



COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT OF ENGAGEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Update for May 15, 2020

PURPOSE: To provide an update on COVID-19 response efforts in Columbus City Schools related to our Community Partners and learn about additional supports within our community.

New resources and updates can be found at www.StaySafeCCS.org.
Email the CCS Department of Engagement at Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us.

DANCE ALONG AT CLASS OF 2020 VIRTUAL PROM:

With support from Columbus City Council and Radio One, high school students in Columbus City Schools will still get to celebrate prom season with a first-ever city-wide Virtual Prom.

Planning for the Virtual Prom started with the Columbus Youth Council, a group of CCS high school students who spent the school year at City Hall learning about government and how they can become leaders in their community. Councilmember Shayla Favor brought community partners together to help launch the students' plan.

The Virtual Prom is May 23, from 7:00 p.m. to midnight, and will feature Radio One DJs, local and national government officials, celebrities, and members of the Class of 2020. The four-hour event will kick-off with a live red-carpet show hosted by Columbus Youth Council members. The prom will begin at 8:00 p.m. and will feature music from radio personalities DJ Mr. King and CeCe, as well as virtual shout-outs from celebrities and local leaders.

The Columbus City Schools Virtual Prom will be live streamed on Instagram, Facebook and www.mycolumbuspower.com.

DAY CARE CENTERS WORKING TO RE-OPEN MAY 31:

Our partners at Action for Children are working with childcare providers across Columbus to work through Governor DeWine's announcement that day care programs and summer day camps can reopen as soon as May 31.

Details of the reopening will be coming soon, but Action for Children says that parents should expect childcare to look very different to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, including:

- Day care staff wearing masks at drop-off and pick-up
- Daily temperature taking for children and staff
- Routine hand washing for children and staff and more frequent cleaning in classrooms
- Smaller day care class sizes, with no more than 9 children in each preschool classroom
- No summer field trips during day care

Resources and tips to help providers and families best prepare for reopening can be found at www.actionforchildren.org.

PARTNERS HELP NOURISH YOUNG BODIES AND MINDS:

During this unprecedented crisis, Columbus City Schools and a growing number of Community Partners - both longtime and new - have launched extraordinary efforts to support our students and families who are struggling to meet basic, educational, and social-emotional needs.

CHILDREN'S HUNGER ALLIANCE TOPS 20,000 MEALS

At our 15 CCS Grab-and-Go Food Sites - where students and parents can pick up free breakfasts and lunches each day for any children 18 years old and under - community partners have been helping families access nutritional food for every meal of the day.

Our partners at Children's Hunger Alliance offer additional take-home meals for students at each site. This week, the organization reported that they had served more than 20,000 take-home meals at our sites.

POWER OF ART HELPS STUDENTS COPE DURING CRISIS:

Recognizing the power of artistic expression to reduce stress and connect creative minds, Columbus City Schools partnered with several talented Columbus artists, a local gallery owner, and a respected art therapist to encourage students to "Color Me Columbus."

More than 1,500 copies of the "Color Me Columbus" art activity book, featuring the works of twelve local artists and encouraging students to recreate the images using their artistic designs, were handed out to children who visited the Grab-and-Go Food Sites this week.

In our Family Needs Survey, parents have often shared a need to find additional academic and creative activities at home to compliment the new CCS Online Academy. This creative outlet can also positively impact how young people feel during this stress-filled time. A Columbus registered art therapist who contributed to the production of "Color Me Columbus" says artistic activities reduce stress, increase coping skills, and create improved social functioning.

More about the "Color Me Columbus" art activity book is at www.bit.ly/ColorMeColumbus.

GROWING A GARDEN ALSO GOOD FOR STUDENT GROWTH:

Growing a home garden can also help to reduce student stress and anxiety, which is why the Columbus City Schools Food Services team is partnering with Green Columbus to provide free home garden kits.

The free kits contain student lesson plans (aimed at students in Kindergarten through 5th grade) and gardening directions for children and parents. There are two small starter-seed kits: basil seeds to start an indoor growing station and flower seeds for outdoor planting.

Last week, volunteers handed out more than 350 of the free kits to students who stopped by the Free Mobile Produce Markets at the Buckeye Middle School and Starling Grab-and-Go Food Sites. The kits will be available again Tuesday (May 19) at Wedgewood Middle School.



