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## *Simmons Foundation Underwrites New Capacity Building Project*

As AVANCE-Dallas moves into its second decade of advancing Dallas children through education, we're excited about the opportunity to deepen and expand our program. The new Capacity Building Project is a three-year initiative that will take AVANCE-Dallas to a new level of service, and thanks to a generous \$91,000 grant from the Harold Simmons Foundation, we will begin executing it this fall.

The Capacity Building Project will include a full program and organizational evaluation, as well as an incubation stage, leading to a new organizational Strategic Plan. The Evaluation/Incubation Phase will commence with the 2007–2008 school year when the Executive Director spearheads an in-depth evaluation of our program model and begins to test a future program plan to ensure our long-term effectiveness in advancing children.

The Harold Simmons Foundation demonstrates a tremendous level of commitment to children by funding our Capacity Building Project. This project positions us to produce a strategic plan that will increase our growth and sharpen our impact. Intensive strategic planning at the right time in an agency's existence sets it up to be fully effective for the culture's changing needs. With the Harold Simmons Foundation's support, AVANCE-Dallas will develop an even more powerful program for more Dallas children that will strengthen the long-term stability of our city.

## *Educational Results Update*

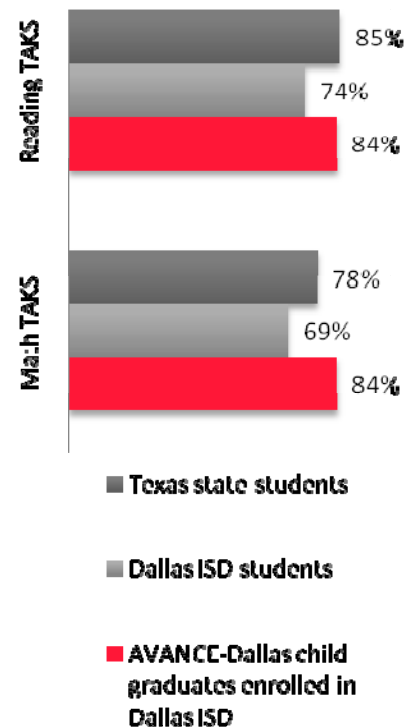
In our 2006–2007 year, our children made significant gains:

- 90% of target three- and four-year-old 2007 AVANCE-Dallas graduates mastered 60% of school readiness skills by the end of the program.

The most recent tracking of our child graduates in school (from the 2005–2006 academic year) confirms the long-term educational impact of our program. AVANCE-Dallas child graduates attend school more often than their peers, saving the District thousands of dollars annually. On average AVANCE-Dallas child graduates are absent three days out of the school year (98% attendance rate). This makes a significant difference because “children who attend school regularly score higher on achievement tests than those who are frequently absent” (<http://Childtrendsdatbank.org>).

AVANCE-Dallas child graduates also are leading the pack on TAKS test achievement. They outperform their Dallas ISD peers on reading and math TAKS tests. They also outperform their Texas peers on math TAKS tests and perform at a high rate comparable to students across the state on reading TAKS tests. AVANCE-Dallas makes the difference!

2005-2006 TAKS Scores



The  
AVANCE-Dallas  
Mission  
Statement:

Unlocking  
America's  
potential by  
strengthening  
families in at-risk  
Hispanic  
communities  
through the most  
effective parent  
education and  
support program.

We Believe...

people can change and  
*want* to change

parent-child relationship  
success begins with  
strengthening the bond  
that already exists

preventing problems at an  
early age (when children are  
under three) is key to later  
success

effective training must  
address the whole family—  
mother, father, children,  
and siblings

we can rekindle the spirit  
of hope and motivation by  
treating participants with  
dignity and respect

public and private  
partnership is essential to  
our success

## Letter from Board Chair and Executive Director

Dear Friend,

We are tremendously excited about the coming program year! Our new Capacity Building Project, made possible by the Harold Simmons Foundation, will position us to deepen and expand our program model in our second decade (page 1). Our 2007 Technology Project is bringing us up to date technologically to improve our program delivery (page 3). The increased health focus in our program is helping families eat better, exercise more, and access health care resources (page 4). And our new leadership with the United Way Born Learning Program will expand our services in Pleasant Grove. As we all begin to gear up for a new academic year, 2007–2008 promises to encompass powerful educational opportunities—both new and old—for low-income children and families.

If the past fiscal year says anything about our future, it says we have some incredible partners to make these initiatives a reality. So many individuals, companies, and foundations expressed their generous support for the AVANCE-Dallas mission last year, we are in a strong position to positively impact the future of Dallas and our city's children. It's a privilege to be blessed with such strong collaborators.

