

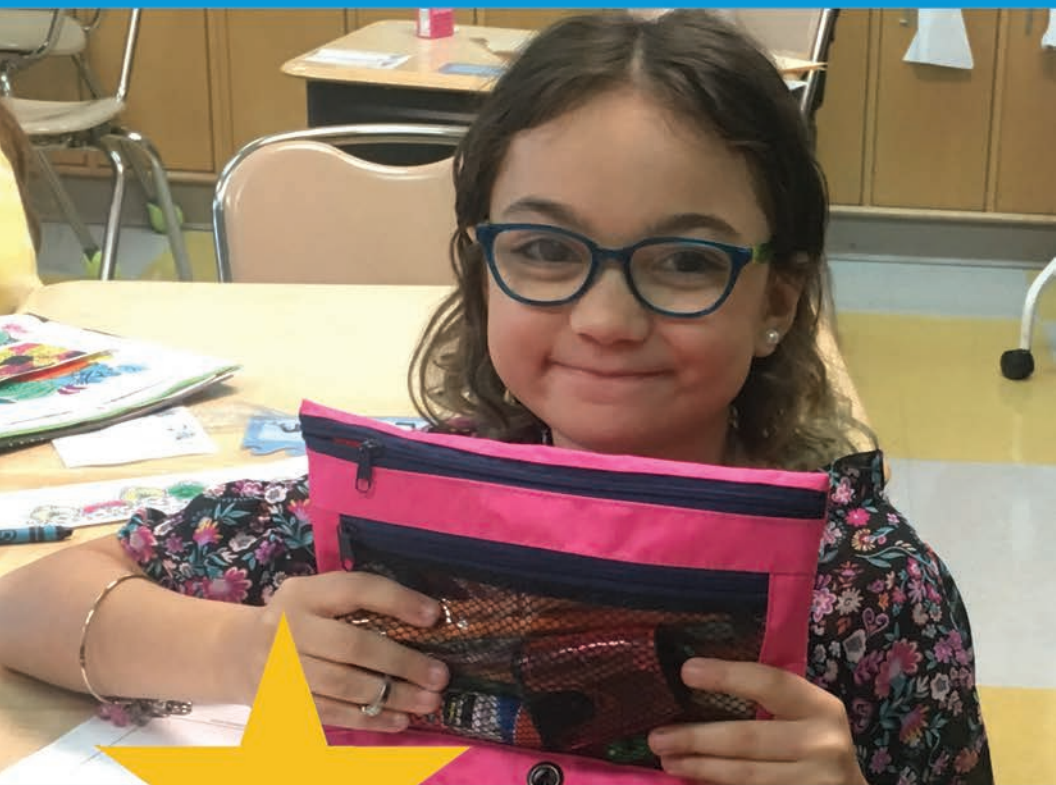
spring • 2021

Inspire

magazine

HARFORD COUNTY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Investing in the Youth of Harford County Public Schools



- Internet Service to Students
- Digital Spring Cleaning
- Apple Monsters
- Littles University & more!

PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LIAISONS

Did you know each Harford County public school has a Parent and Community Engagement (PACE) Liaison? Those serving in this role work with the HCPS Office of Family and Community Partnerships to expand birth to career supports for students and families. PACE Liaisons strive to implement best practices related to the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Building meaningful relationships between schools, families, and communities is imperative to student achievement. When families are involved in their children's learning -- both at home and at school -- their children are likely to do better in school.

WHAT DO PACE LIAISONS DO?



- Support 'Learn with Me' and other family outreach events;
- Support the efforts of the Customer Service Task Force to ensure schools provide a welcoming environment for families;
- Work to elicit input from families and community partners;
- Work with PTA or other parent groups to build capacity; and
- Support administrators with communication to parents/guardians through websites and social media platforms.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES



PACE liaisons participate in systemwide professional learning programs to improve skills and knowledge of family engagement, as well as trainings by the National Association of Family, School, and Community Engagement.

LEARN MORE!



The work of HCPS PACE liaisons is highlighted weekly in the Keeping PACE video series. Be sure to follow Parent Academy on Facebook (@HCPSParentAcademy) and check out the webpage on hcps.org to watch the videos, learn more about upcoming workshops and events for parents/guardians, and get information on community resources.



