

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Media contacts:

Lisa Coffey

Robert-Leslie Publishing

847-733-8100

[lisa.coffey@robert-leslie.com](mailto:lisa.coffey@robert-leslie.com)

Charlene Blohm

C. Blohm & Associates

608-839-9800

[charlene@cblohm.com](mailto:charlene@cblohm.com)

### **Local Preschoolers Learn African Music to Boost Cultural Awareness, Arts in Early Education**

*As Illinois legislature considers "Preschool for All" initiative,  
local organizations celebrate Week of the Young Child with learning activities*

**Event:** African Music and Arts-in-Education Workshop  
Child Care Center of Evanston, 1840 Asbury Ave., Evanston, Ill.  
Friday, April 7, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**Sponsors:** Robert-Leslie Publishing and S.O.U.L. Creations

#### **Agenda:**

Cultural enrichment sessions will run every 15-20 minutes starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Child Care Center of Evanston. With the guidance of top educator, Gilo Kwesi Logan, children will experiment with music from West Africa using several types of drums and other instruments. JT Gator, the music-loving character from *The InvestiGator Club™* Prekindergarten Learning System by Robert-Leslie Publishing, will join in the activities. Photos and video may be taken at any time. Interview opportunities are also available.

#### **Purpose:**

Celebrate the Week of the Young Child, April 2-8, by honoring children's natural curiosity and capabilities and showing appreciation for the caregivers who work to improve opportunities for all children. The African music program introduces children to the concepts of cultural awareness and creative expression while providing a fun learning experience. The arts are critical to healthy child development. Numerous studies indicate that high-quality preschool is linked to better academic and socioeconomic outcomes for children. Currently, the Illinois legislature is considering the "Preschool for All" initiative as part of the Fiscal Year 2007 budget, which calls for \$45 million in new funding each of the next three years to ensure all children receive high-quality early education.

#### **Background:**

The Child Care Center of Evanston ([www.childcarecenterofevanston.org](http://www.childcarecenterofevanston.org)) is a full-day preschool serving 2-1/2 to 5 year-old children. Using Piaget's "learning through play" theory, the teachers strive to provide hands-on experiences where children actively participate in play and exploration to introduce basic reading, math, science, and language concepts.

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S.O.U.L. Creations ([www.soul-creations.org](http://www.soul-creations.org)) is a non-profit, community-based educational agency. The staff is committed to enriching students' quality of life through educational interactive exhibitions and social, cultural and educational programs at schools, community centers and churches throughout Chicago. Based on the founder's years of world travel and his educational background, the S.O.U.L. programming meets over 25 Illinois state learning standards in five academic areas.

Robert-Leslie Publishing, based in Evanston, is dedicated exclusively to early childhood education. *The InvestiGator Club* is a fully integrated learning system for children ages 3-5 that provides explicit, scaffolded instruction in critical school readiness areas, such as literacy and math. A colorful, endearing cast of animal characters guide children through a series of investigations and encourage them to conduct experiments, build structures, sing and dance, engage in dramatic play, and more. Participating classrooms receive Club memberships for teachers, children and their parents, providing them access to a members-only area of the Club's interactive Web site: [www.investigatorclub.com](http://www.investigatorclub.com).