

New Summer Camp Off To Good Start

Our Steps to Success Middle School Health & Wellness Summer Camp is in full swing.

“I really love it,” said Jaylissa Saint-Fleur, who is 11 and attends the eight-week camp at our center in Lake Worth West. “I get to do a lot of things like play outside and go on trips to movies and bowling. I’ve also made many new friends. And the counselors are so nice.”

More than 40 middle school youth are participating in the new camp that will run through Aug. 10. The camp’s focus is on health and wellness, as well as learning academic skills such as computer coding and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

But on a recent hot morning in mid-June, the youth just wanted to escape the sun and have fun. They were watching a World Cup soccer game inside the recreation building. They were eating snacks, cheering on the teams and just happy being together.

“The kids have a lot of fun. They like coming here,” said Lesha Roundtree, our summer camp director.

That’s the point of the camp. For many pre-teen youth growing up in the area, there was little to do in the lazy summer months until the camp opened. Many sat at home, watched TV and accomplished very little.

“We wanted to change that,” said Rhonda Rogers, executive director of Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group. “We set out and created a middle school camp to give the youth a place to go this summer that was educational and fun. I think we succeeded.”

The funding for the camp was made possible by Impact 100 Palm Beach County, which provided a \$100,000 grant. These funds are paying for counselors, teachers and assistants to supervise the youth and emphasize nutrition, academics, and staying focused on the future.

Once the camp ends, the youth, as well as many of the staff, will continue on through an after-school program at our center. The youth will come three times a week to complete homework, get tutoring, and be involved in activities close to their home.

“We made sure that our programming for these middle school youth was year-round so they benefited from learning and relationship-building by being with each other – that was really important to us,” Rogers said.

Unique English Language Program Gets Refunded

For those in our community who haven't learned to speak English, Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group offers a program to study the language – as well as learn about nutrition and wellness – all at the same time.

Thanks to Florida Blue and the Florida Literacy Coalition, we were recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to provide Healthy ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to our residents and members for another year. Our Executive Director Rhonda Rogers was recently presented with the check at the 34th Annual Florida Literacy Conference.

This isn't a standard ESOL program. As participants learn

basic and advanced components of the English language, they also learn about healthy eating and lifestyles. The goal is for students to use the information they learn in the classroom and apply it in a larger context.

Our 25 students also took part in a “project-based” learning initiative. This year, the topic was “legal and illegal drugs – let’s talk about them.” Instructor Louise Gourd worked with our students to understand the nation’s drug abuse epidemic, particularly how people are getting addicted and dying from opioid prescriptions.

In addition, our students went on field trips to a grocery store and dental office and attended our community’s annual Community Health Fair.

In all, the 16-week class, from January to April, got students to understand the challenges of learning English but also the challenges of living in the U.S.

“The students were so enthusiastic. They took on many challenges and they did a great job,” Louise said. “This program is indeed unique.”

To learn more about our ESOL program call us 561-649-9600.

Summer Camp Set to Start Thanks to Impact 100 Palm Beach County

Thanks to a \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Palm Beach County, Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group will offer a free summer camp and afterschool program for middle school youth in

our community.

The funding will pay for 40 youth to attend an eight-week camp – from June 11-August 10 at our center at 4730 Maine Street in Lake Worth – that will focus on health and wellness. In addition, once the camp ends, the grant will enable these and other middle school students to gather after-school at our center to complete homework, get tutoring, and be involved in activities close to their home.

These funds will pay for teachers and assistants to supervise the children and emphasize nutrition, academics, and staying focused on the future.

“This funding is a huge accomplishment for us,” said Rhonda Rogers, executive director of Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group. “We’ve had plenty of activities for children in elementary schools and high schools but not for those in middle school. Now we’ll be well-rounded to offer programs to all of the children in our community.”

Again, the new camp is free. Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group will be providing lunch, snacks, and educational and fun fieldtrips. There is a \$50 per child registration fee.

Learn more about the camp and registration [here](#).

Steps to Success Middle School Health & Wellness Summer Camp

Registration is now open for our Steps to Success Middle School Health & Wellness Summer Camp.

This new camp is free. Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group will be providing lunch, snacks, and educational and fun fieldtrips. There is a \$50 per child registration fee.

With a theme of health and wellness, the camp will run for eight weeks from June 11 to August 10.

Each child must attend all eight weeks. In addition, he or she must have completed 5th grade, and be going to middle school beginning in August until 8th grade.

To sign up, please print the registration form by [clicking here](#) and bring it to our office at 4730 Maine Street in Lake Worth.

The weekly themes are:

Health Factors – June 11 – June 15

Mental and Emotional Health – June 18 – June 22

Healthy Eating Habits – June 25 – July 6

Nutrients Your Body Needs – July 9 – July 13

Managing Your Weight – July 16 – July 20

Body image & Eating Disorder – July 23 – July 27

Managing Stress – July 30 – August 3

Create an Eating & Exercise Plan – August 6 – August 10

“Book Walk” Encourages Students To Read and Attend School Regularly

At our recent “Book Walk” event, our staff and volunteers got many students to read books and focus on their futures.

