

Health and Wellness Event Makes a Splash!

This summer over 200 people attended a health and wellness event at Bailey's Community Center in Falls Church coordinated by the Falls Church Neighborhood School Readiness Team, an initiative supported by Fairfax County's Office for Children. The goal of the event was to highlight the importance of a child's healthy mind and body for success in kindergarten and beyond. Families with children ages 8 and younger were invited to the event, which featured health resources such as medical and dental screenings and tips on healthy food preparation and tasting. Fairfax County Police and Fire and Rescue also shared information about public safety resources and fire safety tips.

Experiences for children during the event included face painting, water play, music and movement. Children also enjoyed the opportunity to see small animals up close. The nonprofit SevaTruck provided 200 meals free of charge to families over the course of the evening.

Special thanks to Bailey's Community Center and Higher Horizons staff for hosting the event, as well as county partners: Neighborhood and Community Services, Health Department, Fire and Rescue, Police, Fairfax County Park Authority, Fairfax County Public Schools and Fairfax County Public Library.

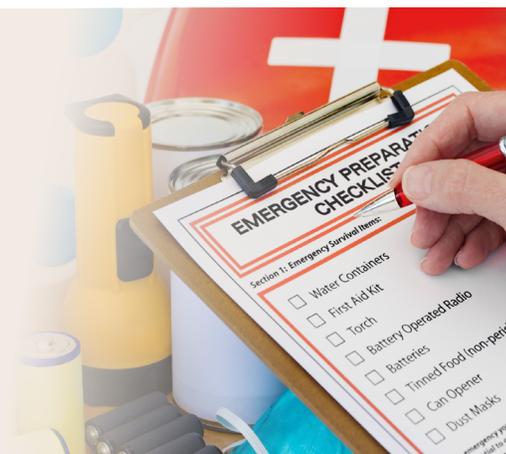


(Clockwise from top left) Water play; Fairfax County's Neighborhood and Community Services program Eat Smart, Move More - Nutrition and My Plate; Carla Paredes Gomez from the Fairfax County Health Department helps a child build an insect; Volunteers with SevaTruck served 200 free meals during the event; A Fairfax County Master Naturalist demonstrates how nature ties to wellness; Yoga and stories with Allison Colby, Executive Director of Culmore Clinic.

September Is Emergency Preparedness Month

Take these four actions to be prepared:

1. Stay informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses.
2. Make an emergency plan.
3. Build an emergency kit.
4. Get involved in your community by taking action to prepare for emergencies.



For information on making your own emergency plan, visit fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency.

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Nancy Elmore Scholarship Awarded to Local Head Start Parent

Congratulations to Abdeltif Bensouda! Mr. Bensouda is the Chairperson of the Fairfax County Head Start Policy Council as well as Fairfax County Public School's Head Start Parent Committee Chair. He was awarded the Nancy Elmore Scholarship this year by the Virginia Head Start Association, Inc. Named in honor of Nancy Elmore, who has been an integral part of Virginia Head Start programs for many years, the Elmore Scholarship provides \$1,000 each to one Virginia Head Start parent and one employee to further their education.

Bensouda's interest in Head Start first began because he wanted to be involved in his daughter's education, but grew as he began attending monthly parent meetings at Parklawn Elementary School, and eventually the Parent Policy Committee and the wider Policy Council. Bensouda has served the Head Start Program in 2010, 2014 and 2018 and has become a strong advocate for the program. The scholarship will help Bensouda as he pursues a degree in Business Management at George Mason University with the goal of someday working as a business analyst.



Jennifer Branch, Director of Head Start/Early Head Start, and Scholarship recipient Abdeltif Bensouda.

Family Resource Fair Serves as an Opportunity for Learning and Fun for Early Head Start Families

This summer Fairfax County Early Head Start Family Child Care hosted a Family Resource Fair for the families of children enrolled in the program. The goal of the fair was to connect parents and caregivers with useful resources and skills-training opportunities while providing fun activities for the whole family.

The event offered a variety of activities for children such as gardening, creative arts, a wild animals dance party with Wolf Trap teaching artist Curtis Mailloux, a storytime and the opportunity to meet firefighters from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and tour a fire truck.

While children enjoyed the fun activities, parents and caregivers learned about services offered by organizations such as Infant & Toddler Connection, Coordinated

Services Planning and Fairfax County Public Schools Early Childhood Identification & Services. They also had the opportunity to take part in health screenings, attend a Friends and Family CPR class and sample healthy snacks prepared during cooking demonstrations provided by Virginia Cooperative Extension; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and program staff. In addition, Medicaid insurance providers shared resources and answered questions about coverage.

