



Summer 2010

Improving the lives of families through child care services, research and advocacy since 1980

Keeping the issues of child care, early care, education and working families up front and in focus

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Healthy Families Faces the Axe

A Needed Program Despite the Governor's Assumptions

The Governor's January Budget Proposal placed the Healthy Families Program (HFP) on the chopping block. Over the past few years, this program has faced possible elimination. It is a low-cost health insurance program for children and teens that provides health, dental and vision coverage to children who do not have insurance and yet, are in families that do not qualify for free Medi-Cal.

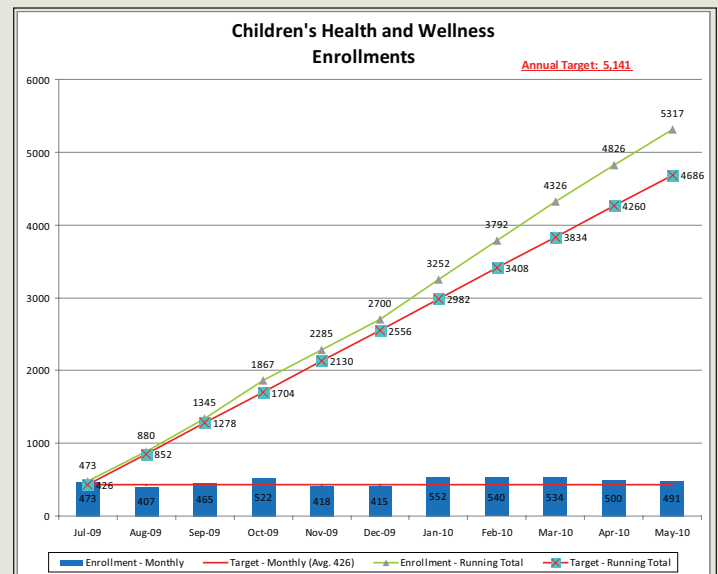
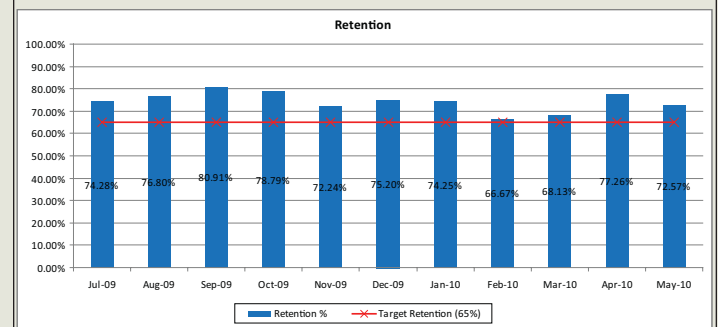
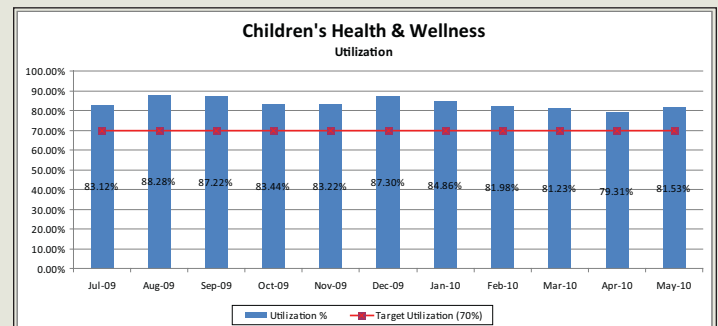
The Governor has complained that the program is underutilized and that families are either not enrolling or not staying enrolled in the program at enough of a rate to justify its continuance in the State.

Our Children's Health and Wellness Department recently released some statistics that counter the Governor's assumptions and show that this program is both critically needed and appreciated by those who are eligible to receive its services. Crystal Stairs has shown an 84% utilization rate and a 74% retention rate of its Healthy Families enrollment services over the past 10 months and this trend does not appear to be subsiding.

"These numbers show that, especially during times of economic downturn, families are more and more dependent upon critical social services such as the HFP," said Marilyn Lawrence, CH&W Manager. "Families enrolled in HFP ultimately cost the state less because preventative health care and having health care access means fewer trips for the uninsured to our local emergency rooms."

