

Miss Ruby's Kids

Miss Ruby's Kids is named in honor of Mrs. Ruby Forsythe

(843) 235-3031

www.missrubyskids.net

pchp@en-visions.com



A graduate waits her turn to march to the front of the church

MRK celebrates first graduation

Five students take first steps toward "big school"

Sunday, May 15, was the big day for the first five graduates of the **Miss Ruby's Kids** program, who began their learning journeys with their families and Home Visitors in the fall of 2003. Held in Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church (whose Baskervill Outreach Ministry sponsors the program), the graduation ceremony was a formal celebration, complete with a Processional of the graduates, an invocation by The Reverend Tommy Tipton, Rector of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church, a welcome by Program Director Betsy Marlow, and an awarding of the diplomas by Mr. Roddy Brown, himself a graduate of the original Miss Ruby's School.

Tawania Oates, another alumna, performed a cappella duet with her friend Jennifer Knox, Home Visitor Alice Young gave a moving message, identifying the graduation and the **Miss Ruby's Kids** program as one of the Creator's many gifts to His children, and Miss Ruby herself was remembered in the song, *Oh, Little Hands*, which she had all schoolchildren memorize and perform.

Following closing remarks by Steering Committee Chair Jo Fortuna and a Benediction by the Rev. Tipton, the graduates, their families and supporters – all seventy-nine strong – adjourned to Miss Ruby's Garden where they celebrated less formally with cookies, lemonade, balloons and family fun.

For all those associated with **Miss Ruby's Kids** and for those in the community who support the program, this first graduation was a landmark event, one which we know will be repeated with ever-increasing numbers in years to come.

Evaluating Miss Ruby's Kids

The Key to a Successful Program

To maintain its identity as a participant in the Parent Child Home Program (PCHP), **Miss Ruby's Kids**, every year, must submit an evaluation of its results in accordance with certain measures mandated by the PCHP, its certifying organization. Some of these measures include the monitoring of Home Visitors and videotaping of family visits. Of particular interest, however, are the observations made by the Home Visitors on the Child's Behavior Traits (CBT) and the Parent and Child Together (PACT) evaluations.

Completed and submitted to the Director at the beginning and end of each year, these evaluations rank the children (and the children with their parents) in 20

different areas of behavior. For parent and child the behaviors are those that encourage communication and create fertile ground for learning. Is the child cooperative, organized, thoughtful and mindful? Is the adult warm, affirming, consistent and clear in expectations toward the child? The Home Visitor is asked to assess what she observes during her bi-weekly visits on a scale using guidelines with descriptions and examples of the specific behaviors. Added together, these rankings become the child's and the parent's status for the beginning and end of each year.

The Miss Ruby's Kids children and their parents exhibited remarkable growth during the year on all evaluations

In addition, each child is measured according to a nationally-normed assessment of receptive and expressive language before entering the **Miss Ruby's Kids** program and at the end of the second year. Even the most cursory glance at the results reveals that, without exception, the **Miss Ruby's Kids** children and their parents exhibited remarkable growth during the year on all evaluations by the final May visit.

Program Director Betsy Marlow submits these evaluations to PCHP each year. As **Miss Ruby's Kids** continues in future years, its graduates will be tracked through the Georgetown County Public Schools through an agreement with the county school district.

The evidence accumulated during the Parent Child Home Program's 40-year history suggests that more than 80 % of these Georgetown County children will, like their peers across the country, persevere in their school careers and successfully receive their high school diplomas. A bright future awaits **Miss Ruby's Kids**.

Home Visitors: The Heart of Miss Ruby's Kids

The seven women who serve as Home Visitors to this year's fifteen children and their families convey, in their descriptions of their experiences, the kind of warmth and enjoyment which only those who love their work communicate. They are not volunteers; they have made a professional commitment to fulfill the requirements set by the nationwide Parent Child Home Program (PCHP), of which **Miss Ruby's Kids** is a replication.



Home Visitor Barbara Logan comforts Jayla Dereef during graduation ceremonies.

According to Program Director, Betsy Marlow, preparing a Home Visitor for the task ahead begins during the recruitment process. All are screened by the State Law Enforcement Division before embarking on a 16-hour training regimen conducted by Betsy and Jo Fortuna, the program's Resource Coordinator.

