

Local child care providers to be recognized - **ObserverToday.com** | News, Sports, Jobs, Community Information – Dunkirk, NY May 7th 2010

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CASSADAGA - The Chautauqua Child Care Council is sponsoring a Provider Appreciation Dinner at the Cassadaga Legion on Thursday to honor local child care providers as part of an international celebration called "Provider Appreciation Day." Child care organizations and parents across the globe are joining together the Friday before Mother's Day to celebrate Provider Appreciation Day. The event is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers, school-age program staff, child care center directors and staff, and all those who work with children in a variety of ways and are responsible for their education and care.

In 2008, it was estimated that there were nearly 2.8 million children, under the age of 5 in child care. According to Bonny Scott-Sleight, Chautauqua Child Care Council Director of Chautauqua Opportunities, child care providers care for more than 2,000 children under the age of 5 in Chautauqua County. "There are over 1,500 children in different after school programs throughout the county, she said. "The children and parents of Chautauqua Opportunities Inc. depend on our child care providers.

This special day was created to recognize the hard work and dedication of providers and to acknowledge their contributions to high-quality care." Linda K. Smith, Executive Director of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) said provider recognition is important to all communities. "By applauding the dedication of child care providers we remind our communities of the importance of high-quality child care and let providers everywhere know that we recognize and value their important work," Smith said.

NACCRRA is the lead sponsor of Provider Appreciation Day. The national event was started in 1996 by a group of volunteers in New Jersey. The founding organizers saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents. Momentum and support for this event has grown each year and recognition presently includes individuals and government organizations throughout North America, Europe and Asia. "It takes a special person to work in the child care field and these individuals are often unrecognized," said Scott-Sleight. "This day offers an opportunity for parents to show their child care providers their appreciation."

To learn more about Provider Appreciation Day or for ideas on how you can thank your child care provider, contact Chautauqua Child Care Council at 661-9430.

The Chautauqua Child Care Council's mission is to work "to foster collaborative relationships in order to build a strong responsive child care support system meeting the needs of all of Chautauqua County's families, child care providers, businesses and communities." The Chautauqua Child Care Council is a division of Chautauqua Opportunities Inc.