

## **Early Head Start Home Base Program, working in Beaverton and Hillsboro**

### **Families recruited in August 2006, Program started September 2006 – up to present**

KZ – says we can't discriminate for enrollment in H.S. It just happens that guidelines embrace needs of Somali families; we didn't favor one group over another;

When we determined we were going to have a small service area, KZ sought applicants in the small service area;

Once we realized we had such a high number of families enrolling and getting accepted, and Tualatin Valley Housing Partners also recognized needs and asked for help –

We recognized that this was the first time these families were exposed to American culture, English language, socializing with children of other communities

We began paying attention to Somali community issues, recruitment is on-going;

Home Base teacher Anjelica has been working with families for a year and has welcomed families into the program – they're very active in their participation, well above average about engaging in parent/child activities, which is a major thing for Somalis because they do not have the value of parents being educators for their children - - no toys in the home, children are tabula rasa - - no education for children until they go to school (K-12) – the concept of pre-school education, parenting education, is completely new - - they're being exposed to our educational values (U.S.) and they're for the first time learning to play with their children and the value of learning through play for learning and growth.

These are families who largely are illiterate even in their native language (they do not read or write) their language is mainly spoken - - they are not fully literate in their own language

This is Bantu tribe, country people, farmers, traditionally strong religious and familial ties - - Muslim (not sure what sect)

Because of they're work they're likely to better integrate – a platform for children as well as adult parents to begin being exposed to and use verbal and written language, learning to read and write, because children are participating with children in class and home visits

New Vision Community Church is aware of Somali families in their community and were looking for a way to help the families access resources, i.e. good, emergency services, Somali families said they can't come to the church because their religious leader interprets the Koran and says they can't come into a Christian church – specific to this particular Bantu community; we are respecting this and securing alternate sites for playgroups and socialization gatherings - - using the Beaverton Community Center - - room there, kitchen – early Head Start menu - - menu scaled to palatable food for Somalis. They prefer whole foods, don't like processed foods or pork - - they are suspicious of any food other than chicken

We are involving families in menu planning, recipes,

Home Base provides translation – to bridge the language gap – we found Somali volunteer translators – very expensive - \$25-\$75/hr – now costs \$75/hr

Gail Boyle, family services coordinators, screens services, approves vendor and process for teachers to use and invoice translation services

Home Base staff is Angelica Molina and Susan Barthalomew (both are Beaverton residents) – 2 teachers who are conducting twice a month playgrounds, Angelica goes weekly home visits, and Kathy Zane is the program coordinator, the only 3 involved.

Program serves around 8 families, 10 children – Home Base serves a maximum of 16 children - - over half of children are Somali (just Beaverton – Hillsboro is additional)