Our Programs



TOOLS for SCHOOLS Resource Center

Ensures all students have the school supplies to engage in high quality learning. Teachers shop for free for school supplies for their students and their classrooms, saving educators thousands of dollars in classroom expenses.

TECH Tools

Bridging the digital divide allows students to research homework and complete coursework. Research indicates students without technology at home are academically performing below their peers with technology. Providing high poverty students with technology increases their learning potential.



BOOKS in HAND Summer Learning

Provides backpacks filled with skill level books and materials to build home libraries for high poverty elementary students to improve reading proficiency. Access to books actually in the home with skill based resources lead to the most opportunities to read.



Innovation and Enrichment Grants

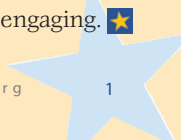
Funds classroom initiatives outside of the district budget. Educators are encouraged to create innovative and exciting educational programs to enhance and broaden student learning. Classroom initiatives for funding can be found at www.harfordeducation.org.

Scholarships and College and Career Access

Helping students make college achievable. Established by business and community members, scholarships help all students achieve their dreams. Students receive support in completing FAFSA, college essays, college research, internship programs, and mentored to ensure college and career success.

Everyday Heroes Award

Annual recognition of outstanding educators of Harford County Public Schools. We honor teachers who go above and beyond to make learning rewarding and engaging. ★






Harford County Education Foundation invests in the success of our students by providing educational resources that empower every child, regardless of background, family structure or economic status, the opportunity to achieve personal success.



Our Focused Accomplishments



Student achievement in a community is a social, civic and economic issue. The Education Foundation helps strengthen our community by providing targeted funding and needed resources to students, teachers and schools to ensure the academic and life-long success of our children. We want all students to have access to innovative learning and materials to help them meet the rigor of quality instruction and the challenges of 21st century workforce skills. Education is the most powerful investment in the well-being of our youth, the stability of our families, and the strength of our communities.

- 313 middle school students participated in a 3-day overnight retreat to learn leadership and soft skills.
- 125 high school students participated in a week-long leadership program to engage in leadership, workforce skills, and career planning from business leaders.
- 15,172 students received \$191,885 of needed school supplies.
- 2720 students in need received homework tool kits.
- 772 educators shopped for free at the Tools for Schools Resource Center saving thousands of dollars in personal expenditures on school and classroom supplies.
- 18,740 skill-leveled books to build home libraries and slow summer regression of learned reading skills.
- \$104,000 awarded in Classroom Innovation Grants to support an enriched learning experience for students.
- \$182,300 in scholarships.
- 190 laptops and tablets donated to students to support learning at home. 



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Harford County Education Foundation Provides Internet Service to Students

With many children learning virtually from home, having a reliable internet connection is essential. Harford County Education Foundation has partnered with Comcast to provide 12 months of Internet service to eligible families served by Harford County Public Schools through the company's Internet Essentials program.

"We recognize the importance of access to the Internet while learning from home," Debora Gavin Merlock, President of Harford County Education Foundation, stated. "It is vital that we do all we can to ensure that our students have the tools and the access they need to succeed in this digital learning platform. Comcast's Internet Essentials program is a means to help provide educational equity for students regardless of their socioeconomic status."

"We value this partnership with Harford County Education Foundation to help children and families get connected through our Internet Essentials program," said Misty Allen, Vice President of Government and Regulatory Affairs for Comcast's Beltway region. "For nearly a decade, Comcast has been dedicated to bridging the digital divide across the nation with our Internet Essentials program – which to date has connected millions of low-income families to the Internet."

Comcast's Internet Essentials – which brings high-speed internet, normally priced at \$9.95 per month, to low-income households – was made available to our families thanks to donors like The Cole Foundation, the Greater Bel Air Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Harford County.

"The Community Foundation was delighted to help Harford County Education Foundation address this critical need for our students," stated Jennifer Farrell, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Harford County. "We are proud to be their partner in philanthropy and support them in their excellent work on behalf of the children of Harford County."

The Education Foundation also provides free school supplies, books to increase access to reading materials in the home, grants to enhance innovation in the classroom, and resources to support equitable learning. ★



Preston and Olivia Clark, students attending Aberdeen Middle and Church Creek Elementary Schools, are engaged in classroom instruction through a digital online platform due to the COVID-19 shuttering of schools. (Photo courtesy of Karen Clark)

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Inspire Magazine is published bi-annually. For advertising information contact: publishing@sonipakdesign.com

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School supplies and gently used books give children valuable tools for learning success. Hold a School Supply Drive or a Gently Used Book Drive anytime throughout the year. Let us know you want to hold a drive and Harford County Education Foundation will email you flyers to post in your business or for distribution in your community organization. Email connect@harfordeducation.org and let us help you help all children succeed in school and life.

