



Greater Enrichment Program, Inc.

*Child Focused. Family Centered.*

# Education Matters

WINTER ISSUE

DECEMBER - MARCH 2013

## Greater Enrichment Program Hosts 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Fitness & Food Festival



This past October, Greater Enrichment Program (GEP) partnered with Kids Heart Felt Health, N'shape with N Youth, University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) Health Psychology students and the Wallace Pruitt Recreation Center to host its annual Fall Family Fitness and Food Festival. More than 300 GEP students and their families attended the festival, which began three years ago in an effort to offer students a healthy alternative to trick-or-treating and unhealthy habits associated with Halloween and fall carnivals.

During the two-hour event, students and their families rotated through activity stations, including

yoga, vegetable relays and jump rope fun. Volunteers from Johnson C. Smith University, Queens University, UNCC, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools facilitated each activity station.

Instead of providing participants with traditional carnival refreshments (cotton candy, funnel cakes, French fries, etc.), students were offered healthy alternatives, such as kale chips, dark chocolate apples on a stick, pumpkin dip, fresh fruit and yogurt parfaits. Students made these dishes and were given the recipes to make at home.

"Greater Enrichment Program believes exposing students to health and fitness activities is crucial," said Bronica Glover, GEP executive director. "The rise in childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes and hypertension is alarming, and anything that we can do to help with prevention is exciting and rewarding."

The festival began with a healthy dinner of vegetable and cheese pizza, baked chips and a low calorie dessert.

"Dinner was good," said Tina, GEP third grade student at the Thomasboro site. "I can't believe it was healthy."

After dinner, students and their families were given cards in which they had to participate in at least eight of the 12 activity rotations indicated on the card. At the end of the night,



each family had to complete the rotations and return their cards to receive a family fit pack that included healthy snacks, recipes, a workout DVD and other fitness ideas the family could do together.

"We want to help plant the seeds for our families to lead healthy lifestyles," said Glover. "I'm hoping our families went home with their fitness packs, thought about all that we offered at the festival and have started on the right track."

Throughout the evening, door prizes, such as cookbooks and blenders were given away. Participants were even surprised with a visit from Carolina Panthers mascot, Sir Purr.

"I really enjoyed this event," said Ms. Edwards, an Ashley Park GEP parent. "I am going to make my kids put the video games down, get in the yard and move."

Each year the event expands, so for 2013, GEP plans to move the festival to a larger venue and invite non-GEP families from the community.



## Thank You Carolinas Healthcare Foundation

Greater Enrichment Program is thankful to Carolinas Healthcare Foundation for its donation of hats, gloves, socks, healthy snacks and school supplies during the holiday season. The GEP Parent Advisory Board made personalized stockings filled with the items for every GEP student at the Thomasboro site.

"During a regular school day, our students are out in the cold for extended

periods of time, whether it's waiting for their school bus, going outside for recess or participating in outdoor fitness with GEP," said Bronica Glover. "The gloves and hats are a necessity during the winter months, and we are so very thankful for organizations like Carolinas Healthcare Foundation that help us meet the needs of our students and their families."



## Volunteer Spotlight

### UNC Charlotte Doctoral Health Psychology Program

Students in the doctoral health psychology program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte are being highlighted this quarter for their commitment to GEP. Each month these students facilitate a healthy activity for Merry Oaks Elementary School GEP students. The students teach fun and interactive

lessons in cooking, martial arts, music appreciation, pottery and dance.

Merry Oaks Site Director Denise Rice says the doctoral health psychology students always come prepared with great attitudes and this is something her students really look forward to each month.

"The students need positive role models and mentors," she said. "Such a small amount of time spent with them makes a big difference."

If there is an interest in volunteering at GEP as an individual or group, contact Tamika Bease at 704.334.8518.

## Cooking With Kids Heart Felt Health

Greater Enrichment Program has an exciting new partnership with Kids Heart Felt Health (KHFH), a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to help empower kids through nutrition, cooking and fitness. In the partnership, KHFH uses a licensed nutritionist and high school student volunteers to provide weekly workshops to Thomasboro GEP students.

Students actively participate in activities focused on nutrition and fitness. Workshops are offered in six-week sessions – three weeks are devoted to nutrition and the other three weeks to fitness. The program starts

at the beginning of the food chain, teaching students how to grow their own food. One workshop in particular sent students to the Thomasboro community garden where they picked fresh vegetables and learned about gardening.

In other nutrition workshops, students are given recipes and their own personal cooking utensils to prepare their own healthy snacks. (One recipe substitutes beet juice for chocolate when making brownies.) In the fitness workshops, the students learn about and engage in fun activities that get their heart rates up.

As an added benefit,

the workshops force students to incorporate math and character education, teaching them about measurements and respect for themselves and their bodies.

"I never imagined our students would be so interested in learning about nutrition and fitness," said Bettie Jones, Thomasboro site director. "They absolutely love

KHFH and are constantly sharing all of what they learn with other students."





## Greetings From the Executive Director

According to the National Institute for Out of School Time, afterschool programs play a critical role in promoting healthy lifestyles for youth. But, more importantly, they serve as crime deterrents, teach youth positive values and impart knowledge and skills to help youth establish lifelong healthy habits.

Health and Wellness is an important element in our out of school program. We collaborate with national and local organizations to expose our students to the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Students enrolled in our program receive a healthy snack and participate in at least 30 minutes of outdoor fitness each day. We are so thankful for partners and special facilitators, including Exercise Fit Kids, Kids Heart Felt Health, N'shape with'N and the U.S.