The Jan. 10th event was aimed at encouraging students from Palm Springs Elementary School to attend school regularly. The school, on Davis Road in Lake Worth, is where many of the young children in our community attend.

Our organizers distributed more than 30 free backpacks stuffed with books, snacks and other items to children in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade. They also visited six homes and talked to parents to see how their children were doing in school. Volunteers also discussed the flu and other ailments with the parents and encouraged them to give their children flu shots and take other precautions to prevent them from getting sick.

“It’s vital that children attend school every day,” said Rhonda Rogers, executive director of Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group. “And so, we worked with our partners to establish the ‘Book Walk’ event so we could really educate our families about the importance of school attendance.”

The event was organized by Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group’s Early Childhood Leadership Collaborative which focuses on preparing students for kindergarten, getting them to attend school regularly, and making sure they are safe. The “Book Walk” was made possible by the support of our funders, including Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County and United Way of Palm Beach County.

“We had a lot of families interested in getting this backpack

and talking to our staff and volunteers, so for us, this was a successful event that we hope to do next year and get even more families to participate,” Rogers said.

Job Posting – Middle School Summer Camp Group Leader (Counselor) Position

Job Posting – Lake Worth West Steps to Success Middle School Summer Camp

Group Leader (Counselor) Position

Seasonal Position. The daily functions of this position consist of but are not limited to engaging and educating middle school summer campers about various health & wellness topics with the use of demonstrations and hands-on activities in an informal setting. This position requires individuals who are comfortable communicating to middle school youth in grades 6 – 8 and delivering health and wellness curriculum in an informal setting.

Qualified applicants will demonstrate enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. The Group Leaders will be expected to follow the curriculum provided and demonstrate proficiency in communicating health & wellness concepts to young audiences. Applicants should be good communicators, have the ability to complete tasks with minimal supervision, and demonstrate excellent customer service skills.

Essential Job Functions:

- Responsible for delivering Health & Wellness Summer Camp

curriculum and engaging the campers in hands-on activities and demonstrations.

- Responsible for supervising campers to and from daily activities, ensuring that all campers are accounted for at ALL times.
- Responsible for overseeing assigned counselors and volunteers each week.
- Responsible for implementing safety rules and compliance to the camp behavior policy.
- Able to apply appropriate policies/procedures, enforce safety regulations, and respond quickly to critical incidents and emergencies.
- Demonstrates commitment to Lake Worth West's vision, mission and values.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Education Requirements:

Candidates will have to pass a background check and be able to sign an Affidavit of Good Moral Character.

Preferred Skills:

Must have experience working with children middle school. Experience in an informal or formal teaching environment is preferred. Candidate should accept, respect and be responsive to diversity. Applicants should demonstrate enthusiasm for working with children, and commit to Monday-Friday for the duration of the camp season (June 11, 2018 – August 10, 2018). First Aid certification is desirable.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Must be able to stand for extended periods. These positions require outdoor walking during the summer months, so employees will be exposed to the summer heat and humidity throughout the course of the day.

Salary:

\$15.00 per hour

Please complete the application by clicking on the link below and send it to rrogers@lakeworthwest.org. No Phone Calls.

[EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION](#)

Meet Our New Employee Sandra Bueso

Just down the street from where Sandra Bueso lives is our community center which offers the 30-year-old mother just about everything she needs to raise her children.

Educational programs to teach her three children to excel at reading.

Playground and ball fields for her older kids to run.

A new mother's support group so she can better bond with her infant son.

And, most recently: a job.

In November, Sandra became the Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group's child watch specialist in charge of children whose parents are attending the BRIDGES of Lake Worth West programs.

"I've been coming here for several years and now I get to work with kids – I'm so happy and grateful," said Sandra, a native of Honduras who has lived in Palm Beach County for much of her life.

Her new job requires her to babysit children while their parents take BRIDGES workshops and participate in other activities. But she's taken on additional duties because she loves the job. She often does arts and crafts projects with the children and helps set up activities for the adults.

Just weeks into the job, Sandra started envisioning a lifelong career as a teacher working with pre-kindergarteners. She didn't go to college and doesn't love higher learning but being around our center over the years has opened her mind to new opportunities and challenges.

"I don't love going to school, but I see myself in this field. I love the children and I love working with their mothers," she said.

Rhonda Rogers, executive director of Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group, said Sandra has taken her job to another level.

"Sandra is planning and researching the activities. She's great at this job," Rhonda said.

Sandra is also offering advice to Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group's Early Childhood Learning Collaborative, a group of community members that work to overcome school and educational challenges in their neighborhoods. Right now, the group is looking at ways to encourage parents to send their kids to school regularly, and Sandra provides good ideas from the perspective of a parent.

"As a parent, Sandra is giving us a valuable perspective on this issue," Rhonda said. "Sandra has been coming to our center for some time now and now she's a great employee. She's come a full circle here. We're glad to have her as part of our team."

Learn about other Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group staff members [here](#).

#KidsMatter Luncheon Speaker: Reading Is Key To Everything

Fall in love with reading – it will open new opportunities for success.

