



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 17, 2007

**Contact:**  
J. Caprice Brown  
Outreach, Evaluations, and  
Programs Manager  
(919) 865-3037 (office)  
(919) 906-5275 (mobile)

## **‘MUSIC AND MORE’ INVOLVES ENTIRE COMMUNITY IN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

*Agency Wins Award for Community Recognition and Partnerships*

**RALEIGH, NC** – The **Community-Based Award** was presented to the **Richmond County Enrichment Corporation** on Wednesday, May 16 during the **Standard of Excellence Awards Celebration for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Kids Cafe Programs**. The **Standards of Excellence Awards Celebration** honors **Kids Cafe partner agencies** that have excelled in the core components and have achieved distinction with the operation of their program. The Agency Services and Programs (ASAP) Department of the **Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina** hosted the event at **North Carolina State University’s McKinnon Center in Raleigh**. **Winners received \$1,000 to improve and further supplement their program.**

At a time when **childhood obesity** is on the rise, nutrition education is critical. “The program serves the basic needs by providing nutritious meals that many students would not otherwise receive”, said Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Principal of L.J. Bell Elementary School in Rockingham, NC.

**Richmond County Enrichment Corporation’s Kids Cafe** program has introduced a class called “Music and More” not only to program participants, but to the community at large. “Music and More” first introduces the participants to music as a healthy experience for the body, mind and soul. Because music is such an integral part of life for young people, the Kids Cafe program taps into this important avenue as a way to plant seeds about music being more than just a sound. Students are taught reading, Math, Science, Language Arts and phonics while learning to play an instrument or sing a song.

“**The health of our children is at risk**. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) is proud to partner with the Food Bank by sponsoring the Kids Cafe program,” said Kristine Carlson, Program Manager for BCBSNC. “More than ever, it is important **to educate our children about proper nutrition, portions, to prepare healthy food, and the benefits of an active lifestyle**. The Food Bank’s Kids Cafe **programs are successful** in doing just that and we plan to support them by **making sure there is a Kids Cafe in all 34 counties.**”

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The **Community-Based Award** rewards the agency that has garnered exemplary community recognition of childhood hunger through increased support of their Kids Cafe program via increased volunteer support, media/civic recognition or increased partnerships with school officials.

The **Richmond County Enrichment Corporation** won the **Community-Based Award** not only because of the many activities in which the children are involved, such as actually learning to prepare nutritional meals and fitness activities, but because the program is strongly supported by local school principals, the faith-based community and members of the arts community.

“Our state curriculum has a focus on nutrition and ‘The Healthy Active Child’ initiatives,” says Shirley Fuller, Principal of West Rockingham Elementary School. “[The Kids Cafe] program is right on target by encouraging physical fitness activities, as well as an awareness of nutrition and the health benefits of proper diet.”

The Pee Dee Missionary Baptist Educational Association has many congregants available and willing to provide volunteer services with an added plus that several are retired professionals. Volunteers consist of a former member of the Fayetteville Symphony and a retired Music/English teacher.

“The after school instruction in the various curriculum areas, the nutritional meals, the availability of certified individuals to assist with tutoring, and the safe environment all enhance our after school services for children. [The Kids Cafe] is a true benefit to our attempt to ‘Leave No Child Behind’, states Principal Fuller.

The **Richmond County Enrichment Corporation**, located at 809 Armstead St. in the town of Rockingham, is an after-school program offering academic enrichment, mentoring, nutrition education, physical activities, parental involvement and most importantly, a nutritious meal to 80 kids in the area. The hours of operation are Monday – Thursday, 2:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. and phone number is 910-997-3316.

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina currently has **23 Kids Cafe programs** in the following **21 counties: Columbus, Craven, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Halifax, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Orange, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Wayne, Warren, Wake, and Wilson Counties**. From July 2006 through April 2007, the Food Bank’s Kids Cafe programs have served over 83,600 meals and received over 13,955 hours of volunteer support. The Food Bank’s programs serve approximately 1,057 children per week.

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Other award recipients were:

Best All-Around – Homework Haven in Raleigh

Physical Activity – Beulaville Youth Center

Parental Involvement – Homework Haven in Raleigh

Nutrition Education – Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club of Wilson

The Kids Cafe program is one of the nation's largest charitable meal service programs, providing free and prepared food and nutrition education to children. The Food Bank's programs are sponsored by **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina**.

For additional information on the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Kids Cafe program, contact J. Caprice Brown, Outreach, Evaluations & Programs Manager, at 919-865-3037.

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**About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina**

*The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that provides food for people who are hungry in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 890 partner agencies offering soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults. In fiscal year 2005 - 2006, the Food Bank distributed more than 31.4 million pounds of food and non-food essentials to these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 400,000 struggle each day to provide enough food for their families. [www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org)*

**About the Kids Cafe Program**

*The Kids Cafe program is one of the nation's largest charitable meal service programs, providing free and prepared food and nutrition education to hungry children. It is a comprehensive approach to ending childhood hunger through after-school programs - initiated by America's Second Harvest - The Nation's Food Bank Network and administered locally by the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina for children ages 15 and under. The Food Bank's programs are presented in collaboration with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. One of the primary strengths to the program is its flexibility. The primary reason for this approach is that poverty and hunger manifests differently in different communities thus requiring a community based approach to solving the childhood hunger dilemma.*