Now is the Time to “March into Kindergarten”

The first day of kindergarten can be both exciting and overwhelming for students, parents, and the teacher. A public information campaign is underway, called “March into Kindergarten,” to inform and urge all parents in Cuyahoga County that they should register their child for kindergarten as early as March. Registration provides their child with a smooth transition for children, parents, preschools and schools,” said Rebekah Dorman, Director, Invest in Children. “Preschools can then prepare children for their specific new school and schools are able to receive the children. Parents and children can familiarize themselves with the new school setting long before the first day of school, and be well-prepared for the next important step on the child’s educational journey. March into Kindergarten helps everyone work together to set the child on the path to educational success.”

“Early elementary educators play a vital role in shaping the experiences of our youngest students,” said ESC Superintendent Bob Mengerink. “Beyond Fair on February 23rd at St. Michael’s Woodside Party Center in Brookside Heights. Families were able to explore summer camps and activities for children and youth with disabilities. Free fingerprinting cards were available, as well as the popular ‘2013 Summer and Beyond Directory’ that lists hundreds of opportunities for children. The directory also is available on-line at www.esc-cc.org.

Richmond Heights Students Partner with Windsor, Ontario School

Mary Nichols-Brodiefield, art teacher for the secondary schools at Richmond Heights Local Schools, has a passion for teaching her students to think global. She has been working with 20 of her art students this school year on a project they will remember for a lifetime called the ‘International Handmade Book Exchange.”

The Richmond Heights students took two field trips to the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory in downtown Cleveland. They made handmade paper and bound it into personal journals. In the journals, the students are writing reflections about culture and using illustrations, cartoons, and other images to decorate the journals. The Walkerville students are currently making their own books with found objects and recycled materials. The students look forward to exchanging their books and learning more about the similarities and differences in their cultures. The conclusion of the project will be an exhibit of all the books for the Richmond Heights community.

This Ohio/Ontario project is made possible through a grant from Kent State University and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.

Why is Early Registration for Kindergarten Important?

- A smooth transition to kindergarten depends on good communication between early childhood professionals, parents, and primary school professionals.
- Transition is a change that involves a process of adjustment. The move from preschool to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes in a child’s life and the life of the family.
- Transition can cause stress and anxiety for the pre-kindergarten child and parents.
- Children’s success in school can be linked, in part, to effective transition practices and activities. Supportive transition practices encourage children to like school and look forward to attending.
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The campaign is a collaborative partnership among the ESC of Cuyahoga County, Invest in Children, Starting Point, United Way 2-1-1, Family & Children First Council of Cuyahoga County, MyCom, and the State Support Team for Region 3.

“The move from preschool to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes in a child’s life and the life of the family. There are many benefits to parents, children, and schools for not waiting long that this campaign aims to educate parents on the reasons why they should register now.”

To register a child for kindergarten, parents need to complete necessary paperwork including medical information related to immunizations and physicals. By registering in March, this gives families more time to learn about and complete the necessary paperwork to avoid any delays in starting school.

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The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently launched a virtual online learning program for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Students, Alyssa Toepken and Kimberly Puls, are currently enrolled in the online community school.

Alyssa, 16, lives in Broadview Heights and has been a student at the ESC for a year. “I love interacting with my classmates on-line and the new ways that I’ve learned to approach things.”

Even as a senior, Alyssa can still fit a part of the North Royalton City School District. She is planning on attending and graduating with people she’s been going to school with since 5th grade. Alyssa is also scheduled to attend college in the fall, with hopes of majoring in interior design and minoring in business.

"I am very fortunate to be alive in the digital age where online school has become a positive option for many students. I have been suffering with chronic Lyme disease throughout my adolescence and the online school has given me the opportunity to go to school in a laid back environment. I strongly encourage parents to send their students to schools who suffer with illnesses,” said Alyssa.

