Early Childhood Graduation

By: Rachel Fisher

August was an exciting month for the Early Childhood Program. At the beginning of the month we took a fantastic trip to the zoo that the children continue to talk about. At the end of the month eight of our current participants graduated from the program. Graduates included Blaipa Chang, Chakong Lee, Pacheng Vang, Daejah Gutierrez, Justice Cloud, Maiyai Yang, Michael Thao, Tou Yer Thao and Damon Cameron. Some of these children had been in the program for three years and grew-up in the Early Childhood Program. We will miss them, but know they are going to do great in Kindergarten. A graduation ceremony was celebrated on August 18th and a well attended family luncheon followed. A special thanks to all those who attended, to Pizza Hut for the donated lunch and to Kazuoa Moua for the homemade dessert. The Early Childhood Program still has a few openings for 3—5 year old children please contact Rachel for more information 244-0767. Once again, congratulations to our little grads! Thank you for the great memories.

Fishing is the Topic of Interest This Fall

By Jody Schmitz:
Several local activists have been working in the community this summer to spread the word about some of the dangers of eating fish caught in the local lakes. Several meetings have been held at the Community Center and others are being planned. The group working on this issue is the Madison Environmental Justice Organization. Founding members include: Maria and Jim Powell, VamMeej Yang, Kazoua Moua and Jody Schmitz.

The group will appear before the State Lakes and Watershed Commission on September 14th at 5:15. Kennedy Heights residents have been invited to attend the meeting and express their concerns about the fishing in Madison lakes. Contact Jody or VamMeej at the center to join the group or be part of the discussion 244-0767.

Meet our New AmeriCorps Member

By: Casem AbuLughod

Hello All, my name is Casem AbuLughod and I am the new AmeriCorps member at the Kennedy Heights community center. I will mostly be working with the community youth in a variety of programs aimed at promoting academic and personal success along with having fun.

I am a recent graduate of UW Madison, with a degree in Communication Arts. I enjoy playing ultimate Frisbee, tennis, board games and Canasta. I practice Tae Kwon Do and I like to act on stage. As the oldest of five children, I have always had younger people in my life and I enjoy working with them.

If you see me around, feel free to say hi. I’m the guy with a fuzzy face.
News From the Heights

Greeting from the Executive Director

By: Alyssa Kenney

Kids grow just like the cucumbers in my garden. Each day I check on the progress of new cucumbers, pick off any bugs, make sure they have enough water and then one day I go outside and find myself shocked at how big the cucumbers have gotten. A lot of Kennedy Heights kids got taller this summer, but that is not what I am referring to. Children have this amazing capacity to learn new things: become a better friend, a better brother, a better citizen. Just last week I glanced out my office window and I saw one of the highest energy children I have ever met, heading for the front door with three friends. I jumped out of my office chair to make sure to greet them and remind them about inside voices. Instead, I observed the child stopping his friends and saying “we need to be quiet in the center ‘cause people are working.” And then later that same week I over heard a different youth say to a younger child, “Clean-up your mess; this is our community center and it should look nice.” Just like cucumbers inevitably grow, well nurtured children grow into wonderful, caring people.

New Board Members

Over the past two months the Board of Directors has welcomed three new members: John Givens, a past Kennedy Heights resident and current northside community member; Kazoua Moua, a UW Extension nutrition educator that has been very involved with the Kennedy Heights Asian Outreach program and the food pantry; and Keisha Young, a Kennedy Heights resident, parent, student and active community volunteer. Welcome new members. The Board of Directors is always looking for Kennedy Heights residents to join the Board. The Board will be seeking new members in October at the annual meeting. Please consider this important volunteer opportunity.

Community Survey

Over the last month staff and volunteers have been knocking on doors and surveying community members. To date 47 household surveys have been completed. We will be knocking on doors again next week to ask community members to complete the survey. We hope to have the results published in early October in time for our annual meeting. Thank you to all the residents who have taken the time to complete a survey. Next Friday, all household that we have been unable to contact will receive a written survey to complete.

Challenge Gift Update

In June, the Kennedy Heights Community Center received a $10,000 challenge gift. The community center has until the end of the year to raise $10,000 in order to receive the challenge gift. We have worked hard this summer to meet this challenge. Our Girl Neighborhood Power program sold over 600 egg rolls and our Youth program spent a very hot day washing cars. A number of area businesses and individuals have also given money to help meet the challenge. We have raised over $6000, but we still have more to go. This fall we will be selling Bucky Books and seeking more community support to meet our challenge. Thank you to everyone who has given, your support is critical to our ongoing success.

Bucky Books

Kennedy Heights Community Center is selling “Bucky Books” as part of our fall fund raising drive. Bucky Books are large coupon books - filled with 50% off, 2 for 1, and even free offers from well over 300 area retailers. Food retailers include pizza, subs, coffee, bagels, ice cream, dinners and much, much more. Other retailers include bookstores, carpet cleaning, dry cleaning, movie admission, bike rentals, massage, sports tickets and even hotel stays. The list goes on and on. You can use the Bucky Book just one or two times to recoup your investment and support Kennedy Heights or you can use it for hundreds of dollars of savings over the next year! The books cost only $35 and can be ordered by calling the center 244-0767 or e-mailing me at ackenney@yahoo.com. Please considering purchasing one.

