

Bright Beginnings Newsletter Spring 2022



Dear Friend of BBI,

As we moved into 2022, many of us hoped for a quieter start to the new year; unfortunately, that was not what greeted us! While the unpredictability of today's world has been challenging, through the unforeseeable, our community at BBI has thrived! We are excited to share how we've strengthened collaboration internally to provide strong and relevant services and programming to our children and families through our dedication to being a two-generation organization.

Our year began with a spike in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant. During that time, DC reported over 9,000 COVID cases! It was another trying time, yet BBI stayed true to the lessons learned over the last two years. We supported our families and staff by providing At-Home COVID-19 tests upon return to the center, conducted thorough electrostatic cleanings of our building, continued our protocols for entering the center, and kept our children and staff in the strict pods that reduce their numbers of close contacts. Although COVID-19 remains unpredictable, the lessons we have learned in how to respond to the virus have allowed us to remain consistent in providing high quality, in-person services to our children daily since July of 2020!



While COVID-19 continues to dictate many of our decisions, one of the most exciting developments this year has been our return to in-person services for parents. Our access to rapid testing has allowed our parents to return to the building to partake in programming.

As part of our effort to continue providing strategic, two-generational programming, our Family Services team held Motherhood Support Group meetings where moms were provided a safe space to speak about their mental health as well as a variety of resources, including therapeutic services, co-parenting skills, financial literacy classes, and much more.

Family Services and our Partnership Coordinator have also been hosting an in-person Health Equity Series, entitled "Better Health." This ongoing program has provided a space for our BBI staff and parents to discuss health equity concerns in Washington, D.C, set health goals to achieve as a community, and debunk myths regarding COVID-19 and vaccinations. This has been an exciting opportunity for parents to lead and drive a discussion based on their own concerns; these conversations will ensure our programming is informed by our parents' needs and concerns in the future.

But, most of all, the launch of our Evening Care program in January has been one of our most notable additions to programming to date! COVID-19 has greatly shaped the workforce and we have seen an ever-growing need for childcare outside of the traditional hours of 9-5. We are excited to offer our community a high-quality, early childhood education aligned to Early Head Start and NAEYC standards with certified staff from 4-11PM! We are excited about the growth of this program and look forward to serving future families.

Lastly, a hallmark of our two-generational approach is what's happening in our classrooms! Teachers have successfully completed professional development related to trauma-informed care and enhanced

classroom culture and support to progress towards their students' kindergarten readiness goals. Teachers have also increased collaboration amongst themselves and showcased it beautifully during our Black History Month Celebration! Our teachers created lesson plans centered on African-American literature, inventors, politics, movement, and singing to not only teach our children about Black history, but also to showcase what they learned on the last day of February. We shared our presentation below.

As we continue to navigate these ever-changing times, BBI will remain unified in our commitment to providing children and families with high-quality, innovative programming that supports the needs of our community. We want to thank you for your support of BBI and of course, a special thank you to our education and support staff, who consistently show up to support each other and our children and families.

It's been an exciting start so far, filled with new possibilities! Please enjoy our updates on the events at BBI this quarter.

Sincerely,



Erin Fisher
Interim Executive Director, Bright Beginnings, Inc.

2-GEN IN ACTION

Our programming supports both children and their families. This creates a long-lasting impact and helps the family unit as a whole move from crisis to self-sufficiency.

BLACK HISTORY EDUCATION

Black History Month was celebrated all throughout February this year. Our students learned about various Black heroes, including NASA astronaut Mae Jemison and Olympic athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey. Other topics explored include the importance of literacy, the music, dance, and culture from Africa, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and various career opportunities. The events were captured in the video compilation. Thanks to the education and program teams for an educational and fun month of activities!



JOB FAIR HELD MARCH 24

Bright Beginnings Inc. hosted its first Career and Job Expo on March 24th, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m at the RISE Demonstration Center. Created with our families in mind, the expo was also open to all D.C. residents! The goal is to support our community residents in the process of becoming upwardly mobile by facilitating connections between job seekers and local employers. Also featured during the expo was an interview coaching class and an entrepreneurship class.



BETTER HEALTH SERIES

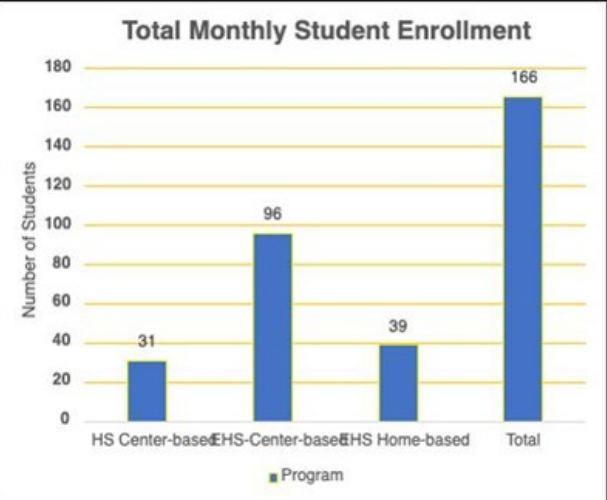
BBI Launched its "Better Health" series in February - a three-part open forum to discuss health and advocacy in our community as it relates to mental health, physical health, healthy eating, and the health of our children. Our second session



was held March 15, facilitated by [Restorative Justice](#) and moderated by pediatrician and health and wellness expert [Dr. Yolandra Hancock](#). Participants drove the discussion based on their own concerns and experiences, ensuring their voices were centered. Prizes, giveaways, refreshments, and childcare were provided for all participants.

HEAD START DATA

Despite the effects of COVID, our enrollment numbers have continued to grow and reflect the need for high-quality childcare in the communities we serve. This chart presents the total number of students enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start Center-Based, and Early Head Start Home-Based programs. We're proud of our enrollment, but most importantly, our ability to adapt and respond to the needs of our families' as displayed through innovative programming. Our Recruitment Specialist will continue this work by collaborating with our partners in the community to learn more about the needs of the stakeholders they serve and continue to evolve our programming!



A CELEBRATION FIT FOR ST. PATRICK

The luck of the Irish smiled upon BBI this month as our students and staff celebrated St. Patrick's Day. Green clothing, hats, headbands, masks, scarves, and even green pudding were on display and helped channel the Irish Spirit on March 17th.



Doing some Shopping?
 Shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com),
 select Bright Beginnings as your
 favorite charity, and 0.5% of your
 eligible purchases will be
 donated to BBI!

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	Whole Grain Pancakes, Fruit, Milk	Grilled Chicken, Pasta, Broccoli	Roasted Salmon, Potatoes, Green Beans
Tuesday	Whole Grain Pancakes, Fruit, Milk	Grilled Chicken, Pasta, Broccoli	Roasted Salmon, Potatoes, Green Beans
Wednesday	Whole Grain Pancakes, Fruit, Milk	Grilled Chicken, Pasta, Broccoli	Roasted Salmon, Potatoes, Green Beans
Thursday	Whole Grain Pancakes, Fruit, Milk	Grilled Chicken, Pasta, Broccoli	Roasted Salmon, Potatoes, Green Beans
Friday	Whole Grain Pancakes, Fruit, Milk	Grilled Chicken, Pasta, Broccoli	Roasted Salmon, Potatoes, Green Beans



Thanks to Ms. Shannon Robinson, BBI's new health and nutrition manager, we are now sharing our [monthly menu online](#). See what nutritious meals are being served every day!

Due to high demand, we opened up our Evening Care Program in January 2022. Childcare is now available at BBI from 4-11 p.m. for eligible working parents.

[Donate Now!](#)

