

**NEWSLETTER  
SMART BEGINNINGS**

# SBWT Newsletter

*"All children enter school healthy and ready to learn"*



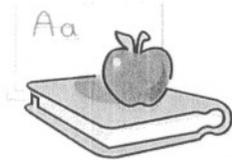
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## SBWT Happenings.....

**Check out our website!!**

[www.smartbeginningswt.org](http://www.smartbeginningswt.org)



- Have you seen us out and about? Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater has been out in all three localities to promote the importance of Early Childhood. We had booths at the Franklin/Southampton County Fair in August, the Isle of Wight County Fair in September, and the Franklin Fall Festival in October. Many of our board and committee members showed their support by coming out and taking a shift, or two. We hope you were able to get out and enjoy the fairs and that you saw us while you were there!
- We also entertained the business community at Business After Hours on September 28. We were pleased to see local businesses come out and learn what Smart Beginnings is all about and how they, too, can support Early Childhood.
- SBWT was also recently awarded three major grants that will help children in Western Tidewater enter school healthy and ready to learn. The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation awarded SBWT a \$100,000 sustaining grant. You can learn more about this on page 2 of the newsletter. Franklin/Southampton Charities also awarded SBWT a \$20,000 grant. And within the last few weeks the Obici Foundation awarded a grant that will help SBWT enroll children without healthcare into Medicare and FAMIS. SBWT is excited about these opportunities that will touch the lives of our youngest members of society!

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## Spotlight



Cindy Thomason with Millview Consulting has been working with Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater since 2008. Cindy always brings innovative activities that aid SBWT in thinking outside the box. Cindy has been instrumental in facilitating *Results Based Accountability* during collaboration sessions, which has resulted in an increased work effort from each committee. This helps SBWT move closer to our goal—"All children enter school healthy and ready to learn."



Mrs. Ellen Couch

## *News from the Executive Director*

**These are exciting times in early childhood across our state and our nation!** Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater is dedicated to helping children, families, and childcare providers gain the necessary skills and knowledge to be ready for school and ready for life! There are many programs available in Western Tidewater for families, children, and preschool providers. The Franklin branch of the Blackwater Library is now working with in-home providers to increase literary skills through the Raising a Reader program and a partnership between The Children's Center, PDCCC, DSS offices and SBWT is providing workshops for parents and providers on a variety of topics geared to help children enter school healthy and ready to learn. Check out our website for more events and resources of information.

## *A Word from the Board President*



Ms. Martha Kello

When I think of all the things for which I am thankful during this Thanksgiving season, at the top of my list is the opportunity to work with each of you to help ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to learn. You are truly a group focused on the mission of this organization, and your hard work is evident! It amazes me when I think of all the accomplishments of this group and the difference made in the lives of young children.

As in Dr. Seuss's book, *Oh! The Places You'll Go*, SBWT has taken on the job of making a dream come true, and we have done it without fear or inhibition, for we have the brains in our heads and our feet in our shoes, and we can steer ourselves in any direction we choose, and you are the guys who will decide where SBWT will go in 2011!



## *SBWT wins \$100,000 VECF Grant*

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, a public-private partnership headquartered in Richmond, awarded Smart Beginnings Western Tidewater a \$100,000 grant that will support the area's young children. Funds for this sustaining grant will support the coalition's ongoing efforts to build partnerships with business and community leaders and to increase public engagement about the importance of providing young children, ages 0-5, with quality early childhood experiences so they will be successful in school and in life. The grant will also be used to expand the use of the "Raising a Reader" program, to increase the number of children being screened for developmental delays, and to expand home visiting services in the area. Additionally, it will be used to increase the number of preschools and childcare centers participating in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. This is a statewide system designed to help families make more informed choices when considering where to send their young children, for childcare and preschool. These funds, along with other funds from businesses and other early childhood stakeholders will help SBWT touch the lives of children in a significant way.

