Study: High-quality preschool worth the investment

By Randye Hoder, New York Times

A decade or so ago, when it was time to send my children to preschool, it never occurred to me to do anything else. For an upper-middle-class family like mine, enrolling my kids in a half-day nursery school program with all of its benefits (socialization and school readiness, among them) was a no-brainer.

Now, amid a highly contentious national debate about whether preschool should be made available to all children, a new study provides a mountain of evidence that my parental instincts were right on the money. Literally. High-quality preschool programs are "the most cost-effective educational interventions and are likely to be profitable investments for society as a whole," concludes the study, financed by the Foundation for Child Development and produced in collaboration with the Society for Research in Child Development.

The report, written by an interdisciplinary group of 10 early-childhood experts, is actually a "research brief" – an overview of "the most recent rigorous research" on a hot-button issue. Among its key findings:

•Large-scale, high-quality public preschool programs can have substantial impacts on children's early learning.

•Quality preschool education can benefit middle-class children as well as disadvantaged children, though children from low-income families benefit more.

•Quality preschool education is a profitable investment, with $3 to $7 saved for every $1 spent.

The analysis will undoubtedly be greeted as good news by the Obama administration, given the president’s call to make federally funded, high-quality preschool “available to every single child in America.” Not that the critics can’t find fault. The research brief points to evaluations of early-childhood education programs in Tulsa, Okla., and Boston, which found large gains in math and reading among participants. But scholars at the Brookings Institution and elsewhere have attacked the Tulsa and Boston studies for their supposedly unreliable methodology.

Read the whole story

League putting on Halloween party

Groovebox and Adient Zoo are teaming up with the League to Save Lake Tahoe for the biggest Halloween party in South Lake Tahoe.

The party is at the American Legion on Oct. 31. Doors open at 8pm, with the show starting at 9pm. Cost is $10. Must be at least 18 to attend.

Roots Rob and S1nth3sys will be joining the party.

There will be a contest for the best costume and most creative costume.

S. Tahoe working to remove lead from homes

South Lake Tahoe’s Lead Safe Tahoe program is teaming up with national agencies to increase awareness of childhood lead poisoning prevention through the National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, which is Oct. 20-26.

This year’s theme, Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future, underscores the importance of the many ways parents can reduce a child’s exposure to lead and prevent its serious health effects.

The Lead Safe Tahoe team is diligently working to identify houses and apartments within the city limits that have lead-based paint hazards. Once identified and qualified, the team works with lead safe certified and licensed contractors to mitigate the risks and make dwellings safe for occupants.

To date, Lead Safe Tahoe has funded the lead-based paint testing of 427 qualifying residential units. Approximately 40 percent of those have lead paint exceeding the levels that are considered safe.

Work has been completed in 135 units, and 27 are currently in the bidding or construction phases. Federal grant funding has also provided training in lead-safe work practices for nearly 200 workers.

The Lead Safe Tahoe team is working to identify houses and apartments within city limits that were built before 1978 that have lead-based paint hazards. For more info, call (530) 542.6011.

TY&FS helping homeless, runaway youth

By Laura Salinas

There are an estimated 1.6 million to 2.8 million young people identified as homeless and runaway youth in the United States.

This number may seem surprising to some, but what people don't realize is that this number reflects not just the youth living on the streets, but also the youth who are unaccompanied, meaning they are under the age of 18 who lack parental or institutionalized care. Furthermore, this number also reflects the youth who are couch surfing, wards of the court, at risk of becoming homeless and chronically homeless youth.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) defines homeless youth as individuals who are "not more than 21 years of age … for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement."

Only a few youth are truly homeless and do not receive any support. Unfortunately, when young people get to that point, it is often almost impossible for them to seek help and make changes to improve their quality of life. It is when they are at-risk or have experienced minimal homelessness that they have the best chance to lead a different life.

During November, Tahoe Youth & Family Services coordinates with the National Runaway Switch Board and other local agencies to bring awareness to our community. Awareness and prevention is the best way to help the youth in our community from running away and becoming homeless. Despite great efforts, there are still a few young people in our communities who attend school and have no idea where they will be sleeping tonight. These youth go unnoticed, not from the lack of

interest from school officials or other adults, but because they are experts at hiding their lifestyles for fear of being institutionalized.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the National Runaway Prevention Month. By working together we can help youth identify community resources and develop life skills. This can make a crucial difference between a youth running away and finding the resources they need to be successful. Youth and families need to know that there are options and alternatives to running away from home and living on the streets.

