

# Head Start family

## Do You Like Green Eggs and Ham? Head Start Joins Read Across America Celebration!

**A** very famous Cat and his friends have been high-tailing it across the country and Newark was no exception! Young readers were brought together under one hat on March 2 during the 7th annual National Education Association's Read Across America Day held at Newark's Metropolitan Baptist Church.

From coast to coast, Read Across America Day found teachers, celebrities, athletes, politicians, community members, volunteers, parents, and others putting aside the many hats they wear for work and donning the ultimate reading hat—the well-known red and white striped stovepipe hat of feline distinction!

The enthusiasm in Newark was not to be surpassed. Featured celebrity guest readers included Louis Prezeau, president, City National Bank; William Librera, New Jersey Commissioner of Education; and Gayle Griffin, assistant superintendent of Newark Public Schools.

Additionally, Rosa Langston of the City of Newark Office of Children read and entertained dialogue with the children about her being in a wheelchair after suffering a stroke.

"We can not emphasize enough the importance of reading to our youngsters," said Executive Director Beverly Lynn, who presided over the event. "Theodore S. Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, is one of America's most-loved authors of children's books, and this year we commemorate his 100th birthday as we celebrate the joy of reading with our children."

As we honor the author of such classics as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham* and *Horton Hears a Who*, Head Start joins in the movement that encompasses America's leading literacy, youth, and civic groups, as a nation of readers brought together under one hat.

The Newark Preschool Choir offered musical selections. Later, there were remarks by NPC Board President Patrick Council and Andrea Hisseine, chair of the Head Start Policy Council.

If you are interested in becoming a reader for NPC, contact Gwendolyn Smith, at the NPC offices, 973-848-5003. ■



Photos: Eduardo Whittington

**So Many Cats in Hats:** **A.** William Librera, New Jersey Commissioner of Education, reads about a "Who". **B.** Gayle Griffin, Assistant Superintendent of Newark Public Schools reads about toes. **C.** Some Dr. Seuss fans create their own "cat" hats.



### Inside!

- NPC Gets Amerigroup Grant
- Dance Classes at Preschool
- Summer Discovery 2004 & MORE!



# Director's Corner



**S**pringtime is a time for blooming flowers and budding trees, and a time to experience all the newness of the season. In this spir-

it of renewal, the Newark Preschool Council Inc. (NPC) is chock-full of fresh ideas focused on the quality of services provided to children and families.

We are determined to stay focused on our goals: full enrollment, quality early childhood education in all of our centers, outstanding support services, and a skilled and motivated staff. Last year, a great deal of work went into creating a plan of action, but it was well worth the effort, as it now guides our programming in a new, exciting direction for 2004! Here we provide a snapshot of several ways we have accomplished our goals to date.

We have added some new energy to our staff. NPC welcomes **Nezzie De Frank, Deputy Director; Clark Thompson, Early Childhood and Education Manager; and Raafia Odom, Family and Community Partnership Manager;** and we salute ten others who have received their degrees. Moreover, we have new leadership on both our Board of Directors and Policy Council. Our parents are integral to the success of our programming, so we use this issue to highlight the Head Start Parent Leadership project. We know that nurturing and

**NPC is chock-full of fresh ideas focused on the quality of services provided to children and families.**

promoting parent leadership results in stronger families and stronger communities.

In other news, we talk about the ongoing initiatives of the Health Advisory committee to promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of our children and families. In addition, we have received a grant from Amerigroup that enables us to remodel resource rooms for parents and staff.

Additionally, we have to mention how our very own Newark Preschool Choir performed at both the Newark tree lighting celebration last December. I can tell you that they were a huge hit (Then again, I am just a *little bit* biased.)

These are just a few of the exciting things springing up at NPC. We will continue to update you on Newark Preschool's latest ideas and accomplishments. Thanks for your continued support! We are definitely blossoming into a promising year of programming!

Warmest Regards,

**Beverly Lynn**  
Executive Director

## Newark Preschool Council's Four Goals

1. Provide quality early childhood education
2. Employ skilled professional staff
3. Achieve full enrollment in all of our centers
- 4 Offer comprehensive support services for parents, children and the community we serve



# FLASHBACK

## NPC Choir Glows at Newark Tree Lighting 2003

**M**ove over Mariah Carey, Harry Connick Jr., Jessica Simpson and other performers at the December 2003 Rockefeller Center (NYC) tree lighting ceremony! None can hold a candle to our very own Newark Preschool Choir's concert, which really shone at Newark's annual tree lighting spectacular.

