JCCEO will still be here providing essential services. We are fortunate to get Dr. Davis to come here and guide JCCEO. Will we remain a viable entity in this community? Absolutely yes. There’s a special place for people like us...community servants. I thank you and salute you for all that you do to make this a successful organization. With whispers of uncertainty across the Agency, positive opening remarks from JCCEO Board of Directors Vice-President Gary Richardson at the August 2013 Staff Meeting, on the premises of the Fairfield Civic Center, were comforting for all to hear. Earlier introduced by Community Services Director Ted Debro, who presided over the meeting, Midfield Mayor Richardson also reminded staff of our great Board of Directors with which the JCCEO organization would continue to grow and do even better.

On the scene was also Pam Laning, who timely shared expected Head Start changes due to sequestration, including a 5.27% cut across all Head Start agencies this year; the elimination of 1,171 slots for young children in Alabama; recompeting for funding (DRS - Designated Renewal System) for low-scoring CAA’s; more accountability and efficiency; substantiating data; consolidation; closing classrooms; releasing staff; and a renewal of commitment, passion, and goals for excellence.

“ Aristotle said ‘Excellence is a habit, not an option.’ Head Start is not excellent because of one person but all of you who give your best every day. Have a good year; you are a great organization.”

Pam Laning, Alabama Head Start Collaboration Director

Dr. Davis, keynote speaker for the morning meeting, acknowledged Board members that were present, her administrative team, Interim Head Start Director Pat Schmidt (“She’s been my sister through this journey. Thank you for staying.”), and Ted Debro (“Thank you—that’s all I have to say.”) and exclaimed that the “State of the Agency is great; after almost 50 years, we are still here, a testimony to the resilience of our founders. We serve at God’s will and it has been that way since the Agency’s inception. People come and people go. Against all odds, our founders believed self-sufficiency and equal opportunity education were deserved by each citizen.”

Dr. Davis named the founding members of JCCEO, stating that “in December 1965 these men and women were all committed to empowering the lives of the least of these and Johnson’s War on Poverty.”

Other shared thoughts from our spirited leader included the following:

Regarding economic development and education:
“Community Action is Head Start and Head Start is Community Action. We don’t stand exclusive of one another. We are only effective when we are together.”

(Continued on page 4)
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I have always loved this time of year, not because of the obvious reasons, but because of the opportunity that it affords us. Winter gives each one of us an opportunity to put away all of the dead things and prepare for newness. How refreshing is that “Off with the old and on with the new.”

We have the opportunity to write our own story, chart our own course at JCCEO. For almost 50 years, this Agency has been steadfast in its place in this community. Regardless of who comes into these doors, our mission and purpose remain the same—to move people into self-sufficiency and to a better place. Each day, people come to and through this Agency, with the opportunity in hand for renewal. So do you! You are part of a bigger picture, a bigger mission; you are part of Community Action and we change lives!

*Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you. Never excuse yourself. Never pity yourself. Be a hard master to yourself and be lenient and kind to everybody else.*

-Henry Ward Beecher

The best to you all this holiday season.

Enjoy FOCUS in color @ www.jcCEO.org!
JCCEO P3 Joins 50 Years Forward Empowerment Celebration

The JCCEO Positive Pathways Program (P3) commemorated the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham in partnership with the City of Birmingham and the 50 Years Forward Empowerment Week. The Birmingham youth hosted a distinguished panel entitled Civil Rights: Lasting Impact on the Legal Community that was held in September 2013 at the historic Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. The keynote address, delivered by Judge Glenda Hatchett, preceded the distinguished panel, led by O. Jerome Green, President of Shorter College and former member of the Clinton Administration. Other panelists included former US Attorney Doug Jones; University of Pittsburgh Law Professor David Garrow; and Jefferson County Judge Helen Shores Lee, daughter of legendary Civil Rights Attorney Arthur Shores.