5 Keys to Activating

This year, our children have been faced with unprecedented obstacles and stress as they've learned to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given these challenges, it is imperative that children develop the skills they need to maintain a hopeful mindset and continue moving forward, especially in the face of adversity. There has never been a more critical time to teach our children about hope.

Hope is a measurable, learnable, and teachable skill that can have a positive impact on your child's life. Research shows that higher hope is associated with higher grades, improved attention, creativity and problem-solving in class, improved athletic performance, and higher-quality relationships. Higher hope is also linked to resilience against anxiety and depression, less violence, and less likelihood of risky behaviors, addiction, and loneliness.

Learning hope starts at home. By using the Five Keys for Hope as your guide, you can make small changes to create big impacts on your child's short and long-term health.



Hope Key 1: Identify and Manage Your Stress Response

When you are triggered by something around you, your body has a 90-second physiological stress response, during which you stay in "fight, flight or freeze" mode. Stress Skills are skills that help you navigate those 90 seconds. By teaching your children Stress Skills, you will be teaching them how to work through their body's stress response and then respond calmly.

Teaching Stress Skills in your home is easy. When you notice that your child is triggered, try the following:

- **Take Deep Breaths.** Encourage your child to breathe deeply with their eyes closed for 90 seconds before they react.
- **Focus on the Five Senses.** Break worry and rumination cycles by having your child focus on the present moment. Have them tell you what they notice with each of their five senses.
- **Visualize.** Encourage your children to take time to visualize the night before big events. Visualizing success the night before can help decrease stress during the real event.



Hope Key 2: Practice Happy Habits

The more you have a hopeful mindset, the happier and healthier you will be.

When you talk about hope with your children, it is important to focus on Happy Habits that they can do to inspire a hopeful mindset.

Here are some fun Happy Habits to try at home:

- **End the Night Positively.** Every night, have your children list one thing they were thankful for and one act of kindness they witnessed. Ending your day focusing on positivity is a great way to stimulate a positive attitude for the upcoming day.
- **Have Dance Parties.** Stimulate positive feelings with dancing, singing, and laughing.
- **Eat Healthily.** Fruits and veggies are not only good for your body; they are also good for your brain. Making sure kids get hope-helping fruits and vegetables every day can help them stay hopeful, happy and healthy.

Hope in Your Home

By Kathryn Goetzk – Source: Ptaourchildren.org



Hope Key 3: Take Inspired Actions Using SMART Goals

The act of setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (or SMART) goals and then pursuing them with inspired actions can help you maintain a hopeful mindset.

We recommend not only setting SMART goals for yourself but also helping your children set their own SMART goals. Working on individual goals as a family can help inspire positive feelings and enthusiasm, both of which help you reach your goals.



Photo by Ben White, Unsplash



Hope Key 4: Develop a Hope Network

Your Hope Network is the group of people around you who know you, appreciate you, see your strengths and help you keep your hopeful attitude.

Many children have a hard time identifying their Hope Network. Spend time writing down a list of parents and family members, faculty and staff within their school, friends and medical professionals that your child can reach out to when they need help.



Hope Key 5: Overcome the Challenges to Hope

By introducing your child to the first four Keys for Hope, you can prepare them for the challenges that they will face throughout their lives. That's why the fifth hope key is practicing those skills when difficulties arise.

Some of the most common challenges to hope that children face include rumination and worry, internalizing failure, and trying to control the uncontrollable. It is important to help your children learn to identify these challenges and then respond with Stress Skills, Happy Habits, and SMART goals in positive ways.

Learning hope is a process and there will be obstacles along the way. However, there has never been a more critical time to introduce hope to your children. ★



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6 Tips for

Digital Spring Cleaning & Organization



Amber Peoples
11th International Baccalaureate Junior
Edgewood High School

1. Review your online accounts.

1. Delete all subscriptions you don't use.
2. Remove information from your accounts that is not needed anymore or old documents in cloud storage.

