

CW33 “Free to Be Heroes”

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Contact: Betsy Dixon, ChildCareGroup

Phone: 214-534-8909

Email: betsyodixon@hotmail.com

Ms. Blair’s Heroic Dedication to Young Children

Teaching, guiding and loving children for more than 37 years, Bobbie Blair has dedicated much of her life to mentoring preschoolers in South Dallas, shaping hundreds of young lives toward successful futures. At the Martin Luther King ChildCareGroup Child Development Center since 1970, Ms. Blair has taught children of the children she taught. With longevity now a rarity at most child care centers because of the profession’s predictable low pay and often nonexistent benefits, Ms. Blair has spent decades doing what she calls her passion- teaching children so they can make a difference... just as she has.

In 1970, Ms. Blair was hired as a housekeeper for the facility, then called the Crossroads Center. Even then, she sat and played with the children, for whom she developed a great love. The Center arranged for Ms. Blair to earn her GED and attend local community colleges where she earned her child care certificate. Through the years, she was promoted from housekeeper to assistant teacher to lead teacher and finally to lead mentor teacher, a post she continues today.

During her tenure, Ms. Blair has made it her mission to prepare children for success in kindergarten, developing their readiness to learn and their eagerness to achieve. The majority of the children who have come to know Ms. Blair in her classroom through the years have been from low-income, often single-parent families, many earning wages below poverty level. For these at-risk youngsters, Ms. Blair has provided encouragement, stability, and support-- building a strong foundation for their futures. Students and their parents often return to ChildCareGroup years after their time there to express heartfelt gratitude for Ms. Blair’s tireless efforts. Many say, because of her, their minds were molded toward a love for learning in school and their spirits sculpted toward a meaningful purpose within their families and their community.

Ms. Blair will tell you that her greatest joy is in seeing children with special needs sharpen their skills for success. One touching example came in the life of little Jervone Wilson, a 4-year-old who suffered brain damage after a tragic accident. Jervone was unable to speak like others his age. When he entered Ms. Blair’s classroom, he could only utter the words ‘Mama’ and ‘No.’ Working in partnership with Jervone’s parents, Ms. Blair worked diligently to help him overcome his developmental delays. By having him watch her mouth, touch her face and feel her throat as she spoke each and every day, she helped him learn how to speak. He began to speak more clearly and learned to utter complete sentences like “I need a drink of water.” Speech therapists were amazed at the little boy’s progress and credited Ms. Blair for her devotion and care.

Jervone’s story is just one of hundreds in which children’s lives have been profoundly impacted by this remarkable teacher. Ms. Blair is working on her 38th Anniversary at the center, and firmly believes she has much more to give to children—and many more blessings to receive in return. When asked why she’s stayed so long, she will smile and say she has been placed there to fulfill God’s purpose for her life... and how fruitful the fulfillment of that purpose has been!!

ChildCareGroup, founded in 1901, is a United Way non-profit agency dedicated to providing, delivering and expanding the best child care services outside the home. The families served by ChildCareGroup are primarily the working poor, most earning incomes below the poverty level. Every day, ChildCareGroup is responsible for providing or managing the care of 14,000 children from low-income families.