



# Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.

## “KID’S COURIER”

Volume 10—Spring 2011

FACING THE FUTURE AT CHILD AND FAMILY OPPORTUNITIES  
A MESSAGE FROM CFO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG ORVILLE



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Spring is just starting to peek through with a hint of green in the trees, and brave daffodils are beginning to grow. Time is speeding by since I took the helm here at Child and Family Opportunities last August.

When I arrived, CFO was starting its 40th year and functioning at a high level, enthusiastically providing quality services. At the same time, there was a sense of wondering – what’s the next step for CFO? That question called for strategic thinking based on a common vision.

A vision statement should answer the question, “*Why do we do this work?*” On arrival, I began brainstorming with the Board of Directors and the Parent Policy Council to develop an answer to this question. After several discussions we agreed that we do this work because “**We believe all children and their families deserve to thrive.**” Take a few moments to think about that statement. That is a BIG vision!

An inspiring vision statement motivates us to keep going in our daily work, however strategic thinking and planning assure that we will make progress toward our vision. In March, Board members, managers, staff members, and parents gathered together and spent a day wrestling with our vision and its implications for CFO. The result has been the development of guiding strategies to help us realize our vision for the future. They are-

- Build communities that support thriving for children and their families.
- Build staff capacity.
- Integrate and coordinate support for children and their families attempting to navigate various systems (school, social services, health care, etc.).
- Implement a comprehensive fundraising, marketing, and public relations/communication capability.

These guiding strategies are broad. They are intended to *guide* us, not define all the details of what we will ever do. They require us to remain flexible so we can recognize opportunities when they arise and can move to take advantage of them. The next step is to create action steps with defined timeframes with specific people accountable for progress. This Strategic Plan will be our best guess at what can and should be achieved by CFO in the next several years as we pursue our guiding strategies. My intention is to complete our Strategic Plan by the end of June. If you have any thoughts or ideas about our guiding strategies or our Strategic Plan, I would love to hear from you.

Our 40<sup>th</sup> year is a great year to look forward into the future, and there are so many opportunities to participate in our growth and the future of the children and families we serve. Whether through financial support, your time in volunteering, or simply giving us feedback to let us know how we are doing, all of your efforts are deeply appreciated and allow us to continue doing our work to help children and their families thrive.

We invite you to share your ideas with us, and keep abreast of our progress through these newsletters and online at our recently updated CFO website: [www.childandfamilyopp.org](http://www.childandfamilyopp.org). Thank you again for your commitment to our agency and our vision!

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## HONORING 40 YEARS OF CFO AND HEAD START SERVICES IN DOWN EAST MAINE

**A PARENTS STORY—MY JOURNEY IN CFO'S HEAD START PROGRAM FROM PARENT TO TEACHER** BY CATHY FAULKINGHAM

Twenty years ago I was a stay home mom with two little ones, and one on the way. My oldest son Dean was extremely shy, and I was worried about how he would do once enrolled in Kindergarten. I looked into the Moose-a-pec Head Start program in Jonesport where he soon became a student. I strongly believe my son, who would hide behind my leg whenever we went anywhere, would not have accomplished the things he has in his life if he had not had a Head Start beginning that gave him support, encouragement, socialization and acceptance.

The other part of my story is- my son's shyness came from me. I was also very shy, and I let this stop me from doing many things in my life. I wanted more for my son. That is why I enrolled him in the Head Start program, never realizing how I would also be affected by this decision. My life was changed in such a wonderful way. I became the person I am today because of the support and encouragement I received to step out of the box, and further my education to someday become the teacher I wanted so badly to be.

I started out as a mom in the parent group, then I volunteered to help on field trips. Before I knew it, I was helping out in the classroom. I started as a substitute, and moved on to become a one-on-one aide. From there I applied for the Food Service Tech position, preparing healthy meals daily for the classroom, which I did for many years. After my youngest son entered his senior year of high school, I thought it was time to do what I had dreamed about for so long. With the help and encouragement of my husband and staff members, I decided to apply for the Infant/Toddler caregiver position in Machias. It was the best decision I could have ever made. I love my job and look forward every morning to getting up and going to work. (How many people can say that!) Head Start has helped me grow as a person and reach goals I never thought possible.



Cathy Faulkingham, Lead IT teacher, shares a smile and hug with students India Spencer, Kamryn Lee, and Emily McClure.

Maine State Representative Walter Kumiega, CFO HFP Manager Ellen Savage, and Alona Winters with daughter Logan (14 weeks old! – held by Ellen) paused for a photo during the busy day in Augusta.

**HEAD START GOES TO AUGUSTA**

In 2011, the Head Start program celebrates 46 years of providing vital early education services to low income families. For 40 of those years Child and Family Opportunities, Inc. has provided Head Start services in Down East Maine.

On April 7th, 2011, representatives from Head Start programs throughout Maine visited State Legislators in Augusta to share their stories about the positive difference this program makes in the lives of families, and to learn about government and ways to participate in the legislative process as citizens. Head Start participants were recognized in the Senate and House of Representatives, and had opportunities to meet with their local Legislators. Health and Family Partnership Manager Ellen Savage, Head Start parents Stephanie Moores and Alona Winters, and Alona's daughter Logan Flannary (age 14 weeks), were CFO representatives who attended this event.

