



NEWSLETTER

**INVEST
IN KIDS**

FALL EDITION 2009

A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR...

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Greetings! It is official: Fall is in full swing, and Winter is just around the corner. For those of us who are parents, our children have spent the last few months settling into the school year. As many of you know, this period can be stressful under the best of circumstances. For at-risk, low-income children, making this transition smooth is absolutely critical. Both of our classroom-based programs, The Incredible Years and Good Behavior Game, help make school a fun, safe, healthy place to learn and grow.

In this issue, we share some back-to-school stories about our programs and the children whom we serve. You'll meet one of our puppet friends, Wally, who helps at-risk children learn how to monitor their emotions and control their anger. As always, you'll hear the story of a child helped by one of our programs. These are the stories that keep us going when times are tough and the need seems endless. We also present some of the latest outcomes from Nurse-Family Partnership, which will serve 2,600 first-time moms and their babies this year alone.

None of our work would be possible without the generous support of our many contributors. We received several large gifts over the past few months, for which we are extremely grateful! Among those are gifts from the Denver Foundation, James Dyde, The Mills Family Charitable Foundation, Newmont Mining Corporation, Occasions By Sandy, The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation, Rose Community Foundation, Summertoast, The Philanthropic Collaborative and the Virginia W. Hill Foundation. We would like to offer special thanks to The Colorado Health Foundation, who recently awarded Invest in Kids a two year grant totaling \$150,000, and Kaiser Permanente for their generous \$35,000 grant. Your generosity makes all of this possible!

With gratitude,

Lisa Merlino, Executive Director



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CONGRATULATIONS!

Jennifer Atler, Invest in Kids board member and former executive director, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl in July. Welcome, Izzy!



IIK'S INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

A new school year brings excitement and challenges to both students and teachers. Some students fit into the school setting with ease while others struggle; some teachers have classroom management down pat while others would love a couple more tools in their tool belt. During the 2009-2010 academic year, Invest in Kids will work with schools around the state to bring The Incredible Years and Good Behavior Game to children and their families. These programs provide a framework of strategies for both teachers and students, supporting classroom management, pro-social behavior and success in the learning environment. This year, Invest in Kids will train 21 new parent group leaders, 175 teachers in The Incredible Years, and 15 teachers in Good Behavior Game.

The Invest in Kids staff works hard to ensure that teachers and parent group leaders implementing The Incredible Years are well supported through monthly Invest in Kids consultation as they take on this dynamic program. Our Good Behavior Game consultants will visit classrooms every other week for the same purpose. Invest in Kids' coaching provides a variety of insights into the classroom environment as well as individual student behavior. In addition, our staff works with important contacts within schools, districts, and the community at large, to support and advocate for this programming. We approach the community as a whole to make sure the programs have the support they need to make the most positive, lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable children and their families.

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS: NOTES FROM THE FIELD

The new school year is in full swing and The Incredible Years program consultants are at work bringing the program to additional sites, children and families across the state of Colorado. This year we will expand the program in many communities, serving an estimated 300 parents and 4,000 children by May of 2010. As the program grows, we continue to see the incredible impact that the curriculum can make on children and families.

In September, we received research outcomes from the 2008-2009 academic year, and the results were significant. Of the children who had below average social/emotion skills in the beginning of the school year, 93.9% improved in their overall social competence by the end of the school year. For a full report on our outcomes, check out the Invest in Kids Annual Review online in the coming month: www.iik.org.

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS CLIENT STORY: CHILD TAKES HUGE LEAP FORWARD

"There was a little boy who was high energy, and had developmental delays, thus he was only able to follow one step directions with a lot of extra support. It was unclear how much of the Dinosaur School [part of The Incredible Years program] lessons he understood, because any type of circle time was a challenge for him.

One dinosaur school day, Wally [an Incredible Years puppet] introduced the relaxation thermometer [a visual tool for helping children relax]. This child sat very still and appeared to be listening to every word Wally "spoke." After Wally finished speaking, this boy raised his hand and waited to be called on. He said, "When I get really, really, angry, I go to red! And then I take a deep breath and another and then go orange (he is pointing to the colors on the picture of the thermometer) and another breath and I go green. Then I breathe and get relaxed and I'm in blue! I'm happy!"

Not only did he sit for the entire lesson and understand but was able to do it. I cried. We had spent 6 months working with him on self control and self-calming techniques and nothing seemed to help. Yet on this amazing day it was clear that the light bulb finally turned on for this struggling child! Truly a testimony for this program."

— an Incredible Years teacher in Pagosa Springs



MEET WALLY!