Prior to Judge Hatchett’s stop at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, she was escorted to JCCEO Headquarters Auditorium for a special rap session and photo shoot on the steps of JCCEO Headquarters with P3 participants. JCCEO staff also had opportunity to meet and greet the celebrity judge and renowned staunch supporter of children and healthy families.

A much-loved personality, Hatchett is known nationwide for her two-time Emmy nominated show, Judge Hatchett. She is also lauded as an accomplished author and barrier-breaker for women and African-Americans in corporate and legal circles. Judge Hatchett served as Georgia’s first African-American Chief Presiding Judge of a state court and the department head of one of the largest juvenile court systems in the country. "The Civil Rights 50th Anniversary is an opportunity to take a look at the history of the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on legislation, civil rights-based laws, and the recent changes in the Voters Right Act (VRA)," said Judge Hatchett.

Many thanks to Dr. Jarralynne Agee (JCCEO Community Substance Abuse Prevention Program and P3 Coordinator) and staff for their efforts to empower at-risk youth from our community, continuing the legacy of leadership and the movement towards dignity and self-sufficiency. Thanks JCCEO!

2014 GOALS: WORK—PERFORM—SERVE—GIVE—STRIVE—IMPROVE—SUCCEED—BASK

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS JCCEO!

› Holidays from work: December 24-25, 2013 and January 1, 2014
› Family
› Friends
› Employment
› A resilient JCCEO
› Strong JCCEO leadership

NAME THEM ONE BY ONE.
Third Class Begins for First in Nation Early Childhood Leadership Academy at JCCEO

The Alabama Early Childhood Leadership Academy (Academy), established through JCCEO Head Start-Early Head Start Center of Excellence in Early Childhood, one of the first ten such centers in the nation, began its third Academy class (r) in September 2013 and is to continue through May 2014. All sessions are/will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Hoover, AL.

The keynote speaker for the first session of the third Academy class was Ronald Henderson, former President and Board Chairman of the National Head Start Association since 1993 and currently, since 1975, Director of the Albina Head Start Program in Portland, Oregon. Other speakers included Dr. Marquita Furness Davis, Academy Senior Advisor/Coordinator and Executive Director of JCCEO; Dr. Kay Emfinger, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham; Pam Lanier, Director of the Alabama Head Start Collaboration; and Dr. Trellis Smith, Associate Director for the Office of School Readiness.

“Leadership and the State of Early Childhood Care and Education” was the focal point for the second session, held in November. Participants were challenged by keynote speaker Stephen Black, Special Advisor to the University of Alabama Chancellor for Outreach and Community Outreach and Founder of Impact Alabama. Many ideas/thoughts were exchanged and generated during a lively panel discussion, facilitated by Ann Florie, Executive Director of Leadership Birmingham, with powerhouse panelists and Birmingham business leaders William J. Canary, President & CEO, Business Council of Alabama; Gillian Goodrich, Co-founder, Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation; Jim Hansen, Regional President, PNC Bank; John Hudson, III, President, Alabama Power Foundation & Vice President of Public Relations & Charitable Giving; and Fred McCallum, President, AT&T. Other speakers during the two-day session included Alabama State Department of Education Chief of Staff Dr. Warren Craig Pouncy; Foster L. Ware, III, Legislative Affairs Manager in the Governmental Relations Group-Alabama Power; Stacie Goffin, Principal, Goffin Strategy Group; and Dr. Davis.

Session three of the Leadership Academy commences in January 2014.

(“Maintaining,” continued from page 1)

Regarding her return to JCCEO: “December 2007 was the last time I was in front of you. This is the oddest thing that has ever happened to me in my whole life. I came home, not because I needed to, but because I wanted to.”