Thousands were on hand to witness the 20,000 light bulbs illuminate the 86-foot Norwegian spruce at Military Park. Nevertheless, the 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds clearly outshone the tree's lights. The NPC Choir lit up the crowd that night with holi-

*continued on page 6*



**A.** The NPC Choir outshines them all at the annual Newark tree lighting spectacular  
**B.** Entertainer Joe Piscopo and Beverly Lynn, NPC executive director, provide glowing remarks during the event

# Safety First

## Risk Management Committee Formed



**I**n an effort to maintain healthier and safer environments in which to work and to learn, the Newark Preschool Council Head Start Program has formed a Risk Management Group. Staff, parents, and health professionals in the group will work toward reducing the number of accidents among children and workplace injuries among adults. In the coming months, the group will review current safety systems, design workplace safety strategies, and implement supplementary programs as part of its ongoing effort to promote the health, well-being, and safety of our children and families.

To date, the Risk Management plan has added a registered nurse to Health Services. Moreover, this year it has placed on its drawing board a collaborative effort with the American Lung Association to provide an asthma wellness program for teaching staff, parents, and their children.

The group will hold its next meeting on Friday, April 23 at 10:00 a.m. at NPC Central Office, Ten Park Place, Newark, NJ. For more information, contact Velda Font-Morris at 973-848-5066. ■

## NPC Receives Amerigroup Grant



**N**ewark Preschool Council Inc. recently received a grant from the Amerigroup Corporation. Headquartered in Virginia Beach, Va., Amerigroup is a multi-state managed health care company focused on serving people who receive health care benefits through publicly sponsored programs. NPC will use the additional funds at the Sharpe James Center to remodel the parent/staff resource and training room, and to offer health training and literacy activities for children.



## National Reporting System

**T**he National Reporting System is an assessment of all 4- and 5-year-old children attending Head Start programs. Part of the Good Start, Grow Smart program spearheaded by the Bush Administration, its purpose is to assess where children are in accordance with meeting certain Federally mandated standards.

Evaluations are administered twice annually, in the fall and in the spring. While individual evaluations from the fall assessment are not available as of yet, overall results indicate that Newark Head Start students received good service. In general, scores were found to be consistent with FACES, the Family and Children Experiences Survey, a national assessment of children and parents. NPC is gearing up for the next assessment, scheduled for this month. ■

## New Staff on Board



*Springtime sees new blossoms among NPC staff.*

### Nezzie DeFrank

Nezzie DeFrank is our new Deputy Director. She will oversee center operations, including the supervision of 14 center managers who oversee Abbott and Head Start sites. Ms. DeFrank's vision is to ensure quality operations and services: all staff will meet high quality standards of professionalism by providing quality training for staff; quality standards at all sites by providing quality resources and materials and maintaining facilities; and ultimately, quality comprehensive services for children and their families.

Previously, she was director of the Childcare Action Department at the Unified Child Care Agency (Programs for Parents), where she was responsible for the professional development of center staff, including the directors' academy, the six-month training calendar, teacher Child Development Associate training, the statewide accreditation project for Essex County child care centers, and quality childcare options throughout Essex Co.

Ms. DeFrank serves as an adjunct professor at Montclair State University and chairs the Policy Advisory Board for the Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education at Kean University.

The N.J. native holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in general professional education, both from Seton Hall University.

### Clark Thompson

Clark Thompson has taken on a new position as Early Childhood Education and Health Services Manager. Previously, he was NPC manager of Special Services and Mental Health, where he adminis-

*continued on page 6*



# You Gotta Have Art!



## SPOTLIGHT

### EVANGLINE GROVER From Preschool to Pediatrics

## We're Puttin' On Dancin' Shoes

**I**magine what it was like to see great dance choreographers George Balanchine, Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey in their very first dance classes . . . Just think, even *they* were beginning students at one point in their lives. Our children are no exception. In fact, several students are kicking up their heels at Mary E. Wheeler Willis, Broadway Mini-Mall, and Metropolitan Baptist centers. Another example of NPC's commitment to the Arts, the dance instruction program is a collaborative effort with Premiere Dance Theatre of Montclair, NJ.

"The weekly classes focus on traditional dance concepts, such as movement and basic dance terminology—all in French," explains dance instructor Shirlise McKinley. "In addition to classical dance training, the children will learn important social skills like taking turns and working cooperatively."

