

TULSA WORLD



Powered by the largest news staff in Northeastern Oklahoma

Visit tulsaworld.com for coverage of news, business, sports and entertainment.

Return to Story

Groundbreaking celebrates Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center expansion

BY KIM ARCHER World Staff Writer

Thursday, August 30, 2012

8/30/2012 7:52:07 AM

Three-year-old Santi Carreno and two of his classmates took tiny shovels to the dirt Wednesday, helping officials break ground on a 10,900-square-foot expansion of Union Public Schools' Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center, 13804 E. 46th Place.

"Without this program, I honestly don't know what I would do," said Santi's mother, Yvonne Carreno. "It's a school, not a day care. The teachers are so loving."

The Community Action Project of Tulsa County and Tulsa Children's Coalition are adding eight new classrooms to the current building, which opened in 2008.

It serves 240 3-year-olds in 12 classrooms and is part of the Union Public Schools district.

Four of the new classrooms will open this fall, and the other four are being added in anticipation of future growth.

The program is offered to 3-year-olds from economically disadvantaged families to give them a good start in education.

"We know early childhood education is the foundation for a lifetime of learning, so we take that very seriously," Union Superintendent Cathy Burden said.

The expansion to the 26,000-square-foot center will cost \$3.6 million, officials said.

The Community Action Project and the Tulsa Children's Coalition are using Community Development Block Grant funds and a low-interest loan from the Harmon Foundation for the construction.

Steven Dow, executive director of the Community Action Project of Tulsa County, quoted a winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics who said investment in high-quality early childhood education yields a greater return on public investment than anything else a community can do.

The center offers comprehensive wrap-around services, including social service programs, medical and mental health care, home visits, and anything else that would ensure children's needs are met so they can learn, Principal Lynn McClure said.

Oklahoma has long been known as a model for early childhood education. In 1998, the state became second in the nation to offer free and voluntary access to preschool for all 4-year-olds.

According to the Community Action Project, recent studies show that children enrolled in high-quality early childhood education programs do better in school and are happier and more successful later in life.

Carreno said Santi is so excited about attending school that he lays out his clothes every night for the next day.

"He loves it," she said. "This (expansion) is going to help a lot of families who don't know it is available."

Original Print Headline: Ready for growth

Kim Archer 918-581-8315
kim.archer@tulsaworld.com

Associated Images:



Students, school officials, elected officials and other dignitaries turn dirt during groundbreaking ceremonies Wednesday in Tulsa for Union Public Schools' Rosa Parks Early Childhood Center classroom expansion. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World



Yvonne Carreno, whose son attends the Rosa Parks Early Childhood Center, speaks during groundbreaking ceremonies. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World



Lynn McClure, principal of the Rosa Parks Early Childhood Center (from left); Steven Dow, executive director of the Community Action Project; and Cathy Burden, superintendent of Union Public Schools, spoke during groundbreaking ceremonies Wednesday for the center's classroom expansion. Photos by MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World

Copyright © 2012, World Publishing Co. All rights reserved

[Return to Story](#)