



Spring 2009

Past Accomplishments, Future Promise

Anniversaries are a time to pause and to reflect on what's been and to imagine what can be. Early March marks the 5th anniversary of the incorporation of Our Children's Place (OCP) – becoming a “real” organization. Yet as many of you know, the work at OCP started before the first paperwork was filed, as Board Chair Kim Hoke writes.

More than five years ago, Our Children's Place began with a vision of how North Carolina could keep its families together, even those fraught with multiple problems, including the incarceration of the mothers of young children.

Faced with the reality that women who are sentenced to active prison terms have their children taken away—or if the mothers are pregnant and deliver while in prison, their infants are removed almost immediately after birth, Sen. Ellie Kinnaird searched for alternatives.

A group of similarly concerned citizens formed a non-profit organization called OCP to investigate programs in other states and establish a way to keep the mothers and children together. And, equally important, to improve their options and opportunities for success.

From that early vision, followed by visits to learn about programs in several other states, OCP has identified a facility, secured state funds to renovate it, employed an Executive Director and staff, and secured approval for a lease on the property.

An architect has been selected and is designing the facility for the unique needs of the women and children. The staff and Board have engaged experts in the field and pursued thoughtful and informed dialogue about the programs OCP will offer.



An OCP supporter looks at her hat choices at “Hats Off to the Kids!” celebration. (Read more on page 2)

These are some of the highlights of progress on OCP. Behind every major step are many smaller steps that had to come together in order to move forward. Numerous contacts with the Department of Correction, other non-profit organizations, and the faith community have ensued. Other agencies have joined as partners, including the Departments of Administration and Health and Human Services, and the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History at UNC, many other non-profit organizations and the faith community. Especially important has been contact with leaders in Butner and Granville County where the facility will be located.

The vision has tangible evidence of progress; and in 2010-11, the vision becomes reality. We open our doors to the families who need Our Children's Place.

We extend special appreciation to the individual donors who have walked with us the entire way . . . as well as those who have recently joined us. Thanks to all of you who helped us to five and to those of you who will get us to 10 and beyond.

Kim Hoke
Chair, OCP Board of Directors

Building Blocks to Success

The planning process for OCP child development has progressed as a result of extensive research, multiple site visits, interviews, careful thought, good communication, and team work. The OCP Board, committee, and staff members are working together toward the common goal of developing a high-quality, comprehensive program that will uniquely meet the needs of our infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

We know that we must precisely lay this foundational planning piece based on the opportunity we have before us to significantly shape the child's values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus far, our efforts include:



- Comprehensive child care survey that addresses over 21 areas such as child care facility and room design, meals, curriculum, playground, etc;
- Completion of our child services draft budget;
- Visitations and observations in over 50 classrooms that document developmental practices that may be appropriate for OCP;
- Interviews with over 20 teachers and administrators to receive recommendations on best practices and pitfalls to avoid, leading to the child development philosophy draft;
- Compilations of visits, interviews, and research into a survey summary with recommendations for a comprehensive plan to meet the individual cognitive, language, physical, social-emotional, and spiritual domains and development of each child.

We are on track to move forward from the planning stage to the selection of our screens, assessments, and curricula, and the development of our child care operational policies, procedures, forms, and handbooks essential to running an effective and high-quality program.

Linda Washington
Early Childhood Consultant

OCP Slides into Fun

Last fall OCP was fortunate to receive a \$6,000 grant from the North Carolina Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the Catholic Church's domestic anti-poverty, social justice program. OCP staff and Board are delighted and honored to have this support from CCHD. Specifically, these funds will be used to develop the children's play area - a space which will uniquely be designed to facilitate children's love of the outdoors as well as encourage creativity and physical activity. OCP is thrilled to work with NCSU's Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) for designing a stimulating place for play. Thank you, CCHD & NLI!

Hat's Off: A Celebration Brimming with Excitement

It was a Sunday afternoon in early November filled with hats, delicious food, catching up with old friends and meeting new ones, and one very happy raffle winner of a handcrafted quilt!

Close to 100 supporters gathered at the Siena Hotel in Chapel Hill for OCP's annual "Hats Off to the Kids!" celebration. Guests were inspired by the words of Greensboro Mayor Yvonne Johnson to go forward as leaders by being of service to others; and had the opportunity to watch the premiere of OCP's DVD.

Thank you to Eleanor Schaller for the lovely quilt donation, our event sponsors, and the Siena Hotel for making the event a success!

If The Hat Fits, Wear It!

OCP displayed H.A.T.S. (Handcrafted And Totally Special) and other items about our mission to unite families throughout North Carolina this past fall. Alternative markets serve as an opportunity to share information about OCP, encourage involvement, and raise funds. Market attendees are encouraged to make contributions in exchange for receiving unique holiday gifts for family and friends. Our thanks goes out to the following groups for inviting us to participate in their markets:

- Grace United Methodist Church, Wilmington
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chapel Hill
- Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Durham
- St. Thomas More, Chapel Hill
- United Church of Chapel Hill

If there is an opportunity for us to be at your market, e-mail Kamira at ourchildrensplace3@gmail.com.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

A big **"THANK YOU!"** goes out to the following donors* for their financial support from July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008. We appreciate your generous spirit!

Scott and Suzanne Alderman	Pietrina DeTitta Alice Dietz	Beatrice Kurtz and Judith Herman	Richardson Christina Riordan
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**We've worked hard to create an accurate list. We apologize in advance for any errors. Please contact us with corrections.*

Did You Know?

OCP can be reached online via Facebook! Be sure to "Join Our Cause" to receive periodic updates, make contributions, invite your friends to join, and start your own fund drive.



1. Go to <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/home>
2. Search for "Our Children's Place"
3. Click on the Join link next to the OCP logo

OCP is enrolled in the Food Lion Shop & Share fundraising program. Here is the link to register your card if you're a Food Lion shopper:



www.foodlion.com/IntheCommunity/ShopAndShare

You can donate to OCP just by searching the Internet and by using GoodShop to find coupon codes and discounts at more than 1,000 stores. Up to 30% of every purchase will go to OCP by following the steps below:



1. Go to <http://www.goodsearch.com>
2. Search for "Our Children's Place"
3. Click on the Verify button, and surf the Net!

Giving Circles

Giving circles bring together groups of people with common philanthropic goals to benefit their communities by allowing donors to leverage their pooled assets to achieve a greater impact. Belong to a giving circle? Consider OCP as a potential recipient of your contributions.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

--Margaret Mead

Please e-mail Melissa at ourchildrensplace@gmail.com to learn more about how your Giving Circle can help OCP today!

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If you wish to be removed from our mailing list or if your contact information has changed, please call our office at (919) 843-2670.

OCP is a residential initiative allowing young children (babies and preschoolers) to live with their mothers while the women serve out their sentences for non-violent offenses. OCP is designed to break the intergenerational cycle of crime, poverty, substance abuse, and family violence. It will empower the child with the mother's help to enhance cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. OCP plans to open its doors in 2010.

(2/28/09)