A common theme of the day was the power of a parent's voice in Augusta, and the importance of sharing experiences and vision with Legislative representatives. Stephanie Moores, Maine State Parent Representative for the New England Head Start Association and Chair of CFO's Parent Policy Council shared her personal experience of receiving early intervention services for her son David. "Early intervention is key in letting our children succeed. In turn, that saves money in the future, for things such as special services." Stephanie continued, "I have been involved with Head Start through Child and Family Opportunities for 4 years, and it has not only been a gift for my children, but for myself as well...I have been able to learn and grow right along with my children. The Head Start program and CFO's staff were a large part in helping me find my voice, and for that I am truly grateful." \*

Another voice heard at the event was that of State Representative Walter Kumiega of Deer Isle. Kumiega, a former Head Start parent, spoke with the assembled group and shared his own journey from CFO parent, to CFO Policy Council Member, Board Liaison, Board member, and finally his movement into politics through local School Committees to the Maine Legislation. "Find your voice, and then use it!" he urged parents. Encouraging parents to get involved with local boards and committees he stated "You can learn things in this program that will change your life and help you change the lives of people around you. If you care enough about your community to take a day and come to Augusta, then you care enough to make a difference."

\*For the full text of Stephanie Moores speech to the Legislators, please read *Head Start—A Parent's Perspective in Maine* available online at [www.childandfamilyopp.org](http://www.childandfamilyopp.org). Also available online is State Representative Walter Kumiega's address to the Head Start Goes to Augusta attendees.



**HEALTHY PENINSULA LAUNCHES  
READY BY 21 INITIATIVE**

Healthy Peninsula is launching a Ready by 21 community coalition in Deer Isle, Stonington, and Sedgwick through a grant funded by the Maine Community Foundation. Ready by 21 is an innovative approach from the Forum for Youth Investment to help communities improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work and life.

Based on the premise that all young people need to grow up healthy and strong, learn skills for today’s jobs, and be connected to a larger community, Ready by 21 project goals are to prepare young people for a healthy life and healthy relationships and to assure that youth have access to lifelong job skills and learning opportunities, either through college or other training.

Current research shows that only four out of ten young people are ready for a productive adulthood, and two in ten are deeply unprepared or off track. Gathering together to combat these troubling figures over 50 parents, teachers, children, youth, and representatives of community organizations met in Stonington on April 12, 2011 to share supper, discuss the community’s existing resources and assets for children, and to list hopes and goals for the community’s youth. Children and youth were invited and encouraged to contribute to the initial discussion, and they will continue to have an essential voice throughout the effort.

Project Coordinator Kim Hutchinson of Healthy Peninsula will work with a Community Leadership Team to use the information gathered at the planning meeting to set measurable goals and create a blueprint for action. The Leadership Team will be a volunteer team comprised of school administrators, local business owners, parents, youth, and representatives from community organizations.

Hutchinson, who has worked with Healthy Peninsula on substance abuse and prevention issues, states “You can’t tackle things like substance abuse in isolation. We need to develop youth assets in a broader way and come to the realization that the schools can’t do it all. The community needs to come together around the children in a number of ways.” For this, Sedgwick, Stonington, and Deer Isle communities are off to a strong start.



Community members brainstorming community assets and hopes for the future of youth at the April 12th Ready by 21 planning event.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION  
CFO EXPLORES INFORMATION SHARING IN A DIGITAL AGE**

CFO is dedicated to sharing timely, relevant, and important information with clients, community partners, and supporters. These days, the opportunities for multimedia information sharing are boundless. At the same time, the multitude of possibilities, and constantly changing methods and protocols of information sharing these days can be daunting. To help CFO choose the most effective and the most appropriate avenues of communications, we have surveyed parents, clients and staff about which methods of communication work best, and what is the most relevant information that people need from our organization. Additionally, a Social Media Committee has been formed comprised of staff from all branches of the agency, Board members and community consultants, to help guide our progress in the electronic media age. Now it is your turn!

Please visit our website at [www.childandfamilyopp.org](http://www.childandfamilyopp.org) and take our communication survey (on the home page, or in the news feed) to give us important feedback about what information sharing methods and content are most important to you. We recently updated our website and added new features such as online donations capabilities, and agency event calendars. We would love to hear your thoughts and feedback! If you do not have internet access, but would still like to send us comments and ideas, please feel free to send those to us at our mailing address: P.O. Box 648, Ellsworth, ME, 04605.

**SAFE SLEEP FOR INFANTS**

We need your help. A recently released Consumer Product Safety Commission's Rule (16 CFR 1220) requires that *all cribs manufactured before July 23, 2010 be replaced with cribs that comply with the Rule.*



Lilliana Hanf an Ellsworth ECEC Infant/Toddler student smiles for the camera.

This ruling will affect CFO as an operator of child care facilities. It also affects family child care homes, places of accommodation (hotels and motels) as well as manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of cribs.

Currently CFO serves 48 infants and toddlers through our programs. We must replace 30 cribs at the cost of \$475 each (shipping included) for a total cost of \$14, 250, on or before December 28th, 2012. We are seeking support in helping offset this unexpected, and very important expense. If you are able to help, we are accepting donations both online, and via check.

To donate online, visit our website and click the Donate Now button. All online donations are processed through a secure website hosted by Network for Good. Checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 648, Ellsworth, ME, 04605. Donations of all amounts are welcome. All donations are tax deductible.



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**THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!** IN ADDITION TO BOARD AND STAFF, THE FOLLOWING DONORS HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN TO CFO

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**A BRIEF HISTORY OF CFO**

- CFO was founded in 1970 as the Head Start grantee for Hancock County. (Action Opportunities)
- In 1980 the agency became Head Start grantee for Washington County.
- In 1988 CFO expanded to include the Child Care Opportunities Resource Development Center.
- In 2006 CFO became the sponsor of Healthy Peninsula.
- Today CFO is a proud employer of over 100 people. Tens of thousands of children and families have received services since CFO first opened its doors. **Happy 40th CFO!**



*Ellsworth ECEC Student Edén Walton enjoying a joyful spring moment.*