



**children's home + aid**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Betty Brisk 312.424.6812

bbrisk@childrenshomeandaid.org

**CHILDREN'S HOME + AID DEDICATES \$4.5M EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION CENTER IN SCHAUMBURG FOR AT-RISK FAMILIES**

CHICAGO (March 7, 2009) — On Saturday, March 7, 2009, Children's Home + Aid held a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of its new Schaumburg Child + Family Center. The Dedication Ceremony acknowledged all those who have supported the project and contributed to its completion. Among the speakers were Schaumburg Mayor Al Larson, American Chartered Bank Chairman and capital campaign chairman, Bob Riter, Children's Home + Aid President & CEO Nancy Ronquillo and Kristina Khalvati, a single parent whose child is enrolled at the Center.

Legislators, Schaumburg village officials, representatives from the Woodfield Area Children's Organization, the local business community and community residents joined in the dedication of this long awaited early childhood center and witnessed Mayor Larson perform the ceremonial ribbon-cutting. Following the dedication, refreshments were served and guests were invited to tour the new facility and enjoy the music of the Schaumburg Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Construction on the Center had been held up for almost six years by a freeze placed on state funds that had been committed to the project. With the foundation poured and the steel girders set in place, the construction site sat idle until last year.

Under the leadership of Schaumburg Mayor Al Larson, a Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant in the amount of \$750,000 was awarded to Children's Home + Aid allowing the construction to resume. On February 27, the Schaumburg Child + Family Center located at 725 E. Schaumburg Road was finally opened, as staff welcomed newly enrolled children and families for the first time.

While being awarded the DCEO grant was good news, the state has only paid 25 percent of the \$750,000 grant amount. As a result, Children's Home + Aid has had to borrow additional money to pay the construction costs that the DCEO funds were expected to pay.

The 13,000-square foot facility more than doubles the available capacity for early childhood education programs targeting at-risk families in the northwest suburbs. Nearly 100 percent of the children served at the Center come from environments considered high risk (families who live below the poverty line, children with young parents, single-parent families, or families in which the parents have not completed high school or a GED). Top priority for enrollment is given to children of teenaged parents, children born into abuse or neglect, and children of low-income parents.

"For nearly 20 years, we have supported thousands of at-risk families in Schaumburg who needed access to accredited early childhood services to improve their lives," said Nancy Ronquillo, Children's Home + Aid president and CEO. "The persistent call to action from families has been to increase our services in Schaumburg to meet the demand. Today, we have answered that call because of the leadership of our Board

of Trustees, volunteers, donors, staff and especially those individuals from the local business community who recognize the critical importance of early childhood education programs.”

Children’s Home + Aid created the Campaign for Schaumburg Steering Committee at the onset of this expansion project to meet its capital campaign goals. That Committee is led by Bob Riter, American Chartered Bank chairman, and includes key leaders from the region’s business and civic community.

“From the beginning of our campaign, area leaders recognized the importance of providing quality early childhood education programs to support the growth of our community. They understood that what’s good for these families is good for our community,” said Bob Riter.

Riter saluted the Village of Schaumburg for its unwavering support of the expansion effort. “Schaumburg Mayor Al Larson knows that all children are born with the same potential to become successful learners. We thank the mayor and all our supporters for their investment in our children and their families,” said Riter.

To date, Children’s Home + Aid has raised \$2.9 million of the \$4.5 million needed to fund the construction of the new facility. Last December, the Kresge Foundation, a national private foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations, awarded a \$500,000 challenge grant to Children’s Home + Aid for its \$4.5 million capital campaign. The challenge grant will provide matching funds up to \$500,000 contingent upon Children’s Home + Aid reaching the last \$1.057 million of its capital campaign by September 1, 2009.

### **Center Targets At-Risk Families**

Children born in high-risk environments face significant barriers to healthy development and learning. Most healthy children test at the same developmental range up to one year. After that, significant achievement gaps begin to develop in children born to at-risk families. If these deficits are not addressed, children face a lifetime of obstacles that lead to poor academic performance.

The most cost-effective and proven way to close any achievement gaps is through early intervention with a comprehensive early childhood education program.

Children’s Home + Aid has been a statewide innovator in developing early childhood education programs to meet the particular needs of at-risk families. It has taken a major step forward in setting new benchmarks for early childhood education with the introduction of a new teaching model. Children’s Home + Aid has partnered with Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey of Georgetown University to implement the findings of their 30 years of groundbreaking research in child development.

The agency is the only early childhood education provider in the state that is using this widely endorsed, evidenced-based program.

# # #

### **About Children’s Home + Aid**

Children’s Home + Aid is a leading child and family service agency in Illinois. Each year, it protects, educates and counsels more than 40,000 children, youth and families to improve their lives. Since 1883, Children’s Home + Aid has been a compassionate advocate helping to shape public policy in child welfare, early childhood and juvenile justice. Children’s Home + Aid is recognized for establishing best practices and achieving outstanding results through its programs and services that focus on child abuse prevention, healthy child development and strengthening families. Visit [www.childrenshomeandaid.org](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org) for more information.