The home visits are timed to begin around the start of the school year and continue through May. Each visitor sees her assigned child(ren) twice a week during half-hour sessions, bringing with her each week either a book or a toy designed to engage the child's attention and produce certain desired learning responses.

"I have learned things as a Home Visitor I wish I had known when I was raising my own child!"

Visiting the children is the most rewarding part of the program for visitor Alice Young, herself the mother of 6 and a confessed lover of children. It's a viewpoint that her colleagues share. Less enjoyable – but no less important – are the records visitors are required to keep following their sessions with the children. Weekly during the school year, visitors sit down with Betsy and Jo for 2-hour staff meetings where they share any problems they are experiencing, get feedback from each other, and discuss possible solutions.

It's apparent that theirs is a labor of love. Barbara Logan says that "I have learned things as a Home Visitor I wish I had known when I was raising my own child!" Zelma Carr looked for ways in which she could be a resource to her families in addition to reading and playing with the children. Marva Riley loves the way children's minds are open, ready to absorb anything she can give them in her visits. Beth Wiley describes her child, one of the program's first graduates, as a "star," who, with her mother's support, "rocketed" to a level she would never have reached without **Miss Ruby's Kids**. And Lucille Grate, already looking forward to next year, says: "Once you get close to the children, it's hard to give them up. They grow on you."

*All seven Home Visitors have interesting stories to tell. Individual profiles of each visitor will appear in subsequent issues of the **Miss Ruby's Kids** Newsletter.*

Summer Activities Planned

Working with the Georgetown and Waccamaw Neck libraries, the Georgetown County YMCA and Service Over Self, members of the **Miss Ruby's Kids** Steering Committee are planning some activities to enliven the vacation months for our 15 families. Two pool parties are in the works, as well as family orientations to the county's library system. Watch the September newsletter for news of these events!

Thanks Supporters, New Members!

Jim & Anne Bessant, James & Carol Bolin, John & Sandra Dent, Paul & Carol DuBois, L.F. & Mabel Heinecke, L.E. & Jan Jones, Don & Pat Lacy, Richard & Sonya Powell, Alberta Quattlebaum, Robert & Amy Steuer, Joanne Urso, Ed & Bunny Vaden. **Memorials:** Dr. Arthur Madden by Richard Burnside, Daisy desPortes, J. O'Neal & Mary Humphries, Jane Kennedy, Bette Lachicotte, Dottie Lafitte, Van Lott, Jr., the John Moormans, and Tula Valassalos. **Honorariums:** Daisy McGregor Hunter by Daisy desPortes.

Nonprofit Training Completed

In May, Program Director Betsy Marlow and Steering Committee Chair Jo Fortuna completed nine months of training at the Nonprofit Leadership Institute at Francis Marion University. The Institute was created using major funding by the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation of Florence and the PSARUS Foundation to strengthen nonprofit organizations and sustain long-term differences in the lives of people.

Recruitment Underway

Miss Ruby's Kids is presently recruiting 11 students to enter its 2005-2007 2-year program. To qualify, children must be 2 years old on or before September 1st. If you know of a child or family with interest in the program, call Director Betsy Marlow at 235-3031 or e-mail her at pchp@en-visions.com.



"As reading specialists, we both believe in the importance of parents reading to their children, and any organization like Miss Ruby's Kids, which promotes early literacy in the home, deserves our support. In fact, we

have often thought that hospitals should give all new mothers a book for their baby, along with the free samples of diapers and formula. Parents have the opportunity to give their child one of life's greatest gifts, the love of reading. This lifelong love affair with books will transcend all social, economic, and political barriers, and it begins with that very first Good Night Moon or Once Upon A Time."

? Paul and Susan Scheno

This newsletter is produced quarterly by editor Eleanor (Pixie) Kubeck. Contact her with questions or suggestions at pkubeck@sc.rr.com.



Holy Cross Faith Memorial Episcopal Church
Miss Ruby's Kids
PO Box 990
Pawleys Island, SC 29585

NONPROFIT ORG.
POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 146
PAWLEYS ISLAND, SC