



## CIRCLE OF SUCCESS, Inc ®

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### *Circle of Success, Inc®~ Report to the Community: Supporting Yakima Valley Children and Families for Success in School and Life*

A community report released today by Circle of Success states that families participating in the Circle of Success home visiting program show substantial gains both in taking their children to the dentist and in obtaining immunizations for their children. Another key finding of the report is the significantly better personal-social skills seen in children who have been with Circle of Success longer. These skills will be key in launching them toward success in school and life.

“This is a report on Yakima Valley families and their youngest children. The analysis shows that there is substantial improvement in several areas of school readiness for families that participate in the program,” said Nick Temple, chairman of the Circle of Success board of directors. “There are particularly significant results for the children that have stayed with Circle of Success the longest.”

The Heritage University STEP UP (Students Teaching and Educating Parents – University Partnership) program is continuing the home visitation program begun by Circle of Success . Dr. Kathleen Ross, President of Heritage University states that, “This report presents an important research validation that the work with parents being done by our University students is making an exciting difference for families in our Valley. The STEP UP program at Heritage University will continue to bring quality services to families and children so that more children will be school-ready at age six. ”

Other findings in the report include:

#### Families Make Gains

A greater proportion of families in the home visiting program are:

- Reading regularly with their children.
- Engaging their children in family outings.

#### Successes for Children

- Children who are in the program longer show a trend towards significantly better performance on their gross motor skills than children who entered the program more recently.

#### Gains for the Community

- College scholarships awarded to 44 Circle of Success college and university students have resulted in an increase in the availability of educational professionals in Yakima Valley.

#### Challenges for Children

- A substantially larger proportion of children are below the cut off point for this development screening than would be expected in the general population.
  - Almost 4 times as many children were below the cut off for the Communication subtest as would be expected nationally.
  - 3 ½ times as many children were below the cutoff for the Problem Solving subtest as would be expected nationally.

#### Challenges for the Community

- Only about two-thirds (69%) of parents report that they have a bank account, which would normally be associated with economic independence.

Dr. Sheri L. Hill, a Developmental Policy Specialist and faculty at the University of Washington, was contracted by Circle of Success as a data analyst and reporting consultant for this report. Dr. Hill states, “Any needs highlighted here are only the ‘tip of the iceberg’ as the neediest families often do not have the personal and family resources to participate in data-gathering activities.” Dr. Hill has assisted in the data gathering strategy development, data analysis, and advised on the presentation of the data collected by the Circle of Success outreach workers.

The *Report to the Community* and the report technical notes are available in English at the Circle of Success website at [www.circleofsuccessinc.org](http://www.circleofsuccessinc.org) after January 1, 2006 and it will be available on the website in Spanish after February 1, 2006. To request copies of the report or to request early learning information, call the Circle of Success office at 469-9888 or toll free 1.888.973.7323 (READ).

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**Circle of Success, Inc is a private, nonprofit 501-c-3 partnership of community organizations that empowers parents to prepare their children to enter school ready to learn. The STEP-UP program at Heritage University, a Circle of Success partner, recruits and trains AmeriCorps volunteers and prepares college students to work as outreach workers, parent club facilitators and to provide home based learning support in order to connect parents to community resources and learning experiences throughout Yakima County. Circle of Success also manages the Let’s Read partnership with local businesses to put children’s books into the homes of pre-schoolers.**