



PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bright Space Developed in Washington, DC to Give Children of Domestic Violence a Dedicated Play and Learning Environment

Teaching Strategies Sponsors Bright Space for Children of the Cornerstone Program at the District Alliance for Safe Housing in Honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Washington, DC, October 28, 2010 – Representatives from Teaching Strategies and members of the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children today cut ribbons to officially open a Bright Space for children of the Cornerstone program at the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH). Bright Spaces are designed to provide children in distress living in shelters with a dedicated warm, enriching area to play and learn.

The Bright Space at DASH Cornerstone is made possible by Diane Trister Dodge, founder and president of Teaching Strategies, Inc., and author of numerous books, articles, and training materials for early childhood educators. The project is a partnership between Dodge, the Teaching Strategies team, local volunteers from Bright Horizons Family Solutions, and the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children.

“Since I first heard about the Bright Horizons Foundation’s work establishing bright play spaces for children in shelters I have wanted to support their efforts,” said Dodge. “Sponsoring a new space here in Washington, DC is the best way I can think of to honor the memory of my friend and colleague, Jim Greenman, and to acknowledge the wonderful work of Dave Gleason and his staff at the Foundation. All of us at Teaching Strategies look forward to continuing to play a role in making this new space a wonderful environment for joyful learning.”

Bright Spaces Enable Children in Crisis to Discover the Magic of Childhood

Studies have shown that children of all ages thrive when they have a safe place in which to explore the world around them, filled with books, toys and activities that are developmentally appropriate. However, the reality for children in crisis is that they often do not have access to the space and equipment necessary to develop social, cognitive, gross motor and language skills, which are so critical for success later in life.

At many agencies providing housing to families in crisis, it is a challenge simply to find funding for a room to sleep in, never mind toys to play with, comfortable chairs to sit on, or books to stimulate the imagination. When children are in a situation like this, it is a challenge for them to discover the magic of childhood.

“Children who have been displaced from their homes because of domestic violence desperately need a place to play and feel safe from the turmoil they’re experienced,” said Peg HacsKaylo, Executive Director of DASH. “Bright Horizons Foundation and Ms. Dodge have made it possible for the children who live in our program to begin to recover from that trauma and have a sense of safety and peace that is essential for their continued healthy development. That kind of support is invaluable” Ms. HacsKaylo said of the project.

The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, the nonprofit organization of Bright Horizons Family Solutions, the leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education, and work/life solutions, established the Bright Spaces program to create appropriate play and learning areas for children of all ages living in homeless shelters and other agencies that serve children in crisis. In a Bright Space, the well-worn children’s space found in many agencies is transformed by a team of early education and design professionals to create a warm, inviting area with where children in crisis can simply be children.

Curtains are put up, cozy nooks are strategically placed around the room to give children of all ages a comfortable place to explore, and shelves overflow with award-winning children’s books, educational toys and games and soft toys. Dramatic play areas are set up so children can act out their dreams and learn to socialize with their peers. Each Bright Space is designed specifically for the individual shelter by early education professionals from Bright Horizons, who create the Bright Space to help meet the needs of the children being served by the agency.

“We are inspired and energized by this partnership with the DASH Cornerstone program, Diane Trister Dodge, and Teaching Strategies to provide engaging and educational places for children in crisis to play, learn and find security and warmth. It is our mission to raise the bar for the quality of care and early education for young children across this country, and this partnership ensures that children in need in Washington get an early start and opportunity to begin a never-ending journey of success in school and life,” said Dave Gleason, President, Bright Horizons Foundation for Children.

About Bright Horizons Family Solutions and the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children

Bright Horizons Family Solutions is the world’s leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education and work/life solutions. The company operates more than 650 child care and early education centers across the United States, Europe and Canada. The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children was founded in 1999 to help forward the vision of Bright Horizons Family Solutions to brighten the lives of children, youth, and families in crisis. Bright Spaces is a program of the Foundation, creating dedicated play areas in homeless shelters and other community organizations. There are now more than 220 Bright Spaces located in shelters in more than 36 states around the country and Europe, serving thousands of children each year. More information is at www.brighthorizonsfoundation.org.

About Teaching Strategies, Inc.

Teaching Strategies is a dynamic educational publishing company that serves the early childhood community exclusively, bringing curriculum, assessment, professional development, and family connection resources to programs serving children from birth to age 6. The company's work is driven by its mission and core values: to provide the most effective early education resources in an innovative, responsive, collaborative, respectful, and ethical way. Teaching Strategies strives to support early childhood educators in their critically important work, providing comprehensive, research-based products and resources to help them as they open doors for all children and their families.

About the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH)

The mission of the District Alliance for Safe Housing, Inc. (DASH) is to ensure access to safe and sustainable refuge for victims of domestic violence through the development and management of safe housing and related services, while increasing the capacity of other community-based organizations to expand housing for victims throughout the District of Columbia. DASH is addressing the overwhelming lack of housing and social services for victims of domestic violence and their children in the District by providing safety and necessary resources. DASH helps women and children rebuild their lives on their own terms. DASH has the following three goals:

- Develop safe housing for domestic violence victims and their families to ensure safety from violence and promote living without fear of abuse;
- Deliver targeted housing resources to victims and their families to improve access to safe, affordable housing; and
- Provide training and technical assistance among community-based programs to increase safe housing for victims and enhance the overall well-being and safety for women and children in the District.