“Tahoe Youth & Family Services has provided me with not only a reliable safe place to eat, shower and do laundry, but most importantly has provided me with immediate help. I could not ask for more of a kind, fun, caring, understanding and realistic staff members when in times of trouble and need. Not only do they help families, but have become family since I have never had one of my own. .. if anyone needs anything I always direct them to TYFS’ Drop in Center … this place saved my life,” said Elliot, whose full identity is being protected.

Tahoe Youth & Family Services’ Drop In Centers are a point of entry for youth to get supportive services they need as well as motivation to move beyond the street with guidance and compassion. It’s a great place for youth to get recharged, get resources, and get respect.

For more information on TYFS Drop In Centers or how you can help runaway youth in our community, contact Cheyanne Lane at (530) 541.2445 or Cheyanne@tahoeyouth.org. Our South Lake Tahoe Drop In Center is open from 1-5pm Tuesday-Saturday and is located at 1021 Fremont Ave. Our Gardnerville Drop In Center is located at 1307 Langley in the Ranchos, behind 7-Eleven. It is open Tuesday-Friday 3-7pm and 11am-7pm on Saturdays.

TYFS offers services in the areas of family counseling,

substance abuse treatment services, mentoring and support services for runaway and homeless youth. We offer counseling services in South Lake Tahoe (1021 Fremont Ave.), Gardnerville (1422 Mission St.), Incline Village (DWR Center, 948 Incline Way) and Woodfords (Early Learning Center, 100 Foothill Road) TYFS 24-hour crisis line is 800.870.8937.

Laura Salinas works for Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

South Shore struggling to be more than it is

By Kathryn Reed

Connecting the dots of the South Shore is getting closer, but what the end picture will look like remains to be seen.

Tuesday night was the third economic forum in the last year focusing on gathering people to discuss visions for the area and starting the dialog to be able implement ideas. (The other meetings were Oct. 23, 2012, and March 5.)

On Oct. 22, 12 speakers gave brief overviews of what their entities are doing.

They were:



South Shore is trying to figure out what will be the solution for a sustainable economic future. Photo/Kathryn Reed

• Jason Drew – Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce – talking about the chamber's vision for 2020 and being active politically.

• Tom Greene – Tahoe Prosperity Center – the need for a substantial digital delivery system.

• Kim Kerr – El Dorado County – Meyers plan and recreation on the South Shore.

• Mimi Moss – Douglas County – South Shore area plan, recreation.

• Lew Feldman – attorney – next phase of Chateau project should be done in July.

• James Grant – Vail Resorts – zipline at Heavenly should open in December, rope courses next summer.

• Nancy Kerry – South Lake Tahoe – recreation plan under way, Harrison Avenue next summer, tourist core plan to TRPA in November.

• Carl Hasty – Tahoe Transportation District – loop road progressing, Stateline bike trail ready to ride, bus shelters going in, ferry service to begin environmental study phase.

• Kindred Murillo – Lake Tahoe Community College – planning for next 40 years, becoming an education and cultural center, four-year education, desire for new facilities.

• Mike Cook – Caltrans – projects on South Shore continue though 2019.

• Ivone Larson – South Tahoe High School – unparalleled opportunities through new programs in state-of-the-art facilities.

• Cindy Martinez – Bijou Community School – two-way immersion program.

A common thread weaving through their presentations is one builds upon the other. It's about education, having a knowledgeable workforce, providing recreation activities for locals and tourists, and having the transportation-infrastructure to move people from place to place.

The more than 100 people at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel were asked to use one word to describe what they heard from the speakers. They said – vision, recreation, implementation, progress, community, positivity and education.

Then it came time for four predetermined ideas to be discussed. And while recreation was a common theme at the start of the meeting, it had nothing to do with the four ideas.

The ideas were an outdoor music venue, business incubator-accelerator-innovation center, interpretive discovery center, and arts identity.

The four speakers each gave three examples of other locations that have brought the same ideas to fruition and then they talked a bit about what it took for those venues to prosper.

When it came time to find out what the audience thought should be done going forward there was not overwhelming consensus.

However, more hands went up for believing a music venue would have the greatest impact on the area, while creating an arts identity would be easiest to do.

Opinion: Americans have funny relationship with animals

By Hal Herzog

We Americans like to think of ourselves as animal lovers. But is this claim true? One way to answer this question is to follow the money.

