

Action for Children GIVES BACK



Action for Children's Celebrity Spelling Bee raises money early child care programs use to improve their everyday services to young learners: *3 Spelling Bees in 3 years equals 25 programs helped in central Ohio*

All non-profits raise money to support their mission and programs; Action for Children does, too. But, the early childhood development focused organization also raises money for other local entities, specifically birth through pre-k child care and education programs. Money these programs desperately need for everyday operation.

In central Ohio and around the country, the early childhood workforce is critical for children and families, but under appreciated. Workforce surveys show that among the child care workforce is more than 90% female, more than 40% African American. And, most earn poor wages - nearly half qualify for public assistance. Yet, these teachers and caregivers help the economic engine run for the rest of us - keeping our children from birth through 5 learning while their parents are earning.

For nearly 50 years, Action for Children (AFC) has been providing programs to support the child care and early learning community, early childhood professionals, and parents. AFC's training, technical assistance and coaching helps programs improve quality for the children enrolled. AFC offers many supports to the early childhood workforce including the CDA Gold Standard program courses and coaching to help early childhood teachers earn the Child Development Associate paraprofessional credential, which can impact their earning potential and help meet the state of Ohio's Step Up To Quality 2020 star-rating requirement. However, many centers and family child care providers are still in need of program materials and basic supplies. Action for Children can help with this as well.

AFC created its innovative annual fundraiser - The Small Steps Big Benefits Celebrity Spelling Bee (SSBB) - where celebrity spellers compete on behalf of local early childhood programs as a fun way for the central Ohio community to support those who every day make a difference for young children. One big benefit of the spelling bee? Contestants win money for various centers and family child care providers that they can use in an unrestricted way- they can purchase supplies, snacks, toys, classroom materials, and even provide field trips for the kids. It's especially important to the small centers and family child care providers who use the funds to improve the everyday services they provide to central Ohio's young learners.



SSBB benefits EC programs in many ways

From child care centers, family child care providers, and public preschools to programs for new fathers, for children of families experiencing homelessness and more, Action for Children has helped 25 individual early childhood education programs through three spelling bees. Here are just a few ways the funds have been used:

Wilbert Owens, Our Kidz Enrichment & Child Care Center

"With the support and resources provided by Action for Children, our program has benefited from professional development, technical assistance and coaching/mentoring. The children and families we serve benefit because we are prepared to provide the best experience for them. Considering our program is highly subsidized, it would be a fiscal challenge to fund these resources ourselves."

Karen Thomas, United Methodist Maize Manor Preschool

"Attending SSBB was a great way for the staff at Maize Manor Preschool to have fun and support a great cause. Maize Manor Preschool applied the money we received from SSBB to our special events fund. We were able to use the money to pay the entrance fee for our students and parents to attend the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium as an end of the school year field trip and celebration."

Paula Neal, YWCA Family Center Safe and Sound

"The YWCA of Columbus partnership with Action for Children has been a huge benefit in providing the highest in care and education to our most vulnerable children facing temporary homelessness. The monetary award from participating in Small Steps Big Benefits provided the opportunity to purchase classroom materials and support teacher development to maintain our 5-star rating."

Nancy Cox, Laugh and Learn Daycare

"Partnering with AFC has allowed my center the opportunity to take advantage of training needed to become a one star center. AFC has acted as a mentor in providing much needed guidance and direction through the Step Up To Quality process and CDA accreditation. The money that we have been awarded provides the tools we need to provide an environment that not only enhances our children's' learning but provides a means for us to perform assessments to measure their learning so that we can make improvements to our system and formulate reports to help parents better understand how they, too, can guide their children to make them successful. Laugh and Learn is very appreciative of the great blessing of being allowed to partner with Action for Children. AFC has truly been a blessing to us and our community."

Celebrities benefit, too

It's not just the centers that win; it's the celebrity spellers, too. Below, two past winners open up about their experience in playing for their centers, as well as their thoughts on participating in a full on, "no electronics allowed" spelling bee.

Megan Kilgore, Auditor, City of Columbus – SSBB winner 2018

On Laugh and Learn Daycare ...

"Jan Betz, Director of Quality Initiatives of AFC, introduced me to Laugh and Learn Daycare. Jan and I are from the same small town in Southeast Ohio, a place where education providers played a very important role – the teachers were involved in the community and daycare was considered an extension of the home. Laugh and Learn's educators reminded me a lot of the teachers in my hometown. It was a pleasure getting to spell for them."

On the spelling bee ...

"I was in elementary school the last time I participated in a spelling bee. Albeit a bit unnerving given that I've relied on spellcheck for most of my adult life, the AFC Bee was a fun, competitive, and hilarious way to raise funds and awareness for deserving organizations."

Elizabeth Brown, City Councilmember – SSBB winner 2018

On YWCA Family Center Safe and Sound Program ...

"Today more women than ever are the primary provider for their families. When women succeed our city succeeds. The YWCA Family Center 'Safe and Sound' program provides women who are experiencing homelessness with the support they need to get back on their feet. Helping women transition to long-term housing and employment not only helps a mother and her children, but it also makes our entire community stronger."

On the spelling bee ...

"A spelling bee does a great job highlighting many important lessons for children and adults. Learning can be fun and engaging – not just something you do in school. And even accomplished professionals need practice and make mistakes. Being humbled by a spelling bee really emphasizes that everyone has room to grow. I hope that the spelling bee inspires children, parents, participants, and the audience to be excited about learning new things throughout their lives."

AFC's SSBB Impact

- Provided nearly \$25,000 to 25 early childhood education programs over 3 years
- Represents more than 3,049 children impacted

Supporting SSBB

Columbus is known for its generous giving community and there are many worthy causes. Action for Children greatly appreciates the sponsors who have supported its spelling bee over the years because they know there are many choices when it comes to designating sponsorship dollars. When sponsors and patrons choose AFC's annual SSBB celebrity spelling bee, they are supporting early childhood education, teachers, and providers beyond AFC's many programs to benefit them ... they are providing much needed basic resources and supplies otherwise unaffordable.

Look for the 4th annual Small Steps Big Benefits Celebrity Spelling Bee April 23, 2020.



Action for Children



www.actionforchildren.org