That was the message of middle grade novelist Donna Gephart, who spoke during our inaugural #KidsMatter Literacy Luncheon and Silent Auction on Nov. 30 at the Benvenuto Restaurant in Boynton Beach.

The author of *Lily and Dunkin*, *Death by Toilet Paper*, *How to Survive Middle School* and other books told a crowd of more than 60 attendees that she grew up in a working-class neighborhood of Philadelphia and spent much of her free time in a library reading books on just about any topic.

“That place changed my life,” said Gephart, who went on to become a popular speaker at schools, conferences, and book festivals, and now lives in South Florida with her family.

The #KidsMatter luncheon was a fundraiser for a new program at Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group that will aim to change the lives of middle school students.

Proceeds from our event will be used to start afterschool and summer camp programs for middle school students, so they are better prepared for high school and beyond. The funds will also go to literacy programs for our children and youth.



At the luncheon, Chief Deputy Michael Gauger of Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and Houston Tate, director of Office of Community Revitalization for Palm Beach County, also discussed how Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group has made a major difference in the lives of hundreds of people during their times of need.

Over the years, the community just off Military Trail near Lake Worth Road was cleared of crime, drugs, and dilapidated houses and turned into a model neighborhood complete with a playground, ballfields and a community center, which offers programs for residents to become better parents and help their children succeed in school.

"This has become a model community," Gauger said. "It wasn't just the police and county that made the difference – it was the residents who stepped up and worked with us to improve their streets."

Rhonda Rogers, Executive Director/BRIDGES Director at Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group, said the community will continue expanding programs because the residents are committed to their neighborhood, and organizations like the Sheriff's Office, the county government, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, and many others are dedicated to funding programs and improvements.

"We have great support in the community," Rogers said.

And now, there's new support from friends of Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group through the #KidsMatter luncheon.

Rogers plans on the luncheon becoming an annual event to serve not just as a fundraiser for the organization but also bring

attention to the importance of reading.

“Reading is key to everything,” she said.

Learn more about upcoming Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group events [here](#).

Our #KidsMatter Literacy Luncheon To Raise Funds For New Programming

Want to help us accomplish much more in our community?

If so, attend our inaugural #KidsMatter Literacy Luncheon and Silent Auction on Thursday, Nov. 30 at the Benvenuto Restaurant at 1730 North Federal Highway in Boynton Beach.

Proceeds from our event will be used to better serve our community and to offer more youth programs, such as afterschool and summer camp for middle school students. The funds will also go to literacy programs for our children and youth.

Our event’s main speaker will be award-winning youth middle grade novelist Donna Gephart, the author of *Lily and Dunkin*, *Death by Toilet Paper*, *How to Survive Middle School* and other books. She is a popular speaker at schools, conferences, and book festivals, and lives in South Florida with her family.

Also speaking at our #KidsMatter Literacy Luncheon will be Chief Deputy Michael Gauger of Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office, and Houston Tate, director of Office of Community Revitalization for Palm Beach County. They will discuss how

Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group has made a major difference in the lives of hundreds of people during their times of need.

Tickets are \$60.

Get tickets to our event [here](#).

If you are able to donate an item (gift cards, sport items, etc.) for our silent auction, that will be a significant added source of revenue for our organization and the programs we offer. **Please call us at 561-649-9600 to learn more.**

Your support of our event is vital to the success of our organization that assists low-income families in the Lake Worth West community by offering programs, activities, and resources for children, teens, and adults.

We hope you can join us on Nov. 30 at Benvenuto Restaurant!

Our Center Nominated For Nonprofit of the Year

Great news: we have been nominated for Nonprofit of the Year in the Hats Off Nonprofit Awards event on October 3 in West Palm Beach presented by [Nonprofits First](#).

Lake Worth West Resident Planning Group, Inc., which operates our Lake Worth West Community Center, is among the 15 agencies nominated in the event's Nonprofit of the Year (Operating budget \$500,001-\$2.49 million) category.

This is a big deal for us.

The recognition is an indication of the good work we are doing to help our families adapt and prosper in Palm Beach County.

In recent years, our center has expanded educational programming and events to assist hundreds of parents in raising their children through our BRIDGES at Lake Worth West program.

Our literacy initiative also is improving reading skills for young children as part of the [Parent-Child Home](#) program with our partner Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County. The staff visit homes to promote verbal interaction, parent-child bonding, and school readiness skills for young children.

(In fact, we are hosting our #KidsMatter Literacy Luncheon on Thursday, November 30 at Benvenuto Restaurant in Boynton Beach from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Proceeds for the event will benefit our center's literacy programs for children and youth. Tickets are \$60. Please call us at 561-649-9600 to learn more. Get tickets to our event [here](#).)

In addition, we offer many other programs and events for teens and adults through our center.

For many years, our center was only known locally in the Lake Worth area. Today, we are catching the attention of the greater Palm Beach County community. This nomination is proof of that.

Come cheer us on during the Hats Off Nonprofit Awards event at the Harriet Himmel Theater at CityPlace from 5:30 – 7:30 PM. The event will benefit Nonprofits First's education and Rising Leaders programs.

Get tickets [here](#).