Wally is one of the child puppets in The Incredible Years' Dinosaur

School. He models pro-social behavior and is adored by the children. Wally represents the diverse ethnic backgrounds and individual needs of the children whose classrooms he visits. Wally teaches the children to identify their feelings, to self-regulate using deep breaths, visualization and self talk, and to solve classroom problems. He uses visual cue cards from his detective kit to help him teach children all over Colorado.



GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME: NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Last year 18 classrooms participated in a pilot of the Good Behavior Game, a classroom-based behavior management strategy. This year we have 13 new 1st grade teachers implementing the Good Behavior Game. Eleven of the thirteen teachers are at schools where teachers participated last year, which speaks volumes on how last year’s teachers feel about the impact of the Good Behavior Game.



As part of the game, teachers examine student behavior and explore, with an Invest in Kids coach, various ways to support these students in positive ways. Instead of reprimanding a student for not adhering to rules, teachers praise students who are near the child needing redirection. Teachers also catch students who exhibit anti-social behavior when they are following the rules and giving them positive feedback. Over time these students who normally receive attention for misbehaviors start seeing that they can adhere to the rules and are receiving positive attention for doing so.



The American Institutes for Research reports that:

- Children with behavior problems in poorly managed first grade classrooms were up to 20 times more likely to exhibit severe aggressive problems in middle school compared to similar children in well managed first grade classrooms.
- The number one reason for teacher burnout is the inability to manage classrooms.

These facts illustrate that effective classroom management is key to happiness for teachers and students. The Good Behavior Game supports both in working together to succeed and grow.

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

The Nurse-Family Partnership is a home visitation program that pairs highly-trained nurses with vulnerable first-time mothers. This fall, Invest in Kids received the results of the 9th Nurse-Family Partnership Colorado evaluation. The highlights included:

- A 20% reduction in smoking during pregnancy
- A 46% reduction in experience of violence during pregnancy
- An 88% breastfeeding rate
- Of those who entered the program without a high school diploma or GED, 41% completed their diploma/GED and 12% were continuing their education beyond high school and an additional 18% were still working toward their diploma/GED

We know that the Nurse-Family Partnership program provides at-risk children with the best possible start in life, provides parents with the skills to improve their children’s school readiness, and promotes family self-sufficiency through life skills training, including the skills necessary to pursue education. Complete Nurse-Family Partnership outcomes will be published in our Invest in Kids Annual Review, available online in the coming month: www.iik.org.

HOLIDAY GIVING & THE CCCC TAX CREDIT!

Please consider Invest in Kids in your holiday giving this year. The economy is taking its toll on communities across Colorado, and the demand for our programs is growing faster than we can keep up with. In these tough financial times, Invest in Kids has been able to increase the number of families served through the support of our generous donors.

Donations made to Invest in Kids’ Incredible Years Program are eligible for the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (CCCC) which includes a **50% tax credit on donations made to The Incredible Years program.** Please see the examples below:

<u>Gift Amount</u>	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
Federal and State Tax Deduction	\$86.50	\$173	\$865
Child Care Contribution Tax Credit	\$250.00	\$500	\$2,500
Total Tax Savings	\$336.50	\$673	\$3,365
Actual Cost of Donation*	\$163.50	\$327	\$1,635

*Please note: This estimate assumes a 28% tax bracket and is for illustrative purposes only. Situations may vary.

This holiday season, make your money go further by donating to Invest in Kids’ Incredible Years Program. Talk to your tax advisor about this substantial 50% tax credit. Give a child the chance for a lifetime of success!



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JANE-A-THON, SAVE THE DATE!

Ski Season is ramping up, which means it's time for Invest in Kids to start planning the 11th annual Jane-A-Thon! This year's event will be held on March 6th, 2010 at Mary Jane/Winter Park Resort. Make sure to keep the date open for a fantastic day of on-the-snow fun and philanthropy!

2008/2009 YEAR IN REVIEW

The IIK Annual Review will be released in mid-November. Please visit www.iik.org to read about the latest program outcomes and organizational impact! If you would like to receive a paper version, please contact Hilary Watt Sontag via email at hwatt@iik.org or call 303-839-1808 and let us know you would like to receive a hard copy.

E-NEWSLETTERS

In an effort to save trees and combat the ever increasing cost of postage, Invest in Kids is transitioning to an more environmentally friendly e-newsletter. If you are interested in receiving the e-newsletter, please make sure we have your email address. **Please visit our website at www.iik.org and click on "Mailing List" at the top of the home page to join our e-newsletter list.**

If you would like to continue receiving a paper copy, we are more than happy to send you one—contact Hilary Watt Sontag via email at hwatt@iik.org or call 303-839-1808 and let us know you would like to keep getting a paper copy. Thank you for partnering with us!