

"MAMA, GUESS WHAT?" Each afternoon, Yolanda picks up three-year-old Vick at Sheltering Arms, prepared to hear that question a million times on the ride home. "I learned to spell my name today, and Mama, guess what? Do you want to hear me count, or say my ABCs? And guess what? We went on a field trip to

hear a real live author tell a story from Africa and we got a book to bring home. And guess what...?"

Vick may chatter a mile a minute, but since coming to Sheltering Arms, he speaks clearly, and he's focused his boundless enthusiasm on all he's learning. He runs to class every morning to find out what's next, and rushes home in the afternoon to teach his little brothers his latest discovery.

Yolanda may not have Vick's energy, but she shares his passion for learning. "While my children are safe at school, I am getting my life together. I have a job, and I'm getting my GED so I can go back to school and have a career one day."

Vick and Yolanda are part of a Sheltering Arms pilot program at Cook Elementary in Atlanta. In 2010, Sheltering Arms' preschool classes at Cook will move to a new school-based, 212-student early learning resource center, part of The Annie E. Casey Foundation Civic Site partnership. Together, civic site partners are improving education, health, employment, and economic investment in Mechanicsville and four other historic neighborhoods striving to overcome crime and poverty.

"Mechanicsville has always been my home, and I'm hopeful about the changes happening here," says Yolanda. "Now I have the opportunity to set an example that will make my children want to do better."



YOLANDA & VICK

The power of education begins here.™



Sheltering Arms

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Affordable Preschool & Child Care

- 3,600 infants, toddlers, & preschoolers each year
- 17 centers in Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, Gwinnett & Rockdale
- Tuition scholarships based on income
- Nationally acclaimed early childhood education
- On average, every child meets or exceeds 92% of developmental milestones each year

Comprehensive Family Support

- Family Support Coordinators and Parent Leadership Organization at each center
- One-on-one counseling, GED or ESL classes, parenting workshops, presentations on community resources, and more
- Recognized as a Strengthening Family exemplary program by the Center for the Study of Social Policy
- 94% of parents attend parent meetings and volunteer in the classroom on a regular basis

Community Building

- Anchor for neighborhood redevelopment and public housing
- Space for local services such as community health fairs, support groups, and civic groups
- Service partnerships involving volunteers, schools, and other nonprofits
- Centers located on school campuses and in nonprofit service centers
- Training and credentialing for more than 3,000 early childhood educators and family support professionals each year

Experienced, Respected, Well-Managed

- Founded by Atlanta volunteers in 1888
- Finalist for the 2007 Managing for Excellence Award from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta
- One of only 25 programs nationwide to be named a Program of Excellence, Head Start's highest award for quality
- 92 cents of every dollar contributed goes directly to services for family and children

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