FAMILY: Learning basics

Continued from B1

As part of the literacy program, volunteers with the Literacy Council meet once a week for two hours at the family center and work with clients taking beginning and intermediate English classes.

"I really think it's one of the most vital relationships," Ritola said. "People who come to this country and who don't speak the language often feel incredibly disempowered. And by having the ability to communicate with those that they see as powerful like teachers ..., they're able to feel like they are contributing to their child's education rather than just sending them."

Erica, who withheld her last name because of her immigration status, was in class because she wants to be involved in her children's education. She said it's embarrassing not being able to speak English, and that's kept her from becoming as involved in the community.

"But overall, (I'm taking the classes) so I don't have to feel so frustrated when I go someplace and people cannot understand me," she said. "You have to wait twice as long until they can serve you, while they find an interpreter. It's much more difficult."

TO VOLUNTEER

- Mountain Area Family and Child Center has various volunteering opportunities, from reading to kids to baking for its nutrition program. For information, contact 298-0808 or www.macfc.org.
- The Literacy Council is looking for tutors, or volunteers to work in the office, community outreach and advocacy, marketing or event planning. For information, contact 254-3442 or www.litcouncil.com/index.htm.

NOTICE OF A CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORI
PROPOSED DETOURS DURING REHABILITATION OF SEVERAL BRIDG
LOCATED ON INTERSTATE 240
IN WEST ASHEVILLE

TIP Project No. B-5179 B & C WBS No. 45066.1.1

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold
zens Informational Workshop, for the above mentioned bridge(s) r
November 9, 2010, beginning at 4:00 pm and ending at 7:00 pm. Thi
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Center (2nd floor Bo
Avenue, Asheville, 28801.
The purpose of this Citizens Informational Workshop is to provide i
work involved in rehabilitating aging bridge decks along Interstate
work will require the closure of a portion of I-240 for several weeke
in April 2011, and to continue for several months. The purpose of t
to familiarize themselves with the detour routes planned during t
Interested citizens may drop by anytime between the hours of 4:
project maps on display. NCDOT representatives will be available
questions and receive comments relative to the proposed project.
comments or questions will also be provided and is encouraged. P
presentation.

Anyone desiring additional information may contact Cole Hood, P.
(828) 298-0080 or email: chood@ncd

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the American
persons who wish to participate in this workshop. Anyone requiri
Mr. Hood as early as possible so that arrangeme

November 3-8, 2010

Family literacy program gets $25K

By Sandra V. Rodriguez
SRODRIGUEZ@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

ASHEVILLE — Area families can now learn new ways to promote emerging literacy in their children thanks to a Ribbon of Hope grant awarded through the N.C. GlaxoSmithKline Foundation.

"Parents want their children to be ready for school, they want them to be successful," said Sylvie Delaunay, programming director at the Mountain Area Child and Family Center. "All of us do. ... That's what we are trying to do, say, 'Hey, you want your child to be successful. Here are some tools and ideas and strategies where you can help with that.'"

The $25,000 grant was awarded to the Literacy Council of Buncombe County, in partnership with the Mountain Area Child and Family Center, and will be used to administer Reading for Two. The program helps women strengthen basic adult literacy skills through classes for English for Speakers of Other Languages and helps develop their children's language skills.

For some families, learning activities may be overlooked in the struggle to provide their kids with basic daily needs. One goal of the program is to teach parents the importance of making time for simple activities like reading with their kids so they can develop the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in school.

The ongoing classes will teach parents different activities that will strengthen different skill sets in their kids.

"Understanding the benefits of activities like reading to kids makes parents more aware and allows them some time to put a little more focus on that than they ordinarily would if they didn't understand how important it is to kids' learning," Delaunay said.

For some clients at Mountain Area, the barriers extend from poverty to language. DiAnna Ritola knows her clients at the family center are concerned that they can't read the notes that come home from school and that they can't help their children with homework.

Please see FAMILY on B3