



OUR HOME

Opening Doors: Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

OUR HOME

November 2006

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PEGGY DUNN IS NEW STATE COORDINATOR

Before coming to the Illinois State Board of Education in November, I have been teaching part time at the University of Illinois at Springfield in the Teacher Education Program since 1998 and attending school full time in the Ph.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a projected graduation date of December, 2007. My doctoral dissertation is ethnographic research on the Impact on Teacher Practice of Homeless Children in the Classroom with the goal of providing a voice for teachers to share their experiences from the classroom teaching children of homelessness, extreme poverty, and high mobility. My interest in homeless children arose out of my own classroom and meeting the needs of both children and their parents in making life a safe place to be, starting with my classroom.



I have a Masters of Education and am Illinois 03 certified with middle school endorsements in Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science and have been a classroom teacher in rural education settings. During the 2002 – 2005 years as the Director of the Public Policy High School Initiative through the Illinois Board of Higher Education bringing classroom grants to teachers throughout Illinois and educating over 39,000 secondary students in public policymaking with hands-on classroom projects impacting on their communities and the Abraham Lincoln Summer Institute offering secondary students a summer residential university education experience.

I am a published author focusing on Illinois history, enjoy providing conference presentations on history related to women, a grandmother of some wonderful kids that make me really proud, a gardener, quilter, musician, and a world traveling education advocate working in Scotland and Wales, and creating curriculum for South Africa.

I am looking forward to working with all the schools in Illinois to provide the best educational services that we have available for homeless children and their families with all of you working beside me. Looking forward to a bright educational future for all children in Illinois, with your help.

Peggy Dunn



The Adult Learning Resource Center and the Whole Center are moving to Arlington Heights!

When: December 14, 2006

Where: 2626 S. Clearbrook Drive
Arlington Heights, IL
60005

Phone number: The main
telephone will be the same
847-803-3535

Note: Our communication may be interrupted for a week or so during the move.

Sorry for the inconvenience!

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE
<http://www.serve.org/nche/>
AmeriCorps*VISTA
<http://www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp>

Hotline Assistance

If you have questions or comments regarding the Opening Doors Project, or a homeless student, you may contact the ISBE Homeless Hotline at **800/215-6379** or contact Peggy Dunn, Principal Consultant
 Accountability Division
 Illinois State Board of Education
 100 North First Street
 Springfield, IL 62777-0001
 Phone 217/782-2948
 Fax 217/524 - 8750

Heightening Opportunity and Potential for Educational Success

Stephanie Chacharon, VISTA Volunteer, CPS Homeless Education Program

Chicago HOPES—a new partnership between the Chicago Public Schools Homeless Education Program and AmeriCorps*VISTA—began in earnest this month with the start of two pioneer tutoring programs in Chicago shelters. The programs are designed to address the negative impact homelessness has on educational achievement and are focused on sustainability.

After assessing the need for such a program at various shelters around the city, VISTA coordinators decided upon the two initial sites: Uptown's

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BEST PRACTICES**A Priority to Preschool Programs**

The major priority for most homeless education liaisons and others serving homeless students is making sure that school-aged children are enrolled in school and that their needs are met. What do you do when younger children are involved? Do you have a system in place? Do you know about possible programs for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers in your area?

The *Area 3 Annual Homeless Education Symposium* focused on early childhood education this year. Representatives from Illinois Head Start, ISBE Early Childhood Division and Illinois Early Intervention discussed the types of services their programs offer for young children.

At the end of the Symposium, participants shared ideas about providing early childhood education to young children experiencing homelessness. Some common challenges were discussed including issues with screening and encountering waiting lists. All participants were enthusiastic about increasing collaboration and coordination between liaisons and early childhood providers.

For programs in your area please go to: ISBE Early Childhood: <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/directories.htm> or Head Start: <http://www.ilheadstart.org/map.html>

Best Practices Shout Out!

This column is an opportunity for **YOU** to share ideas with your colleagues working with homeless children and youth. You can write a complete column or just a sentence or two!

Please send your submissions, short or long, anytime to Helen Campbell at: hcambell@thecenterweb.org with Best Practices in the subject line. Submissions will be collected for the next edition of OUR HOME.

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Cornerstone Community Outreach (CCO) and Maria Shelter, set in the south-side neighborhood of Englewood.

Both programs are a mix of homework aid, general academic skill building, and arts and cultural enrichment activities.

