

The Renee Jones Empowerment Center is a new non-profit organization that was founded to foster positive opportunities for at-risk individuals. The overarching goal of this organization is to increase self-esteem through intensive motivation clinics and workshops that confront real life issues, and provide for life-like experiences. These workshops are designed on the philosophy of determination, self-reliance, and the desire to achieve all your dreams. The workshops aim to prepare individuals for the job market and teach them of personal budgeting.

The Center has worked in the past with Head Start, M.A.D.D., The Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence, and Cuyahoga Community College. They have provided great strides in building a network that is dedicated to helping people in crisis and the community as a whole.

In 1999, the 1st Celebrate Empowerment Black Tie Gala honored 78 individuals who became self-reliant. This year, the Center hopes to honor even more individuals that have worked themselves out of the constraints of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing and honoring a wonderful organization that is dedicated to helping fellow individuals in the community, the Renee Jones Empowerment Center, on their 2nd Annual Celebrate Empowerment Gala.

CHILD CARE WORKERS WERE  
HEROES, TOO

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 11, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, since the terrible events of September 11th, we have all read account of the bravery and heroism displayed by Americans in the face of horrific terror in New York, Washington, and on board hijacked airliners. These men and women—fire fighters, police, rescue workers and airline passengers—thought not about their personal safety and security, but about their responsibilities to others. They did their jobs, but they often did much more. By their bravery, they displayed the very best qualities and earned our gratitude forever.

A recent column by Sue Shellenbarger in the Wall Street Journal draws our attention to another group of people who confronted the dangers of September 11 with great courage: child care workers. We have heard little about their determination to protect the children in their charge despite serious dangers. Ms. Shellenbarger recounts harrowing examples of children trapped and in danger whose lives were likely saved by dedicated child care workers.

It is worth noting that child care workers are among the very lowest paid workers. Yet millions of Americans daily entrust their children to the care of these women and men in order to earn a living for their families. The poor pays of child care workers contributes to massive turnover that undercuts the quality of services for our children. We must make a greater commitment to improving the quality of child care for the sake of our children, and to properly honor those whose dedication and

courage for their young charges is undiminished by dangers of themselves.

The article follows:

TEACHERS SAFELY EVACUATED CHILDREN  
CAUGHT IN ATTACKS

(By Sue Shellenbarger)

Is worksite child care safe? Amid few fears for children, many parents wonder whether bringing kids to high-profile, visible workplaces is unwise.

Among all the tales of Sept. 11 heroism are two stories that should reassure parents: How teachers at the World Trade Center and Pentagon child-care centers safely evacuated the children in their charge.

The 14 teachers at Children's Discovery Center in 5 World Trade Center, a building that later party collapsed had taken in only 42 early arrivals by the time the first plane hit that morning.

As the ground shook, teachers grabbed each child's emergency records, took babies in their arms and, following a drill they practiced every month, led the children outside, leaving behind their own purses and, in some cases, their own shoes, says Kristin Thomas, head of northeast operations for Knowledge Learning, the San Rafael, Calif., operator of the center. Some parents raced in to pick up children, too, leaving staffers with just 28 kids.

Once outside, the ragtag band was barred by police from the preset evacuation destination, 7 World Trade. Then, the second plane hit. Split into two groups by flying debris and hordes of fleeing people, teachers began walking north. One group picked up several shopping carts from a grocery store and helped toddlers inside, telling them, "We're going for a little ride," Ms. Thomas says. Some passing businessmen tore off their white shirts to cover the children.

Some teachers, with babies propped on their hips, were soon barefoot; the paper booties they'd donned in the center's infant room had shredded from all the walking. Armed with the emergency records, staffers borrowed phones to get messages to parents. Both groups trekked more than a mile before coming to rest, one in a hospital and the second in a preschool. All the kids were returned safe to parents; in the preschool, many were napping on cots as parents arrived.

At the Pentagon, Shirley Allen, director of the Children's World Learning Center, had plenty to worry about after Flight 77 plowed into the building. Her husband, a naval officer, worked in an office directly in the path. But Ms. Allen, a 12-year child-care veteran, thought only of evacuating the 148 children in her center, located about 30 yards from the Pentagon. In a process also honed by monthly drills, she and her 36 staffers rounded up youngsters, put babies in mobile cribs and set out across a park.

Hundreds of panicky workers ran past the children. Rescue workers relocated Ms. Allen's group five times. Again and again, she had to demand loudly that security officers accompany the kids as they moved. Heart pounding, she fought fears that a child would be lost.

But with the children, she and the teachers, many of them equally experienced, kept calm. "The children were relaxed, because they looked into their teachers' faces and saw they were relaxed," Ms. Allen says. To distract them, teachers played pat-a-cake and sang "Eensy Weensy Spider."

Not until three hours later, with the children safe and most of them back in parents' care, did Ms. Allen allow herself to think of her husband. She burst into tears. Two hours later, she finally learned he was safe. Three children at the center, Ms. Allen says, her

voice breaking, lost a parent. The center reopened Monday.

Child-care teachers generally aren't paid enough to reflect the awesome responsibilities they bear. Both the Pentagon and the World Trade child-care centers were high-quality facilities subsidized by employers. That support helped produce the policies, training and employee-retention programs that prepared these staffers so well. Bright Horizons Family Solutions, a high-quality child-care concern, won't even open a worksite facility without employer support, in subsidies or facilities.

Operations chiefs at several big child-care chains say they'll study government or military locations more carefully before opening new centers, but none said they plan to pull back. Joseph Silverman, president of Day Care Insurance Services, an Encino, Calif., brokerage, says exits should be safe and accessible, and centers probably shouldn't be above the second floor.

That said, worksite child care is still one of the safest places to leave a child. "Do I keep a day-care facility out of the Pentagon? Probably not," Mr. Silverman says. "You start thinking that way: Do I keep a day-care facility off an earthquake fault line? Do I keep a day-care facility off a flight path? And where do you stop?" Roughly three million children attend child-care centers safely every day.

In dangerous times, parents want their kids near them. Child-care center enrollments haven't fallen in Oklahoma City since the 1995 attack on the federal building there, a blast that killed 19 kids in a center. Centers in U.S. government buildings have since grown about 10%.

Perhaps parents' biggest job is banishing fear—putting on a calm face, as these teachers did, so children can stay calm. "Children, of course, always have giants and monsters in their minds, but now the adults do, too," says Bright Horizons' Jim Greenman. "At some level, we have to remember: We know how to cope with this."

TRIBUTE TO MR. ROBERT G.  
DAVID

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 11, 2001

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Mr. Robert G. David, a notable citizen of Northville and a constituent in Michigan's Eleventh Congressional district. Mr. David has served his community with distinction and honor and has recently been bestowed with two special awards.

In 1997, while still an undergraduate at Michigan State University, Mr. David initiated the Campus Walking Tour program that would eventually foster the creation of the present Student Alumni Foundation. Since this graduation in 1978, Mr. David founded his own business, the David Group, and he is an executive producer to the nationally syndicated Glenn Haegge radio show. In addition, Mr. David has co-chaired Celebrate Northville, which organizes the Fourth of July Parade and fireworks for the city, served as president of the Broad School Alumni Association Board of Directors, and been an elected precinct delegate.

Mr. David has been honored by his Alma Mater with two prestigious awards. In 1999, the president of Michigan State presented Mr. David with the Alumni Service Award. This