



High Fives All Around

2011 marks the 35th anniversary of Just Kids Early Care & Education Centers. We celebrated this achievement with students, families, alumni and community supporters at our “High Five for 35” event on May 11, 2011 at the Milan Community Center.

See pages 4 and 5 for more photos from this great celebration.



Just Kids has grown from a small location serving just 6 children to four locations serving over 250 families.

Our growth couldn't have occurred without the commitment of our staff members and supporters. Thank you for your part in working with us for the past 35 years!



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Board Members:

- John E. Bauersfeld
- Brenda Brandt
- Ken Collinson
- Dottie Dougherty
- Toni Gasper
- Amanda Johnson
- Jerry Lyphout
- Donovan Robertson



Vera Hinrichsen,
Executive Director

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**Stephanie
Vinar Memorial
Fund for
Just Kids II**

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Just

Kids is still mourning the loss of our friend Stephanie Vinar. To honor her memory and help the school-age children she worked with each day, Just Kids and Stephanie's family have developed a memorial fund in her honor. This fund is being administered by the Community Foundation of the Great River Bend (CFGRB) and will support the programs and activities at Just Kids II. We are thankful to those that have already donated in Stephanie's memory. Donations may be sent directly to:

**CFGRB
852 Middle Rd. Suite 100
Bettendorf, IA 52722**

Please make your check out to CFGRB

and put "Just Kids S. Vinar Memorial" in the memo line. For more information on this fund, please contact Lisa Redecker, Just Kids Finance Manager, at 309-787-6303.



**Just Kids and
First Presbyterian
Summer Partnerships**

This summer, Just Kids expanded its meaningful partnership with First Presbyterian Church by administering ***Kid Launch 2011***. The church had a vision to launch area children towards scholastic success by providing educational enrichment assistance to area young people identified by their school as needing academic support during the summer. *Kid Launch* received support from the Presbytery of Great Rivers and the Day Foundation and provided services to nine area children this summer.

First Presbyterian also partnered with Just Kids II to offer an optional week of Bible School for our students. Several families chose to participate and had a great time! First Presbyterian Church is looking for more ways to be involved with our school-age families this year and we are happy to collaborate with them to further support area families.





Early Care & Education Centers

2011 Summer Activities

We had a great time this summer going on field trips, enjoying classroom activities and having special guests! Thanks to all that helped make this a great summer!



Thank You To Our Recent Contributors!



The Junior Board of Rock Island granted

\$700 to Just Kids for large-motor equipment for the indoor gym at Just Kids South. The Junior Board of Rock Island is committed to serving children in our community and we are proud that they have partnered with our organization. More information about how they serve the community can be found online at www.jbri.org.

The Milan Rotary Club has been a loyal supporter of Just Kids, particularly in the area of



literacy development. They are the primary sponsor of our Visiting Reader program and continue to work with us to get high-quality literacy materials into the hands of our students. To further this endeavor, the club has donated \$500 to Just Kids to create literacy activity bags for families. Pictured above is Milan Rotary Treasurer, Toni Gasper, presenting the check to Executive Director, Vera Hinrichsen.



The Doris & Victor Day Foundation has granted Just Kids \$1,265 to go towards the purchase of a new shade structure for the playground at Just Kids South. Their generosity in providing equipment to give our students fun and safe outdoor experiences is greatly appreciated.

High Five for 35!

Just Kids Early Care & Education Centers Celebrate

On May 11, 2011, Just Kids celebrated 35 years of providing services to area children. The "High Five for 35" event at the Milan Community Center. Hundreds of children, families and supporters came out to celebrate at this sports-themed birthday party:



Just Kids would like to thank those that contributed to the success of this event: Blackhawk Bank, the Village of Milan, Just Kids Staff & Families, Mary McNeil, Ralph Conner, Dottie Dougherty, Save-a-Lot, RI County Regional Office of Education, Martini's on the Rock, Milan Rotary Club, Hy-Vee, AOK Early Childhood Network, University of IL Extension, Modern Woodmen of America, Fun Industries, State Farm Insurance, Incredible Pizza, Figue Art Museum, Target, Corn Crib, Wal-Mart, Bettendorf Family Museum, Lavender Crest Winery, Circa '21, Niabi Zoo, Picture Perfect, Panera Bread, Dick's Sporting Goods, Carlos O'Kelly's, Fazoli's, QC River Bandits, Putnam Motel, Isabel Bloom, Cordova Dragway, Jumer's Casino and Hotel, Fun City, Regalia Mfg., White W...



celebrates 35 Years

en and families by hosting the “High
s, community members and Just Kids



Bank & Trust, Milan Community Center and
ty, Performance Foodservice—TPC,
b, Red Cross/AmeriCorp, Monkey Joe’s,
merica, First Presbyterian Church,
o Nursery, Hardee’s, QC Symphony,
People, Chicago Cubs, St. Louis Cardinals,
useum, Michael’s Fun World, Skate City,
ater Junction



Just Kids: Growth Through the Years...

