



improving lives, strengthening communities

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RMDC Head Start Awarded Treacy Company Grant Funds Expand Music and Creative Curriculum Work

Helena MT. Rocky Mountain Development Council's (RMDC) Head Start Program just received a \$7,500 grant from the Helena-based Treacy Company. These funds complement a \$10,000 grant from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, \$3,000 from the Montana Arts Council, and \$3,290 in earmarked support from the Head Start Policy Council and Parent Fund. RMDC's Head Start Program applied for these grants to create an early childhood music program.

Research demonstrates a link between music education and children's abstract reasoning skills. Early music training strengthens connections between the neurons used for spatial-temporal reasoning tasks. "That means," notes Patty Dahl, Head Start Director, "that a child with music skills acquires better math and science reasoning skills." Music and movement also improve children's hand-eye coordination, self-esteem, and their ability to play together.

The Treacy Company grant will provide storage shelves for the drums, xylophones, triangles, maracas, rhythm sticks, claves, and jingle bells that the Head Start Program purchased with matching grant funds. Head Start teachers have received special in-service music training. Classrooms now reverberate with music practice, and Head Start family events include musical presentations. "We're already seeing kids blossom when they dance and drum," says Dahl.

RMDC's Head Start is an extremely successful early childhood learning program for children from low-income families. The Program offers comprehensive services designed to strengthen families and help children succeed socially and academically. The Program's new music initiative is guided by *Creative Curriculum* materials that are designed to build the full range of a child's literacy skills. Treacy Company grant funds also enabled the Program to purchase more than 250 music, art, and discovery books for classrooms.

Housing

Head Start

Rocky Mountain Preschool

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LIEAP

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Mental Health Crisis Planning

Kids Management Authority (KMA)

Agency on Aging

Daily Dinner Clubs

Foster Grandparents

Meals on Wheels

Retired & Senior Volunteers

Senior Citizen Centers

Senior Companions

Senior Transportation

For additional information about the Head Start music grant program and *Creative Curriculum*, contact Head Start Program Director Patty Dahl, 457-7335, pdahl@rmdc.net or Wendy Studt, Education/Literacy Specialist, 457-7304, wstudt@rmdc.net. ###