

LYCOMING-CLINTON HEAD START



Anne M. Doerr
Director

Lincoln Street
P.O. Box 1328
Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17703-1328
Phone: (717) 326-0587
1-800-346-3020



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Mr. Curtis Wadlington
Deputy Director
BEBASHI
1528 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19102

Dear Mr. Wadlington:

It is my pleasure to extend this written invitation to you to speak to Lycoming-Clinton Head Start staff at our annual Preservice on September 3, 1991, as you and I discussed by telephone July 26th. Lycoming-Clinton Head Start will be responsible for your travel expenses and for an honorarium of \$175, both to be billed after your presentation. In our phone discussion we planned that you would arrive in Williamsport on September 3rd on a USAir flight at 10:45 a.m. and depart on a USAir flight the same day at 6:10 p.m. and that your office would make your plane reservations.

All our Head Start staff should be present for your session. Our staff consists of just about 50 people, including approximately 12 Teachers and 12 Teacher Assistants, 8 Home Visitors, 6 bus drivers, 7 Coordinators, 4 office assistants, a Cafeteria Assistant and myself, the Director. Our program dates from the beginning of Head Start, 1965, in Clinton County. The Parent Involvement Coordinator goes back that far and is a former Head Start parent turned staff member. I would estimate that one-third of our staff have had 10 or more years with the program, one-third are moderately experienced, and one-third were hired within the past twelve months. Forty-nine percent (49%) of our staff members are former Head Start parents. All of our Home Visitors and all of our Teachers are "Qualified," according to Head Start guidelines.

We were funded to serve 278 children in 90/91 and have applied for five expansion slots for 91/92 to take us to 283 slots. We do not yet have approval for the new slots; our fiscal year begins August 1st. Eight Home-Based groups have one socialization day/week with a 90 minute home visit to each family each week by a Home Visitor, and eleven or twelve center-based classes (depends upon our expansion approval) meeting five days/week for 160 days staffed by a Teacher and a Teacher Assistant. Parent and other volunteers work daily in both options.

Lycoming County is the largest county in the state of Pennsylvania. Its population in the 1990 Census was 118,710, of which 97% was white. Clinton County comprises the largest school district in the state at nearly 1000 square miles. 1990 Census count for Clinton County was

37, 182, 99% of which was white. Lycoming-Clinton Head Start is spread across both counties and has children in eleven different center sites. One site has 65 children assigned to four different groups; most classes are by themselves at their centers. It takes over 90 minutes to travel from furthest center to furthest center and one hour from one of those two centers (Renovo) to the office. We rely on Coordinators for each of the Head Start component areas, and do not have center managers.

The largest city in our program is Williamsport at a 1990 population of 31,933. Lock Haven, Clinton County's seat, had a 1990 population of 9,183. You may have heard of Williamsport in Philadelphia over the past year or so because of our so-called "influx/recovery population." We made the "Inquirer" and the "New York Times." Over the past two or three years urban blacks, many from Philadelphia but others from New Jersey and New York, have moved here for a better life and/or to recover from an addiction. It has caused major community upheaval, and, as you might imagine, has generated unfortunate attitudes and behaviors from old-time residents of all races, affected crime rates, and made for general uneasiness. This Head Start program serves many members of this "influx" community and in Williamsport, maybe 75% or 80% of our families are or have been involved with some type of addiction. (Obviously not all of these are newcomers!)

Others families in our program live in rural areas or small towns: some live Appalachian style on the side of a mountain; some live in a very small, valley-oriented farming community, others live in a miniature sized city isolated by the northern mountains on the edge of the Susquehanna River. Less than 8% of our families had incomes above the Federal Poverty Guideline for their family size in 90/91.

On the telephone you and I agreed that your major focus would be a recomittment to Head Start goals by staff at every level of the program. Expanding and enhancing the contribution every individual can make to the overall goal of family/child empowerment, supporting the program's team approach, motivating staff and promoting their self-esteem for another successful Head Start year are all part of that overall objective. We have an excellent Head Start program, and we need to be very proud of our many successes at all levels of the program; there is much on which to congratulate ourselves individually and collectively and much to celebrate. Individuals need to be reminded of the pride they should take in their jobs and of the gratification they (should?) receive from their jobs, don't you think?

In May, 1991, as part of a workshop on refining our developmental assessments and curricula, Lycoming-Clinton Head Start teaching staff identified what they saw as program goals. In the coming school year we expect to develop a mission statement using their list as a base. The unrefined, brainstormed goals' list is enclosed for your reference.

I should mention here one more reason Lycoming-Clinton Head Start staff may need emotional support this year. This subject came up in our telephone conversation and will probably impact upon our staff in September, even if it's only on our composure. Unfortunately, our Head Start program is affected by the lack of a Pennsylvania budget. Here's why: our program's fiscal year begins August 1st; Head Start

funds are usually received here at the beginning of September. The community action agency which is our grantee covers Head Start expenses for the usual month or so between the receipt of our Head Start funds and the notification of our grant award.

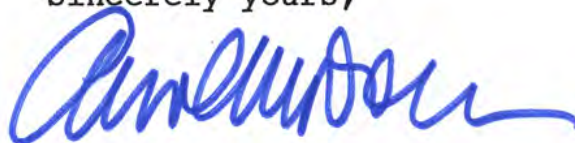
This year the agency has not got the funds, because it is unable to access its federal funds (weatherization, aging, Job Training Partnership Act programs, day care, etc.) which must flow through the state. Loans are being sought madly, but there is no definite news at this moment, which means, at a minimum, that Head Start office staff need to consider whether to volunteer to work on a post-paid basis and school-year staff have worries about their pay and whether the school year will proceed on schedule. By September 3rd, this should all be worked out, but you see what I mean about staff composure, I'm sure.

As I said on the phone, I do not wish to alarm you about our program's ability to pay for your trip and your presentation. I anticipate no difficulties with regard to our Head Start budget or this agency's fiscal stability. The situation is strictly a function of the financial crisis in Harrisburg and of the requirement for federal funds to pass through the state. The above information is provided for your insight into the possible state of mind of our staff members in early September.

I enclose a copy of our program brochure and of a printout of Lycoming-Clinton Head Start's PIR (Federal Program Information Report) results for the past two operating years. The latter will show you our standing on the PIR indicators in comparison to the state and the region. Probably all this is more information than you want or need! If so, I apologize, but do feel free to call or write with any questions.

The Education and Training Coordinator for our program, Shahnaz Mondanipour, who is on vacation and who recommended you as Preservice Speaker after hearing you at the Philadelphia Substance Abuse Conference, will finalize the arrangements for September 3rd with you. I look forward to meeting you in September and thank you for your willingness to do this session for us.

Sincerely yours,



Anne M. Doerr
Director

cc: Shahnaz Mondanipour, Education Coordinator
Lycoming-Clinton Head Start

Enclosures: Goals' List
Brochure
PIR Printout