

CONNECTING FAMILIES WITH SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS FOR SUMMER EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The 23rd Annual Summer and Beyond Fair took place on Saturday, February 15 at Woodside Event Center at St. Michael's in Broadview Heights. This annual event offers educators, families and those who support children and youth with disabilities an opportunity to talk to representatives from agencies and organizations that offer academic, social-emotional, therapeutic and recreational support year round in order to assist in developing independence, enhance growth and development, and prepare for post secondary options of students with disabilities. At the event, there was face painting, balloon sculptures and a roving magician provided by Zap Entertainment, as well as a craft table supported by Northeast Ohio Parent Mentors. New York Life Insurance provided families with free fingerprinting. ■



Shaping LEADERS OF TOMORROW

High school students who are in student government or who are responsible for directing student clubs or leaders in their schools from Richmond Heights Local Schools and other surrounding districts attended a Leadership Workshop at the ESC of Northeast Ohio on February 6. They participated in a number of hands-on activities that strengthened their leadership, communication and collaboration skills.



WE BUILD BRIDGES FOR . . .

Educators • Districts • Agencies • Organizations • Universities & Colleges
Students • Adult Learners • Families & Communities • Businesses

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE EASY FOR STUDENTS

Independence Local Schools and Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools both started a chapter of Drug Free Clubs of America (DFCA). After completing a voluntary, confidential drug test, drug free students receive a photo ID "Club Card," recognizing them as members. Members use their club cards at school and participating businesses to receive rewards tailor made for DFCA. Re-testing of random members occurs periodically throughout the school year. Participants keep their privileges and continue getting rewarded as long as they test drug free at any given time.

Random tests empower members to say "I can't, I could get tested." When a member tells a friend "I can't," the friend knows that to be true because the member has been seen getting rewards. Peer pressure is stopped in its tracks, and the member escapes a tough situation drug-free.

This is the second year for the program at Independence High School. Currently, 60% of the student body is a member of DFCA. Throughout the year, they are receiving special rewards. Student members enjoyed a luncheon sponsored by Tom + Chee.

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools launched its club in the fall with 32 student members. "We believe that it is the role of the schools to be bold and proactive in partnering with families to do everything that we can to support our students inside and outside of the classroom," said Middle/High School Principal Pat Coleman, Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools. "In reviewing different agencies, Drug Free Clubs of America was perfectly aligned with how we viewed this important issue. We value being proactive, emphasizing and recognizing the positive decisions our kids are making whenever possible."

One of the district's early kick off events was hosting a Chipotle catered "Taco Tuesday" lunch for all DFCA members. "It was incredibly popular and well received, and we know many students will request applications for next year."

"We hope that this brings a positive climate to Independence High School, in which students making healthy choices are being rewarded and students who are put in tough situations have a healthy and easy way out," said Counselor and Co-advisor Mary Dolejs, Independence High School. "This is simply a tool that we should afford all of our students." ■

"I couldn't be more excited about our Independence chapter of the Drug Free Clubs of America. Our community and school board recognize the significant responsibility of helping our students make positive choices about healthy living. We have adopted a drug education curriculum, work with our Independence Police Department on prevention, and try to keep a forward-thinking approach of guidance towards those healthy choices.

- Ben Hegedish, Superintendent,
Independence Local Schools



Administration from Cuyahoga Heights, DFCA director and Cleveland Clinic nurses on first testing day.



Independence Local Schools' DFCA members are treated to pizza.



Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools' DFCA members are treated to a Taco Tuesday.

"I am so incredibly proud of our students who have committed to DFCA. They have chosen to make a statement about who they are and what they stand for and I support that 100%. They do this at a time in their lives where peer pressure can rule the day. It is wonderful for them to know that they have others that will support them at this time of their lives.

- Tom Evans, Superintendent,
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

WE ALL COUNT IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY!

ESC of Northeast Ohio Encouraging Participation in the U.S. Census

Cuyahoga County residents are in the process of completing the 2020 Decennial Census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. As the federal government's largest statistical agency dedicated to providing current facts and figures about America's people, places, and economy, the U.S. Census Bureau uses this data to shape communities nationwide. It has never been easier to respond on your own, whether online, over the phone or by mail—all without having to meet a census taker.

For those wishing to complete the questionnaire by phone call 844-330-2020, or call the number associated with your preferred language. Phone lines are open every day from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Eastern Time.

Why We Do It

The U.S. Constitution requires that each decade we take a count— or a census—of America's population. The United States has counted its population every 10 years since 1790. Federal law protects the confidentiality of all individual responses the Census Bureau collects.

The results of the census determine your congressional representation as well as federal funding for states and communities. Every year, more than \$675 billion goes toward hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and more.

When You Can Take the 2020 Census

By April 1, 2020, households will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. You will then have three ways to respond, by phone, mail, and for the first time ever, you will be able to respond to the census online.

Everyone Must Complete the 2020 Census

If you live in the United States, you are required by law to participate in the 2020 count, even if you recently completed another survey from the Census Bureau. A complete and accurate count is critical, as the results of the 2020 Census will affect congressional representation, boundaries for school districts, and funding allocations for programs and services that we all enjoy, from our parks to the history center, libraries, and resources. Census data helps businesses determine if they should stay and grow, relocate here, or leave. An accurate population count impacts all of us.

Where Do I Count? Addressing Special Circumstances

For some people, it's not always clear how they should count themselves or the people in their home. These circumstances can include:

- » Group quarters, which are places where groups of people live (such as on-campus student housing, correctional facilities, military bases, health care facilities, and shelters).
- » People who live in more than one place.
- » People who are moving on Census Day.
- » People who are born or die on Census Day.
- » People experiencing homelessness.

