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 to entertain the guests.

Life Insurance provided families with free fingerprinting supported by Northeast Ohio Parent Mentors. New York Life Insurance provided families with free fingerprinting.

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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 tailored 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.

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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, or online. After the first time you respond, 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.

Counting Young Children
It is important to remember to count any children who are living with you. 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 U.S. Census Bureau on social media: facebook.com/uscensusbureau or twitter.com/uscensusbureau.

Leadership Courses at Independence Middle School

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 Jamani 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 What 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 Krask 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.

Student 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.