

Circle of Friends

Investing in the Future of Children

Fourth annual 'Champions for Children Gala' set for Jan. 24

The 2009 4C gala will honor two individuals and a philanthropic fund for their work on behalf of Greater Cincinnati children: Jim Schwab, Merri Gaither Smith and the Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation (see below.)

"Our community is fortunate to have these dedicated champions for children," says Sallie Westheimer, 4C's executive director, "and we are proud to honor them." By turning the spotlight on those who work tirelessly to ensure a bright future for the children of the community, 4C hopes to inspire others to step up to the continuing challenge of ensuring quality, effective and accessible early childhood education.

The fourth annual "Champions for Children Gala" will be held Jan. 24 at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. Local 12's Bob Herzog, father of four young children and star of "Dance Party Friday" will emcee the event.

The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails and a raffle. The awards presentation is at 7:30, followed by dinner at 8 and dancing to the music of Soul Pocket.

For information about sponsorships or individual tickets, call Karen Hurley at 513-758-1201. Invitations will be mailed in early December.

This year's Gala Committee, chaired by Joelle Rag-



land, includes Jenna Bowen, Kim Cockerham, Mary Ellen Cody, Kate Nelson, Carole Rigaud, Dianne Rosenberg, Digi Schueler, Shelby Wood and Kelly Zobrist.

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4C turns spotlight on 2009 Champions for Children

Jim Schwab, Market President for US Bank, recently chaired both of Cincinnati's major community-wide funding efforts—the 2004 United Way Campaign (with his wife Vivian) and the 2007 Fine Arts Fund—upon which so many children's services depend. He has also served on many child-focused boards and committees including the The Children's Home, the Research and Education Committee of Cincinnati's Children's Research Foundation, the CBC Education Committee and Cincinnati Country Day.



Merri Gaither Smith, a retired Cincinnati Public Schools administrator, dedicates herself to making college a reality for financially strapped students. She founded Advocates for Youth Education, Inc., a group of professional women who pool their resources and have provided over \$350,000 in scholarships over 18 years. She is a cofounder of the 40-year-old Women's Alliance, Inc., whose fundraising efforts provide educational programs and scholarships for high school students. And she serves as a commissioner on the Cincinnati Park Board.



The Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation started in 2001 as the Patricia A. Vance Foundation to honor Sara's mother, a lifelong advocate for children, with Michelle as executive director. It was transformed into its current form at the Greater Cincinnati Foundation in 2007—and has donated over \$1 million to organizations that support the education and care of children.



Michelle (left) and Sara Vance Waddell

Staff 'live united' for this year's United Way campaign

With the theme, "Live United," 4C staff pitched in to support this year's Greater Cincinnati United Way Campaign with 100 percent employee participation. As a pacesetter agency, 4C raised more than \$17,000 through pledges and special events in advance of the city-wide kick-off in August.

The 2008 United Way video, *Underneath It All*, featured individuals in the community proudly displaying personal messages across the front of T-shirts describing how they "live united." With the video as an inspiration, 4C staff displayed their own personal messages with a colorful T-shirt collage.

Several 4C staff have also contributed to this year's United Way



4C staff members, Dawn Hoskins (left) and Janiece Dalmida, point out their personalized T-shirts in the 4C "Live United" collage. They created T-shirts to reflect their dedication to helping family child care providers and changing lives. The project was part of this year's staff campaign that raised more than \$17,000 for United Way of Greater Cincinnati.

Campaign kick-off meetings at various companies around Cincinnati by speaking and sharing displays to explain how 4C is making a differ-

ence with the help of United Way. 4C also hosted a table at the United Way campaign kick-off event at Fountain Square.

4C to lead Cincinnati effort to prevent child abuse, neglect

Family and Children First Council awards \$493K to strengthen families through early education

4C, Centerpoint Health and The Children's Home of Cincinnati, three organizations within The Consortium for Resilient Young Children, will partner with Santa Maria Community Services to bring a new child abuse and neglect prevention approach to Cincinnati's Westwood neighborhood. The Consortium was awarded \$493,000 from the Hamilton County Family and Children First Council.