Who Counts as Part of Your Residence?

If you are filling out the census for your household, you should count anyone who is living there as of April 1, 2020. This includes anyone who is living and sleeping there most of the time.

Citizens of foreign countries who are living in the United States, including members of the diplomatic community, should be counted at the U.S. residence where they live and sleep most of time.

Citizens of foreign countries who are visiting the United States on vacation or a business trip on April 1, 2020, should not be counted.

Students

- » Boarding school students below the college level should be counted at their parental residence.
- » College students who are living at home should also be counted at their parental residence.
- » College students who live away from home should count themselves at the on- or off-campus residence where they live and sleep most of the time, even if they are home or on break on Census Day.
- » U.S. college students who are living outside the United States while attending college outside the country are not counted in the census.
- » Foreign students living in the country while attending college in the United States should be counted at the on- or off-campus residence where they live and sleep most of the time.

Counting Young Children

It is important to remember to count any children who are living with you. This includes:

- » All children who live in your household, including grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and the children of friends.
- » Children who split their time between households, if they are living with you on April 1, 2020.
- » Newborn babies, even those who are still in the hospital on April 1, 2020.

The Decennial Census is no easy undertaking. That is why it is important that each person in Cuyahoga County is counted. Do your part – when you receive your invitation to respond in the mail in the spring, take ten minutes to answer 10 questions.

Your participation in the census will help to ensure federal funding flows right back here to Cuyahoga County and stays in our community. Learn more: visit 2020census.gov and follow the US Census Bureau on social media: facebook.com/uscensusbureau or twitter.com/uscensusbureau. ■



LEADERSHIP COURSES AT INDEPENDENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LIFE



Students at Independence Middle School (IMS) are learning about how to apply effective habits to their own lives after taking a course in leadership. The idea of introducing leadership courses into the school came after a discussion between IMS Principal Jamie Vanek and teacher Karl Schuld. Vanek wanted to introduce the idea of leadership to students and spoke with Schuld in the summer of 2019 about creating a sixth-grade leadership class. The class came to fruition and centered around the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey.

The class examines each habit individually and has a discussion paired with an activity. Schuld also teaches the students about the “R Factor,” a method described by Tim Kight. Kight is a nationally-known speaker and author who founded “Focus 3,” which aims to help companies align their leadership, behavior, and culture to achieve next level results.

The R Factor is defined by the equation Event (E) + Response (R)=Outcome (O). Schuld teaches the students Kight's method along with the idea that every person only has 20 sq. ft. of control in their life and when an event enters this space, the response is crucial. In addition, he teaches Kight's idea of “pause,” where, for example, if a conversation is not going well, a person should think about the outcome and change their response. “The students are using it in their own life. This is one of the only subjects where it's all about them,” said Schuld.

The sixth-grade students were so interested in the course that they approached Vanek about adding leadership classes to seventh grade for the fall 2020. In December 2019, eighth-grade students, led by Emily

Richards, approached Vanek about adding a leadership class for the eighth graders for the second semester. Schuld prepared to teach the eighth-grade class the same book focusing on highly effective habits and Kight's “R Factor.” In February 2020, student Kendall Krsak reached out to Kight by direct messaging him on social media. Schuld had also reached out to Kight via email and he answered both inquiries personally.

Also in February, Schuld along with Vanek and teacher Michelle Koussa, attended a leadership workshop focusing on Kight's “Focus 3” ideas in New Albany, Ohio. Schuld said the idea of R Factor, “Changed my life immensely. It benefited the kids as much as it did me.”

On March 5, Kight Skyped with Schuld's class, talking about the different parts of his life such as being a grandfather, and the new challenges that presents. IMS is one of the only schools to have a dedicated leadership class and other schools have come in to observe how IMS teaches the course.

The eighth-grade students renamed their class, “Leading a Legacy” and came up with possible names for the future fifth, sixth and seventh-grade classes. Students created a symbol for the leadership courses and the artwork was completed by Independence Primary School Art Teacher Mike Gruber. The hope is that this class can expand to be available for all grade levels in the middle school. ■

Cover Photo: IMS principal, teachers and students

STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN FIRST RING STUDENT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The First Ring Student Leadership Institute, now in its second year, focuses on building community awareness and leadership through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), a research method that empowers youth by focusing on the issues important to them and by emphasizing student-adult collaboration in developing solutions. High School students from both Cuyahoga Heights and Richmond Heights Local Schools have been participating.

First Year Student Leaders selected an issue and conducted research on the causes and possible solutions to that issue. Topics included changing school culture through student/faculty relationships, athletic relations/communications, stress management, impact of a school levy, mentors, substance abuse, school climate, mental health, academic rigor, and integrating students through school spirit activities. They were guided by an adult mentor from their district.

Seniors from 11 districts returned to the Institute this year as Year 2 Student Leaders with a focus on putting their recommendations into action and mentoring First Year teams. Students role played how to influence decision-makers and discussed efforts to raise awareness of their issues and get their messages out. Year 2 students helped their First Year counterparts with a panel discussion on research methods and provided small-group peer mentoring in data analysis, formulating recommendations and sharing results with decision-makers. ■



Cuyahoga Heights
Year Two students
and advisor



Richmond Heights
Year Two students



Cuyahoga Heights
Year One students
and advisor



Richmond Heights
Year One students
and advisor



DID YOU KNOW?

The 2020 Census is important for schools. Undercount can result in underfunding of your school district. This Census will determine funding for special education, teacher training, technology, school lunch assistance, Head Start and after-school programs.

Some of the federal funding based on Census statistics is for services that influence students' readiness for learning, including maternal and child health programs, and housing, heating and food assistance.