Englewood's Maria Shelter works with single women and mothers. The interim housing program, sponsored by the Institute of Women Today, operates under the motto "Where change begins" and strives to create a sense of normalcy in the lives of its residents.

School-age children staying at Maria—typically around 15—will be required to attend tutoring. The program will mostly focus on youth between the ages of 4 and 9.

"We are extremely excited and privileged to be a part of this amazing opportunity," says Deborah Benford, case manager at Maria Shelter. "When your [life] is interrupted by homelessness and the shelter system becomes your home, it is important for children to have a stable place to laugh and play and just be children...this program gives our children a chance to be nurtured by learning."

The coordinators at Maria are actively working to develop partnerships for the program. Potential organizations include Congo Square Theatre Company, Hyde Park Art Center, Lillstreet Art Center, the Chicago Bar Association, University of Chicago and New Beginnings Church.

CCO is a large shelter that services nearly 300 men, women and children. The shelter staff hopes this tutoring initiative will provide its young residents with the academic support they need and want.

The program at CCO is staffed primarily by volunteers from Loyola University, Truman College and North Park University, as well as other community members. Over thirty of CCO's residents, all between the ages of 5 and 11, are currently enrolled.

Kate Albing, tutor and Loyola University student, volunteers at CCO because she feels the program provides the children with stability and serves as reinforcement that people care enough to devote their time and energy.

"These children are not only hilarious, but they seem to genuinely appreciate our presence," says Albing. "I leave Cornerstone in a better mood than I was in coming there, and that keeps me coming back."

Through partnerships with local arts groups, such as Joel Hall Dance Studio and Raven Theatre, the children of CCO will be exposed to the arts in the form of weekly hip hop classes, monthly theatre workshops and more. The program also anticipates visits from the Storybook Mom and local children's authors and illustrators to promote literacy.

To volunteer, donate, or request more information on Chicago HOPES, please contact a VISTA volunteer by phone at (773) 553-2242 or by email at HEPVistas@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE!**NCLB: No Child Left Behind Annual Statewide Conference**

Bringing together Illinois educators associated with:
Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV and Title V

February 14, 15, 16, 2007 - Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, Chicago, IL

Beyond Boundaries: Strategies for Reaching All Students

Look for more information in the near future at <http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html>

A track on homeless education will be offered at this conference.**Keynote speakers include:**

Dr. Robert Barr - Nationally recognized scholar, speaker and author
Mary Bigler - Professor of Teacher Education at Eastern Michigan University
Cathryn Berger Kaye - Author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*
Kay Toliver - Retired Elementary & Middle School Teacher & Creator of 'Challenger Program'
Kathy Barclay - Professor of Reading & Former Department Chair at Western IL University
Joseph Fatheree - Illinois Teacher of the Year

ARE SCHOOLS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE HOMELESS STUDENTS WITH UNIFORMS?

Laurene Heybach, Director
The Law Project Of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Throughout Illinois as we provide training and support to schools, social workers and community advocates, a question always arises regarding student uniform requirements. Many schools do, in fact, require that students wear particular –often simple—uniforms to school. Under many school discipline codes, failure to wear a proper uniform can result in suspension or loss of privileges. See, e.g., Chicago Public Schools Uniform Discipline Code 1-3 (forbids suspension but allows loss of extracurricular privileges). So we are often asked who, in such a situation is responsible for providing the uniform to a student experiencing homelessness: the parents, the shelter, the school, public aid? Fortunately, both the Illinois School Code and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act offer a good answer: the school is ultimately responsible.

In Illinois, a school board “may adopt a school uniform or dress code policy” where “necessary to maintain the orderly process of a school function or prevent endangerment of student health or safety.” 105 ILCS 5/10-22.25b. However, the School uniforms section of the School Code makes clear that no child can be denied attendance or disciplined for noncompliance with the policy “during such time as is reasonably necessary to enable the student to acquire a student uniform or otherwise comply with the dress code policy...” 105 ILCS 5/10-22.25b(i). Any uniform or dress code policy adopted by a board, moreover, “shall include criteria and procedures under which the school board will accommodate the needs of or otherwise provide appropriate resources to assist a student from an indigent family in complying” with the policies. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.25b(ii). In other words, any Illinois school which imposes a school uniform as a requirement, must also have a plan for helping low-income families meet the uniform or dress code requirements. And “reasonable” time for compliance must be allowed as well.

