1.17	108%
Physical Punishment	1.72	130%
Role Reversal	1.04	74%
Power and Independence	2.17	110%

This year will be our 8th year running The Cape Verdean Nurturing Program curriculum. We witness its effectiveness in person and in evaluation results. Cape Verdean families who often feel that community resources are lacking for them feel listened to and supported by staff and facilitators who communicate with them in their language about their concerns. In fact, this year we are responding to working parents' needs to have the Nurturing Program take place during the weekend. Park Street DSS staff members who help facilitate the program will work with us on a Sunday to support families. It is this nurturing spirit of collaboration and compassion that gets results for parents and kids.

Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts

200 Bowdoin Street, Dorchester, MA 02122

(617) 474-1143 Fax: (617) 474-1261 • www.familynurturing.org

A variety of neighborhood based Nurturing Programs for Families are now available, each specially designed for the parents and children they serve. Programs range in length, are free, include a meal, and are offered at various times and locations. To learn more about referring families to a program or about joining a Nurturing Team of facilitators, please contact the person listed beside the program.

Boston Area Nurturing Program Calendar: Winter/Spring 2008

LOCATION	PROGRAM TYPE	COMMUNITY PARTNER	DAY/TIME	OTHER INFO	CONTACT
Allston-Brighton	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children	FNC, Community Partnerships	Tuesdays, 6:00–8:30 pm Start date: February 12	Referral: Open to families with at least one child age 6 or under Transportation home	Randi Freundlich 617.474.1143 x228
Charlestown	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children	FNC, City of Boston, Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Boston Housing Authority	Thursdays, 4:00–6:30 pm Start date: March 20	Referral: open to parents with children ages birth to 5 only Transportation home	Dina Maldonado 617.635.5710
Chelsea	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children (SPANISH)	Chelsea Community Connections Coalition	Sundays, 2:30–5:30 pm Start date: February 10	Referral: open Transportation: Provided for Chelsea residents	Jessie DeFrancisco 617.889.7100
Dorchester	Cape Verdean Family Nurturing Program (CAPE VERDEAN CREOLE)	FNC, Park Street Area DSS Office	Sundays, 3:00–5:30 pm Start date: March TBA	Referral: open Transportation: not provided	Alice Gomes 617.474.1143 x238
Dorchester	Nurturing Fathers' Program	FNC, Park Street Area DSS Office	Tuesdays, 6:00–8:30 pm Start date: March TBA	Referral: open Transportation: not provided	John O'Neil 617.474.1143 x251
Dorchester	Nurturing Fathers' Program	FNC, Dorchester House, Colonel Dan Marr Boys & Girls Club	Wednesday, 6:00–8:30 pm Start date: March TBA	Referral: open Transportation: not provided	John O'Neil 617.474.1143 x251
Roxbury	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children (SPANISH)	Elizabeth Stone House	Wednesdays, 4:30–7:30 pm Start date: April 9	Referral: open Transportation: not provided	Laura Plummer 617.427.9801 x420
Roxbury	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children (ENGLISH)	Elizabeth Stone House	Tuesdays, 4:30–7:30 pm Start date: April 8	Referral: open Transportation: not provided	Alicia Settles 617.427.9801 x402
South Boston	Nurturing Program for Parents and Children	South Boston FANS	Tuesdays, 6:00–8:30 pm Start date: February 26	Referral: open Transportation: provided for South Boston families	Ann Buechs 617.269.9331

Training Opportunities

LOCATION	TRAINING	SPONSOR	DAY/TIME	OTHER INFO	CONTACT
Small Wonders Childcare Bay Cove Early Intervention 105 Victory Road Dorchester, MA	Developing Nurturing Families and Communities (NP Facilitator training)	FNC & Boston Regional DSS	March 10, 11, 12		Sue Parker 617.474.1143 x236
	Training of Trainers	FNC	June TBA		Sue Parker 617.474.1143 x236

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Mission Statement

To work with others to build nurturing communities where children are cherished, families are supported, and healthy human development is promoted by all.

Staff

- Matthew LiPuma**, Executive Director
- Mary Elaine Anderson**, Playgroup Coordinator
- Elayne Baskin**, ABFN Playroom Coordinator
- Valerie May Bean**, Development Officer
- Andréa deSousa**, Family Support Specialist
- Randi Freundlich**, Director of Community Programs
- Alice Gomes**, Family Development Specialist
- Maxine Hall**, Neighborhood Development Coordinator
- Colleen McGuire**, Allston-Brighton Welcome Baby Coordinator
- John O'Neil**, Nurturing Fathers' Program Specialist
- Sue Parker**, Program Manager
- Sandy Sachs**, Child Development Specialist
- Dianna Wayne**, Stony Brook CARES Program Assistant
- Cherie Craft**, S² Director

- Phyllis Menken**, President
- Ken Willis**, Vice President
- Anne Hyde**, Treasurer
- Jay Youngdahl**, Clerk
- Sharon Shay Workman**, Founder & President Emeritus
- Gulrez Arshad**
- Patricia Carter**
- Irza A. Collinson**

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- Deborah Gray**
- Susan Keller**
- Deirdre Pierce**
- Ellen Shapiro**

- Elise DeWinter Eckelkamp**, Organizational Development
- Sharon Shay Workman**, Special Projects

Consulting Team

- Rohini Bhinsen**, Curry College
- Anne Chen**, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work

Student Interns