



# ARPS Family Center Highlights



## Sponsored Programs

Drop in Support  
 ARPS Dialogues  
 Computer Program  
 Dental Program  
 Juntos we Play Events  
 Project Backpack  
 Youth Engagement  
 Steps to Success  
 Home Visit Project  
 Before and After School Programs



## Family Engagement

- All Parents/guardians have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
- All parents/guardians have the capacity to support their children's learning.
- Parents/guardians and school staff must be equal partners.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to connect students, their families and the community to partner for student academic achievement and overall success.

## Drop in Support

Have a question? Call or stop by and ask. The ARPS Family center is for everyone.

## ARPS Dialogue Series

Monthly Conversations led by district staff and community specialists about various topics of interest to families.

#1 Homework made easy facilitated by Dr. Denise Green  
 Tips, Tools & Solutions for Low-Stress Homework

#2 Meet Paul Wiley, ARPS Ombudsperson, What does the Ombudsperson do?

# 3 The Adoption Mentoring Partnership Program, facilitated by Renee Moss, M.ED, Program Director

# 4 Maker @ Amherst



Come learn about what we do at the makerspace. Some members of the makerspace steering committee were on hand to help facilitate some of the activities: Paula Rees of the Engineering Department at UMass and Charlie Schweik of the Environmental Conservation Department at UMass

#5 Brookfield Farm, How farming connects students to the environment, facilitated by Leila Tunnell  
 Leila Tunnell Brookfield's Farm Educator shared with families how farming connects students to the environment, the community and food. She explained how farm education support theoretical learning in schools, how it contextualizes Massachusetts Common

April 2016



**Dr. Marta Guevara, Director Student & Family Engagement**

Core and Science Standards across multiple disciplines. Recipes used with the VELA students were provided for families to take home and try.

# 6 Before School Care Programs, facilitated by Dwayne Chamble, Out of Time School Coordinator



# 7 The Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America along with District Attorney David Sullivan and the Amherst Police Department presentation was very informative. The Moms Demand Action presenters gave a powerful and moving presentation on how to be SMART about guns and how curious children and innocent teens have lost their lives to guns. District Attorney David Sullivan shared information about the "Gun Buy Back Safety Initiative" for Franklin and Hampshire counties to safely dispose of guns. He also gave recent statistics about how unsecure guns have affected our society and more importantly children and teens. Amherst Police Department had two of their finest present on the steps and process of gun ownership and how to safely secure guns in the home. They also provided free gun locks to the members of the audience and encouraged them to take some for family members or anyone they knew that had a gun in their home that was unsecured.



# 8 Internet Safety Dialogue Session, facilitated by district staff.  
 Are you new to the world of social media? Come learn what your child may already know.



## Computer Program

Repurposed Computers given out to eligible families.

## Dental Program



The ARPS Family Center is partnering with The Mobile Dentist to provide dental care to our district families of Amherst. Smile Programs...the mobile dentists are innovative, on-site, school based, dental outreach providers. Their mission is to bring state of the art, dental care to those students in need in the most comfortable and effective way possible.

Many children sadly find themselves without easy and affordable access to necessary dental care. Smile Programs...the mobile dentists utilize locally licensed dentists and hygienists, employing the latest technology in portable equipment, to provide all services directly at your school. This imaginative program sets up conveniently in a classroom, auditorium, gym or other suitable locale and transforms it into a fully functional "dental office" for the day.

## Juntos We Play Events

Events hosted in the community throughout the school year.



The ARPS Family Center staff 1<sup>st</sup> "Juntos We Play" event of this school year was held on Saturday October 24, 2015. It was a beautiful day at Colonial Village with over 50 people in attendance. Our Superintendent Ms. Maria Geryk joined us and helped distribute books to all students in attendance. Talib Sadiq represented the Middle School and our Ombudsperson, Mr. Paul Wiley, volunteered as well.

## Olympia Oaks Apartments



We had a wonderful Juntos we Play event at Olympia Oaks on December 23, 2015. Everyone had a good time playing games, enjoying magic tricks, eating pizza, winning prizes and dancing the night away.



The ARPS Family Center has partnered with Olympia Oaks' management staff to help promote literacy and the love of reading among their tenants by establishing a community library/reading area within the complex. The ARPS Family Center along with several other entities provided a bookshelf and many large boxes of books. The boxes contained books of varying genres selected for the whole family. This donation was in part to provide reading materials for the diverse families of Amherst Regional Public School District that live in the complex. The underlying goal of this project is to function as an educational and outreach tool to build a sense of community as we engage and encourage families to participate in the Amherst Regional Public School District.

## Project Backpack



"Project Backpack supports income eligible students in grades PreK-12 to acquire necessary and grade appropriate school supplies and is designed around the social justice commitment of the Amherst-Pelham and Regional Public schools. We distributed over 500 backpacks last year with the help of many in our community.

## Youth Engagement

Students are at the center of our work. We support several programs such as: "They Made it so can I", Dialogue Forums, College Access Group, Intergenerational Equity Group, Youth Leadership Groups, etc.



We facilitated a dialogue with the ARPS ALANA group on the topic of micro-aggressions; and how they present themselves in everyday transactions. In small groups staff developed, negotiated and presented ways to effectively address institutional, personal, and professional micro aggressions utilizing an effective communication strategy. The workshop concluded with staff presenting a visual aide and oral presentation of language to use when dealing with the discomfort of exposing offensive unintentional or intentional insensitive racial, gender, class, and/or sexuality bias and/or prejudice.

