Collaboration with Local College Benefits Eva's Village Kids, Moms, and Staff

Eva’s Village, a Paterson, NJ, anti-poverty, nonprofit is working with Early Childhood educators to expand staff skills, and to promote learning and bonding for mothers and children in Eva’s residential programs.

Paterson, NJU (PRWEB) July 26, 2017 -- In June, educators from Passaic County Community College (PCCC) introduced the mothers at Eva’s Village Hope Residence to a mobile library filled with picture books, toys and simple games. Facilitators from the college showed the moms how to use the materials to connect with their children—demonstrating that these items aren't just fun for the kids, but can also be tools for learning and bonding.

“It is never too early to start reading to a child. Read to your kids even before they can talk, because storytelling is an important way we learn about the world," explained Nicole DeNude, a PCCC educator. “Reading with your child may start a conversation that can turn into quality time,” she continued. Asking kids open-ended questions about storybook characters, plot and vocabulary can boost learning and reading readiness. Some stories also help kids identify and deal with emotions like sadness and anger that can feel overwhelming.

Mothers come to Hope Residence seeking help to recover from homelessness or from substance use disorders and mental illness. While they work towards independence and stability, Eva’s Childcare and Education staff cares for their children. During recovery, moms learn new parenting skills and are introduced to activities that help strengthen bonds with their children-- which can be as simple as reading a book together.

Before meeting with the mothers, PCCC facilitators trained Eva’s staff to run future workshops to build learning and parenting skills. The library idea grew out of a collaboration between PCCC's Early Childhood Education Department and Eva’s Village, funded by a one-year grant from the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation. The grant also funds professional development for Eva’s Childcare and Education staff, and covers two semesters of classes at PCCC. The program builds curriculum development skills, safety and health awareness, explores emotional learning, and ways to strengthen family relationships. After completing coursework and a supervised externship, each participant will be eligible to apply for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

PCCC educators, Eva’s staff, administrators, and mothers at Hope Residence have been meeting monthly since January to incorporate feedback, identify educational needs for the children at Eva's, and to engage the mothers in activities that will support learning and reading skills. They will continue to meet regularly, troubleshooting issues and identifying new initiatives that can benefit the mothers and their children.

More About Hope Residence
Eva's Village Hope Residence for mothers with children offers more than just temporary shelter or recovery treatment; it gives them the tools and support they need to heal as a family. The program provides a safe and secure environment for children while the mothers work towards recovery and independence. Services address physical and mental health issues, including substance use disorder treatment, psychological counseling, and job training, and placement.

More About Eva’s Village
Founded by Msgr. Vincent E. Puma in 1982, Eva’s Kitchen began by serving 30 meals a day to feed the hungry
in Paterson. In response to the related issues of poverty, addiction, mental illness and homelessness, programs and services grew out of the original soup kitchen to address the root causes as well as the effects of homelessness and poverty. Today, Eva’s Village, a non-profit, comprehensive, social service organization, offers 20 programs that address needs in the community for food and shelter, recovery and medical services, and education and job training, with the goal to help those in need move toward stability and independence.
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