



Sheltering Arms

EARLY EDUCATION AND FAMILY CENTERS

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Children Walk for Physical—and Fiscal—Fitness at Sheltering Arms

(ATLANTA, April 21, 2009) – Eight-month-old Thomia Bailey may still be working toward her first steps, but that didn't keep her from joining other infants, preschoolers, and parents from Sheltering Arms Early Education & Family Centers for a walk on the Georgia Tech campus last Saturday. Thomia and her friends were participating in one of twelve Walk-A-Mile-For-A-Child events happening around metro Atlanta between April 18th and April 25th, the National Week of the Young Child. The Walk-A-Miles are raising awareness and resources to impact two headline issues: childhood obesity, and the recession's impact on families.

"We are going through the toughest time in my 27 years with Sheltering Arms," says CEO Elaine Draeger. "For 121 years, Sheltering Arms has provided affordable child care so young parents working low-wage jobs don't have to choose between their child's well-being and putting bread on the table. What we're seeing now, with foreclosures, layoffs, and shortened work hours, is those families need more child care scholarships, and families who didn't need help before need help now. The irony, of course, is that as demand goes up for our services and child care scholarships, many of our funding sources are cutting back on contributions. That's why every penny raised during the Walk-A-Miles is critical for the families who need us."

Families participating in the Walk-A-Miles are being sponsored by donors making gifts to the Sheltering Arms Scholarship Fund, which provides child care tuition assistance based on family size and income. But raising much needed funds is not the only objective of the events.

"We work with young families, with children during the crucial early years of their development, and with parents as they are learning what it means to support and raise a family," says Draeger. "The Walk-A-Miles are a fun way to get children and parents excited about physical fitness at a time when it can become a lifelong habit." For several years, Sheltering Arms has partnered with Morehouse School of Medicine to promote healthy living, and this year Sheltering Arms' 17 early education centers will implement "I Am Moving, I Am Learning," a research-based Head Start initiative that teaches nutrition and fitness through classroom-based activities and parent education.

The public is invited to participate in the Walk-A-Miles as walkers and donors. For a complete calendar of events, or to donate online, visit www.shelteringarmsforkids.com.

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About Sheltering Arms: *Sheltering Arms Early Education & Family Centers is one of Atlanta's oldest, largest, and most respected nonprofits, providing nationally-acclaimed, effective early education and child care for 2,300 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers each day. Founded by volunteers in 1888, Sheltering Arms is different because of its quality, because it serves all families regardless of income, and because its comprehensive services build strong families and communities. Sheltering Arms has 17 centers in Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, Gwinnett, and Rockdale counties. To make a tax-deductible donation or for more information on Sheltering Arms, please call Paige McKay Kubik at (404)-523-2849 or visit Sheltering Arms' website at www.shelteringarmsforkids.com.*

The power of education begins here.™

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