Crystal Stairs has been working hard to share this information, along with personal testimonials from

parents on the value of the Healthy Families Program, with its State of California and Los Angeles County funders.



Source: Crystal Stairs data, 2010



Employees Bring Family Holiday Cheer

Last holiday season, Crystal Stairs employees nominated families they felt could benefit from a little extra help from Santa.

Employees Veronica Garcia, Tifonee Jackson, La Tisha Wilson, Marie Loper, Patricia Umana-De La Rosa, Arista Davis, Gabriela Camara, Mishawn Smith, Roxana Monzon and Dawn Lovelace rose to the occasion, nominated a number of worthy families and brought smiles to the faces of some surprised and honored parents and children.

We commend these employees for making life a little bit easier for those in need.

Los Angeles Clippers Come to SAGE

The Nickerson Gardens Gym invited SAGE to attend their annual toy give-a-way sponsored by the Los Angeles Clippers on December 8, 2009.

SAGE selected 25 children through a random drawing and they spent two hours at the gym singing songs, playing hand games, and waiting with excitement until the Clippers arrived to distribute one toy to each child.

This event allowed 25 more children to take home one more special gift for the holidays.



SAGE Parents Excel in Literacy Program

Crystal Stairs' Nickerson Gardens SAGE Center honored 14 parents (out of 17) who successfully completed its

Interested in reading to the children at SAGE? Contact La Tisha Wilson at 323-249-1361 to schedule a time to read to the leaders of tomorrow.

three-month Family Literacy Program. Parents learned and shared techniques on how to encourage reading among their children.

This effort was funded by a grant from the Verizon Corporation, and developed by Keila Leon and implemented by Keila and Olivia Carrillo, both University of Southern California MSW Interns.

Parents received a literacy tool kit with books, activities and materials to support reading at home with their children. Chief Programs Officer Jackie Majors visited the preschool class during family literacy week and one of the preschoolers reported that her mommy reads to her every night since coming to class.

Parents attending all sessions were eligible to win a netbook computer or a gift certificate. Many of Crystal

Stairs' executives and staff took part in the program by reading and leading discussion among the children. Bernard Dory, District Director of the 52nd Assembly District, also showed his support by reading to the children while on a tour of SAGE.

Agency Starts a Community Dialogue

Crystal Stairs introduced its Community Discussion Panel Series this year. The March panel, "Healthcare Access in our Community," happened the very same night President Barack Obama signed the law that will vastly overhaul the nation's health care system. Talk about timely.

The June 29 panel, entitled the "Education vs. Prison Pipeline in California," was a lively discussion on the state's commitment to education. It too was well attended.

The final panel, "The Quality Rating System in Early Childhood Education," is on September 21. All panels are free and open to the public. To attend the panel, [rsvp to: marmstrong@crystalstairs.org](mailto:rsvp@marmstrong@crystalstairs.org).

Wright, Bradford Help

During the 2009 holiday season, the offices of Senator Roderick D. Wright and Assemblymember Steven C. Bradford were instrumental in helping some of our families have a more joyous and abundant holiday.

The offices held a joint toy giveaway. Crystal Stairs staff nominated some deserving families who then participated in the festivities and walked away with gifts

and good tidings. Parents and children alike got a chance to have some fun and get some goodies.

Crystal Stairs has been fortunate to partner with some very giving offices and organizations over the years. It is during economically stressful times like these, that we are especially grateful for the support. Senator Wright and Assemblymember Bradford, our families thank you.



Senator Roderick D. Wright and Assemblymember Steven C. Bradford

New at Crystal Stairs

NEW FACES ON CRYSTAL STAIRS TEAM

Jeffrey Moreira was recently hired as our Stage 1 Manager and he has hit the ground running. He just finished building a new Stage 1 database system which will mean a more streamlined work product. We are excited about Jeffrey joining our team.

The Crystal Stairs Board of Directors has just gained two new members: **Nike Irvin** and **Omer T. Simeon**. We are excited about the talent and enthusiasm these board members bring and look forward to their many contributions. Thank you and welcome!