Representatives from the Sheriff's department offered child safety seat inspections and Child ID cards while the Fairfax County Public Library was on hand to sign up families for library cards and connect them to literacy resources. Thank you to all our county partners who helped make this day a success!



(Clockwise from top) Curtis Mailloux entertained kids; cooking demonstrations featured healthy smoothies and breakfast wraps; Sheriff's Office offered Child ID cards; Fire truck tours.

A Garden of Learning

Sensory-rich garden provides a unique opportunity for exploration and play

Little hands are getting dirty and little minds are growing in the Infant & Toddler Connection (ITC) Cooperative Learning Garden. Composed of container gardens and a raised garden bed and located in the courtyard of the Joseph Willard Health Center in Fairfax, the Learning Garden is made possible by donations from community partners.

The learning space offers families receiving services the opportunity to explore innovative learning activities, engage socially and have fun. Carolyn Ricks, an educator with ITC, developed the program in response to a need she saw with many of the families she serves. Parents and caregivers had questions about exploring new foods, sensory-based play and ways to creatively engage with their children.



Over a series of four weeks, children and their parents explored the basics of planting, making observations, touching and tasting edible plants and using what they have grown to foster healthy eating habits. These activities are early opportunities for children to explore the scientific method, enjoy creative arts and build communication and social skills.

Head Start and Early Head Start Host a Cross-Cultural Learning Opportunity

On July 2, 2019, the Fairfax County Head Start and Early Head Start program hosted a delegation of officials from South Korea's Ministry of Health and Wellness as well as several government officials, directors and case managers representing "Dream Start" programs from cities and provinces throughout South Korea. The "Dream Start" program provides wraparound services – including case management – for disadvantaged children from birth to age 12.

Fairfax County was represented by Karle Finley, Child Care Program Administrator, and Julie Chang, Business Analyst. With the help of a translator, Karle and Julie fielded questions from the delegation on a variety of topics such as:

- Funding streams and governance structure.
- Services for children with special needs and disabilities.
- Favorite activities/events of participating children and parents.
- Outcomes for enrolled children and their families.



The delegation selected Fairfax County for their fact-finding and information-sharing session due to the Head Start and Early Head Start program's reputation for providing high-quality services. "It is truly an honor to share highlights of our program with the Dream Start representatives," said Ms. Chang. At the conclusion of the session, both parties agreed that it was a great opportunity to share information and learn from their counterparts on the other side of the world.

It's All About Community: Here, There & Everywhere

This school year, children in the School Age Child Care program will look at community through an expanding lens. Explorations will begin with the children and their families and grow as children look at communities close to home, such as SACC and school, and then look wide to explore communities “Here, There and Everywhere!” The world is made up of many types of communities and each child’s connections to these communities helps them create their role in the world.

At the end of the 2018-2019 school year and as a springboard to this school year’s SACC curriculum, SACC teachers asked children “What Does Community Look Like to You?” Children in SACC centers across the county were invited to submit a drawing and a short description reflecting their answer.



Isabel | Age 7 | Floris SACC

“My community has bakeries for people to go for parties, dinners and more! It has homes for people to live in, cars for people to drive in and trash cans for people to put trash in!”

Hundreds of submissions were received and illustrated a wide range of diversity in what community can encompass, such as...

- A whole city
- People helping others
- People coming together, supporting each other and knowing each other’s feelings!

This school year, to expand on children’s understanding of what community means, SACC teachers at each center will guide children’s exploration of community through a wide range of fun and engaging opportunities. SACC’s six focus areas will provide the structure for creative curriculum activities, experiences and projects designed to expand children’s interests, develop their talents and enhance their learning:

- WE Play - Sports & Adventure
- WE Shine - Performing Arts
- WE Create - Visual Arts
- WE Imagine - Literature
- WE Grow - Community & Culture
- WE Build - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math

Children, families and SACC staff are looking forward to an exciting year of exploring, connecting and sharing at each SACC Center Community.



Luana | Age 8 | Greenbriar East SACC

“A community is a group of people coming together and supporting each other. All of them know each other’s feelings. They work together and help each other. They support each other through rough times.”



Skylar | Age 10 | Fairview SACC

“It tells you that even if you are somewhere different, the world is a big community on land, sea or in the sky. You are in a worldwide community.”



Zara | Age 7 | Mason Crest SACC

“This is New York at night because at night it’s usually packed with people.”

Fairfax County

O F C Office for Children

This employee newsletter is published by the Office for Children, a division of the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services. If you have any questions, contact Gwen Jones at 703-324-7137 or Nancy McDonough at 703-324-8042. Fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.



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