2. Update all devices.

1. Update all apps and operating systems on all internet-connected devices. This includes PCs, smartphones, tablets, Wi-Fi home routers, and smart TVs to reduce risks from malware and infections.
2. Delete unused apps.

3. Fine-tune web browsers.

1. Check your web browser settings.
2. Clear out old data, like stored passwords, old auto-fill information, and ensure your browser is set not to store passwords.
3. Delete unused browsers.

4. Lockdown your login.

1. Use a password, passcode, fingerprint, or facial recognition to log into all of your devices. Enable the strongest authentication tools available.
2. Utilize multi-factor authentication.
3. Take inventory of your passwords.
4. Use a different password for each account.

5. Back up your files.

1. Copy important data to a secure cloud site, another computer or external hard drive where it can be safely stored.
2. Back up your files before disposing of a device.

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Creating the Perfect HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

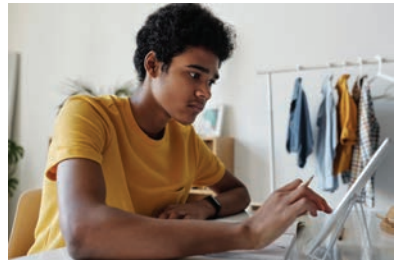
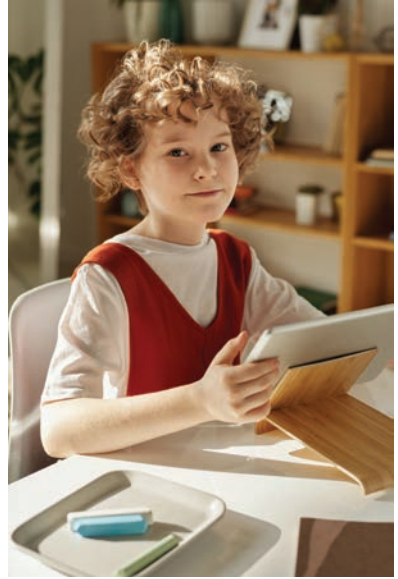
School closures to help mitigate the coronavirus meant students were forced to move online for learning and instruction. Not having a dedicated space for learning can make virtual learning more difficult. Harford County Education Foundation worked with Harford County Public School's Student Support Services to provide an optimal learning environment for vulnerable students.

Donating over \$5,000 in critical resources, the education foundation provided vulnerable students with desks, chairs, lamps, keyboards, mice, headphones as well as other essential tools to support the unique learning needs of the student.

"The partnership Harford County Public Schools has with Harford County Education Foundation is nothing short of amazing," stated Bernard Hennigan, Executive Director of Student Support Services. "This specific initiative helped students create a space where they could optimize their learning and develop a workspace that is as close to their school classroom as possible. Our students benefitted greatly from their work and as a system, we are so appreciative."

Students challenged with finding the ideal space to learn often resorted to the living room floor, a bed, or a couch. Learning virtually is difficult enough without a dedicated workspace. To ensure every child had the tools and workspace to engage in learning, Harford County Education Foundation teamed with HCPS Pupil Personnel Workers to provide students in need with an optimal workspace for home learning.

"Harford County Education Foundation's mission is to ensure every child has equitable access to learning and pivoting resources to our students who have the greatest risk of falling behind in their studies was a priority of our Board of Directors," said Debora Gavin Merlock, President of Harford County Education Foundation. "We are excited that students have these critical tools to support them during virtual learning with the knowledge these materials will have a positive impact for years to come." 🌟



Photos by Julia M. Cameron, Pexels

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PET A DOG	HAVE A PICNIC		TRY A NEW FRUIT	GO SOMEWHERE NEW
JUMPROPE	CATCH LIGHTNING BUGS	WRITE A POEM	MAKE POPSICLES	DECORATE THE SIDEWALK WITH CHALK
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Items Needed: Pencils • Markers • Crayons • Glue Sticks • Pocket Folders
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Pencil Case • Binder Pencil Pouches • Backpacks • White Glue • Index Cards

One pencil can draw a path to literacy. One box of crayons can color the imagination with new possibilities. Ensuring that children have the supplies they need to do their homework, take tests, and complete science and art projects is a simple but important way we can help them get their education and succeed in school.