In collaboration with the Amherst Together project; we facilitated an after movie group reflection. After the presentation of the "If You Build It" documentary, the group considered one prevailing theme in the movie. Through small and large group activities, participants examined what would help the Amherst community grow together. The groups reflected on "What immediate resources would benefit the Amherst community?" considering various age generations. By the end of the session the group collectively agreed that what would presently benefit the Amherst community is a recreational center.

**"They made it; So Can I"** The program is aimed at inspiring six graders in the Amherst and Pelham Elementary schools bringing successful people into their classrooms to tell their personal stories beginning with their own lives in sixth grade. The simple exposure of the possibility of different career paths can have a significant impact on a young person's life. This program aims to share with our students, before entering middle school, that there are multiple pathways to prosperity.



### Steps to Success (STS)

A Tier 3 long term family support program offered within the ARPS Family Center that supports the academic success of students.

We do a lot of curricular and co-curricular activities such as:

- Middle School students who participate in the Steps to Success Program have weekly sessions with their advisors by grade level during the school day. As part of the group, staff provides age appropriate community and group building lessons about self-esteem building, social and self-advocacy skills, connecting the mini-lessons to academic success. Lessons will be collected and available for review. We continue to partner with our STS caseloads and have had several successful events where they have been able to participate.

- During the month of January we visited the **UMass Stonewall Center** to continue to expand our knowledge of resources in our community and awareness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer, Intersex, and Asexual people. We want to be sure that we stay educated, knowledgeable and aware of resources for all students and families in our community. It was a pleasure to meet with **Dr. Genny Beemyn** who we look forward to working with at an ARPS Family Center event soon.

- **Success after High School**  
This group focused on preparing young scholars for the next phase of their journey in life. This group was co-facilitated by Mount Holyoke interns & ARPS Family Center Staff, the group meet weekly during the entire year and were able to support students in the college and scholarship application process. The ARHS students participating in the group successfully completed FAFSA applications and have made up their mind about their post application plans.

- We teamed up with LSSE and Family Outreach of Amherst to provide theatre tickets to STS families to enjoy **Mary Poppins the Broadway Musical**. Thank you, it was a fabulous show!

### Home Visit Project

The **Home Visit Project** is aimed at visiting all Kindergarten students and their families. Visits have been hugely successful and have provided a great opportunity to meet new people and learn more about the Amherst Regional Public Schools families and community. Over the course of the visits we have been able to address questions regarding who to connect with at the schools, providers in the community that could be supportive and programs that the schools have to offer.

**"INCREASING THE SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS — ONE VISIT AT A TIME"**

### Before and After School

Before and after school programs are available at all elementary schools to support students thru academic success.



The students in the have been working diligently improving their academic skills, while gaining a better understanding of their respective subject matters. We are continually supporting our Title 1 Champions with enrichment activities. It was our pleasure to host The Title 1 Encouragement Celebration on Tuesday March 1<sup>st</sup> at Fort River and Wildwood Elementary Schools as well as on Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Crocker Farm Elementary School.

Title 1 is an important aspect of our vision for after-school programming. Title 1 provides us the ability to offer and maintain academic support/enrichment activities for students. This program consists of one hour of Math & ELA instruction on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons between 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm at Crocker Farm, Wildwood and Fort River Elementary Schools. Title 1 Math for students in the 6th grade and ELA (English Language Arts) for students in grades 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.



For more information visit <http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>

## Upcoming Events

- **Dental Van**  
The Massachusetts mobile dentist will be visiting **Wildwood** Elementary on Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup> to help us shine!
- **Family Dialogue**  
Amherst Together & Equity on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at the High School
- **Juntos we Play**  
Southpoint & Mill Valley date pending

ARPS Family Center  
Amherst-Pelham Regional Middle School  
170 Chestnut Street  
Amherst, MA 01002

Hours:  
Monday-Thursday  
8:00am-4:00pm

Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm

Phone:  
(413) 362-1875

Fax:  
(413) 549-1036



As the summer months quickly approach, we are gearing up for the Summer Achievement Academy 2016. The Summer Achievement Academy is designed to offer support for our students through the implementation of two distinct programs. The Literacy Program is focused on the development of early literacy skills and will be offered to students in grades K-2. The English Language Learners (ELL) program is designed to work with students in small groups using research-based intervention strategies that are an extension of their current literacy programs. All Summer Achievement Academy classes will be held at the Crocker Farm Elementary School. The dates of the program are Tuesday, July 5th, 2016 through Thursday, July 28th, 2016, 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM



## VELA Programs

The Amherst Regional Middle School after-school and summer program is a Collaborative for Educational Services 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program called Vela Scholars. It is a free academic and enrichment program for rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The VELA Scholars Program provides a great opportunity for students to bridge academic years, engage in new experiences, and build relationships with mentors and peers, while encouraging them to challenge themselves academically



in a fun and exciting environment. For this reason the experience of each Vela Scholar will vary as we strive to meet every youth wherever they may be and help all of them to grow as learners.

Applications for The Summer Session of the program have been mailed out to all families with 6th and 7th grade students.



VELA Scholars Family Engagement Night