Mr. Presidents Competition Tests Middle School Students on Knowledge of our Nation’s Past Leaders

Mr. Presidents Competition Tests Middle School Students on Knowledge of our Nation’s Past Leaders

With the inauguration of our President Barack Obama on January 21, 2013, and President’s Day being celebrated on February 18th, our United States Presidents were top of mind to students at their school districts across Cuyahoga County. On January 25th, students in grades 4-8 from Richmond Heights Local Schools, as well as other districts, attended and learned about leadership styles, importance of vision, making consensus, team building, and creating positive environments for success.

For the past five years, the Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury Charitable Trust has donated more than $150,000 towards scholarships to Simon Young NCA graduates who may not have had the opportunity to attend post-secondary education opportunities due to life’s situations.

This year, the Dusenbury Trust will continue providing scholarship monies for post-secondary education opportunities, public bus transportation for economically-challenged students, and field trips to area two- and four-year colleges and universities.

Financial Literacy

The workshop was in partnership with the Financial Planning Association of Northeast Ohio. Students were exposed to such topics as financial responsibility, budgeting and money management, and credit/debit card responsibilities.

``We are deeply grateful for the Dusenbury’s ongoing support of Simon Young NCA,” said Rena Wertheim, NCA Director. “Acting in accordance to the intentions of the late founders of the trust, Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury, the trustees continue to make a significant difference in the lives of our students and we thank them for their ongoing support.

Students Learn how to "Master the Art of Public Speaking"

On February 20th, the North Coast Academy (RCA) students were to the adult day program at the campus of Park Hyatt, located in downtown Cleveland. There were 170 students in attendance.

"I learned some important life lessons. I learned to perform in front of other people and that is something I never tried before," said Alayna Gorrigan.

Simon Youth North Coast Academy Grateful to Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury Charitable Trust for On-going Donations

North Coast Academy Students Give Back to the Community

From February 16th to the 18th, the students participated in a blood drive, volunteered in the kindergarten classrooms at Mentor Elementary School in Shore Heights, partnered with the Jewish Family Service Association to work with the handicapped children at Beach High School in South Euclid, and volunteered as mentors at Memorial Junior High School in Cleveland Heights.

"I couldn’t be more proud of these students. They did a wonderful job. They were very excited about participating in the blood drive," said Tony Hocevar, President of ESC Board.

North Coast Academy Students Give Back to the Community

Since November, students have been preparing an individual resource file on the Presidents of the 19th and 20th centuries in their individual classrooms. Weighted questionnaires were given and students identified their President by secret ballot using the resource file.

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Student Programs Offered by ESC . . .

Financial Literacy

This past fall, students from Richmond Heights Local Schools participated in a workshop on Financial Literacy at the ESC offices. Students were exposed to such topics as financial responsibility, budgeting and money management, and credit/debit cards.

Leadership Workshop

A high school leadership workshop conducted by Paul Pendleton was held on October 25th at the ESC offices. Students from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools, as well as other districts, attended and learned about leadership roles, importance of vision, making choices, team building, and creating positive environments for success.

Mr. Presidents Competition Tests Middle School Students on Knowledge of Our Nation’s Past Leaders

With the inauguration of our new President Barack Obama on January 21, 2013, and President’s Day being celebrated February 18th, our United States Presidents were top of mind for students at their school districts across Cuyahoga County.

On January 25th, students in grades 4-8 from Richmond Heights Local Schools and from other districts were invited to the ESC to compete in the Cuyahoga Heights Regional Academic Games Mr. Presidents Competition.

Since September, students have been preparing an individual resource file on the Presidents of the 3rd and 4th constitution in their individual districts. Written questions were given and the students identified the President by secret ballot using the resource file.

North Coast Academy Students Give Back to the Community

On February 20th, the North Coast Academy (NCA) students were to the adult dog program in the program of Park Tailgate PAWS at Cleveland Metroparks. The students showed up to the meeting on February 20th, the students decorated and assisted with the party.

