



Spark NH Vision: All New Hampshire children and their families are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.

Spark NH Mission: Provide leadership that promotes a comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable early childhood system that achieves positive outcomes for young children and families, investing in a solid future for the Granite State.

Director's Report – October 22, 2015

Transforming Tomorrow's Workforce Today: A First in the "Early Learning Nation" Event

On October 5 I had the great pleasure of attending the exciting event organized by Early Learning NH (Spark NH and many others served on the planning team). *Transforming Tomorrow's Workforce Today: A First in the "Early Learning Nation"* event was a wonderful opportunity to hear the latest research about how brains develop, to hear those from the policy, military and business worlds all agree that investment in the early years is vital for our future. Speakers included brain development experts such as Dr. Patricia Kuhl, Dr. Kathryn Hirsch-Pasek and Ellen Galinsky who all gave fascinating insights into why children learn best in an environment of stable, loving, serve and return relationships where they are protected from toxic stress. Former Lieutenant General William Tangney and former CEO of Proctor and Gamble John Pepper made riveting and inspiring speeches urging increased focus on the early years.

Other highlights included a discussion moderated by Cokie Roberts and including Mark Shriver, President of Save the Children Action Network, and Kevin Madden, a well-respected Republican pundit, about why early learning is a bi-partisan issue and why we all need to care about it. Finally, though all the presidential candidates were invited, only Hillary Clinton was able to attend. Secretary Clinton was interviewed by Cokie Roberts and talked about how important effective early learning is to the future of our nation. The 300 people who attended from all over the state left energized and inspired. The PowerPoint presentations and videos used by speakers are now available on the Spark NH website <http://sparknh.com/event>. For those of you who could not attend (and for those who would like to see it again), the whole event was video-taped and will be available on the Spark NH website in the next few weeks.

Project Funds

You will remember that in August the Council authorized \$1,100 from project funds to create a data bridge for the Watch Me Grow developmental screening system. That left \$8,500 in project funds for committees to spend by the end of December. The Data Committee is now requesting \$3,600 to continue its contract with Peter Antal to complete his work with the committee on prioritizing early childhood indicators for inclusion in a dashboard to be on the Department of Public Health's WISDOM system.

No other committee has approached me requesting funds to date. If the request of the Data Committee is approved, there will be \$4,900 remaining for committee use. Committee Chairs should contact me if they have a project in mind to use these funds.

See Poverty...Be the Difference

Through the generosity of the Maternal and Child Health Section at the Department of Public Health, DHHS each member of the Council will receive a copy of See Poverty...Be the Difference, by Donna Beegle at the Council meeting. The book is a resource guide for professionals who work with families living with low incomes. Some of you may remember that Dr. Beegle was a speaker at the Department of Education's Summer Summit; she speaks around the country to help people understand poverty. I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Beegle at the summit and was greatly inspired. Additional resources are available at <http://www.combarriers.com/Home>.

December Council Meeting

Just a reminder that the December Spark NH Council meeting will be held on December 10.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Milliken,
Director, Spark NH

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - *Helen Keller*