FREE MOBILE PRODUCE MARKETS IN MAY

Our partners at the Mid-Ohio Food Collective and Columbus Recreation and Parks have extended the Mobile Free Produce Market at our food sites through May. Here's the calendar for the week ahead:

Tuesday, May 19

Wedgewood Middle School (3800 Briggs Road, 43228)
West High School (179 S. Powell Avenue, 43204)

Wednesday, May 20

Columbus Africentric Early College (3223 Allegheny Avenue, 43209)
Linden-McKinley STEM Academy (1320 Duxberry, 43211)

Thursday, May 21

Centennial High School (1441 Bethel Road, 43220)
Woodward Park Middle School (5151 Karl Road, 43229)

Friday, May 22

Dominion Middle School (330 Dominion Boulevard, 43214)

KEEPING KIDS CONNECTED TO HEALTH CARE:

During this crisis, many families in Columbus have struggled to maintain access to regular health care. Our health partners at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus Public Health, and the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center have stepped up to keep kids connected.

OSU PROVIDED FACE MASKS AND MOBILE CARE

The OSU Wexner Medical Center provided thousands of face masks and wellness kits to families at several locations throughout the past week, targeting families who live in neighborhoods where experts fear there is a higher risk for a spike in COVID-19 transmission.

OSU's mobile health unit will also be at two of our schools throughout May to answer any additional health questions your family might have. The unit will be at East High School on Mondays and Columbus Africentric on Tuesdays.

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MOBILE UNIT

During the school year, many of our students rely on easy access to health care through our school-based clinics staffed by Nationwide Children's Hospital. To help these families, our partners at NCH have stationed their mobile unit at South High School on Tuesdays, East High School on Wednesdays, and West High School on Thursdays. Expanding the efforts, the NCH mobile unit will now also be at Woodward Park Middle School on Wednesday.

The Nationwide Children's Hospital mobile units are open to all families from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Same day appointments are available. Call 614-355-2590 to schedule or learn more at www.NationwideChildrens.org/Care-Connection.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

During these critical times, the new Columbus City Schools Department of Engagement has enlisted our community partners' help to take active roles and have a sense of urgency to identify, mobilize, and align the community resources our families were most asking for.

Our Partnership in Action Team has responded with impressive success. More than three dozen local partners, family representatives, and administration staff engages students and families daily to address their basic needs and connect them with critical support and services.

Here are just a few recent examples of their work:

SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Serving the refugee and immigrant populations in our city, the team at Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) offers a wide array of programs and services to facilitate sustained self-sufficiency and successful integration.

Within CRIS, the Community Connectors program matches middle and high school New American youth with mentors to help with academic goals, employment efforts, linguistic learning, and social interaction. The program has grown to more than 100 students.

This past week, the CRIS Community Connectors teamed up with local partners and donors to create and hand-deliver "Boredom Bags" to those students. Each bag contained books, art supplies, snacks, cleaning supplies, books, supportive notes, and information about CCS laptops, hotspots, and online learning.

Help CRIS connect with more New American youth at www.crisohio.org.

SPOTLIGHT: STUDENT SUCCESS STORES

During a typical school year, Student Success Stores provide a free, anonymous store inside six of our schools filled with hygiene products, easy-to-eat food items, school-code clothing, and school supplies.

Over the past month, the volunteers behind Student Success Stores successfully delivered more than 800 hygiene packs for students who visited the Grab-and-Go Food Sites at Wedgewood Middle, South High School, Columbus Global Academy, and Woodward Park Middle School.

The volunteers shared how heartfelt and rewarding this experience has been to create the packs and safely deliver them to these schools and they've already set a goal to distribute another 800 packs before the end of May.

Help Student Success Stores with their efforts by checking out www.studentsuccessstores.org.



SPOTLIGHT: Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services

Also serving our immigrant and New American communities, the team at Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services provides services for both adults and children and a Community Mental Health Navigator program to assist individuals who have experienced extreme trauma.

Recently, one of the Community Navigators received a call from an older Nepali couple who had separated themselves from their children, self-quarantining out of concern that the husband's health issues were symptoms of the COVID-19 virus.

Fighting back tears, the couple called ETSS and shared their fear that they would die alone in their apartment unless they had help. Calmly and reassuringly, the Community Navigator connected the couple with translated health information and a counselor.

"If I wouldn't have gotten help and support from people like you in our community, I might have died from anxiety and stress," the wife later shared.

Read more about this family's story and connect with ETSS at www.ethiotss.org.

SHARE YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION UPDATES:

Our work is far from over, and we want to honor your continued commitment. Please share your updates with us at Engage@columbus.k12.oh.us.

Please share this Community Update with the families and stakeholders you serve.

This health emergency is affecting EVERY person, household, and business in the Columbus community, so it's important we communicate as much as possible to as many people as possible - in as many languages as possible - about the steps being taken in Columbus City Schools to support students and families.

Remember: Updates on Columbus City Schools' COVID-19 Response can be found at www.StaySafeCCS.org.