TAPIA RUNS AND RAISES MONEY FOR SAGE

Fred Tapia, Business Analyst with Project Lighthouse, ran the Los Angeles Marathon March 21, 2010 on behalf of our childcare center.

"Crossing the finish line in less than four hours was invigorating, but what made the journey even more special was running the marathon for SAGE," said Fred.

While training, he realized he could use it to raise funds for SAGE. Fred coined the phrase "Running for SAGE," developed the marketing campaign and raised a whopping \$708 on behalf of the child care center. He challenges all of us to think outside the box about ways in which we can find needed resources for the agency.



GOING GREEN IN PROVIDER SERVICES

Crystal Stairs' Provider Services Department manages the reimbursements, contracts and general correspondence between the agency and the thousands of child care providers with whom we contract. This means lots o' paper.

Starting in July, Provider Services will be **going green with the green** and issuing reimbursement funds via direct deposit or debit cards only. This new policy will cut down on paper, fraud and reimbursement miscalculations.

Saving both trees and time. What a great combination.

Child Care Goes to the Polls

Three child care candidates ran for Assembly districts throughout the state on June 8. Hilda Zacarias ran for the 33rd District (Nava), Holly J. Mitchell ran for the 47th District (Los Angeles), and Kate Anderson ran for the 53rd District (Los Angeles, Venice).

Zacarias and Mitchell were successful and will go on to face Republican opponents in the November general election.

CV Collects 2800 Names in Campaign

Community Voices, with the help of staff, collected over 2800 signed petitions from Crystal Stairs parents and providers over the span of just two weeks. The petitions were in protest of the budget cuts and were mailed to Assembly and Senate members in Sacramento.

Thank You to all who came out to speak out against the cuts.



Story Banking on YouTube

Staff members Veronica Diaz, Alesia Brewer and Martha Williams are piloting our Story Banking Project. They capture on video the comment and opinions of parents and providers on issues concerning their businesses and families as they relate to childcare—like Soy Cyprian (above) who shared comments on the budget cuts while en route to the Capitol. The videos are posted on YouTube and shared with others around the world. **They can be viewed at youtube.com/storybankingproject.**

Facebook, You Tube: New Ways to Stay in Touch

Crystal Stairs is catching up to the 21st Century. The agency has refreshed its website and is now both on Facebook and on You Tube. We will be tweeting in the very near future.

Strategic uses of current technology allow us to stay connected to new audiences and expand what and how we communicate with our current supporters.

Our last Annual Report was distributed through our website and allowed us to share more for less. You Tube has allowed us to share testimonials from our parents and providers to a wider audience and gain traction in our relationships with policymakers.

Stay tuned and stay connected.



Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles (HACL A) leadership—Rudolf Montiel, President and CEO and Sanford Riggs, Director of Housing Services—recently stopped by to present to Crystal Stairs CEO Holly Mitchell and SAGE Director Latisha Wilson our annual lease agreement and a check. Both represent HACL A's maintenance of effort support for our physical site. Thank you HACL A for being a great partner!



Board OKs 2010 Plan

The Crystal Stairs Board of Directors recently approved the agency's 2010 Strategic Plan. As a competitive employer, a local economic engine, and a well-known advocate for quality child development, Crystal Stairs must continue to think strategically and implement tactically in ways that further our reach into the community, policy arenas and the field.

Our 2010 Strategic Plan will help us do just that—navigate the changing economic and political waters while continuing to serve families in respectful and meaningful ways.

Dancing Under the Stars: 3rd Time's the Charm

Over 200 attendees enjoyed true dancing under the stars at L.A. Live's Target Terrace to make Crystal Stairs' 3rd Annual Dancing Under the Stars fundraiser a huge success. With food and fabulous auction items, we raised needed funds to benefit

the critical work that we do on behalf of our children and families.

The event would not have been a success without the generous support of our donors: premier sponsors Union Bank of California and Southern California Edison, as

well as our many volunteers, dance instructors and auction donors. This year was especially fun because we celebrated our 30th Anniversary as well.

Don't throw out your dancing shoes. Save April 30, 2011 for next year's Dancing Under the Stars.



Crystal Stairs, Inc.

5110 West Goldleaf Circle, Suite 150
Los Angeles, California 90056
www.crystalstairs.org



GoodSearch

