



...Because every child deserves a childhood

November 8, 2013

Gipson to read to Astor's Head Start children at event in Poughkeepsie November 12th

Senator concerned about federal cuts to Astor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POUGHKEEPSIE – Spurred by what he saw two months ago at an event over federal budget cuts to Astor's Head Start and Early Head Start programs, State Senator Terry Gipson, D-41st District, will return to Astor Tuesday to meet with the children and staff at a Head Start classroom. Gipson will read several stories to the children, starting at 10 AM, November 12th, at the Astor Early Childhood Center on 50 Delafield Street.

The Senator attended an event at the center September 9th, when staff members placed empty chairs outside the building to represent the 118 slots that had to be eliminated due to cuts triggered by the federal budget deadlock. He said he decided to return and read to the children to demonstrate his continued concern and support.

The federal "sequestration" resulted in a loss of \$340,000 in federal funds this year for Astor's Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Poughkeepsie, Wappingers Falls, Millerton, Red Hook, Beacon, Wingdale and Pine Plains.

"It has been a pleasure working with Astor and supporting their important work in our community by fighting for state funding and standing with them against the negative impact the federal government's 'sequestration' has had on their Head Start and Early Head Start programs," Gipson said. "Promoting early literacy is important to growing our children's minds and that's why it's important for me to join these wonderful kids and this great staff. The more we do today for the education of our children; the better off our community will be tomorrow and for future generations."

Astor Executive Director and CEO James McGuirk, Ph.D., said he was gratified to learn about Gipson's upcoming visit.

"Clearly, the senator cares enough to do more than just fight to obtain the appropriate funds for our programs; he's coming back to the classroom to see our kids learn," McGuirk said. "We're grateful and touched by his support."

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About Astor

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) has been providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving more than 6,000 children and families annually in over 33 locations, Astor's current range of services in the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties) and the Bronx include: Residential Programs (for children ages 5 - 14 who have severe behavior and mental health challenges); Early childhood Programs (Astor operates the Early Head Start and Head Start Programs in Dutchess County, a federal early childhood program for low-income families); and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services (outpatient mental health services).

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