The two-year initiative will provide coaching and specialized training to child care centers and family child care providers to help them identify early signs of neglect or abuse, and to link families to prevention resources.

4C will serve as the project's coordinating and fiscal agent and provide administrative oversight. Sallie Westheim-

er, 4C executive director, will serve as the agency liaison.

"We are looking forward to making an impact in Westwood," Sallie says. "If the program is successful in one neighborhood, the long-term goal would be to expand it to other areas in Cincinnati."

This initiative was developed by The Consortium for Resilient Young Children, a collaboration of mental health and early care and education specialists in Cincinnati. It is based on an educational approach developed by The Center for the Study of Social Policy. Similar projects are appearing nationwide.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy linked research about preventing child abuse and neglect with knowledge about quality early care and education to develop a conceptual framework for a "Strengthening Families" approach. The concept involves building five "protective factors" around young children including parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and children's social and emotional development.

"These community partners have the perfect combination of expertise ranging from community organization to early childhood education and children's social and emotional development," Sallie emphasizes, and the approach has been tested. "Child care providers in other cities sing the praises of this approach to support families as they raise children in a stressful world," she adds.



4C will lead a two-year initiative to bring a new child abuse and neglect prevention approach, "Strengthening Families," to early education and care in Cincinnati.

Partnership with CETconnect helps 4C reach families

4C executive director, Sallie Westheimer, taped two interviews on the set of CET this summer for CETconnect, the nation's first community-based on-demand public media Web site.

In one interview, she explains state voluntary quality-rating systems (Ohio's Step Up To Quality and Kentucky's STARS for KIDS NOW) and how they are a tool for parents seeking quality child care.

In a second video, she discusses 4C and the services and resources the agency makes available to families.

A new 4C "Partner Page" on the CETconnect Web site (www.CETconnect.org) includes links to both 4C interviews.

"This partnership is an excellent



Sallie Westheimer (left) discusses 4C's services for families with CET's Amanda Carnes. This interview can be viewed on CETconnect.org on 4C's new "Partner Page."

opportunity for 4C," says Amy Gorga, 4C communications coordinator. "We can share important information with families who visit CETconnect.org,

plus we can link to these videos from our 4C Web site. We look forward to contributing additional guests and topics," she adds.

Family, Friend and Neighbor grant awarded to 4C Miami Valley

In June, 4C Miami Valley received a \$30,000 grant from United Way of Greater Dayton for a Family, Friend and Neighbor Care Program. This initiative will reach out to individuals who care for children in their homes on an informal basis.

Informal child care settings are not regulated by the county or state and may not receive the support they need to provide learning opportunities for children. According to the Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning Content Standards, children in these settings are less likely to be

exposed to enriching activities and opportunities that enable them to achieve milestones identified as crucial for learning.

4C Miami Valley's grant will be renewed each year for the next three years. The main goal is to help children in informal settings be better prepared for Kindergarten. 4C staff will reach informal care providers in the Dayton area at local fairs and events and through other community organizations.

"This is an exciting project," says Marcia Beachler, 4C Miami Valley

outreach coordinator. "Many of the informal care providers I've met so far are grandparents who are usually thrilled to have 4C's help and are open to our educational ideas."

4C will provide support and consultation to help providers create educational environments. Many of the activities and educational materials are from the United Way Born Learning™ initiative, a public engagement campaign that helps parents, caregivers and communities create quality early learning opportunities for young children.

4C helps providers with Kentucky's new state regulations

The 4C Northern Kentucky staff are playing a critical role helping providers make necessary changes to meet new state licensing requirements.

The new regulations were a direct result of the 2007 report from The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies that ranked Kentucky at the bottom regarding quality child care programs. The new child care licensing regulations

went into effect July 1. Enforcement begins this October.

The Northern Kentucky office has seen an increase of provider calls and workshop participants due to the new requirements, reports Laura Heuser, director of 4C Northern Kentucky.

More providers are calling upon 4C staff for support with implementing changes in their programs. Directors also need support developing the

newly required professional development plans for child care staff. And the increased number of training hours now required has brought participants to 4C workshops.