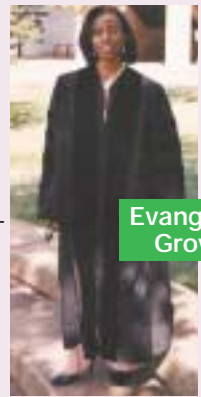
At Mary E. Wheeler Willis, youngsters work on a literacy-based movement  
*continued on page 5*



Photos: Thomas Whittington

**Gotta Dance!:**  
*Youngsters from Mary E. Wheeler Willis, Broadway Mini-Mall and Metropolitan Baptist centers receive formal dance training from Premiere Dance Theatre.*

**A**s a Newark preschooler at Zion Hill Center during the early 1970s, a gifted little girl named Evangeline Grover displayed a true inquisitive nature and a love for science. Even at such an early age, she was *on call*, pretending to be a doctor aiding her young classmates or as a veterinarian for the stuffed animals. Not surprisingly, today she is still *on call*, but this time as Dr. Evangeline Grover, a real-life pediatrician practicing in Germantown, Pa. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.



Evangeline Grover

We would be remiss had we failed to mention her mother, Joann Grover. Like it is said, "the fruit does not fall far from the tree." Joann too is another NPC success story too! Currently a teacher at Greater Abyssinian II, Mrs. Grover worked her way up the ranks at NPC. Seeking the very best for the younger Evangeline, her initial contact was that of a Head Start parent where she began working as a dedicated volunteer. Soon she took a position as custodian, and later as a foodservice worker. After a period as a teacher assistant, Joann began work toward becoming a fully certified teaching professional. Today she is a few courses shy of her AA Teaching Degree from Essex County College.

Joann Grover recently reflected on her two-decade relationship with NPC, "My daughter and I will eternally be grateful to Newark Preschool Council Head Start," she beamed. "I have learned how to encourage children—including my own, and Evangeline has learned how to heal children. Head Start has helped us both achieve so much!" ■

## Coming Soon! Preschooler Puppetry Performances



**N**ewark Preschool Council received a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Arts to implement a puppet theatre project for four classrooms serving approximately 60 preschoolers. The grant covers training the teaching staff about puppetry and provides resources for the cost of recording the puppet show presentations. Set to launch in fall 2004, the program's duration will be approximately 15 weeks. NPC's new Arts  
*continued on page 5*

# New Faces on Board and Policy Council



**N**

ewark Preschool Council recently welcomed several new members to the Head Start Policy Council and we list them below. Look to meet these new members in future issues of *Head Start Family* as we feature informal interviews and bios.

## Head Start Policy Council 2003-04

**Chairperson** ..... Andrea Hisseine  
**Vice Chairperson** ..... Natasha Graham  
**Recording Secretary** ..... Janitza Collazo  
**Corresponding Secretary** ..... Takiya Alston  
**Treasurer** ..... Monique Langford  
**Parliamentarian** ..... Barry Fields

### Members

**Representatives**

Raymond Baker	Felicia Dickson
Myteshia Covvington	Natasha Graham
Jessica Richardson	Dorothy Brozell
Barry Fields	Geraldine Howard
Jeanette Morales	Karriem Sandford
Ahshia Brown	Juanita Collazo
Aldeeya Graham	

**Alternates**

Dawn Ross	Dianne Rogers
Danielle Commander	Takiya Alston
Sheneka Croom	Naftal Cruz
Addy Nafisa	Tori Adams
Melba Brooks	

**Representatives**

### Collaborators

Patrick Carter	Michelle Epps
----------------	---------------

**Alternates**

Carla Townes	Calvin Henry
--------------	--------------

### Community Representatives

**WISE Women's Center,**  
**Essex County College** ..... Patricia Palmieri  
**Essex County Div. Welfare** ..... Carol Simmons Logan

## APPLAUSE

### We Salute Our Teaching Professionals

**A**

s our staff advances professionally, we recognize 10 individuals who have successfully completed job-specific training and received additional credentials.

Becoming a fully certified teaching professional is a long road to travel. Hours of training are necessary to ensure that no child is left behind. We currently have 75 staff members attending programs at Bloomfield and Essex County College and at New Jersey City and Montclair State Universities. Join us in congratulating the following individuals for completion of their degrees.

Joyce Arnold, AA  
 Sherise Corrothers, AA  
 Rose Gillespie, AA  
 Hyacinth Grayson, AA  
 Mercedes Lugo, AA  
 Lynette Marcus, AA  
 Leslyn McKenzie, AA  
 Yvette Sampson, AA  
 Thelma Turner, AA  
 Maisha Walter, BA

*Congratulations to all on a job well done!* ■

## NPC Dance Classes

*continued from page 4*

piece—as some students dance, others will narrate or tell stories. At Broadway Mini Mall and Metropolitan, the groups will work on an adaptation of *Beauty and the Beast* and a Natalie Cole Medley, respectively.

