

From Science to Smoothies



Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) are receiving a lot of attention this fall at the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center.

Center Youth Services Coordinator, Teresa Allen, says one of the goals of the program is to involve girls in science.

“Our program has been awarded a STEM grant from The Delaware Afterschool Network in a targeted effort to introduce girls to science jobs. We will be offering a STEM club to our oldest groups on our Friday Fun Days and including a STEM week for all students monthly.

Teresa notes that literacy exercises are ongoing across all grades.

“Kindergarten and first graders practiced phonics activities focused on identifying and matching beginning and ending sounds. Second and third graders' skills consisted of identifying and distinguishing short vowel sounds in words and recognizing the long final “e” sound. Older youth,” Teresa continues, “read and demonstrated comprehension of non-fiction books, as well as showed understanding of inference skills and cause-and-effect events. All the lessons were designed to aid in helping our children become better readers. The games played were not only educational, but also fun.”

Meanwhile, the Hilltop preschoolers were receiving an early lesson around eating at restaurants through pizzas and smoothies. Center Curriculum Coordinator, Dashaba Fielder, says the fun centered around “Tabby Tiger’s Diner.”

Students were “introduced to vocabulary words such as menu, restaurant, silverware, and even reservations. They may not be able to spell the words, but they know what they mean. They all had the opportunity to pretend to be waiters and waitresses, hosts and hostesses, and even chefs!”



“The children created chef hats using construction paper and decorating materials. During the unit of produce,” Dashaba points out, “they were able to make their very own smoothies! Yum Yum! The dramatic play center was turned into a Pizza Parlor. During this time, the children were able to walk into the parlor and order their pizza. Their favorite part was ordering from the menu! We even talked about being sure to give a tip!”

Evenings are busy at Hilltop this fall too, according to Center Deputy Director, Brandon Furrowh.

“We continue to offer free haircuts on Monday and Wednesday evenings starting at 5:30, open gym on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings, as well as cooking classes and DJ workshops. Programming is offered in three different cohorts in an effort to allot time and space for the community planning council meetings that are held at the center every second Monday and third Wednesday of each month.”

Finally, we would be amiss if we didn’t mention the Halloween activities at Hilltop. Center Executive Director, Michelle Williams, says activities centered in the gymnasium.

“The gym was decorated and set up for a harvest celebration on October 31st for all of the Hilltop participants. There were pumpkins, leaves, and lots of treats all around. The children and staff were dressed in their costumes and everyone went to each station in the gym and filled their bags with lots of goodies. They took pictures at the end. There were also toothbrushes and toothpaste on hand for everyone! The preschoolers visited the Regency Nursing Home and trick or treated with the residents before they came to the gym.”

The kids **NEEDED** those toothbrushes and toothpaste, big time!

Merry Christmas to all from the Staff, management, and Board of Directors of the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center!

*Eric F. Mease
Member, Board of Directors
Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center*