

## From The VNA of Fox Valley News Room...

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### **VNA of Fox Valley, a Healthy Families America Program, Accredited for Quality Service by Prevent Child Abuse America**

#### ***Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Healthy Families America program in Aurora, IL***

**August 2, 2010 - Aurora, IL** – Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA) announced today that the Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley (VNA) has been accredited as a provider of high quality home visitation services to families who want to improve their child's health, nutrition and developmental outcomes.

HFA is a signature program of PCAA that has been providing home visitation services for more than 16 years. Expectant and new parents have common questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals and pediatricians to find the answers to their questions, meeting within the familiarity and convenience of the family's own home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary and well received service - 90% of all the families who are invited to participate in HFA's program accept.

"Parents want to be good parents; and as parents we all have had many questions when we realize the importance of raising a child," said Jim Hmurovich, President and CEO of PCAA. "HFA's well-trained home visitors are trusted sources in their own communities. They help provide answers to those questions and when needed, refer parents to other community services. As we congratulate the Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley we also should recognize the state leadership and the community engagement that has made this a great benefit for Aurora. HFA requires community agency involvement and the commitment of community leaders."

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements founded in 20 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as, the quality of the visits made by the family workers.

"We commend the VNA for opening itself up to such an intensive review process," said Cydney Wessel, Director of HFA Quality Assurance and Accreditation. "We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visitation services."

The HFA site in Aurora is located at the VNA's office at 400 N. Highland Ave.

“All new parents need support, especially parents facing challenges like domestic violence, mental illness, and social isolation,” said Kit Patterson, the coordinator of the Healthy Families program at VNA. “It is so rewarding to see the changes in families as they progress through the program. This accreditation is a testament to the experience of our hard-working home visitors and the high quality of services that we have been able to provide to over 1000 families in our community over the years.”

The Healthy Families Program at the VNA was one of the first HFA programs in Illinois when it began in 1994 with funding from the 708 Mental Health Board and the City of Aurora. The program is now one of over 40 programs funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services' Healthy Families Illinois initiative, with additional support from local groups such as the Fox Valley United Way, the Exchange Club of Aurora, and the Batavia Mother's Club. The program's collaboration with Mutual Ground in Aurora served as a model for a statewide initiative integrating domestic violence programs and home visitation services.

Home visitors in each community receive extensive training in a wide range of areas that can cause stress and worry to just about every new parent: caring for a crying baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the nutrition needed, promoting healthy child development and coping with the stresses of the personal relationship and financial changes that may come with an addition to the family.

PCAA implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, building on two decades of research in the field of home visitation. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of 420 communities in 35 states, DC and Canada annually.

PCAA is proud to be part of a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the home visitation field. Other members include HIPPIY USA, Parents as Teachers, Child Family Partnership, all home visiting programs, as well as, many non-home visiting members including Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Voices for America's Children.

This summer the VNA is running a fundraiser to support the Healthy Families program in southern Kane County. Raffle tickets are being sold for \$10 each with a chance to win a 2010 Harley-Davidson Fat Boy motorcycle. The motorcycle will be on display and representatives from the program will sell tickets at local summer festivals including the DeKalb Corn Fest, August 20-22 at the Dekalb Taylor Municipal Airport in Dekalb and the Sandwich Fair, September 8-12 at the Sandwich Fairgrounds in Sandwich. The drawing will be held at 6:00 p.m. on September 12 at the Sandwich Fair. Winner need not be present. Tickets can also be purchased by calling Kathy Astin at 630-482-8183 or by visiting the VNA's website at [www.vnafoxvalley.org](http://www.vnafoxvalley.org).

*The Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley (VNA), is a humanitarian, not-for-profit organization based on the concept that each individual is unique and is to be treated with dignity. VNA has been at the forefront of health services in the Fox Valley area since 1918, responding to community need with exceptional healthcare delivered at home, in VNA clinics, and in every neighborhood.*

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