1976 Just Kids is founded as a for-profit child development center by Vera Hinrichsen. The organization began with just 10 children.

1989 Just Kids is restructured as a non-profit organization (Just Kids, Inc.) with a governing Board of Directors and becomes a United Way agency. The Board options to employ Vera as Just Kids’ Executive Director.

1993 Just Kids II (School-Age Program) begins at First Presbyterian Church, Milan, serving 44 students ages 6-12.

1997 Just Kids adds on to the main facility to incorporate 4 new classrooms, a laundry facility and a full kitchen.

1998 Just Kids opens the first area on-site corporate child development program at Export Packaging (XPAC).

2003 Just Kids is awarded 5 state-funded preschool classrooms with certified 04 teachers and parent educators.

2006 Just Kids receives a \$30,000 grant for playground renovations from Walman Optical.

2009 Just Kids purchases property south of the main facility to provide enhanced programming for children 0-3 and expand services for up to 51 additional families in our area. Just Kids South opens in March, 2010.

Staff Members Participate in Rally for Children and Families

Just Kids staff members Lisa Redecker and Amber McLaughlin and 04 teachers Annie Howser and Erin Stern attended the Rally for Children and Families in Springfield on May 18. These Just Kids



representatives were able to meet with local legislators (including Sen. Mike



Jacobs, D-District 36, pictured above) to talk about issues facing children and families in our community. Staff members frequently attend events with area legislators to hear their views and share our thoughts about the field of early childhood education to make our area an even better place to live and work. Just Kids parents and supporters are always welcome to attend these events. Contact Lindsay at 309-787-6303 or lbayer@justkidsinc.org if you would like to be notified of these types of events or to get more information.

Parent Survey Results for Just Kids South

For the past year, Just Kids South has gone through the process of applying for national accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC). Within this process, parents of children attending South were asked to complete a confidential survey to comment on our facility, programs, staff and overall operations. We are happy to report that we have overwhelmingly positive survey results from our parents. Some areas identified as needing improvement include implementing a variety of opportunities for parent-teacher communication and providing parents with more information about nutrition. We have already begun working on these areas by posting nutritional information on the parent bulletin board and by providing parent-teacher communication logs in each classroom. We had some great comments from parents, including, **“My child comes home happy and is well taken care of. For working parents, that is the BEST thing to know!”** Thank you, South parents, for your valuable input! We always appreciate feedback when it comes to your family. Please don't hesitate to contact us anytime to share your thoughts, concerns or ideas!



Donation Needs



As a non-profit organization, Just Kids depends on the generosity of our local community to help our programs succeed. We are grateful to those that donate new or gently used items to our locations. Current needs for our teachers and classrooms include: **new 1-subject wide ruled notebooks and fleece throw blankets.**

Donations can be dropped off to the front desk of our Main Building at 1800 West First St., Milan. If you have numerous items to donate, please provide an itemized list when dropping off your donation so we may provide you with a receipt.

Remember, Just Kids accepts other items throughout the year including: **child clothing, disposable diapers (excluding pull-ups), arts and crafts items, scratch paper, office supplies and age-appropriate books.**

Thank you for your help in providing essential supplies to our teachers and students!



Just Kids...Providing Affordable, Accessible, High Quality Early Care & Education Services to the Quad Cities Community Since 1976



Sue Gordon Nominated for 2011 My Favorite Teacher Award

Congratulations to Sue Gordon who was nominated by her former student, Justin Foy, for the 2011 My Favorite Teacher award. Justin, who is now in sixth grade, calls Sue “the most magnificent teacher I’ve ever had.” He states that because of Sue he had “the time of his life in preschool.”

Sue is pictured above with her students in the Butterfly classroom at Just Kids South.



Just Kids would like to recognize two of our program administrators for successfully completing the Illinois Level II Director Credential. **Mary Girot** (0-3 Program Coordinator) and **Amy Strandberg** (Preschool Coordinator) earned this credential through validation of accomplishments in five competency components dealing with early childhood education and administration.



Make a New (School) Year's Resolution: Be a Visiting Reader

Just Kids is always looking for guests to come and read a book to our preschool students. It's a fun and easy way to get involved in your community and make a difference in the life of a child.

Guests can also share other talents or hobbies with our students like music, art, collections, photography...the possibilities are nearly endless!

We invite you to come and join the fun at Just Kids. Interested readers and visitors are encouraged to contact our Preschool Coordinator, Amy, at 309-787-6303 or astrandberg@justkidsinc.org.



Our thanks goes to the Milan Rotary Club for sponsoring the Visiting Reader Program!

Just Kids Early Care & Education Centers

1800 West First Street
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Our Mission

We exist to invest in children and families and be a leader in early childhood advocacy through providing affordable, accessible and high-quality early care and education services.

