

Nurturing the Next Generation

Rainbow Village Program Spotlight: Early Childhood Development Center

When breaking the cycles of homelessness, poverty and domestic violence in the lives of the families we serve, Rainbow Village is dedicated to serving the whole family. One of the most important ways we do that is through our Early Childhood Development Center – providing a place for young children to thrive emotionally, socially and educationally, while their parents work, secure in the knowledge that their children are in a safe and loving place.

A regular fixture at the Rainbow Village Community Center since 2016, Dr. Zandra L. McDonald has served as everything from an Assistant Afterschool Program Coordinator to Cook to PreK Teacher at the Early Childhood Development Center. Today she serves as Interim Director – overseeing the entire ECDC. She began her career as an interrelated special educator serving middle school students in Cobb County and went on to work in private school education with primarily 2nd and 3rd graders. She has also been



a youth pastor at New Life International Family Church under Bishop C. Jeronn Williams and First Lady Dr. Latoya K. Williams, MSW since 2003. As if all of that wasn't enough to keep her busy, Zandra recently earned her PhD in Management and Organizational Leadership from the University of Phoenix.

One look at her resume and her love of children is apparent. Although, a couple of years ago, Zandra decided she needed “something different.” She was drawn to the mission at Rainbow Village and the fact that the organization endeavors to help the whole person, not merely put a band-aid on the problem. She loved the fact that Rainbow Village doesn't just break the cycles of homelessness, poverty and domestic violence; it rebuilds families. She wanted to be a part of it... and an integral part of it she has become.

“I am entirely dedicated to whatever I put my mind to doing,” said Zandra. “I love children and want to see the best for them... in every area of their lives. All of the teachers and administrators at Rainbow Village do a fantastic job of working with the children. It's an amazing program that focuses on fully meeting the needs of the children we serve. I love working at Rainbow Village.”

Not entirely like traditional early education programs, Rainbow Village grants its administrators and teachers the freedom to adjust to fit the needs of the individual child. Zandra describes a 4-year-old in the program when she first arrived at Rainbow Village who was what they call a “runner.” A very busy child

who was prone to tantrums, he was often found climbing the walls or taking off at full speed up and down the halls. Calls to his mother throughout the day were not uncommon. Zandra leaned on her experience in special education – where she often worked with children who had varying degrees of emotional disabilities and found this child’s sweet spot. In the time since, his behavior did a complete 180. He has grown so much as a student, that Zandra knows when he leaves Rainbow Village, he’ll be prepared for future educational success in Kindergarten and beyond. In another instance, a two-year-old boy was acting out so much that his mother had been asked to remove him from another preschool program. Once at Rainbow Village, they soon realized the boy was intellectually advanced – putting him on par with students in PreK. Sensing that he wasn’t receiving the stimulation he needed, the teachers adjusted their teaching plans to accommodate him. He continues to thrive today.



Rainbow Village, Inc.

“It’s my role to be a nurturer with an understanding of what’s going on with the child – and not just academically,” Zandra added. “Some of the children in our care have emotional issues, many have seen too much in their young lives. What we are doing here is so important – we’re providing a holistic environment where the children in our care can flourish and learn.”

Located at 3402 Fox Street in Duluth, the Early Childhood Development Center at Rainbow Village is OPEN TO

THE PUBLIC and SPACES ARE AVAILABLE! We serve up to 60 infants and children, ages 6 weeks old to age four. The Center builds children’s cognitive skills, capacity for problem solving and self-esteem, while observing and documenting skills and knowledge in four developmental areas: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language. Call Zandra and her team today to schedule a tour of our classrooms and facility at (678) 878-4889 ext. 1203.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RAINBOW VILLAGE
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER!**