According to government, industry and interest group stats, we spend about $50 billion on our pets annually and donate another $6 billion to animal-related and environmental charities. This sounds like a lot until you compare it to the amount we collectively devote to killing members of other species: $72 billion on hunting and fishing, $60 billion on animal research and $240 billion on meat, poultry and seafood.

In short, Americans fork out nearly seven times more toward harming animals than toward protecting them.

Our cultural schizophrenia over the treatment of other species is also reflected in our behavior. In 2010, PETA named Bill Clinton Man of the Year because he had forsworn the consumption of animal products and become a vegan – no meat, no dairy, no honey. Yet on CNN last year, while extolling the benefits of his new vegetable-only lifestyle, the former president casually added, “Now I try to eat salmon once a week.”

Hal Herzog is a professor of psychology at Western Carolina University and the author of "Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals" and the blog Animals and Us.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Placer County is set to unveil a new look for the county website with easier access to information and services available to the public. There is a meeting about it on Oct 29, 6-7pm at the Customs House, 775 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City.

• El Dorado County sheriff's Capt. Randy Peshon was appointed to the Judicial Council Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee.

• Lora Nadolski is now the executive director of Tahoe Maritime Museum.

• The Nevada Chapter of the American Planning Association has recognized League to Save Lake Tahoe Policy Analyst Shannon Eckmeyer with a Citizen Planner Award for her work on TRPA's Regional Plan update. The award goes to individuals who are not professional planners, but who have advanced or promoted the cause of planning in the public arena.

• Kelly Shanahan, doctor at Emerald Bay Center for Women's Health, is having an open house Oct. 24 from 4-6pm to celebrate five years of being a breast cancer survivor. The office is at 1154 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Learn to balance chakras

There will be a chakra balancing class on Oct. 24 from 6-7pm in South Lake Tahoe.

Diane Underwood, a hyperthermia trainer, will give a half hour lecture following the class.

Donations will be accepted.

The chakras are the main energy centers of the body. Their function is to vitalize the physical body and they affect us on physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. The size and health of our chakras are influenced by various life experiences.

The event is at 1169 Ski Run Blvd., No. 2 – next to Nepheles.

For more information or to RSVP, call (530) 545.3426.

Bears looking for food; 2 die in Tahoe



A bear in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 22 munches away on apples. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Two bears have died recently in Lake Tahoe, others have been caught and released, and many are roaming neighborhoods.

A female cub was hit and killed by a car near Zephyr Cove and a 2-year-old female was found in a stream. Nevada Department of Wildlife officials said residents in the area of the stream had reported a “lethargic, sickly looking bear” before it was found.

NDOW caught two bears in traps in Reno. One was in the area around West Plumb Lane and Ferris Lane, and the other in the Juniper Ridge area of Reno. Both were released back into the wild.

“These bears are hungry and west Reno offers a lot of temptation,” NDOW black bear biologist Carl Lackey said in a press release. “Besides the always-present human garbage, there are still fruit trees which attract these very hungry bears.”

One of the females was last caught in 2007 by NDOW. That year was another poor year for wildland nuts and berries, similar to the conditions in the Sierra Nevada this year.

NDOW still has two traps set in west Reno.

Early Tuesday morning, a 350-pound male black bear was caught in west Carson City. That bear, according to Lackey, had never been handled before and was expected to be released Oct. 23.

Lackey estimates his department has run into 10 bears in 10 days.

In addition to the ongoing issue with people leaving trash out for bears, they are also attracted to fruit on the ground and in trees. Fruit on the ground is a bear magnet.

Officials expect bear activity to continue for another month before they begin hibernating. That usually happens between Thanksgiving and Christmas as food sources become harder to find.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Expect smoke in basin from

prescribed fires

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will begin prescribed fire operations in several locations around the Lake Tahoe Basin on Oct. 23.

Weather and conditions permitting, operations will take place on the South Shore near Pioneer Trail and Al Tahoe Boulevard, Blackwood Canyon on the West Shore, Spooner Summit on the East Shore, and Bunker Drive near Tahoe City. Crews will burn approximately 1 to 2 acres per day in these locations and expect to continue operations through the weekend and into next week. Operations will remain small until the basin receives regular periods of rain and snow.

Smoke will be visible. The Forest Service strives to minimize the impacts of smoke on local communities. Smoke-sensitive residents should consider staying indoors and keeping doors, windows and outside vents closed.