



NOTEABLES

ABLE Families

Winter 2011 Volume 16 Issue 1

Local moms get helpful new resource

New mothers in the Mingo County have a helpful new resource available to them. Emma Sue Pack, an in-home family educator with ABLE Families' Maternal Infant Home Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program, recently became a certified Lactation Specialist.

The certification qualifies Emma Sue to guide and teach new moms in breastfeeding techniques and to prevent and recognize problems. She will be able to recognize more quickly when a problem is significant enough to need a doctor's care and when it's not. She is

also qualified to teach breastfeeding classes and lead support groups.

"Being a new mother is wonderful, but it can be hard, too. I'm looking forward to helping moms have the best experience they can with their new babies," Emma Sue says.

The certification involved participation in an intense 45-hour training course in Charleston and passing a thorough exam at the end. The training included topics like infant behavior, physiology of milk production, problems that breastfeeding mothers (cont. on p. 3)



MIHOW mom Emberly Damron and her baby Lilah-belle are among those served by ABLE Families' MIHOW program. Here they're visited by in-home family educator and newly certified lactation specialist Emma Sue Pack..



Author Nancy Kelly Allen visits with ABLE Afterschool children. See page 3.

ABLE Families gets national nod

ABLE Families has been designated a national "Promise Place" by the Washington, DC-based America's Promise Alliance.

The honor goes to organizations who have demonstrated an effective commitment to providing all of the "Five Promises" to the young people they serve. Those Five Promises include: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start toward adulthood, effective

education, and opportunities to help others.

Children who receive at least four of the Five Promises are much more likely than those who experience only one or zero Promises to succeed academically, socially and civically. They are more likely to avoid violence, contribute to their communities and achieve high grades in school.

Afterschool receives \$15,000 grant

ABLE Families has received a grant of \$15,000 from the McDonough Foundation to help fund our Afterschool program during 2011.

This has been a great school year so far for the program. Despite a long period of difficult winter weather (which often affects attendance at Afterschool), we've maintained a steady group of about 20 to 25 students daily. One focus this year has been exploring many different countries and cultures around the world. Children and staff have done this through creative use of music, stories, maps, and much more.

Earlier in the year, the

kids received an exciting visit from award-winning Kentucky author Nancy Kelly Allen, who talked to them about what an exciting and adventurous thing reading can be. (See the article below.) Later in February, West Virginia Teacher of the Year Drema McNeil will pay them a visit as well.

Our warm thanks go to our friends at the McDonough Foundation for their trust in the work we do.

The Afterschool program operates on a budget of about \$50,000 per year. We depend on individual donations from our loyal friends to help keep the program going.



There's nothing like a great game of chess with friends! A group of boys develop both friendships and problem-solving skills at ABLE Families Afterschool.

Christmas at ABLE Families

Many local parents brought their children to the **Breakfast with Santa**, held again this year by ABLE Families' Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program. Children got to enjoy a tasty pancake breakfast with their parents and then sit on Santa's lap for an important wish-list chat.

They also received a small gift from ABLE Families. Some helpful funding for the event came from Americans Helping Americans.

ABLE Families again collaborated with sister agency Christian Help of Mingo County this year for that organization's **Christmas distribution** on December 21. The annual program provides toys for under the tree and groceries for full holiday meals to low-income families around the county.



Above: A local child enjoys a chat with the big guy at the Breakfast with Santa.

Above right: ABLE in-home family educators Emma Sue Pack and Christy Stroud unpack toys for the Christian Help Christmas distribution.

Right: Sr. Patricia Ann Murray, ABLE's Program Director, was a cook at the Breakfast with Santa.



In Brief

Tax Help Offered Here

ABLE Families is collaborating with our sister agency, Christian Help of Mingo County, to provide free tax preparation services to people of our area. Christian Help is an official site of the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

The intention is to help lower income folks file their tax returns and get access to valuable programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit.

ABLE's Executive Director Barry Hudock and Program Director Sr. Patricia Ann Murray went through an IRS training program and passed certification exams to qualify serve as volunteer preparers.

Blood Drive

ABLE Families and Christian Help again sponsored our annual Red Cross Blood Drive here at our site. Despite snowy weather on the day of the drive, many generous donors from around the community showed up to donate. Our thanks to each of them!

Speaking Up

ABLE Director Barry Hudock wrote an op-ed column that appeared in the Charleston Gazette in late November. The column addressed the proposal by the region's electric company to seek a new rate hike of 17 percent. That would follow the 7.4% increase that took effect July 1, 2010, which followed a 12.1% increase that took effect October 1, 2009. Barry wrote about how devastating these rate hikes can be for people living in poverty in Mingo County (one of the nation's poorest counties). You can find it online at: www.wvgazette.com/Opinion/OpEdCommentaries/201011190795.

"Like a warm blanket on a cold night"

'Reading Celebration' encourages local parents to read with kids

"Your job isn't to teach your kids how to read. Their teacher at school can do that. Your job is to teach them to love to read."

That was the message from

writer and the joy of reading, and took many questions. Every one of our kids received a copy of Nancy's book, *Trouble in Troublesome Creek* as a gift

from ABLF Families, and Nancy signed every kid's book.

Later came the evening's main event, the Reading Celebration, especially for parents of young children. Nancy spoke to the parents about the importance of parents reading to their kids, and ways it can be an exciting experience for both parents and kids.



She suggest-

Nancy Kelly Allen to the parents who gathered for ABLF Families' recent "Reading Celebration" event.

Nancy, a noted author of children's book as well as a few for adults, was our featured guest.

In the late afternoon, Nancy spent time with the children of our afterschool program. She read to them, talked to them about being a

ed ways that their kids can begin to experience time spent reading as feeling "like a warm blanket on a cold night."

All parents who attended received a copy of Nancy's booklet *Read to Me! I Will Listen: Tips Mom and Dad Can Use to Help Me Become a Lifelong Reader*, as a gift from ABLF Families.

Local moms get new resource (continued from page 1)

commonly encounter, psychological issues, ethical issues, and much more.

ABLE Families' in-home family education program serves families Mingo and Lincoln Counties. Educators make monthly visits, offering parents support and information about issues like prenatal health, child develop-

ment, parenting skills, nutrition, and more.

Learn more, see more photos, or leave a comment at the ABLF Families blog: ablefamilies.wordpress.com

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Success Worth Smiling About



Jessie White is a local woman who recently earned her General Equivalency Diploma (GED) after some help from ABLE Families' adult education program.

Jessie's family members came from out-of-state to join in a congratulatory party with us. Like them, we are proud of her accomplishment.

2010 at ABLE Families: By the Numbers



Around here, people are able. You can count on it!