

May 2008

Partnership honors child care providers

Two local child care centers have been named Child Care Centers of the Year by the Richmond County Partnership for Children.

Kid's World Day Care Center and Kidz Konstruction were honored with the 2008 award at the Partnership's annual Child Care Professional Appreciation Banquet. Also at the event, Leah Jackson of Kidz Konstruction received the Bernice Ratliff Outstanding Teacher award and Lisa Marshall of Little Kingdom received the Kathy Alexander Positive Attitude Award.

Kid's World was nominated by parent Shannon Sweatt who said, "I feel good at work because I know that my daughter is in a home-like environment, so my mind is at ease." At Kid's World, she said, children are very active, play a lot as well as learn songs, dance and do many projects. "These ladies work very hard and work together, and do so for the love they have for the children."

Parent John Searcy nominated Kidz Konstruction because "the staff have good morals and teach the children to incorporate good stewardship toward each other. They recognize the needs of the children, offer praise and encouragement, and interact with each daily . . . We watched the staff take our son carefully under their wings and become just what we had been praying for, another family away from home."

Leah Jackson was nominated by Melissa Pirana for the outstanding teacher award because "she has the biggest heart of anyone I know. She has taught my daughter so much in the short time she has been there." In addition, Pirana congratulated Jackson for her emphasis on family. "When she sends homework for the students, it helps the parents spend a little time with their children that they might not otherwise spend with them."

Lisa Marshall "has a way about her that brings out the



Wiley Mabe, chairman of the Richmond County Partnership for Children Board of Directors, presents plaques to the winners of the Child Care Centers of the Year. Receiving her award is Rhonda Phillips, owner of Kid's World Day Care Center, while Lorie McKenzie, owner of Kidz Konstruction looks on.

good in people," said co-worker Sherry Morgan in her nomination of Marshall for the Positive Attitude Award. "Ask any parent or child, and they would definitely agree that she is the most positive person that they have every met."

More than 200 teachers attended the annual child care banquet, which also recognizes teachers who advanced their child care education as well as child care centers or homes that raised their star ratings in the last year. "Child care plays an important role in our lives and in our children's lives," said Martha Vance Brown, executive director of the Partnership.

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“Child care in Richmond County is quality child care, and the increased star ratings of the child care facilities and the increased education levels of the teachers prove it.”

North Carolina’s Division of Child Development determines the star rating program that evaluates facilities on program standards and staff education and awards one to five stars. Ten Richmond County child care centers increased their star ratings during the last year.

Increasing their rating to the top, five-star license were CLG Family Child Care Home, Falling Creek Head Start and the More at Four programs at Mineral Springs, Richmond Primary, LJ Bell and Fairview Heights elementary schools. Increasing their rating to four stars were Blessed Beginnings, Kiddie Korner, Kid’s World and BJ’s Day Care centers.

“We’re proud that our centers are dedicated to providing the best care to children whose parents cannot be at home during the day,” Vance Brown said. “These centers and their teachers provide loving care to our children so that parents can work outside the home. Parents have to be comfortable with the people who are giving daily care to their children – who are, in essence, substituting for them during the day so they can work.”



Leah Jackson of Kidz Konstruction receives the Bernice Ratliff Outstanding Teacher award from Mabe.

Sixteen teachers were honored for earning educational achievements during the last year. “We encourage teachers to further their education, to improve the quality of teaching in Richmond County child care centers and homes,” said Michelle Grant, administrator of Child Care Avenues, a program of Richmond County Partnership for Children. “But going to school while working full-time is very difficult, and we want to salute our teachers’ efforts to gain higher education and a better understanding of children’s needs,” she said.

Five child care professionals were honored for earning early childhood associate degrees: Ashley Gribbins (Kiddie Korner), BJ Hatchell (BJ’s Daycare), Joanne Simmons (BJ’s Daycare), Jackie Blue (Country Daycare) and Cassie Cloninger (Country Daycare). Harmony Graham (BJ’s Daycare) was cited for earning an early childhood teacher associates degree.

Earning degrees in early childhood administration were Katie Fox (Margie’s Treasure Chest), Sheena Knight (Country Daycare), Hattie Reep (Country Daycare), Elazer Green (Mrs. Green’s Playhouse) and Deanna Quick (Gingerbread). Honored for earning early childhood credentials were Katina Jordon (BJ’s Daycare), Jessica McIntyre (BJ’s Daycare), Elazer Green (Mrs. Green’s Playhouse), Jessica Partin (Little Kingdom) and Gina Wilkerson (Romper Room.)



Lisa Marshall of Little Kingdom receives the Kathy Alexander Positive Attitude Award from Mabe.