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From Ommie Rachel Ashford, Director, "I Can" Weir Child Care Learning Center.

Thank you for all the assistance that Golden Triangle Planning and Development District Child Care Department is giving the parents of "I Can" Weir Child Care Learning Center. I retired from twenty-five years of teaching in the public schools because I saw a need for child care in Choctaw County. Eighty-five percent of the parents I serve are low-income single working parents and single parents who attend high school and college, who don't make enough money to pay for quality childcare. I greatly appreciate the assistance that Golden Triangle gives to help the parents pay their childcare fees. The enrollment has greatly increased because of the assistance that is given to the parents and grandparents of "I Can". Since the enrollment increased, I was able to move into a larger building to make sure I have enough space to serve the parents and children who need childcare.

Mr Johnson, my goal is to make sure every parent and child gets the education they need to survive in this world. Thank you for helping me reach my goal. Please continue to put funds in the childcare budget for certificates for students and working parents.

Words cannot express my appreciation for helping the parents and me meet our educational, physical, social, economic, intellectual, and spiritual needs. If you could see the excitement on the children's faces when they learn something new, you would know they are saying "Thank You," too.

From a teenage parent....

Without the help of Golden Triangle, I could not have continued to stay in school. Thank you very much.

My name is Cortney Ivy, I am a sixteen year old parent. I have two beautiful children that I have been raising for three years with the help of my dear wonderful mother and the "I Can" Day Care Center, which has been the backbone for my success. Without the help of Mrs. Ommie Ashford and her lovely daycare staff I wouldn't be still in school today. They have been a blessing from up above for every teenage parent and parents trying to make it in this world. They have helped me tremendously. I thank God for Mrs. Ommie, I truly believe she is my guardian angel. I know I don't give her as much gratitude as I should, but I just want to let her know that she will always have a special place in my heart and I will never let Alexandria and Jamal forget who helped raised them to be respectful, smart, and intelligent children they will grow to become. This daycare is not only a daycare center it is a learning center for anyone. I have no regrets of them being a part of this wonderful place because if my kids are happy, then so am I. They come home being taught something new whether it is their basic colors or their ABC's. I can tell by the looks on their faces that they are excited to be there. I take them to this daycare knowing that they are in good hands. This is a little letter of gratitude showing my appreciation.

(edited for brevity)

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

The Golden Triangle Planning & Development District participated with the American Heart Association, Inc. Heart Walk for the fourth year. Departments were designated certain weeks for fundraising. Fundraising ranged from sales of bracelets and/or pins, to raffling cakes and gift bags with gift certificates and many goodies valued at more than \$300. Staff also purchased breakfasts and lunches prepared by fellow employees. Hearts were purchased for \$1.00 and excitedly taped to a co-worker's door, as the three employees with the most hearts were given a "pie in the face". The top two employees also received a little "sugar" from a pig. The GTPDD Heart Walk team raised \$1,636.00 to aid research for the Heart Association, Inc. Pictured are survivors Bobby Gann, Director of Aging Services and Rudy Johnson, Executive Director of the GTPDD.



See back page for Heart Facts & Fun Pictures.

TRANSPORTATION

Mary Byron, pictured right with Ondean Meadows, has been a homemaker for 7 years. Ms. Byron says about her job, "It fulfills me and it is a blessing to do for people. I know I am making a difference." Ms. Byron and her client, Ms. Ondean Meadows, have developed a close relationship in this 7 years. Ms. Meadows said of her homemaker, "I just like her, her ways and everything about her."



Mary Ella Lee, pictured left with client Mattie Colvin, states "My job is a blessing and I don't know what I would do if I was not working. I love meeting and helping all these nice people. They are all beautiful." Her client, Ms. Colvin, says she feels like Mary Lee is a daughter and "I

know God had a hand in sending her to me."

The goal of the Homemaker Service is to assist disabled and functionally impaired older persons to remain in their homes by providing assistance with the activities of daily living such as housekeeping, laundry, meal planning and shopping.

Transportation is one of the most common needs expressed by older adults. The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District's transportation program makes it possible for older persons to obtain rides for essential trips, such as medical appointments, business errands, shopping and other activities. The program operates on a demand response basis with riders calling a day in advance to schedule a ride. The program is expanding to offer rides to the general public. Older adults will continue to ride free while the general public will be required to pay a fee of \$2.00 per trip.



For more information about this program or to schedule a ride, call the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District at (662)324-7860 and ask for the transportation program.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Legal services help older persons experiencing problems in civil matters to obtain advice, counseling and information. Services are provided either by a licensed attorney or trained paralegal. Types of matters for which help is typically sought include health care, public benefits (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SSI, food stamps), consumer complaints, nursing home resident rights, guardianship/conservatorship, wills and estates.

The Golden Triangle Planning and Development District/Area Agency on Aging contracts with North Mississippi Rural Legal Services to provide legal assistance to older adults in the planning and service area.



For more information concerning part-time employment opportunities, please call Bobby Gann, Director of Aging at the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District at (662)324-7860.

EMPLOYMENT

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is designed to increase older worker employment opportunities in the general labor market as well as in community service. Income eligible persons 55 years of age and over are recruited, trained and referred to job openings with local employers. The ultimate goal is to place the older worker in non-subsidized employment.