

*New Britain***New Britain YWCA Celebrates "Week of the Young Child"****School Stuff**

Submitted by Jessica Ciparelli, CT Early Childhood Alliance, on 2010-04-21.

The sounds of musical instruments and children singing, laughing and celebrating could be heard on Glen Street on April 15, as the children of the New Britain YWCA celebrated THEMSELVES, during the "Week of the Young Child."

Governor Jodi Rell issued a proclamation, declaring Monday, April 12, through Friday, April 16, as the "Week of the Young Child" in Connecticut and encouraged all citizens to make an investment in early childhood.

"Week of the Young Child is very important to recognize children," said Sherman Fletcher, assistant director of the child care program at New Britain YWCA. "They are our future. Having the children here to help them develop is just amazing."



Jessica Ciparelli, CT Early Childhood Alliance

Wearing their one-of-a-kind handmade hats, children from the New Britain YWCA march in a "Hat Parade" on April 15 during "Week of the Young Child" celebrations.

The parade took the children - from infants to school-age children - down Glen Street to Main Street to Franklin Square. Along the way, business owners stepped outside their shops to clap and watch as the children, wearing hats they made earlier in the week, passed by their businesses.

"All the businesses up front are very supportive of our program," said Michele Eathorne, child care program curriculum coordinator of the New Britain YWCA. The pizza parlor has given them pizza boxes for dramatic play, the children have taken a field trip to C-Town and the Thai restaurant Kay's Place had the school-age children come in to sample Thai food.

As they marched, YWCA employees passed out fliers that said, "Children Soar with High-Quality Early Childhood Programs." The fliers, produced by the CT Early Childhood Alliance and CT Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC), acknowledged that high-quality early learning helps prepare children for school success. Children who are ready for school require less remedial and special education services, display fewer problem behaviors and are less likely to repeat a grade. School-ready students perform better on achievement tests, get better grades and help to close the worst achievement gap in the nation.

"Once you give them a good foundation, they fly - that's why I went into early childhood education," said Fletcher.

Other events through the YWCA and its off-site location included a carnival, art gallery, ice cream social, family sing-a-long and Mayor Timothy Stewart reading to the children.

Week of the Young Child is aimed to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

For information about programs for children in New Britain, contact the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative at 860-229-6018, ext. 309. For more information on the New Britain YWCA's early learning program, contact Michele Eathorne at 860-225-4681 ext. 251