Stuff the Bus is the Harford County Education Foundation's Annual School Supply Drive. Stuff the Bus stocks the education foundation's Tools for Schools Resource Center where teachers and schools can access school supplies for their students and classrooms year-round. Our goal is to ensure every child has school supplies on their desk beginning on the first day of school and every day of the school year!



This school year, over \$36,000 in school supplies and classroom materials were donated to Harford County Public School classrooms. Together, we can help more teachers and students!

The following participating businesses and organizations are accepting donated school supplies:

- ★ Beacon Staffing Alternatives, Inc.
- ★ Bel Air Orthodontics
- ★ Drayer Physical Therapy
- ★ Edward Jones - Havre de Grace
- ★ Forest Hill Fit Body
- ★ Hamilton Service Center
- ★ Harco Credit Union
- ★ Harford County Government
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- ★ Macy's Harford Mall
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- ★ The Y in Abingdon
- ★ The Yards at Fieldside Village
- ★ WAVE
- ★ Wesleyan Chapel United Methodist Church
- ★ Women of St. Mary's Episcopal Church

More collection sites can be found online at <http://bit.ly/harfordcollectionsites>. School supplies can also be purchased and donated by visiting Harford County Education Foundation school supply registries online at Target: www.bit.ly/targetharfordeducation and Amazon: www.bit.ly/amazonharfordeducation. Donations can be shipped directly to Harford County Education Foundation.

Stuff the Bus makes a great service project for youth groups, places of worship, PTAs, and families. Contact us at connect@harfordeducation.org to get started with a Stuff the Bus poster and collection box. Learn more at www.harfordeducation.org/programs/tools-for-schools. ★

Apple Monsters

When craft time doubles as snack time, its yummy fun!

Ingredients:

- 1 apple
- 1/3 cup, plus 2 teaspoons nut-free butter spread, divided (*see note*)
- puffed rice cereal
- 4 red grapes, each sliced vertically in half
- 8 green grapes
- 16 chocolate chips

Instructions:

1. Quarter and core the apple, then quarter each piece again, so you have 16 thin wedges.
2. Spread 1 teaspoon nut-free butter on each apple slice.
3. Lay half of the apple slices on top of the other halves (matching up nut-free butter sides so the apple slices stick together), to create the “mouth.”
4. Push puffed rice “teeth” gently into the nut-free butter, all around the “mouth,” leaving room to place a red grape “tongue” on the bottom slice of each “mouth.”
5. Place 1 red grape half in the center of each bottom slice to create the “tongue.”
6. To create the “eyes,” slice the ends off of the green grapes, then cut each grape in half horizontally. (If your grapes are exceptionally large, you may get more than two “eyes” out of each one.) Using the tip of the knife, make a small slit in the top of each grape half, then place a chocolate chip, pointy-end down, into the grape, pushing the point of the chocolate chip into the slit you cut.
7. Place 2 small dollops of nut-free butter on the top portion of each “mouth,” then gently press a grape “eye” onto each dollop.
8. Enjoy immediately, or store in the refrigerator for an hour or two before serving.



NOTE: Nut-free butter

We chose WowButter (a soy-based, nut-free product), but you could also substitute a peanut-free sun butter (made from sunflower seeds). Alternately, if nut allergies aren't a concern, you can use regular peanut butter. 🍌

Reference: <https://twohealthykitchens.com/apple-monsters-a-nut-free-healthy-halloween-treat>

Freedom Federal Credit Union Calls For Entries In Annual Golden Apple School Employee Competition

HCPS Employee Can Win \$2,000 For Best Education Award Entry!

Freedom Federal Credit Union has announced its 2021 Annual Golden Apple Education Award competition with \$4,000 in prizes, and open to all Harford and Baltimore County school employees (public and private).

The essay competition is designed to recognize a Freedom member who is deeply committed to educational excellence. Freedom is looking for the idea with the greatest impact on local students, classes, schools, and the Harford or Baltimore County community.

Four winning school employees will receive cash awards; \$2,000 for first place, \$1,000 for second place and \$500 each for two runner-up awards. Entrants must be a Freedom Federal Credit Union member, and a school employee in Harford or Baltimore County, as a teacher, administrator or support personnel.