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## Parent Tips

There are many activities parents can engage their young children in to help better prepare them for school and to make their first year a success. If you have a child age 0-5, or know someone who does, please pass along these tips! Read right and top to bottom, and how we turn



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Point out letters on cereal boxes, menus, maps, etc. Teach your child the difference between a letter, a word, and a sentence. Count everything and touch each piece as you count. Play games to encourage letter and number recognition. Cook with your child. Talk about colors and shapes. Allow your child to practice with crayons, markers, pens, chalk, paint, and modeling dough. Practice cutting with scissors. Encourage buttoning, zipping, and snapping. Speak to your child in a positive way. Point out what your child does correctly. Encourage imagination. Teach your child the proper way to use a tissue, go to the restroom, and wash hands. Set rules, limits, and expectations for behavior at home and at school. Allow your child to play. They learn so much through play! Teach responsibility for belongings, such as picking up toys, and putting away belongings. If you would like a copy of these tips to share please visit our website!

## October Breakfast Meeting is a Success

The SBWT Breakfast Meeting was held at the Workforce Development Center on Wednesday, October 13, 2010. The purpose of the breakfast meeting was to update local leaders on the progress of SBWT since the spring. SBWT Executive Director, Ellen Couch, welcomed everyone and gave a brief overview of recently awarded grants and programs that are in place to help prepare our children for school and for life. SBWT President Martha Kello, Franklin Mayor Jim Council, Director of Information Resources and Legislative Affairs for Isle of Wight County, Don Robertson, and Cindy Thomason from Millview Consulting all gave their perspectives on why we should be placing an emphasis on children, prenatal through age five, when we look at our future workforce development. For some fast facts on why Early Childhood is vital to our nation's future, see page 4 of this newsletter.

As a special touch to the breakfast, all of the table decorations were made by local preschools in all three localities. It was exciting to see the creativity from our area young people. After the meeting, business leaders gathered the decorations and displayed them around Western Tidewater!



*One of the many wonderful tabletop decorations*

## Highlights from the Ready Families Committee

Thanks to the collaborative effort of the Ready Families committee, a group of local physicians, nurses, and hospital staff met to discuss the resources for children in our communities. Susie Cobb organized a breakfast meeting that was extraordinarily interactive on the WIC (Women Infants Children) nutrition program and early intervention services for children with developmental delays or at risk for delay based on a diagnosing condition. The group was given information and encouraged to share the barriers to service within the community. Literature was distributed and referral forms and criteria shared. Based on reported feedback of the attendees, the event was quite successful. Marli Laudun and Rosalind Cutchins represented the committee and the above mentioned services.

Rosalind Cutchins and Anne Bruehl met with the Healthy Families project to continue a collaborative effort for identifying and serving children who may be eligible for early intervention and social emotional intervention, as well as Healthy Families. As both programs target parent intervention and education with a home visiting model, the options for improving coordination and serving more families is the goal! The meeting brings the group one step closer to the intended goal.

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207 West Second Avenue  
Franklin, VA 23851

Phone: 757-562-8511  
Fax: 757-562-7982  
E-mail: [ecouch@franklinva.com](mailto:ecouch@franklinva.com)

Mr. Mike Johnson  
Southampton Cty. Administrator  
P. O. Box 400  
Courtland, VA 23837



We're on the Web:



[www.smartbeginningswt.org](http://www.smartbeginningswt.org)

2563730400 8004



*Why is a Smarting Beginning Good for Business?*

- Children should learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade.
- 55% of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the US from moderate to high income families fail to meet proficient reading levels.
- Every high school drop-out costs our society an estimated \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity.
- 25% of China's population with the highest IQ is greater than the total population of the US.
- The US will need 60% of the population to possess post secondary degrees or credentials by 2025 to remain globally competitive.
- India graduates more honor students than the US has kids.
- The US is losing over half of our potential workforce because they lack a high school diploma.
- The US continues to drop in the Global Competitive Report and is now ranked as 5th.
- 1 in 5 children in VA arrive at school "not ready".
- The number of Asian students who chose to pursue Ph. D.'s at US universities dropped by 19% over the last four years.