Some might interpret the Illinois law as permitting a school board to allow a low income student to attend school without wearing the uniform or the other proper dress code attire that the other students must wear, i.e., to “accommodate” the student’s needs. Such a student would then look different from his or her peers –an uncomfortable position at best. Under McKinney-Vento, such a choice would be tantamount to “stigmatizing” the child and would, accordingly, be a violation. See 42 U.S.C. §11432g(1)(J)(school districts must adopt policies to ensure homeless children and youth are not stigmatized). In addition, remember that the Illinois school uniforms law only permits school uniform policies in situations where uniforms are determined “necessary...to maintain order[...or ... student health and safety.” Exempting the homeless student would be hard to justify if the policy rationale, i.e., necessity for order, health or safety, applied to all other students. Indeed, failing to provide uniforms that assist in creating health, safety and order in a school would likely be a violation of the McKinney-Vento mandate that homeless children and youth be given “comparable services” 42 U.S.C. §11432g(1)(F) and that barriers to homeless students’ attendance, enrollment and success be both identified and that strategies be employed to address those problems caused by “uniform or dress code requirements.” 42 U.S.C. §11432g(1)(H)(v).

Once a uniform requirement is adopted in a school, therefore, the school assumes the responsibility to provide appropriate resources to assist low income families with meeting the requirement. Most school districts have found very practical solutions to the uniform issue garnering corporate or individual donations, cash assistance or negotiating with uniform suppliers to include additional items of clothing. Holiday clothing drives, including discreet clothing drives among district families have also been helpful. If you have further questions regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth, please feel free to contact the Law Project at 1-800-940-1119.



Opening Doors

Who are we?

Opening Doors is an Illinois State Board of Education grant-funded project provided through the McKinney - Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.

Under the direction of the Accountability Division, the goal of this initiative is to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to Illinois schools and shelters as to the educational rights and needs of homeless children and youth. The Opening Doors project partners include:

Adult Learning Resource Center
1855 Mt. Prospect Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Phone 847/803-3535
Fax 847/803-3231

Regional Office of Education #26 Hancock/McDonough
130 S. Lafayette Street
Suite 200
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone 309/837-4821
Fax 309/837-2887

Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness
P.O. Box 3956
Oak Park, IL 60303
Phone 708/263-3590
Fax 708/401-0105

Visit us on the world wide web at <http://homelessed.net> to receive FREE materials!

Our Home

To submit an article for OUR HOME please send to:
Eileen Worthington
ROE #26 - Hancock/McDonough
130 South Lafayette
Suite 200
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone 309 / 837-4821
Fax 309 / 837-2887
mworthing@roe26.k12.il.us



Save the Date - November 11 - 13, 2007
Oregon Convention Center - Portland, Oregon

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth 18th Annual Conference

For more information go to <http://naehcy.org>



Opening Doors

Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

ROE #26 Hancock/McDonough
130 S. Lafayette - Suite 200
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone: (309) 837-4821
Fax: (309) 837-2887
Email: mworthin@roe26.k12.il.us

We're on the Web! <http://homelessd.net>

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Homeless Youth and the Surrogate Parent Program

Pearl A. Schneider, Surrogate Parent Coordinator, Special Education Division, ISBE

As this is written, the final Federal Rules and Regulations governing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) have gone into effect. (See <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2006-3/081406a.pdf> for the complete text of comments, rules and regulations.)

The responsibilities of a surrogate parent have not changed (34 CFR §300.519(g)):

"The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to –
(1) The identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child; and
(2) The provision of FAPE to the child."

However, regulations specific to the assignment of surrogate parents to homeless youth are now more clearly defined in 34 CFR §300.519(a)(4):

"(a) Each public agency must ensure that the rights of a child are protected when –
(4) The child is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(6))."

While the regulations continue to restrict who may serve as a surrogate parent, a new section, 34 CFR §300.519(f), offers additional opportunities to address the peculiar needs of homeless youth who may require special education services.

"(f) Unaccompanied homeless youth.

In the case of a child who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs may be appointed as temporary surrogate parents without regard to paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section, until a surrogate parent can be appointed that meets all of the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section."

In the course of your jobs, homeless liaisons could provide an invaluable service in spreading the word to the staff at these programs concerning this new "wrinkle."

Should the "appropriate staff" noted above wish to ensure they are knowledgeable in the rights of students with disabilities and become trained as surrogate parents, please encourage them to use the contact information below to learn the time and location of the nearest training or to arrange training at their location.

Nancy Ewert, Surrogate Parent Training Program
School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASED)
Phone: (630)889-7393