At the end of the term, each dance troupe will perform for friends and family. ■

## Preschooler Puppetry

*continued from page 4*

Program Coordinator Marcos Beria will run this program. Mr. Beria is a graduate of the National School of the Theatre of Venezuela, obtained a B.A. in film production from Hunter College, and subsequently worked as a producer for The Children's Television Workshop—the home of the renown *Sesame Street*. His area of expertise is in the development and instruction of theatre, video, and visual arts programs for both non-profit and public schools. ■

## NPC's Cable Show

*Our early childhood educational programs now are available on Cablevision Channel 19 Mondays at 8 p.m.*

## Your Issue of Head Start Family is Now Available On-line!

*Did you know you can download your copy of Head Start Family from our website: [www.newarkpreschool.org](http://www.newarkpreschool.org) ?* ■

# Mark Your Calendars



## Storytelling at the Newark Public Library

On Saturday, May 8, join us for storytelling through puppetry, dance, and African drumming at the African American Children's Book Festival, at the Newark Public Library, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring favorite authors, illustrators, and over 300 titles and thousands of books for toddlers thru teens! Free admission!

## NPC Health Fair

On Friday, August 20 (rain date August 27th), local health care providers and health management organizations will be on hand for the Health Fair—a collaborative initiative between the NPC Health Advisory Committee and UNDMI.

## Turn Off the TV Night

Also, be on the lookout for announcements highlighting the NPC *Turn Off the TV Night!*

## What's Going On?

- Last December, parents and staff attended the New Jersey Head Start Association (NHSA) Parent Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico!
- Three dads are all set to attend the Head Start Bureau—*The Father Factor: National Head Start Institute on Father Involvement* in Dallas, Texas in June.

## Head Start family

### Newark Preschool Council, Inc. Head Start Program

Ten Park Place, Fourth Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
e-mail: NPCouncil@aol.com  
Tel: 973.848.5030  
Fax: 973.621.6051

**President, Board of Directors**  
Patrick Council

**Policy Council Chairperson**  
Andrea Hiseine

**Executive Director**  
Beverly Lynn

**Editor/Writer**  
Alexis Ellison

**Graphic Design & Production**  
Tropical Penguin, Montclair, NJ



## NPC Summer Discovery 2004

### Leap into the Learning Zone . . .

a free, ten-week exploratory learning experience for 3- and 4-year old children in Newark set to enrich, enhance, and to build skills through science, math, creative arts (including drama and music), language, and family activities. Weekly themes will include Ocean Life, Gardening, Civic Pride, Family Week, Community Involvement, and more. In addition, the NPC summer program will offer field trips and swimming, and will provide nutritious meals and snacks.

Your child deserves a fun-filled summer experience in a safe and family-friendly environment!

Call 973-848-5030 today to register at the 22 Head Start locations around town. There is one in your community!

## Newark Tree Lighting

*continued from page 2*

day favorites, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," "Feliz Navidad" and "Jingle Bells."

Directed by Jonnie Smith, Alisha Lee, Becky Brown, Francie Guerrero and Sonia Cordero, the preschoolers hail from Sharpe James Center. Making appearances at various events throughout the city, their performances are a gleaming example that the Arts are very much alive at Newark Preschool Council.

"The Tree Lighting Ceremony was a wonderful experience for the children," says NPC Executive Director Beverly Lynn. It ushered in the Christmas spirit and gave Newark Preschool Council an opportunity to showcase our children."

After The Newark Preschool Choir's final selection, jolly old Santa Claus arrived at the park heading towards

the tree with a sleigh full of goodies in tow. One 10-second countdown later and the tree lit up amid a sea of confetti and laser lights.

We certainly are looking forward to next year's celebration! ■

## New Staff

*continued from page 3*

tered disability and special needs programs and supervised the special service social workers, mental health consultants and speech pathologist.

In his new role, he will work to ensure that children receive quality child educational services, regardless of the needs of the child—gifted, remedial, or special needs. He envisions an integrated approach for all NPC services: health, education, nutrition, special services and mental health.

A Newark native, Mr. Thompson holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Yale University and a master's degree in Social Work from Rutgers University.

## Raafia Odom

Raafia Odom is the newly appointed manager of Family & Community Partnerships, which includes Social Services, Adult Education, and Parent Involvement. Her professional work experience includes management positions with the UMDNJ, NCC Verizon, the YMWCA, and prior to joining NPC, she was Director of Marketing & Membership for the Girl Scouts Council of Greater Essex & Hudson Counties, where she expanded membership throughout Essex and Hudson counties.

Ms. Odom has extensive background in the field of human services, including health education, childcare administration, and designing and managing various programs for youth. She aspires to increase NPC presence in the community and to advance the integration of services to children and families by improving marketing and grassroots outreach and staff accountability.

Her immediate goals are to expand training programs through the Adult Education Program to include more opportunities for professional development, and enhance programs like the Male Initiative Program and family literacy programs.

A product of Newark public schools, she holds a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and a master's degree in management from New Jersey Institute of Technology. ■