



Sioux Empire United Way

News Release
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For Immediate Release

Chelsea Cronin
Marketing Assistant
Sioux Empire United Way
1000 North West Avenue, Suite 120
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
336-2095
chelsea@seuw.org

Sioux Empire United Way Launches New Initiative for Area Families

Sioux Falls, SD – Sioux Empire United Way is proud to introduce their 2009 Initiative, Sioux Empire Family Foundations. The program supports parents, enriches families and teaches children valuable social, emotional and developmental skills. Family Foundations consists of interactive community meetings held at area elementary schools for ALL families with young children in the Sioux Empire. The initiative is modeled after successful programs established across the nation.

“When looking at needs in the community we had many requests for a program to support all families,” said Kerri DeGraff, Sioux Empire United Way Initiatives Director. “And recent studies show that 1 out of 3 parents lack knowledge and understanding of how their child develops. We hope that this program provides families the support and tools they need for raising a happy, healthy child.”

This program will take place in five locations throughout the Sioux Empire. Sites will be held at Cleveland Elementary, Robert Frost Elementary, Terry Redlin Elementary, and St. Michael Elementary. A fifth location located outside of Sioux Falls has yet to be determined.

Families will participate in eight two-hour sessions during the first semester of the academic year, ending in December. The program will run again during the second semester from January to May with an additional eight two-hour sessions.

Families will begin their session with a free meal, followed by an opportunity to participate in activity time that is focused on parent/child interactions. Parents will also have the opportunity to discuss the challenges and joys of raising children while providing support and advice to one another. Children will also be active in learning as they explore the fun classroom environment. In addition, child development professionals will be on hand to answer questions, talk with parents and provide families new ideas for activities they can do together.

When families are connected in a community, the network of support helps reduce parenting stress, boosts mothers' perceptions of themselves and their children, and helps fathers feel more involved.

Parents who take part in parent education programs:

- Provide more age-appropriate toys and spend more time reading to their young children
- Read and talk with their children more frequently



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- Interact with their children in more supportive and effective ways, and feel more confident in their role

And their children:

- Have more positive attitudes toward school
- Are better prepared with pre-kindergarten basic skills
- Are more confident
- Have more social skills for interacting with other students
- Have fewer behavior problems
- Are more emotionally mature

If you would like to participate in Sioux Empire Family Foundations, or know of a family that would benefit from educational and social interactions with other families, please call 336-2095 or log on to www.seuw.org.

XXX

Contacts & Additional Information

What: Sioux Empire Family Foundations
Interactive community meetings for families with young children.

When & Where:

Cleveland Elementary, Tuesday evenings 6-8pm, first session is September 16
 Terry Redlin Elementary, Thursday evenings 6-8pm, first session is September 11
 Robert Frost Elementary, Monday evenings 6-8pm, first session is September 15
 St. Michael Elementary, Tuesday mid-days 11:30-1:00, first session is September 30
 Fifth location for this fall is still being determined

**Please contact Brandi if you would like to attend one of the first sessions for video/photos/comments.*

Contact:

Brandi Miller brandi@seuw.org 336-2095
 Marketing Director, Sioux Empire United Way

Kerri DeGraff kerri@seuw.org 336-2095
 Initiatives Director, Sioux Empire United Way