Tennis Association that help us engage students in fun activities during our program hours.

This spring Greater Enrichment Program has been selected to participate in a pilot program with the U.S. Tennis Association. The Association is scheduled to train all GEP staff members so they are equipped to teach our students the fundamentals of tennis. This is an amazing opportunity for our students who otherwise would not be exposed to this sport.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank some of our other community partners for their generous donations this quarter. On behalf of the GEP staff and students, thank you to the Charity League for donating school uniforms; to Executive Women's International for hosting a reading rally and providing books and school supplies; to Judge Donnie Hoover



and Steel Creek African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and North Carolina A&T University Alumni Association – Charlotte Chapter for donating Thanksgiving baskets to our families; to Myers Park Mustang Community Organization for the Thanksgiving dinner donation; to Rennie Cuthbertson and the N.C. Nature Conservancy for the Helmet of Hope ice cream party; to the Mayor's Tickets for Kids program for the Charlotte Bobcats tickets; and to the Bank of America Black Professionals Networking Group for donating gloves and toiletries to our students and their families.

## GEP Students Give Back!

Community service is an important part of the GEP program. Students are taught to give back and contribute to their community. Each quarter students engage in various service projects that focus on the environment, senior citizens and people who

suffer from chronic illnesses. In honor of breast cancer awareness month, students participated in several service projects, including making cards for cancer patients and painting a memorial pink rocking chair. The students took a field trip to the

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, where they presented the donated chair to the Charlotte office. "The students were so excited about painting the chair and worked together on the design and decoration of it," said Bronica Glover.

## Chris Canty Foundation Makes a Difference

Greater Enrichment Program is grateful for the opportunities the Chris Canty Foundation (CCF) have afforded GEP students and families. CCF's mission to serve the Charlotte community is evident through the quality projects and services it sponsors and facilitates.

GEP is thankful for CCF's collaboration on several projects, including the National Lights on for After School event, Family

Fitness Festival, sixth grade Rise ceremony, West End cleanup and Red Robin canned food drive.

"CCF's service model is outstanding" said Bronica Glover. "The leadership and volunteers truly believe in giving back and helping others. We look forward to a continued relationship with this amazing organization and wish them continued success."

### GEP WISH LIST

- Composition books or spiral notebooks for Journaling
- Stencils and stamps for writing activities
- Notebook paper
- Pencils
- Washable markers
- Different colors in regular size construction paper
- White and color poster board
- Drawing paper
- Scrapbook paper
- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- Calculators
- Flash Cards: Multiplication, Addition, Subtraction, Sight Words and others
- Clocks for telling time
- Inflatable globes
- Atlas (2013)
- Crayola Air Dry Model Clay
- Play Dough
- Instant cameras for photography club activities
- Beads, clasps and wire for making jewelry and entrepreneurial club activities
- Tie Dye Kits
- White T-shirts
- Play money and coins for money management activities
- Paint for poster boards and fabric
- Red ribbon and pins for HIV project
- Scrap fabric for sewing projects
- Various colors of rectangular table cloths for program site activities and projects
- Stickers of all varieties
- Games, game cards like UNO and Mancala
- Hula Hoops
- Individual dry erase boards
- Self adhesive flip chart paper
- Copy paper (white and color)
- Carpet squares or floor mats to sit on
- Mechanical pencils
- Educational games for individual or group instruction. Staff can make recommendations. Leap Frog is a preferred brand.
- Large white project boards
- All genres of reading and reference books appropriate for K-6 grade students

### FOOD ITEMS AND PRODUCTS

(Note: Nothing with peanut butter)

- Capri Sun – Sunrise drinks
- Individual cereal boxes
- Nutri-Grain Bars
- Cereal bars
- Any other individually wrapped, non-refrigerated snack or breakfast food – items can be microwavable
- Popcorn
- Individually wrapped candy and gum
- Paper plates, cups, napkins, bowls, forks and spoons

### FURNITURE

- Student-size chairs for computer lab
- Popcorn machine on wheels
- Outside Storage Unit



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The Greater Enrichment Program operates in four Charlotte-Mecklenburg School sites and one community site.

- Ashley Park Elementary School
- Bruns Elementary School
- Merry Oaks Elementary School
- Thomasboro Elementary School
- Wallace Pruitt Recreation Center

# Save the Dates!

## Greater Enrichment Program Black History Bowl

**Saturday, February 23, 2013**  
**3 p.m. - 5 p.m.**  
**Wallace Pruitt Recreation Center**  
**440 Tuckaseegee Road**

- **U.S. Tennis Association Family Tennis Festival**  
**Saturday, March 23 from 9 a.m. - noon**  
**Merry Oaks Elementary School**
- **Community Resource and Health Fair**  
**Saturday, May 18 from noon - 3 p.m.**  
**Independence Park**

**For more info on these events, call 704.334.8518**

### GEP STAFF

Executive Director  
Bronica Glover  
Office Manager  
Katy Vasquez  
Financial Manager  
Angie Benjock  
Director of Academic Services  
Tamika Bease  
Director of Programs  
Shereene Hill-Veal

Connect with GEP  
**WEBSITE:**  
[www.gepinc.org](http://www.gepinc.org)

**facebook**

### Make A Difference Program

- ▶ Connect your Harris Teeter Rewards Card to #7715 to support GEP
- ▶ Connect your Target Credit Card to #126414 to support GEP

You can connect on the company website online or in the store



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