

PREVENTION

“Assignment: Impact!” Creating a Foundation for Success

by Annette Beuchler, President and CEO, Obici Healthcare Foundation

What if every young child in Virginia had the education foundation he or she needs for success in school and life? This goal is at the core of the new early childhood education initiative and partnership between the Obici Healthcare Foundation and the University of Virginia.

On Wednesday, October 31st, the Obici Healthcare Foundation invited community members to hear firsthand from the Foundation and from Robert Pianta, PhD, Dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, about its new priority area: Early Childhood Education (ECE).

In 2017 the Foundation commissioned a Community Health Needs Assessment to identify the health issues of greatest concern to the service area. The community level data is used to help the Foundation make decisions on where to commit resources in order to have the greatest impact on the community health status of Western Tidewater and as a resource to share with the community.

As a result, in early 2018 the Board of Directors set forth an updated strategy for grant making around its two strategic priority areas: Access to Healthcare and Prevention. Access to Healthcare receives 50% of the Foundation’s funding and the new transformative initiative, Prevention, receives the remaining 50%.

Access to Healthcare has been at the core of the Obici Healthcare Foundation since its 2006 inception and focuses on health “safety net” providers who deliver care to uninsured, underinsured and medically underserved populations who otherwise could not access it. Core safety net providers include emergency rooms, free and charitable clinics, local health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and community health centers. The Foundation safety net initiative focuses on improving access to primary care, oral and mental health.

Access to Healthcare also includes an investment by the Foundation in improving maternal and child health outcomes. By addressing potential health issues in pregnancy or early infancy, death and disability can be prevented. The goal is to decrease the overall infant

mortality rate in the Foundation’s service area.

Why Prevention? The Foundation chose to continue its efforts in prevention of chronic illness and disease because research shows that addressing social determinants of health is a path to better health status. Social determinants are the environmental conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play and worship. These conditions, and age, can affect a wide range of health functioning and quality of life outcomes and risks. The Foundation has chosen to focus on three specific areas of Prevention: healthy behaviors, capacity building and a new focus on early childhood education.

Why Early Childhood Education? Recent data from the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program indicates that 40% of students enter kindergarten “not ready” in terms of demonstrating key readiness skills. For children coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, that percentage climbs to 48% - almost half of these children enter kindergarten far behind their more advantaged peers. The results have long-term consequences including falling below grade level expectations, grade retention, special education placement and school dropout.

Consequently, an investment in the early years of life is one of the best investments the Foundation can make. Improving early childhood education can enhance the quality

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Dr. Robert Pianta, CEO Annette Beuchler and Delegate Chris Jones.

“Assignment: Impact!” Creating a Foundation for Success (cont.)

of life and have a significant influence on later health status. Obici Healthcare Foundation’s vision combines the power of people, programs and policies to transform the lives of young children in Western Tidewater in a way that will have lasting impact.

The Virginia General Assembly has already made an investment to improve the quality of young children’s preschool experiences. The Obici Healthcare Foundation is expanding this funding to provide these investments across preschool sectors, giving the preschool programs, including those within the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), Head Start, faith-based and private programs, the opportunity to also engage in these initiatives. By creating a public-private partnership, we will expand the funding from the Virginia General Assembly and give more money to help children in Western Tidewater. The pathway towards realizing the vision for every young child in Western Tidewater to have the educational experiences they need for success in school and life combines the power of people, programs and policy to transform young children in ways that will have a lasting impact.

Improving the level of ECE is the primary path for overall academic achievement and ultimately better health status. As a result, Obici Healthcare Foundation has created several new collaborations for better early childhood education to serve the children in Western Tidewater.

By leveraging the statewide initiatives to work across sectors, Obici Healthcare Foundation will provide access to ECE opportunities for a wide range of preschool classrooms and make Western Tidewater a model case study for Virginia.

Currently, funding will be distributed across the various

ECE initiatives in Western Tidewater. The project will be led by the University of Virginia Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) team, which will communicate closely with the Foundation staff and the local project coordinator, coaches, implementation specialists, school leaders and other stakeholders. Implementation will be accomplished through local project coordinators, coaches, instructional specialists, school leaders and teachers.

Specifically, a full-time, on-site project coordinator will coordinate all initiatives and help ensure full engagement within the community. Local coaches will be hired and trained by CASTL and supported in curriculum implementation. Local community members will be trained on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and professional development by CASTL, both funded by the state. Curriculum coaches are currently being trained. Recruitment for CLASS and Professional Development will occur in the late winter of 2018 and spring of 2019.



CEO Annette Beuchler announces the Foundation’s \$1M support for Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Meet the Foundation’s Newest Program Officers

Fiona Charles comes to the Foundation from the Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast where she was the Corporate Giving Manager, a member of the council’s philanthropy department, and served as a grant writer.

Fiona will focus on developing the Foundation’s new strategy around Capacity Building. “I look forward to working alongside organizations throughout our service area, learning more about how they address needs and aid our communities. The Foundation’s innovative investment in capacity building will help local organizations in their continuous quest to develop, expand, and refine their quality of programs and services.

“I welcome the opportunity to collaboratively create solutions to help generate more measurable and sustainable change in our impact radius.”

Fiona is a graduate of the University of Virginia.



Fiona Charles

Sarah Crouch comes to the Obici Healthcare Foundation from the YMCA of South Hampton Roads where she was the Association Director for Healthy Living, focusing on community health in Hampton Roads and northeastern North Carolina.

Sarah will be working on the Foundation’s grantmaking related to Healthy Behaviors. “I am looking forward to being a catalyst and support system for partnership and innovation in the area. Enhancing access to healthy food and creating opportunities for safe physical activity will help Western Tidewater become a healthier community. I truly believe that through collaboration we can move the mark where we live.”

Sarah is a graduate of Old Dominion University where she earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration.



Sarah Crouch