



The Community Foundation of Decatur/Macon County • 125 North Water, Suite 200 • Decatur, Illinois 62523

“Because many Decatur parents are at work for much of the day, they turn to other adults for help in caring for and raising their young children.... While many of these adults provide good care and a few are exceptionally knowledgeable about child development, the overall quality of care in these homes and license-exempt centers is uneven at best.....

“Unfortunately, there is insufficient coordination and integration among these programs and services.....The system is fragmented and even disjointed...

“Parents have no place that can provide them with accurate and unbiased information about all the various resources, and to guide them to the programs most likely to meet their children’s individual needs...

“.....Childcare providers and educators are faced with a crazy-quilt pattern of expectations and requirements, some overlapping and some contradictory. There are no clear and unambiguous targets that apply to all providers and are accepted by the schools the children will attend.”

P. 34, Children in Poverty study, Decatur, 2005

Copies of the Children in Poverty study are available at The Community Foundation office.

Taking childcare up a notch

Matching grants benefit the very young

Two matching grant programs will benefit young children in the Decatur community, when local donors make contributions to two new funds established by The Community Foundation.

One initiative is the Communityworks matching grant, provided by the Grand Victoria Foundation in Elgin, Illinois. This match focuses on three related areas supporting community improvement: childcare, workforce development, and land use planning.

A new matching grant challenge from the ADM Foundation provides for implementation of specific initiatives recommended in a recent study of early childhood learning and childcare in Decatur.

The Children in Poverty study identified ways to improve the educational development of children bound for kindergarten enrollment in the Decatur Public Schools. Gail Evans, Executive Director of Decatur Macon County Opportunities Corporation, headed the

project in partnership with The Community Foundation, Macon County Mental Health Board, and the Illinois Facilities Fund.

The study proposed solutions to the problem of fragmented services and unclear objectives for early childhood programming. The effectiveness of fund-

ed projects will be measured by the increasing number of children reaching kindergarten in Decatur who are ready to function at grade level and beyond, in their first year at school and in the years to follow.

Donors who contribute to the

Early Childhood Funds in Decatur will have their gifts for current programs matched by the ADM Foundation challenge grant, and gifts to the Communityworks Endowment matched by a grant from the Grand Victoria Foundation of Elgin. Donations should be sent to The Community Foundation of Decatur/ Macon County, Early Childhood Funds, 125 N. Water Street, Suite 200, Decatur, Illinois 62523.

