

## Thanksgiving in August!

As we enter the “dog days of summer,” the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center has lots of good news to report.



First, Summer Camp is going fabulously! There are at least 80 students attending daily with a lengthy waiting list of children who also want to attend. Center Youth Services Coordinator, Teresa Allen says this year’s focus is on literacy and math. “Reading Buddies and Book Nook delivered via partnerships with Summer Collab and United Way of DE. Summer Collab works with our rising 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders and Book Nook for rising 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. We also continue to use Renaissance Learning for the oldest campers and the Freckle Math program for everyone.” Once again this year, the goal is to make sure our students don’t forget what they learned this past school year and are better prepared for classes in September.

Secondly, in its closing days, the Delaware General Assembly approved its annual Grant in Aid and Community Reinvestment Fund legislation that included funding for the Hilltop Center. The Grant in Aid for fiscal year 2025 included an increase of \$5,000 to a new annual total of \$165,000.



For several years the Hilltop Center has dreamed of expanding its facilities to serve more children and offer more and varied activities for our students. That dream came closer to reality in June when the Delaware General Assembly voted to grant the Center \$1 million through its Reinvestment Fund. We still have a long way to go to fulfill our dream, but this is very welcome news! Our thanks to the General Assembly for this substantial grant.

Finally, Center Executive Director, Michelle Williams says Hilltop received \$12,000 from the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program. “(The purpose of the grant is) to prevent and increase family awareness of the various forms of child abuse, educate families on trauma, disseminate information on mental health substance abuse and domestic violence, and create opportunities for families bonding with families.”

This program is already showing results, according to Center Deputy Director, Brandon Furrowh. “Center staff, students, and families visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. (in June). This excursion kicked off the first of the Family Engagement portion of the Prevent Child Abuse Delaware grant. All who participated are looking forward to doing more activities like this.”

Have a great summer and try to stay cool!

*Eric F. Mease*

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