Regarding who she is: “You should know your own truths and be able to share them. My own truths...I work hard. I am very impatient. I love to laugh out loud. If you tell me something, prove it. I document and so should you. I tell stories, lots of stories. I am a talker; are you surprised? I want to be an introvert but I am not. I have to process information. I love creative environments. I don’t function well doing things at the last minute. I am kind, compassionate, fair, funny. I love to have a good time. Music is my medicine. I will tell you what you need to know. I will be truthful, honest, open, even when it’s difficult. Don’t confuse my kindness, happiness for my weakness. I want you to know that I am completely flawed. I may not make all right decisions. I’m no better than anyone in this endeavor. I am nothing but a servant of God; only His grace and mercy will keep me. It is all of Him and none of me.”

Regarding the Agency: “We are fine. We are bent but not broken. We do good things for so many people. Change isn’t always easy. Consider it an adventure. You have a choice as to whether or not you want to be a part of this adventure. The door remains open to you. Some may choose to leave; the rest of us are moving forward.

Leadership isn’t always fun—it is sometimes painful, difficult, with unpopular decisions—but it is what I must do. We must learn from the past but push to the future. Remember, you owe me nothing. Whatever I do for JCCEO is because I want to, suppose to do—it’s part of our journey, mission. Don’t place me on a pedestal. I’ll fall. I’m human. I deserve respect and I will work my butt off each and every day. So, wipe your eyes, get off your knees, and get to work. You all are the heartbeat of JCCEO. (Cont’d next page)
(**Maintaining:** Continued from page 4) 

What is our state? We are open for business and ready to serve.”

Dr. Davis then gave staff the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns. Forthright in her responses, she talked about the inevitable effects of sequestration and how we must streamline services, do more with less, make sure we are fiscally solvent. “We will face another 5% cut in Head Start. We will consolidate where we can to save jobs and money.”

“Old habits die hard,” said Dr. Davis, in response to the question about a totally electronic environment. “We need to start scanning. Our document retention policy provides for 3-5 years instead of 10 years.”

When asked about the Agency’s active pursuit of grants with the perception that the Agency’s image has been tarnished, Dr. Davis said, “We have always been in the forefront of receiving federal, state, and local grants. Our ability to apply is greater than most. Diverse services [at JCCEO] provide us great opportunity. Actually, we want to do the reverse and streamline funding for a moment. It doesn’t make sense to keep applying for federal dollars when we need to clean up. Most funding grants are reimbursements. The difficulty is we can’t frontload all those grants. We pay the bills on time when the money comes in. We want to be good stewards of the $35 million we have, not one more penny. Our image has been tarnished, affected. Do I think our image has changed? Yes. A bad thing? No, it’s an opportunity to show people what we do and who we are. We do good work. We have a choice to be a victim or victor. When asked, speak the truth. We have to continue to do more with less, prove people wrong by doing what’s right.”

When questioned about promotions and raises, Dr. Davis concluded her dialogue with staff, stating, “The reality that we will get a raise is very low. We just laid off nine people; have decreased salaries. How can I give raises when people are sitting at home? At the federal level, people aren’t getting raises and our money comes from feds. We will look at places where we can do better.”

Many thanks are extended to Pat Schmidt, who recognized staff for educational accomplishments (see page 8); Family Engagement Coordinator Michelle McAlpine (who, with wonderful parting words, reminded staff to have a vision and remain focused; embrace the hard things and move forward. We have been given everything we need for such a time as this. Let us harvest our individual and collective gifts, gather our gifts, and move forward, unyieldingly forward. Have a good year!); Ted Debro, who always gives us his best presiding skills; Head Start Festival Center Manager Earl Williams, who warmly prayed for us; our helping hands staff, who assisted with distributing door prizes and ensured a comfortable meeting facility; and the entire JCCEO staff for your indulgence.

**Maintain the vision. Move forward. We are JCCEO.**

**SECURITY TIPS FOR THE WORKPLACE**

(Information provided by Palmetto Security Services, LLC)

Auto burglary is a crime of opportunity. Most thefts occur at night while the vehicle is parked outside the victim’s residence. The thieves’ favorite targets are anything of value: CDs, wallets, purses, cell phones, radar detectors, radios, speakers, and cassette tapes. Virtually any item left in plain view is apt to be stolen.

