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Fred Corredor: Hi, my name is Fred Corredor. She is my daughter, Sophia. She is [Inaudible] right now to the River Head Center -- of course, the Head Start. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Head Start, the whole institution, because they have done a lot of stuff -- the good stuff for -- for me, for my kids, of course, and for my family. I got involved with the Head Start about four years ago. I have an older son.

He's older; he's eight years old. Sophia's four. And we are involved with the -- the center in Bridge Hampton, and my son started going there. He was -- he was about four years old, and it was very impressive for us because that was the perfect transition between home and school. Sometimes the kids have trouble when they first start the kindergarten because they don't have any transition, they don't know the colors, they don't know the numbers. And at the beginning we thought Head Start was just like a day care, but they became the biggest help for us as new parents, as hard workers.

Because, you know, sometimes we have to spend more than the normal time working, both my wife and I, and sometime we cannot afford to pay a babysitter. And Head Start was the -- the biggest thing back then. With the -- with the time, we started seeing in our kid this development. He started the counting, he became more outgoing -- no shy at all. He did socialize perfect with the other kids, and that was something we missed before because he was the only -- the only kid. He had no company at home.

And it is a beautiful story because when he was like three or four months in the Head Start, there was a program there when you could choose among three different careers, music, art, or the other one -- I don't remember what it was. And we were back then trying to find out what was our son's talent. You know, all fast they -- they come here to this life with a special talent, and I think it's our task as parents to identify what is that talent. And through the Head Start, I picked out music because I -- I play music myself and I say, "I think my -- my son he has that feeling and he..." I -- I knew he had a good ear.

And they gave us a bonus for two classes of piano -- piano lessons in a school in South Harbor. And I said, "Okay, let's take the chance. Let's take" -- Nicholas is his name -- "let's take him there." And he was the younger of all the kids -- was about 20 kids ages between four years old and 12 -- and the teacher was amazed. The first class he said, "This kid has a special talent and you should keep bringing with him here to the class." Of course, I had to pay a little bit after the two bonuses I -- I had spent.

But it was a beautiful, beautiful experience because, after that, Nicholas became the -- kind of the -- the star of the center because he was the youngest and one -- one of the most talented. Right now, after three years, he's in third level of piano, he's reading music beautifully, he's playing classical music, and music became part of his life. It's part of his routine.

And as parents -- and this going to be one of my advice for parents -- is we have to provide our kids with any discipline -- arts, painting, music -- whatever they can combine with the -- with the toys and the -- and the playground because I think -- my -- my -- my wife and I think you have to have two professions in your life. One is the one that's going feed your body. It's going to be your profession; you're going to be an architect, a doctor. And you need another profession to feed your soul and your mind. And, thanks to the Head Start, we could find that way to fill our kid's soul, and now it is part of his life.

Now with Sophia, she is four, and with the experience we have with -- with Nicholas before, we started to find out what is her natural talent. She is going, I think, for dance like ballet. She -- she loves painting. She's very smart. And now next year, she's going to start the kindergarten and she's pretty much ready to start because she was a little shy, now she is very outgoing. She makes friends very easy. And she's writing her name at least. She recognizes all colors.

And the other thing I would like to -- to say about the Head Start is not just the kids, it's the parents. Head Start is helping parents to find out what the trouble are at home. Sometimes when you, after a -- a hard day of working, you are home and your kids are running, screaming, or something, and sometimes you -- you don't know you are acting the wrong way. You start screaming or getting desperate or stressing more your kids. And through the Head Start and some programs they have, they -- they invite us to assist like a disciplinary program with the kids.

And at that -- those programs we could find out that sometimes the way we act is not the best one. And it was great because -- because after that, the -- the very same day after the meeting, we were having dinner and one of the kids did something and my wife look at me and said [Inaudible] because we talked about that like a couple of hours before that happened and we knew exactly what to do. So after that we tried to -- not to scream and not -- like to calm down. And we learn a lot of stuff thanks to the -- to the Head Start programs.

And I would like to take this opportunity, as well, to tell the other fathers, especially the -- the men that get involved with this institution, with the program, and in general with the kids' education, I was thinking about something yesterday. I was looking through the -- the window of my house and I saw my neighbor walking the dog, and I said, "How come people spend 20-25 minutes in the morning to walk the dog and another 25 minutes to walk the dog in the afternoon, and when you ask him if they play with their kids they said no because they don't have time?"

So I was thinking about that, and I said it is very good to be a father, to be a parent. It's a privilege, it's a bless, and I think if we get involved in all the process of education of our kids, they're going to be better persons when they are adults. They are going to remember the good times; they're going to to have good memories. And somewhere I read that when you are a good son, you become a good father. So if you have good memories of your father, if you have good memories of your mother, you want to provide your kids -- your own kids with the same care, with the same love.

I invite the other -- the fathers, all the parents, to get involved seriously in the kids' education because, for them, kids they don't used to speak out, to say I need this or need that, they just act. And we need to understand the way they are acting and the way we have to handle the situations. I would love to -- to do more stuff for the Head Start. Sometimes the time is -- is a problem, but if -- if we create like a parent's department or something and we can do a lot of things for -- for our kids, for the schools because, when you look around, all the parents -- you have carpenters, you have electricians, you have a lot of people.

You know, you put just a little imagination you can make very, very good stuff for your kids. They can learn how to -- can they be someday a carpenter or electrician or do more projects. Or they... Just the fact of the kids to see your father or your mother with you in your classroom is a big deal for them.

So I -- I want to thank -- to thank all the institution, all the staff of the Head Start because they -- they gave us the best for our kids, and it's something we -- we always appreciate. We will never forget. And no matter if we -- if our kids are already the high school or whatever, if we can be part of the Head Start, we'll be more than pleasing to cooperate and be part of this beautiful family. Thank you very much.

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