As AVANCE-Dallas keeps growing, we still offer the proven results-driven program that the Dallas community has come to expect from us. Our children continue to significantly outperform their Dallas ISD peers and Texas Hispanic peers on standardized TAKS tests, and their parents become their biggest cheerleaders because they learn how to perform concrete activities that stimulate lifelong learning. Children at AVANCE-Dallas receive the educational foundation that propels them to success in school—the first step to a thriving future.

When you join with AVANCE-Dallas, you can know you're joining a program that works. And frankly, we are incredibly humbled so many people have chosen to partner with us to advance disadvantaged children in Dallas. You are the heart of AVANCE-Dallas, the people who pump the lifeblood into our program and set the tone for compassionate action.

On behalf of our families and staff, thank you for making a difference in Dallas today!

Thanks!

Tamara Marinkovic  
Board Chair

Lisa Oglesby Rocha  
Executive Director

## *Keeping AVANCE-Dallas Connected*

Computers are great, except when they break. Here at AVANCE-Dallas, some of our computers were at the breaking point, until just recently when the Pearl C. Anderson Fund, Ledbetter/Styron Fund and Jean B. Lykes Endowment Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas hooked us up with new equipment.

AVANCE-Dallas is proud to be the recipient of a \$25,000 grant to fund our 2007 Technology Project. The grant provides six new computers to replace our oldest PCs, a server to connect our Swiss site network and build capacity, and additional equipment that improves our administrative processes. This support makes it possible for us to develop and deliver the best possible program for educating young children during the foundational growth stage of age 0–3.

Special thanks to the Pearl C. Anderson Fund, Ledbetter/Styron Fund and Jean B. Lykes Endowment Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas for their interest in keeping us connected so we can have efficient operations and the most effective impact on children!



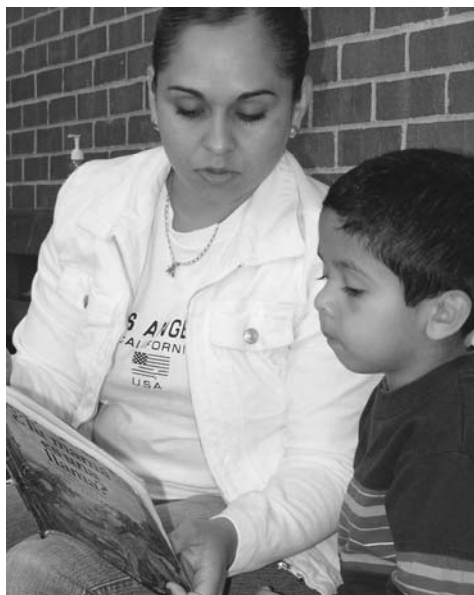
## *Hudson Foundation Gives \$75,000 Grant*

This summer AVANCE-Dallas received a momentous \$75,000 grant from the M. R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation to support our Parent-Child Education Program. The Parent-Child Program is the core of what AVANCE-Dallas does. It stimulates the development of children birth to age three and trains their parents to be their first teachers and lifelong educational partners. The result is that children are ready to perform well in school—a factor that keeps them in school and promotes their success.

The Hudson grant will also build capacity for our program through intensive staff development. Davis Interventures LLC, an expert consulting firm, will train our staff in order to build the leadership capacity of the AVANCE-Dallas management team. By strengthening the communication and management skills of key lead educators, we will fortify staff retention, build leadership capabilities, and position AVANCE-Dallas for growth in the next decade.

Finally, the Hudson grant will fund our Educational Tracking and Evaluation Project, which tracks the long-term educational achievements of graduating AVANCE-Dallas families. By assessing the long-term impact of our program on low-income families, we obtain solid objective data like the results reported on page 1 of this newsletter. And that makes it possible for you to know that the organization you support makes real-life change.

By investing so profoundly in AVANCE-Dallas, the M. R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation demonstrates high-level commitment to Dallas children!



## *Joining Hands of Compassion*

The Women of St. Michael are known for their concern and action on behalf of those in difficult circumstances. For that reason, it's a great privilege for AVANCE-Dallas to receive their \$2,500 gift to support the low-income children in our program.

These committed women first contributed to AVANCE-Dallas in 2001, and their continued support leverages their impact on Dallas families. Their latest grant provides educational toy-making supplies so our children receive the sensory stimulation they need to develop properly.



## *New Health Focus at AVANCE-Dallas*

This past summer, we launched our new Summer Family Health Program at AVANCE-Dallas. We served 80 families through our five-week program that helps children and parents develop healthier lifestyles through exercise, nutrition, and health care resources.