To avoid being a victim of an auto burglary, park your car in a garage or parking lot that is supervised by an attendant or in well-lit areas, away from places of concealment (e.g., alleys, behind bushes).

**ADDITIONAL AUTO BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS**

Remove visible items from your vehicle - If you leave items visible in your car, you are a target. Be aware that someone may be watching as you put a wallet, purse, or cell phone under your seat, especially at a gym. Take these with you or secure them in your trunk.

**Lock Up!** - Lock your vehicle and take your keys, even for quick errands. Lock the trunk, hatchback, or tailgate to block access into the vehicle. Close all windows, including vent or wing windows and sunroofs.

**Vehicle alarms** - Buy an alarm and use it! Many people believe that alarms no longer make a difference however; they do remain an effective deterrent to a burglar. Remember criminals are looking for the easy target.

**Vehicle Registration** - Black out the address on your registration and photocopy it. Keep the copy, not the original, in your car. You must have the registration available to present to a police officer upon request.

**Do not attach personal information to your keys** - If your keys are stolen, having your personal information or vehicle license number attached only compounds the problem. A criminal now may have access to your home, automobile, or office.

**Mail** - Do not leave outgoing or incoming mail in your car, especially where visible. This has your name and address on it.

**Garage Door Opener** - Avoid leaving this in your car if possible.

**Park Safely!** - Park in a well-lit area. Check to see that your vehicle is visible from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

When leaving work after hours or during dusk, please be sure to have a member of Palmetto Security Services, LLC walk you to your car.

Remember, only you can prevent auto burglaries by removing your valuables from your vehicle and locking them in a safe place. Help us to protect your property.

Many thanks to Carmalita Hawkins, J.D., General Manager of Palmetto Security Services, LLC, JCCEO’s security services team.

**AVOID THE POST-HOLIDAY BLUES. HERE’S HOW!**

- Spend only what you can afford. Best bet? Give the gift of your love, presence.
- Focus on celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ without the material trappings.
- Play games, laugh, share stories, break bread, bond with family and friends.
- **Lend a hand, a service, precious moments to those who are alone, less fortunate.**
I’m so glad we’ve had this time together... …just to have a laugh, or help a family. Seems we just get started and before you know it, comes the time we have to say “So Long Edsel”

Months ago he made a decision. He planned his exit. He prepared his staff. He exited stage left. Edsel Massey, former JCCEO Family Services Coordinator, threw in the towel and left the JCCEO premises for a life of leisure, traveling, and fun. To commemorate Edsel’s tenure at JCCEO (15 years), to celebrate the man Edsel, and express well wishes, a retirement party was held Friday, December 13, 2013 at JCCEO Headquarters auditorium. HS Family Services Specialist Georgia Weatherspoon, Family Services Worker and Bilingual Specialist Barbie Swift, EHS Family Services Specialist Dawn Hampton, and Bilingual Family Services Worker Zamaris Morgan worked hand-in-hand to transform the auditorium into an oasis of obvious love and gratitude (thanks to Andre Smith, Headquarters Custodian). A heavy presence of staff and friends was indicative of the respect and appreciation for Edsel, an individual who brought cheer and smiles to all of us.

JCCEO is especially proud of Edsel’s level of service and dedication during his 15-year stint at the Agency. He will be sorely missed by all...most of all, we daresay, by the thousands of children and families whose lives he touched in a mighty way.

Parting is such sweet sorrow. Thank you Edsel Massey. You’ve sown the wind. It’s your time to reap the whirlwind! Au Revoir!

