

CRAVEN SMART START

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

First Issue FY 2023-2024

Collaboration... a Strength of Craven Smart Start

One of the hallmarks of the Smart Start initiative is its vision for collaboration for communities to work together for the future of their children. Collaboration was one of the founding principles of Smart Start and has been one of its greatest strengths. Our “partnership for children” is built on collaboration not only with the service providers that we fund, but also with local organizations and businesses in the community. These relationships have helped us to meet our “state required match” through their cash and in-kind donations; volunteer hours and grants. Their grants also have helped us enhance our services for Craven County youngsters during their first five years of life and in our 25 years of operation.

Collaboration with New Bern Parks & Recreation

The Touch a Truck Kids Fest, recently held at West New Bern Recreation Center, is a great example of community collaboration. For years Craven Smart Start and later the Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) have talked about holding a Touch a Truck event, but were never able to do so without a partner. It was not until our Community Outreach Coordinator contacted West New Bern Recreation Center seeking meeting space for the LICC, that she learned they too wanted to hold such an event, that a connection for collaboration was made. These organizations (New Bern Parks & Recreation; Craven Smart Start and the LICC) began working together and held a very successful event on September 30th with 160 families in attendance. Many thanks to all the families who attended and to all who participated and/or helped to make the event happen and to make it a success!

*Mission of Craven
 Smart Start:*

*Building Brighter
 Futures for Young
 Children*



Craven Smart Start Board Member Lisa Kemp & her team, who work with exceptional preschool children through Craven County Schools, shared info with families at the Touch a Truck event.

In This Issue

- Collaboration ...a Strength of Craven Smart Start
- Program Highlights for Fiscal Year 2023-2024
- Congratulations to Latia Warren
- New Staff Members
- Save the Date for the Holiday Hustle



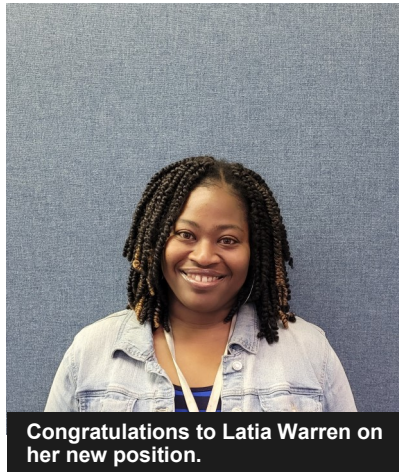
Dr. Sandra Potter joined Craven Smart Start staff at our resource table at the Touch a Truck Kids Fest. Dr. Potter read to children & shared UNC-TV kids programs info.

Congratulations to Latia Warren

On 8/16/23 Latia Warren assumed the position of Day Care Services Coordinator at the Craven County Department of Social Services.

Latia has worked at Craven DSS for 11 years. During this time she worked in several positions, most recently as a Work First Social Worker II for Retention Services. In the new position, Latia will oversee the Child Care Subsidy Program & supervise four day care social workers.

Craven Smart Start greatly appreciates the work of the Day Care Unit and is pleased to provide the program Smart Start funds to help income-eligible families with the cost of childcare.



Congratulations to Latia Warren on her new position.

Program Highlights for FY 2023 –2024

Raising A Reader

The Bosch Community Fund awarded a \$15,000 grant to Craven Smart Start's Raising A Reader (RAR) program to incorporate STEAM concepts and materials into the nationally recognized literacy program. Raising A Reader has expanded this year and has selected 16 classrooms in 12 different sites. The sites are located at Sunshine Scholars; Excel 1; Excel 6; Excel 7; Childcare Network 77; Kiddie Kollege; Little Blessings; Have-lock Elementary; Duffyfield Head Start; Bridgeton Elementary; YMCA Little Hands; and Craven Smart Start's administrative office for a new RAR program called Story Cubs.

Child Care WAGE\$ Supplements Program

According to Allison Miller, Vice-President with the Child Care Services Association, "The Child Care WAGE\$ Supplements Program is off to a great start in Craven County for 2024. Thanks to funding provided by the Craven Smart Start Board, participants will be funded at Tier Two with an additional 15% increase. At Craven Smart Start's request, applicants must earn at or below the \$19 income cap and work in a site with at least three stars. Award amounts are tied to each applicants level of education. Currently, WAGE\$ has 53 active participants and new applicants. Allison also tells us that participants share that WAGE\$ supplements really make a difference in their lives. One Craven participant said, "The WAGE\$ Program encouraged and helped me to stay in the early childhood field and continue my studies. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree and am currently enrolled in the master's program for early childhood psychology. I am better able to serve the children, the families and the community, which impacts our society."

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library currently has 3,632 children active in the program. 79 children graduated out of the program and 116 new children registered in the month of August.

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Newsletter

Pinkie Moore, Community
Outreach Coordinator,
Writer/Editor



New employees (from Left) Debbie Cashwell, Mandy Morris and Angela Pate joined our Child Care Resource and Referral team during the 1st quarter of FY 2023-2024

Introducing New Staff at Craven Smart Start

Debbie Cashwell and Amanda (Mandy) Morris were each hired by Craven Smart Start to fill a Quality Enhancement position to provide training and technical assistance to childcare providers in Craven County.

Debbie has 41 years of childcare/administration and holds a BS degree in Early Childhood Education. She began her childcare career in Laurinberg, NC, later taught preschool and continued her early childhood education in California, while her husband pursued a career in the US Navy. Returning to North Carolina, she began working at All About Children, moving from the classroom to center director.

Amanda (Mandy) Morris has a Bachelor's degree in early education and has worked as a lead teacher and assistant in kindergarten. She is currently working on a Master's Degree in Leadership, Policy and Advocacy in Early Childhood.

Angela Pate was hired for the Region 2—Family Child Care Specialist. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Mount Olive and worked in the early childhood for over 15 years. Previously, Angela served in teaching/ administration positions in a licensed facility, as well as Early Education Programs Specialist and NC School Age Initiative Consultant. She is currently enrolled in the University of North Carolina Wilmington Leadership, Policy and Advocacy Master's Program.

Save the Date for the Holiday Hustle!

Craven Smart Start is pleased to announce that the 11th Annual Holiday Hustle charitable race event will take place on December 9th at Union Point Park in New Bern and that B/S/H/ will again be the presenting sponsor. The Holiday Hustle will feature both in-person races on a course through downtown New Bern as well as virtual race options. The in-person races will include the Tinsel Run 10K, the Jingle Bell Jog 5k and the Santa Family Fun Run. The virtual event provides runners with several options, in which they can choose their type of exercise (running, walking, biking) to get in their miles, participating any time between December 1st-December 12th. To register for the Holiday Hustle, visit www.cravensmartstart.org, click on the Holiday Hustle race logo and follow the prompts.

Craven Smart Start is currently seeking additional sponsors for the Holiday Hustle, FMI, contact Pinkie Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator, at pmoore@cravensmartstart.org.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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Visit us on the web at
www.cravensmartstart.org

Craven Smart Start is a 501(c)3. Donations are tax-deductible.

TOUCH A TRUCK KIDS FEST CROWD- SEPTEMBER 30, 2023 AT WEST NEW BERN RECREATION CENTER

