



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 17, 2009

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Youth In Need Receives \$2.4 Million to Assist Families with Young Children in Need

ST. CHARLES, Mo., Nov. 17, 2009 — Youth In Need will be receiving \$2.4 million in federal stimulus dollars to expand child development and family support services in St. Louis City and St. Charles, Lincoln, Warren and Montgomery Counties. The agency will be adding 46 Head Start slots that serve families with children, ages 3 to 5; and 165 Early Head Start slots for families with children, ages birth to 3. The program expansion comes as a result of federal funding Youth In Need received as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The agency received approximately 20 percent of the available funding in Missouri and is the only organization to receive Head Start and Early Head Start expansion dollars in the greater St. Louis region.

St. Louis City will receive 104 of the expansion slots. "There is such a need for Early Head Start services in St. Louis City," said Linda Armstrong, Vice President of St. Louis City Head Start. "Being able to serve more than 100 new families each year will have tremendous impact."

"This expansion adds quality and capacity to our services, enables parents to stay in school or the workforce, and allows Youth In Need as an employer to add jobs," said Daryl Rothman, Youth In Need's Vice President of Head Start for the four-county area outside St. Louis City. "There are vast numbers of underserved families who will benefit from these services, and we are thrilled to meet these community needs."

Since 1974, Youth In Need has provided services for children and families in crisis, particularly runaway and homeless youth. In order to prevent crisis and strengthen families while children are young, Youth In Need expanded its services to include early childhood programs when it became a Head Start provider in 1998.

"We will be adding more than 50 new jobs to the economy and increasing by 17 percent the number of children and families we can help who are most affected by the difficult economic conditions," said Jim Braun, Youth In Need's President and CEO.

The national funding also funds facility and quality improvements at current sites to accommodate the increase in children who will be attending Youth In Need centers. Youth In Need will

be opening additional center classrooms in Troy, Warrenton and Montgomery City, Mo. These communities will receive 16, 38 and 23 of the new slots respectively, while St. Charles County will receive 30 slots.

“This funding provides Youth In Need with great opportunities to partner with school districts and other service agencies, so that we’re all working together and maximizing resources to support children and families, rather than competing for them. Everybody wins—the children, their families, the communities and the local economy,” Rothman said.

Youth In Need will continue to build on its community support by launching this expansion and will be looking to the community to continue to support the agency’s other programs for youth.

Head Start and Early Head Start services are offered in center-based or home-based programs. Center-based services assist working families or those attending school or a trade program by providing educational services in both full- and part-day settings. Children attend a classroom environment to prepare for kindergarten, and parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child’s learning environment. Home-based services facilitate the involvement of family in meeting a child’s needs at home—their primary learning environment. Home visitors meet weekly with each family in their home for 90 minutes. Families also enjoy two group meetings a month so children can experience a classroom setting. Home visitors help parents enhance their parenting skills and learn how to be their child’s best teacher. Both center-based and home-based services assess family needs and assist parents in finding health and dental care, employment, education and other services. Head Start services are offered at no-cost to families who meet income eligibility.

According to research compiled by James Heckman, Nobel Prize-winning economist at the University of Chicago, the economic return on the investment in comprehensive early child and parent education to American society is high. Benefits include higher educational achievement, increased earnings, greater family stability and decreased welfare dependency.

“We have long known from our own outcomes that early child interventions build stronger families when children are young and lower the prevalence of crisis when children are in adolescence,” Braun said. “We are proud to have been selected to expand these services that will benefit the region for years to come.”

Approximately \$2.1 billion was available nationwide for expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start services. A major portion of the expansion funds were allocated for the Early Head Start program across the country to increase enrollment by 55,000 children, ages birth to 3. Currently, 600 programs serve 45,000 Early Head Start children nationwide; ARRA funding doubles the scope of services to families with children in this age range.

Youth In Need is an eastern Missouri regional agency serving more than 10,000 children, teens and families each year with residential group homes, homeless street outreach, education, counseling and support groups, foster care case management and infant, child and family development programs. ***Believing in the power of potential, Youth In Need's mission is to provide nurturing environments and educational opportunities so children, youth, and families will find safety and hope, achieve their goals, and build a positive future.***

YOUTH IN NEED BY THE NUMBERS	
PROGRAM	CURRENT NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY MEMBERS SERVED*
Head Start and Early Head Start	5,888
Shelter and Transitional Living	304
Homeless Outreach	2,408
Foster Care and Adoption	131
Counseling	541
Teen Parent Program	165
Before- and After-School Programs	1,131
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS RECEIVING DIRECT CARE	10,568

*Based on 2008 data.

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