4C is available to help providers meet new regulation requirements with on-site visits or through specialized workshops. All training held at 4C is tailored to address the updated rules.

4C News Briefs...

► Ohio reaches Step Up To Quality goal with 4C's help

In June, the State of Ohio reported 452 star-rated programs in Ohio through Step Up To Quality, surpassing Governor Strickland's goal of 450 star-rated programs by June 30, 2008. The next goal is to reach 800 star-rated programs in Ohio by June 30, 2009.

► Ads for STARS for KIDS NOW are riding Kentucky busses

With funding from the Kenton/Campbell County Community Early Childhood Council, ads are appearing on the sides of the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) busses to urge parents to contact 4C for information about the STARS for KIDS NOW quality-rating system. These ratings can help parents identify levels of quality when searching for child care in Kentucky.

► Push for expanded oversight of small family child care businesses continues

4C is working with other resource and referral agencies in Ohio, as well as the United Way of Greater Cincinnati, to support passage of Substitute Senate Bill 232, which requires improved safety standards and procedures for child care home businesses. 4C has hired Betty Hull, a public relations consultant, to provide communications and legislative support for this advocacy effort.

► Fifth Third collects art supplies for 4C

As part of the 2008 United Way Community Care Week in Greater Cincinnati, Fifth Third Bank collected creative, kid-friendly art supplies for children in September. 4C requested crayons, markers, colorful art paper and paint to give to child care providers during home visits and center visits, or as prizes for workshop participants.

► Greater Cincinnati Foundation funds technology upgrade

A \$20,000 grant from The Greater Cincinnati Foundation in August funded the hardware, software and training needed for a Novell to Windows server migration for all 4C offices. "This project will enhance current functionality at 4C, allow for future growth and create a more financially sustainable technology infrastructure for the long term," says 4C IT manager, Terri Alekzander.

► Key staff position added

In response to rapid growth with the addition of the Miami Valley office and in anticipation of more growth to come, the agency created a new position of human resources manager. Ann Thomas was hired to fill the position in June. She joins 4C with more than 25 years of nonprofit human resources experience.



Ann Thomas

► 4C Miami Valley staff tackles Spanish to better serve growing Hispanic population

4C Miami Valley staff are taking an extra step to serve the growing number of Hispanic parents and providers in the Dayton area by taking conversational Spanish classes. Marcia Beachler, Diane Johnson, Patti Nelson and Donna O'Neill all regularly attend the free classes offered as a community service from Sinclair College to 4C and other agencies sharing a building in Dayton. "We are taking the classes to be better prepared to serve families and providers in our area—and also just because it's fun!" says O'Neill.

In Memory...

Alan Crace family names 4C for memorials

Here is how the *Cincinnati Enquirer* began its Sept. 7 obituary feature: "If Alan E. Crace impacted your life, chances are you never knew it. He was a philanthropist who never sought recognition and it was common for him to give donations anonymously."

Mr. Crace, 54, died Aug. 12 at his home in East Walnut Hills. Born in Piquette, Ohio, he was the owner of Crace Construction Company.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, daughters Marie Shearn, Amelia and Hannah Crace and son, Robert Rice.



Alan Crace

Memorials were requested for 4C for Children or the Brain Tumor Patient Care Fund at the University Hospital Foundation.

As of Sept. 24, 4C had received memorials from the following:

Robert B. Contin & Lynne D. Ambrosini
David & Lou Doub
Mr. & Mrs. James Ellis
Kelly L. Feil-Addy
Hubert & Margo Gibbs
Susan L. Haas & Craig Decker
David & Karen Hoguet
Dexter Nardella
Jack & Mary Lou Noel
Michael and Theresa Sanders
Anne S. Vanoy
Eric Franke Construction Co
Hilb Rogal & Hobbs of Ohio
King's Daughters Medical Center
Klinker's Lumber & Builder's
Supplies, Inc.
SOS Electric, Inc.
Stevens Construction
The Henry P. Thompson Company
The Seven Hills School
The Seven Hills School Seventh
Grade Parents and Students
TNT Equipment Company

A complete list of memorials will be published in the 4C annual report.