Women’s Group Restarts Knitting

By Jody Schmitz

With the onset of fall the knitting needles are starting to click, click again. The first meeting of the knitting group is set for Friday September 22nd. The group will meet from 6:00—8:00 PM at the community center. All three of our volunteer teachers—Barb, Lorene, and Myrna will be returning. Lorene will bring a supply of new yarn and new projects. After the September meeting, we will return to our usual schedule of the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Beginners and non-knitters are always welcome. Please come join us.

Pawg Poj Niam Rov Pib Qhaib Xov

Los ntawm Jody Schmitz
Rov txog lub caij teem tseg rau caij nplooj ntoos zeej kev xaws xov, yuav rov muaj dau. Thawj thawj zaug yog muaj rau saww daws hnhub Friday September 22nd. Laww yuav piab thum 6:00—8:00 p.m. nyob rau ntawm community center. Tag nhro peb cov xib fwd uas pab dawb volunteer yog—Barb, Lorene, thiab Myrna yuav rov qab tuaj. Lorene yuav nqa ib bo xov tshiab thiab khoom tshiab tuaj. Tom qab lub Cuaj hlis tag, peb yuav rov muaj txhua txhua hlis hnhub Fridays as thiv thib plaub. Qheb rau cov kawn tshiab thiab cov tusi tuaj xaws huv tib si. Thov caws tuaj koom nrog peb.
News From the Heights

Theater Tickets Will Be Available Again This Year

By Jody Schmitz

Both the Overture Center and the Wisconsin Union Theater will be offering Kennedy Heights residents special deals on theater tickets again this season. The Overture Center will offer $3 vouchers for a select number of shows. The Union Theater will offer free tickets for most of their offerings.

If you are interested in being notified of the ticket opportunities, please get in touch with Jody Schmitz, Adult Outreach coordinator. The ticket program will be announcing the first of the group of available tickets within the next few weeks, so please let us know if you are interested right away.

Please submit your name, your apartment number and a phone number that we can reach you at to Jody Schmitz in writing as soon as possible. We look forward to being able to distribute tickets in community and are thankful that the Wisconsin Union Theater and the Overture Center provide no-cost or low-cost tickets.

Cub Scout Jack-o-Lantern Jamboree

Scout Master Miller stopped by the center to drop off fliers for the “Jack-o-lantern” Jamboree on October 21st. The all day outdoor adventure will include nature games, crafts, hiking, Scout skills and much more. For more information, Kennedy Heights Cub Scouts can contact Harold Miller at 244-8210 or go online at www.glaciersedge.org

After School Program Update

By: True Vang

Hello everyone! I am sure that most parents and kids already know me, but for the ones that don’t my name is True Vang. I have been working as the assistant in the Early Childhood Program for the last year and half. However this year I will also be coordinating the After School Program for elementary school age children. I would welcome any questions about the program or ideas for improvement.

There are some exciting changes to the program this year. We will now be having three separate classrooms for different age groups. Children is Kindergarten and first grade will have program in the downstairs preschool space and I will be the lead teacher. The second and third grade children will have program upstairs in the big room and Kia Yang will be the teacher for that class. The fourth and fifth grade students will meet in the computer lab and cozy room. The three classrooms will allow us to serve more children from the community and to provide activities better suited for the age of the children in each classroom.

The After School Program already has some exciting activities planned for this fall including a weekly science club for the 2nd and 3rd grade classroom, the First Book program will be reading in the Kindergarten and 1st grade classroom and a daily homework helper for the 4th and 5th grade students. Parents are always welcome to stop by and all community members encouraged to volunteer. I am looking forward to the fall and encourage you to contact me with questions. The after-school program still has a number of spaces available in the 2nd—3rd grade classroom and a few spaces available for 4th and 5th graders.
There is something for the whole family at the health fair on Sunday October 1, 2006 at Lakeview Lutheran Church. Kids can participate in Karate America martial arts. Kids can receive free crayons and coloring books along with first aid information from Meriter’s emergency room nurse. WAGS—Wisconsin Academy for Graduate Service Dogs—will be on hand. “Buckle Bear” will talk about car seat safety—pull up a chair and see what he has to say. There will be blood pressure checks, massage and strength assessment by ElderCare physical therapists for Seniors—and much, much more. Plenty of healthy refreshments for snacking will be available. The fair runs from 9:00 AM until noon, is free and open to all at 4001 Mandrake Rd. at the intersection with Northport Drive. For more information contact Anne Tigan at 244-6181.

Three Neighborhood Child Health Clinics are planned for this fall. The free clinics for Dane County children and adolescents, regardless of insurance status, will be open for registration on the following days and locations:

Monday 9/18 at Lincoln School—909 Sequoia Trail
Monday 10/9 Allied Head Start—2096 Red Arrow Trail
Monday 9/18 at Lincoln School—909 Sequoia Trail

The clinics will provide physical exams, dental and other screenings and immunizations. School and sports check-ups can also be completed.

If families are receiving MediCaid (Healthy Start or Badger Care) they are asked to bring each families member’s Forward card.

No appointments are necessary, but a parent or guardian must accompany the child. Interpreter services are available at clinics, which are sponsored by Dane County Coalition for Neighborhood Child Health. For more information contact Sally Zirbel-Donish at 663-8424.