This past winter, students also participated in a blood drive, volunteered in the kindergarten classroom at Kenmore Elementary School in Shaker Heights, partnered with the Jewish Family Service Association to work with handicapped children at Cleveland Heights High School in Shaker Heights, and volunteered at the Memorial High School in Independence. All of these activities were part of the NCA students’ commitment to their school and community.

Richmond Heights Art Students Create a Cultural Mural

Richmond Heights Secondary art students—Isabella Guajardo, Patricia Morales, and Matt Hayes—were recognized on March 17th by the Richmond Heights Board of Education for their outstanding art work and contributions to the community. The mural, which was created by these students, reflects the personal and community development of students in Richmond Heights.

A Look into ESC’s Online Learning Program

The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently launched an online learning program for students to improve their school grades. Alyssa Toepken and Kimberly Pulis, are currently enrolling in the online community school.

Students Learn how to "Master the Art of Public Speaking"

The program encompassed four reduction, preparation tips, presentation design, cultural development, and delivery style. These topics were covered through examples and enacted to enhance public speaking skills, said Shaymax Gomez, ESC’s Director of Career Education. The students will now be able to use these techniques in various projects in their high school settings.

In an evaluation, a Richmond Heights student commented, “I will be able to use some of these skills in my interviews, presentations, even when I am having conversations with my peers and teachers.”

North Coast Academy students create a cultural mural.
The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently launched an online learning program for students to complete in 12”-18” months. In 2013, Alyssa Hardesty and Kimberly Pulis are currently enrolled in the online community school.

Alyssa, 18, lives in Broadview Heights and has been a simon youth student for the past two years. She is currently taking American literature, English I and II, psychology, creative writing, world literature, and an art 12th grade art course as an independent study. Alyssa is also scheduled to attend college in the fall, with hopes of majoring in criminal justice and minoring in theatre.

“I am very fortunate to be alive in the digital age where online school has become a positive option for many students. I have been suffering with chronic Lyme disease throughout my adolescence and the online school has been the perfect opportunity to go to school in a laid back environment. I strongly encourage kids to attend and especially to students who suffer from illness,” said Alyssa.

Students Study how to "Master the Art of Public Speaking"

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools, Richmond Heights Local Schools, and several other school districts participated in a speaking workshop at the ESC offices on February 5th. The workshop, "Speaking to Win: How Mastering the Art of Public Speaking Will Help You in School and in Life," featured Russell Siff, President of Gage.

"The workshop encompassed four reduction, preparation tips, presentation design, and visual media. Three topics were covered through examples and activities to enhance public speaking skills, said Russell Siff, ESC’s Director of Gifted Education. "The students will now be able to use these techniques in various projects in their high school settings."

In an evaluation, a Richmond Heights student commented, "I will be able to use some of these skills in other interviews, presentations, even when I am having conversations with my peers and teachers."
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- A smooth transition to kindergarten depends on good communication between early childhood professionals, parents, and primary school professionals.
- Transition is a change that involves a process of adjustment. The move from preschool to kindergarten is one of the most significant changes in a child’s life and the life of the family.
- Transition can cause stress and anxiety for the pre-kindergarten child and parents.
- Learning about what is expected in kindergarten and how to register helps reduce anxiety and stress while paving the way for a more positive start to the new experience.
- Children’s success in school can be linked, in part, to effective transition practices and activities. Supportive transition practices encourage children to be school and look forward to attending.
- When parents are supported, they are more likely to become actively involved in their children’s education. When parents are involved in their children’s learning, the children have a higher chance of succeeding in school and developing a love of learning.

“The first day of kindergarten can be both exciting and overwhelming for students, parents, and the teacher.” Public information campaign in underway, called “March into Kindergarten,” to inform and urge all parents in Cuyahoga County to register their child for kindergarten as early as March. Registration provides their child with a smooth transition for kindergarten, it is just as important for schools to be ready for all children, from screenings, parent information and feedback from early childhood settings, educators spend time before school starts learning about their incoming kindergartners to ensure their classroom instruction is designed to teach all students’ needs. In addition, students need to know how many students to expect on the first day of school and how to best prepare for the pre-kindergarten class. Supportive transition practices encourage children to be school and look forward to attending. When parents are supported, they are more likely to become actively involved in their children’s education. When parents are involved in their children’s learning, the children have a higher chance of succeeding in school and developing a love of learning.
other staff. A child's transition to kindergarten is much more positive when they know what to expect and who is there to help as they venture into a brand new environment.

