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## Kidango receives funds for teacher training



By Ritu Jha  
Photos By Courtesy of Kidango

A grant of \$17,075 may not be sufficient to run Kidango's 40 centers, but it is seen as a blessing for 62 teachers who will be trained under the Incredible Years Teacher Training Program.

Last month Kidango received a grant from the East Bay Community Foundation that would help in training new teachers and mental health clinicians on how to deal with pre-school children and children with special needs. "We are very excited. We are going to train the teachers now," said Marc Baker, Director of Development and Communications. He said the project ran out of funding last September.

Kidango is a non-profit organization that began as the Tri-Cities Children's Centers in 1979. The center that started with 90 children has more than 2,500 children currently enrolled at its Alameda County, Santa Clara County, and San Francisco centers.

The centers offer a wide variety of programs to meet the diverse needs of children 0-12 years of age. Some centers also provide before and after school care programs. According to Baker, Kidango is about "promoting young children," and Kidango provides tuition subsidies to students from low income families. "We welcome diversity, and all families," said Baker.

Grant money will go toward the Incredible Years Teacher Training Program, started three years ago and is comprised of a 32-hour workshop. Its program focuses on teachers, school curriculum, strategy and building social and emotional development among children.

The program emphasizes classroom management skills such as the effective use of attention given to children, praise and encouragement, incentives for difficult behavior problems, proactive teaching strategies, and ways to manage inappropriate classroom behavior and build positive relationships with students.

Kavita Malik, a teacher at Kidango on the Ohlone College campus who was trained last year under the program said the training helps her do her job much better and feel stress free. "You learn how to deal with the situation," said Malik. "It makes children happy and because all other teachers have gone through the same training, there is a consistency among us."

The workshop encourages children to be independent. "We are taught to keep a positive environment and keep encouraging children," Malik said, and added "Reward all positive behavior."

She said the program workshop has been divided in to two parts, the Incredible Years Teacher Training Program and the Dina Curriculum.

Under Dina Curriculum, teachers teach students through puppets that act out problem-solving skills such as breaking up an argument. Malik said after the training, she found herself acting more consciously.

Mitchell Ha, Center Director at the Ohlone lab on the Ohlone college campus echoed the same thoughts as Malik, "The workshop is very useful and effective." Ha received the training last year and said it teaches classroom management and a better understanding of how to deal with students. However, he feels that it takes hands-on practice to deal with classroom management. Ha said a child cannot learn academically unless teachers understand their social and emotional needs.

Kidango is celebrating its 30th anniversary and has been funded by various organizations and government agencies since its inception. "This year we are opening three new centers," said Baker. Requested funds will also be used to provide on-going support to trained teachers and mental health clinicians including refresher training and ongoing focus groups, fund costs associated with the training including temporary employees, food for participants, printing costs, and incentive prizes and costs associated with implementation of the curriculum including books, DVDs, puppets, and posters.

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