4C Northern Kentucky has a new location

The 4C Northern Kentucky staff moved to a new office in Newport on Aug. 1. The new location—601 Washington Ave., Suite 105—is easily accessible off I-471, just south of Newport on the Levee in Watertower Square and across the street from Pompilio's. The new office has the same services, same hours, and same phone numbers.

“There is plenty of free parking and a larger, more accommodating professional development space,” says 4C Northern Kentucky director, Laura Heuser. “We encourage everyone to stop by,” she adds.

The Northern Kentucky office has seen an increase in the number of parent walk-ins due to the convenient location inside a building with multiple nonprofit organizations. The Watertower Square houses the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Brighton Center among others.



4C Northern Kentucky staff (from left)—Joni Collins, Laura Heuser, Diann Forbes, Natasha Bigl and Jillian Ruther—in front of 4C's new, improved office space in the Watertower Square in Newport.

Focus groups, 'process improvement' a key focus of new program evaluation manager

Under the lead of Bob Mayer, 4C's new program evaluation manager, the agency is finding new ways to bring “process improvement” to key services. Bob facilitated a “process improvement” workshop for the 4C Southwest Ohio Professional Development Team in August to “flowchart” the many activities involved in the production and delivery of the 4C *Professional Development Opportunities* training catalog. The next step will involve brainstorming ways to improve the overall process of production and online registration for professional development.

Bob has also conducted several focus groups:

- to help Xavier University determine the child care needs of its employees and students.
- to better understand the needs of parents who use informal child care—and those who provide it.
- to learn why participants in the child nutrition program may not regularly make claims.



Bob Mayer (right) discusses a “process improvement idea” with Kim Ginn, 4C Step Up To Quality coordinator, during a workshop with 4C's professional development team.

4C steps up Internet use to reach target audiences

This summer, 4C has stepped up its use of the Internet in communicating to parents, providers and the community.

e-Pathways, an electronic companion to 4C's quarterly print newsletter to providers, was launched in July.

This e-newsletter is distributed to more than 1,100 providers in 4C's service areas twice a month with workshop schedule updates, upcoming professional development opportunities, the latest 4C news, child care-related news tips and upcoming event information.

July also marked the launch of online workshop registration, a new section of the 4C Web site for providers to sign up and pay for classes online. The site includes all courses found in the printed *Professional Development Opportunities* catalog. More than 200 providers have signed up for classes online to date.

And starting this fall, media and community supporters will receive *News from 4C*, a periodic e-news release.

To be added to the e-news distribution list, send your e-mail address to Phyllis Leatherwood at pleatherwood@4cforchildren.org.

'Guide to Early Care & Learning' coming soon

The 2009 editions of *Ohio's Guide to Early Care & Learning* will be available later this fall for parents throughout 4C's three regions—including, for the first time—the Miami Valley.

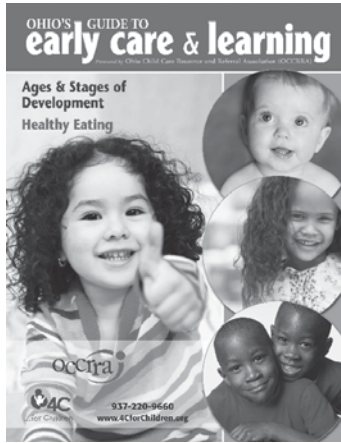
The Southwest Ohio edition will have a special section with Kentucky information and resources for the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area.

Each guide includes updated, comprehensive listings of early care

and education options for all three regions, sorted by county. Other important information is also included about how to choose quality child care, how to get help in paying for child care, and state voluntary quality rating systems for early care and learning programs.

Coordinated by the Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association and 4C, the guide is available at no cost in local

grocery stores, pediatrician offices and all 4C locations.



Miami Valley edition available for first time this year.

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Circle of Friends is published quarterly. 4C invites comments, guest editorials, agency news and program updates.

www.4CforChildren.org
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4C provides early childhood resources and referrals in Southwest Ohio, the Miami Valley and Northern Kentucky.

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