The families *loved* the program. They learned so many important concepts about healthy living, and they're doing something about it. As an example, one mother stopped drinking soda altogether, and another mom decided that instead of watching TV she would take daily walks with her children. Over the course of the five weeks, 79 percent of the parents walked 10,000 steps or more per week—that's more than 630,000 steps altogether! Participants were also screened for serious illnesses, including diabetes and high blood pressure. The program culminated with a fun educational health fair.

We're not limiting health awareness to the summer program. Thanks to a *Little Bites, Big Steps* grant from KERA, we're implementing additional health education initiatives in our nine-month Parent-Child Education Program during the school year. The *Little Bites, Big Steps* curriculum will expand families' awareness of healthy living, proper nutrition, and exercise. This initiative will also require parents to perform six health projects in their neighborhoods and six health days at their local schools, training them to be leaders in their community. Together, KERA and AVANCE-Dallas are making a powerful impact on the health of Dallas families.

### *Roxanna Learns Her Letters*

When Roxanna first came to AVANCE-Dallas as a three-year-old, she didn't know the letters of the alphabet—and she had never even practiced them before at home. She came from a home where the parents didn't understand the critical role they played in their child's life, a home where basic concepts that parents teach children through natural conversation, like letters and words, were disregarded.

Coming to AVANCE-Dallas changed things for her and her family. Roxanna started receiving the early stimulation that promotes healthy brain growth and activity, and now she writes her name all by herself and she knows her alphabet. Roxanna also signs her own name on the AVANCE-Dallas attendance list in the mornings and can read the letters and simple words on the alphabet wall.

Her progress is attributable to the educational interaction she received in the AVANCE-Dallas Early Childhood classroom and to the increased role her mother has learned to play in her daily life. AVANCE-Dallas is making a difference for Roxanna early on so she is ready to succeed in school when she starts Kindergarten next year.



*She came from a home where, before participating in the AVANCE-Dallas program, the parents didn't understand the critical role they played in their child's life, a home where basic concepts were disregarded.*

### *Wish List*

#### *Early Childhood Supplies*

- Glue
- Crayons
- Construction Paper
- Preschool Safety Scissors

## *A Mother Becomes a Parent*

A young Hispanic mother in Bachman Lake, never reads to her children. She doesn't think young children can build a vocabulary, talk with parents or other children, or learn new concepts. Her two-year-old son, Daniel, is very shy, but she believes that's normal—after all, Teresa thinks children don't really develop mentally or personally at his young age.

That was Teresa Avila before coming to AVANCE-Dallas. During the past year, she has tremendously progressed in her understanding of child development and parenting. She has learned what an important role she plays in her son's life, and she feels equipped with the tools and knowledge to guide Daniel's future on an upward path. She has also realized how much he can learn in his young years, and her new attitude is turning Daniel into a more talkative and confident boy who masters new words and concepts every day.

Teresa has come a long way in the past year. Now she not only realizes how much her child can grow early on, she even dreams of the day all of her kids will go to college. When she asks Daniel, now three years old, what he wants to be, he answers, "a teacher." Teresa has peace about being a mom and is actively involved in making Daniel's future brighter each day.



*Teresa and Daniel Avila*



## *Did You Know?*

You can get monthly updates from AVANCE-Dallas through our e-newsletter. It's an easy way to stay informed about what AVANCE-Dallas and our supporters are doing in the community.

Visit our Web site today to sign up!

[www.avance-dallas.org](http://www.avance-dallas.org)

## *Born Learning Program Launches*

In May 2007 AVANCE-Dallas was awarded one of only two grants for the new United Way of Metropolitan Dallas Born Learning Initiative. This August we launch the Born Learning Program, an intensified parenting and early childhood program, at two Dallas ISD sites in Pleasant Grove: Annie Webb Blanton and Edward Titche Elementary Schools.

AVANCE-Dallas has an incredible opportunity to impact low-income children through this Born Learning Initiative. Pleasant Grove is one of the highest risk areas in Dallas, and through the Born Learning Program, AVANCE-Dallas will transform the lives of children and their parents to give them a foundation for lifelong success.

Other groups are joining with us as we launch this program. One example is State Farm Insurance, whose employees painted four classrooms in July for AVANCE-Dallas at Titche Elementary School. The brightly painted classrooms and Born Learning office will help families feel welcome and excited about participating in the program beginning in September, thanks to State Farm's hard work. With the support of the community, our new Born Learning Program is bound to be a success for many more low-income children!

## Special thanks to our 2006-2007 individual donors!

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**Special thanks to the corporations, foundations, and entities that supported AVANCE-Dallas in the 2006-2007 fiscal year!**

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Dallas Independent School District  
Texas Department of Family & Protective Services  
Texas Education Agency  
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas  
U.S. Department of Education

**\$50,000–99,999**

M. R. & Evelyn Hudson Foundation  
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**\$20,00–49,999**

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