Edsel proudly receives his 15-year pinning from Dr. Davis.
THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT
“AT WORK” AT JCCEO

With all the recent glitches, complaints, and roadblocks associated with the Affordable Care Act, JCCEO, once again, was part of the solution as the Agency continues to meet the changing needs of the Jefferson County citizens we serve. Sponsored by Enroll Alabama, the HS-EHS Family Services component, led by former Coordinator Edsel Massey, provided three days of training on the Healthcare Insurance Marketplace in October and November 2013 at the JCCEO Headquarters auditorium.

The major goal of The Affordable Care Act is to ensure uninsured, eligible Americans have access to quality, affordable healthcare. The resulting Health Insurance Marketplace satisfies that goal, allowing eligible Americans to access and learn more about the destination marketplace and enroll in a health plan to receive medical coverage that will begin January 2014.

The JCCEO trainings provided families and staff a warehouse of information on national healthcare, including explanations to make easier the process for individuals to receive information regarding eligibility, choices of coverage, financial help, and other questions that might arise for medical coverage.

Thanks to Edsel Massey and the Family Services team! Well done!

Enroll Alabama, a coalition of health care organizations, can be contacted at 205.918.8192.

ASK HUMAN RESOURCES

Q I recently began employment at JCCEO. When will I be eligible for health insurance coverage?

A Under the Affordable Care Act, new employees are eligible for health insurance coverage after 60 days of employment.

OTHER NEED-TO-KNOW HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS

December is Open Enrollment month for joining the BlueCross BlueShield Health Plan and/or Alternative Insurance Resources Dental Plan. If you would like to participate, or make changes to your current coverage, contact the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. Time is running out!

Employees are encouraged to join the JCCEO 403(B) Retirement Savings Plan, a deferred annuity plan that is available to all regular, full-time employees who have completed the probationary employment period. Open Enrollment occurs every quarter. The Human Resources Department will send agency-wide notification of Open Enrollment. Stay tuned! Sign up! Plan for the future!

JCCEO employees are also urged to become members of America’s First Federal Credit Union. Join today and enjoy the benefits of being a credit union member, including a hassle-free banking experience, free checking and savings accounts, easy savings through payroll deductions, mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards.

TELLING YOU JCCEO! TELL OUR CLIENTS!

Low-income citizens of Jefferson County who are seeking JCCEO Energy Assistance can visit the JCCEO website at www.jcceo.org for instructions on applying for assistance, to download the required energy assistance forms, and schedule an appointment online to speed up the eligibility process.
FOCUS extends CONGRATULATIONS to each of the following staff for their educational accomplishments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor of Science Degree</th>
<th>Early Childhood Education</th>
<th>University of Alabama</th>
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<tr>
<td>STEPHANIE COTTON</td>
<td>Kingston Cluster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science Degree</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>University of Alabama at Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DARLEEN GOLDEN</td>
<td>HS Tarrant Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>VICKI MAULDIN</td>
<td>(Cum Laude) EHS Sherman Heights</td>
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<tr>
<td>FERLINDA BRAXTON</td>
<td>HS St. Francis</td>
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Bachelor of Science Degree Early Childhood Education University of Alabama at Birmingham

KATHLEEN PEAKE
HS St. Joseph’s

DELOIS WELLS
HS St. Joseph’s

JANICE SADLER
HS West Center Street

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree Child Development/Early Childhood Education Lawson State Community College

ARTELIA SHEFFIELD (Magna Cum Laude) HS St. Joseph’s

Associate’s Degree (AS) Degree, Child Development/Early Childhood Education Lawson State Community College

NATOYA TYNDALE
EHS Sherman Heights

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential

ANTONIETA CRISTOBAL
HS Center Point

JEREMY HALL
HS Festival

DENETIA KING
HS St. Joseph’s

LARRY KING
HS West Center Street

KIARA McCANN
HS Festival

Our Mission
JCCEO seeks to reduce poverty and help low-income citizens of Jefferson County, Alabama to meet critical needs and become self-sufficient.

We deliver more than promises!

Promise of Community Action
Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live.
We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Enjoy FOCUS in color @ www.jcceo.org!