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CPCD's Landis-Tyson seeks to fill seats

June 26, 2014 | Filed under: One on One, Photo, Print | Tags: Community Partnership for Child Development, CPCD, Noreen Landis-Tyson

By Marija B. Vader

Noreen Landis-Tyson directs the former Community Partnership for Child Development, now called CPCD ... giving children a head start. Landis-Tyson and the organization say a seat in the classroom now means a place in the community later as an employed, productive citizen. CPCD finds better results from working with two generations at the same time, rather than just with the children.

Tell us about CPCD ... giving children a head start and your role.

At CPCD, it's all about the chair. Each chair in a CPCD infant/toddler and preschool classroom holds a young child as they begin their educational journey. CPCD provides comprehensive early childhood education in El Paso County, including Head Start, Early Head Start and the state-funded Colorado Preschool Program. We have more than 2,000 children and families in our programs, in 60-plus classrooms located in elementary schools and within our partner child care centers and homes. I've been with CPCD since 1991 and became the CEO in 2002, and I've seen how our comprehensive services change the lives of children, strengthen their

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Our Poll

How does your holiday spending compare to last year?

- ▶ More. Times are better and gas prices lower.
- ▶ About the same. Nice to have a little cushion.
- ▶ Less. Local economy isn't as good as it might seem.

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This poll is not a scientific sampling, but offers a quick view of what readers are thinking.

Most Read

- ▶ Here's a different role model: Duluth!
- ▶ Bach indicates he won't run
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- ▶ Compassion International: Local presence combines with global influence

families and ultimately break down barriers to success for low-income families. We believe that early childhood education is a vehicle to help break the cycle of poverty in El Paso County.

Who are your clients?

CPCD makes a point of reaching out to our county's most vulnerable children, birth to age 5 and their families, to enroll them in our programs. Over 80 percent of our children are living in poverty, 25 percent are military-connected and 20 percent have identified special needs. About half of our children live in single-parent homes.

Our programs take a two-generation approach by focusing on the whole needs of the child and involving parents through classroom volunteering, job training opportunities, health and nutrition classes, and referrals for services. Our staff works with parents to encourage them to set goals, and supports them on working toward fulfilling those goals. ... Research shows that parents who are involved with Head Start have better coping skills and are less prone to anxiety and depression, and children become school-ready — which means they are far less likely to fall behind, drop out and continue down a path of failure.

Why work on a two-generation approach?

Parents are their children's first and best teachers and have the responsibility for providing them with a safe, nurturing home environment. Additionally, the educational

level of parents — particularly mom — has an effect on children's attitude toward school. The

“I've seen how our comprehensive services change the lives of children.”

more education mom has, the more likely her children will be successful in school and life. Part of the two-generation approach is ensuring that while children are learning, so are their parents. Parents are encouraged to increase their education and job skills, learn about their child's development, and how to effectively advocate for themselves and their children.

CPCD has 24 family advocates on staff, each of whom is at once a cheering section and a support system for parents. Other important aspects of this approach are ensuring that both children's and parents' health and mental health are supported and that families have a network of positive support, whether it be in their neighborhood, church or in their child's preschool classroom. We have great child outcomes that demonstrate children's educational growth while in our program, but the real success stories come from working with parents to set goals and eventually change their lives, too.

How is early education helpful to people later on?

The foundation for success in school and life is laid from a child's birth through positive stimulation that ensures the “right” connections are made in the brain, and mitigating stress that hinders those connections. Early education programs that involve and support parents to address the family's whole needs increase the likelihood that children will graduate from high school, go on to college, own their home and will be healthier as an adult. Also, an early education decreases the rate of teenage pregnancies, youth crimes, reliance on public assistance, and is even correlated with lower smoking rates as adults.

What is the organization's annual budget?

CPCD raises over 25 percent of its annual budget in the local community. Our budget is \$17 million annually, with 60 percent of that coming from our Head Start and Early Head Start grants. This budget supports comprehensive services for more than 2,000 children and families in 68 CPCD classrooms, as well as partner child care centers and homes. CPCD is a significant employer in El Paso County with 360 staff members.

We have support from many private foundations, individuals and Pikes Peak United Way. In fact, we have an



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award-winning campaign going on right now, called Fill A Classroom, in which the community is encouraged to invest in a community-funded classroom for infants and toddlers in our Fort Carson Center. We are 75 percent of the way toward our goal of \$80,000 to open the classroom in August. nCSBJ

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