

Division of Early Learning Provider/ Program Spotlight

June 2015 ~ Edward C. Mazique Helps to Celebrate 50 Years of Head Start

On May 18th, 1965, in the White House Rose Garden, President Lyndon B. Johnson announced to the nation the creation of Project Head Start which represented a commitment to opening a window of opportunity for the nation's most at-risk children and their families. To commemorate President's Johnson speech, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) and Teaching Strategies for Early Childhood have invited select programs across the country to celebrate 50 years of Head Start by planting a rose bush in front of their centers.

Upon a personal invitation from Teaching Strategies, Edward C. Mazique Parent Child Center, Inc. (Mazique) agreed to host a Rose Bush Planting Ceremony at all three of its current locations across the District of Columbia on Monday, May 18, 2015. Mazique is one of the original 38 Parent Child Centers established nationally in 1968 as one of the "Great Society" programs included in President Johnson's "War on Poverty." At the time, Mazique was the first and only Parent Child Center in the District of Columbia to provide home-based services to pregnant woman and children from birth to age three. Mazique was also the first infant center in DC and among the first to serve children with special needs. Today, Mazique continues to foster positive outcomes for children and families entrusted in its care, rearing true to its original mission supporting the underserved community.

Almeta R. Keys, Mazique's Chief Executive Officer, and Diane Trister Dodge, Founder of Teaching Strategies, led Mazique's children, parents, staff and honored guests in the Rose Bush Planting Ceremony. As a part of the ceremony, Mazique's children led the attendees in The Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of God Bless America and the reciting of a special poem dedicated to the memory of the late Helen Hollingshed Taylor, former Associate Commissioner of the Head Start Bureau renamed the National Office of Head Start. Former Head Start parents and staff were recognized for their years of service and many joined in with the children as they planted and watered the rose bush. Additionally, children described the process that it takes to make the rose bush grow. Indeed at Mazique, they will be nurturing the plant and looking forward to enjoying the beautiful yellow roses, which just happened to be Helen Taylor's favorite colored rose.

The event ended with everyone in attendance wishing Head Start a Happy 50th Birthday!