1. *What is your plan to benefit your students, your class or your school? How will this money help you implement your plan?*
2. *Will you take a continuing education class or classes to improve your own education and expertise? (Please be specific.) How will your education improve your students' learning?*
3. *Will you purchase supplies for your school or classroom? How will the supplies help improve student learning? (Please provide as many quantitative details as possible.)*
4. *Will your plan, training, or purchases affect the Harford County Community? If yes, how so?*

Interested applicants may complete an entry form available online.

Go to freedomfcu.org/golden-apple/ for the form.

Completed entry forms must be submitted by the deadline date of May 30, 2021, to marketing@freedomfcu.org. All entries will be reviewed by a panel of Freedom employees, volunteers and community partners. The winners will be announced by June 18, 2021.

Freedom Federal Credit Union is a community-chartered federal credit union offering consumer financial services to those who live, work, volunteer, worship, attend school, or have family in Harford or Baltimore County. Additionally, Freedom offers a full line of banking services for all businesses, associations, and other organizations that are based in Harford and Baltimore County. Freedom has been in business since 1953 and has five locations. 🌟



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Summer Learning Fun!

By: Brenda McLaughlin, Jane Voorhees Sharp & Reading Rockets

Research about how much children lose ground over the summer is well documented. Harris Cooper of Duke University notes, "Overall, children experience an average summer learning loss across reading and mathematics of about one month" (1996).

The thing is, though, kids don't have to lose over the summer. In fact, you can encourage your child to have a summer of fun and learning with these five free and easy things to do. Try them out!



Read Every Day

The Research: At the middle school level, reading four to five books over the summer has a positive impact on fall reading achievement comparable to attending summer school (Kim, 2004).

Suggestions: Take your kids to the library often and let them choose which books to check out. Listen to books on tape. Subscribe them to a magazine. Take turns reading to each other. Allow your kids to stay up a half-hour later at night as long as they're reading.



Use Math Every Day

The Research: The largest summer learning losses for all children occur in mathematical computation, an average of 2.6 months (Cooper, 1996).

Suggestions: Practice the multiplication tables by making each point in a basketball game worth 7 points (or 8 or 9). Ask your kids to make change at the drive-thru. Show your child how to go to Cool Math to play math games. Make up math word problems in the car and at the dinner table.



Get Outside and Play

The Research: Intense physical activity programs have positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior (Journal of School Health 1997).

Suggestions: Find ways to ensure your child is active for 60 minutes each day. Have him or her walk the neighbor's dog, go swimming, play badminton or soccer, take walks, or go for family bike rides. Look for safe, fun ways to play outside together year-round. Go to *Family Corner Magazine* and *PBS Parents* for more ideas.

Write Every Week



The Research: More freshmen entering degree-granting postsecondary institutions take remedial writing courses than take remedial reading courses (NCES 2003).

Suggestions: Ask your child to write a weekly letter to his or her grandparents, relatives, or friends. Encourage him to keep a summer journal. Have her write the family's grocery list. Organize a secret pal writing project for adults and kids at your church or in your community.

Do a Good Deed



The Research: Students learn better and "act out" less when they engage in activities to aid in their social-emotional development, such as community service (The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2004).

Suggestions: Encourage your child to help out neighbors or friends. He or she can volunteer with a local group or complete a service-learning project. Suggest that your child set aside part of his allowance for charity. Look at Nickelodeon's Big Help website together for more ideas. ★

Adapted from a presentation by Brenda McLaughlin, Director of Research and Policy, Center for Summer Learning, Johns Hopkins University and Jane Voorhees Sharp, Office of Early Care and Education, New Jersey Department of Human Services.



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LITTLES UNIVERSITY

Welcome to Littles University!

This year, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) introduced Littles University (LittlesU) as a way to welcome families with children who aren't school-aged yet, into the HCPS community. The series introduces a book, read by Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications for HCPS, to our Littles. Harford County Education Foundation has partnered with LittlesU to provide a copy of the book to families who register. With just two episodes released in the series, the education foundation has already provided over 350 books to families in Harford County!

"LittlesU is an opportunity for HCPS to connect with future HCPS families," said Mrs. Lader. "We recognize that reading from a young age is critical to a child's success. We are so excited that Harford County Education Foundation saw a way to get each book into homes around the county and can't wait to see how many books can be distributed over the next year!"

LittlesU episodes are released through the HCPS Facebook and Instagram accounts. We encourage you to follow HCPS on social media and use #HCPSLittlesU to show us how your family enjoys reading with Littles University!



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