"Registration for kindergarten paves the way for a smooth and planned transition for children, parents, preschools and schools," said Bekahah Dorman, Director, Invest in Children. "Preschools can then prepare children for their specific new school and schools are able to prepare to receive the children. Parents and children can familiarize themselves with the new school setting long before the first day of school, and be well-prepared for the next important step on the child's educational journey. Mars into Kindergarten helps everyone work together to set the child on the path to educational success."

"Early elementary educators play a vital role in shaping the experiences of our youngest students," said ESC Superintendent Bob Menges. "In Cuyahoga County, our schools educate a very diverse population of students. Recognizing this diversity, it is even more important for teachers to have as much information as possible about each child at the outset so their classroom and teaching can effectively address the multiple strengths and challenges students will bring to the first day of school."

Richmond Heights Students Partner with Windsor, Ontario School to Increase Global and Cultural Awareness

Mary Nichols-Broadfield, art teacher for the secondary school at Richmond Heights Local Schools, has a passion for teaching her students to “think global.” She has been working with 20 other art students this school year on a project they will remember for a lifetime called “The International Handmade Book Exchange.”

The students are working with teachers and students from Walkerville Collegiate School for the Arts in Windsor, Ontario to create their own journals reflecting their cultural experience that will be exchanged between the two schools later this school year.

The Richmond Heights students took two field trips to the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory in downtown Cleveland. They made handmade paper and bound it into personal journals. In the journals, the students are writing reflections about culture and using illustrations, cartoons, and other images to decorate the journals. The Walkerville students are currently making their own books with found objects and recycled materials. The students look forward to exchanging their books and learning more about the similarities and differences in their cultures. The conclusion of the project will be an exhibit of all the books for the Richmond Heights community.

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"When we think of the first day of kindergarten, we imagine family photographs of adorable 5- and 6-year-olds, dressed smartly, holding their new lunch boxes and gazing the camera their best big-kid smiles," says Rob H. Martin of the Family & Children First Council of Cuyahoga County. "If families have not prepared and registered, a day that is supposed to be a smooth transition into a major new stage of a child’s life instead chaotic and stressful. That’s a very different picture."

The campaign is a collaborative partnership among the ESC of Cuyahoga County, Invest in Children, Starting Point, United Way 2-1-1, Family & Children First Council of Cuyahoga County, MyComm, and the State Support Team for Region 3.

"There is a growing concern that parents are waiting too long, and in many cases until the first day of school, to register their children," said Billie Osbome Fears, Executive Director, Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education. "There are many benefits to parents, children, and schools for not waiting that long and this campaign aims to educate parents on the reasons why they should register now."

To register a child for kindergarten, parents need to complete necessary paperwork including medical information related to immunizations and physicals. By registering in March, this gives families more time to learn about and complete the necessary paperwork to avoid any delays in starting school.

While we want to prepare children to be as ready as possible for kindergarten, it is just as important for schools to be ready for all children. From screenings, parent information and feedback from early childhood settings, educators spend time before school starts learning about their incoming kindergarteners to ensure their classroom instruction is designed to teach all students’ needs. In addition, schools need to know how many students to expect on the first day of school so each building can make the proper assignment of teachers, establishment of class sizes, and ordering of classroom materials and supplies.

For families, early registration allows them to prepare their child and themselves for the specific school she/he will be attending—including its building, people, programs, and protocols. The family has a chance to learn the building, become familiar with where everything is, and also obtain policies, procedures, and schedules. Most importantly, the child will be able to meet the kindergarten teacher and