



Recent Highlights From the Last Few Months

Your Support Has Kept Us Going Strong

DECEMBER 2009

Coalition for Kids Celebrates 15th Preschool Graduation

For 15 years Coalition for Kids has been providing quality early childhood education and child care to children in the Family Resource Center. This August five of our preschoolers graduated and headed to Kindergarten in the fall. Parents were invited to the FRC for a small graduation ceremony after which all of the kids enjoyed pizza, cupcakes and a water slide.

Although enrollment in our child care center has declined over the last few years, largely due to the economy, we continue to maintain a strong program and are constantly working to improve the quality of our care and education.



Above: Jasmine, Ashley, and Matthew flip the tassels on their graduation caps.

Right: Rebecca proudly displays her diploma.

Since Kindergarten programs are usually half-day and/or only a few days a week, some of our graduated preschoolers come back to CFK on a part-time basis. It is a joy to see and hear how well they are doing in school.



Above: A child hands a ticket to Kelly Wessels of UCAN-RSVP for the warm coat he picked out on Make A Difference Day.

Keeping Children Warm This Winter

Coalition for Kids participated as one of the Josephine County sites for KDRV 12's Coats for Kids drive. We received deliveries of coats throughout October and November and distributed them at the Family Resource Center. We have also distributed coats to the Gospel Rescue Mission, Women's Crisis Support Team, Options, Grants Pass School District #7 and L.I.F.T Street Youth Services. All in all, we estimate that **over 2000 coats** were distributed to keep kids and their families warm this winter!

Make A Difference Day

CFK was pleased to partner with UCAN, RSVP, Josephine County Food Bank and Save A Child's Life Foundation to host a Free-cycle event for Make A Difference Day on October 24th. More than 60 people received free blankets, jackets, sleeping bags and Crock-Pots. In addition, more than 300 pounds of food was collected for the Food Bank.

Trick-or-Treating at Jefferson Behavioral Health



Once again, the staff at Jefferson Behavioral Health welcomed our costumed kids to their offices for trick-or-treating. The toddlers and preschoolers had a great time and came away with a lot of candy! Thank you JBH!!



Looking Ahead to 2010 and Beyond

Your Continuing Support Will Carry Us Forward

Board Establishes Priorities for Short-Term Vision

Reflecting back on the past 12-18 months, the economy has been the primary concern of most in our community and the driving force behind many decisions. Last July, in large part due to the economic crisis, Coalition for Kids cut some programs to focus resources on our core services: the Family Resource Center and the Child Care Center. We have worked hard to cut expenses and with your generous support we have maintained a solid foundation.

The economy is beginning to recover, so it is time for us all to look ahead and regain sight of our vision for the community. Coalition for Kids' mission is to "empower families in Josephine County to thrive." If we are to achieve that mission, and our vision for the community, we must do more than just maintain a foundation — we must build on it.

Empowering families to thrive means giving them a safe and accessible place to come for resources, services and activities. Coalition for Kids provides the place and the board's goal moving forward is to expand the services and activities offered here. The board has established goals in 3 priority areas to focus on in the short-term:

- 1. Family Engagement** - To thrive, family members need to be engaged and build bonds with one another. It is important that there are healthy and affordable activities for families to do together. Coalition for Kids will be working to create more of these opportunities as well as highlighting those that already exist in the community.
- 2. Financial Literacy** - The economy has hit everyone hard, and even families who are not usually considered "at-risk" are facing financial challenges. More than ever it is vital that individuals and families understand concepts like budgeting, saving, and the financial pitfalls to avoid. Coalition for Kids has been granted an AmeriCorps position and will be launching Money \$mart, a program that will be providing financial education and support one-to-one and in community workshops.
- 3. Early Childhood Education** - Not only is quality preschool education and child care critical for the healthy development of our children, it is a necessity for parents who work or go to school. But for quality child care to be accessible for parents it must be affordable. With a \$1000 grant from Rotary District 5110 and a matching \$500 from the Rogue Gateway Rotary Club, Coalition for Kids will be establishing a fund to assist our families with their child care tuition.

Times are still challenging, but we are confident that together, with your support and our shared vision, we can build on our foundation to "empower families in Josephine County to thrive."

UCAN RSVP is New Partner in Family Resource Center

Coalition for Kids is pleased to welcome a new partner agency to the Family Resource Center. "UCAN RSVP is thrilled to begin developing a partnership with CFK to serve a wider population in an environment that is welcoming to individuals of all ages," says program director Kelly Wessels. "Coalition for Kids has the ability to bring together diverse partnerships to create services that are cost-effective and have a positive impact on our community."



The Family Resource Center is a perfect fit for two UCAN RSVP programs:

- AARP Tax Aide Free Tax preparation services for middle to low-income families, seniors and disabled, from volunteers trained by IRS qualified instructors. Service includes free electronic filing at time of service.
- Ready to Start School Right Backpack School Supply program in partnership with DHS, Job Council serving over 1100 youth annually with necessary school supplies, backpacks and learning items.

Wessels says, "the volunteers are excited to begin a new chapter in their service at the FRC and welcome the opportunity to help our new host maximize resources for the benefit of families."

We all share in the excitement and look forward to all the wonderful opportunities this new partnership will bring.