



FEBRUARY | 2019

Homewood-Brushton Family Support Center Newsletter



Successful Event: Stuck Series Kickoff

In February, Family Support hosted an event to introduce the “Stuck Series” to the Center’s parent support groups.

The evening began with food and fellowship. Parents sat enjoying dinner and chatting with one another about: disciplining their child; allowing them to express themselves; establishing healthy boundaries; building up a child’s self-esteem; books they have enjoyed; learning to find fulfillment; and societal expectations.

To end the night, the group established “norms” for their future meetings together. These guidelines will serve as expectations for how to interact during the sessions. The most important of these are: respect; confidentiality; compassion; and “no judgment.”

Stuck Series

Fear, blame, avoidance, unwillingness, and “refusing to stand in your truth” can all cause people to become stuck. When caregivers and parents practice unhealthy patterns or habits, children see these and may pick them up. The “Stuck Series” is about being honest, peeling back layers, and fully understanding oneself.

The Center will begin this Series with the Women’s Rap and Fathers Trying Together groups separately. Series’ meetings will consist of group conversations, journaling, and ownership and honesty about where each person is individually. There will be no particular pace, but the group will move together as each person defines success for his or herself, and identifies and overcomes personal barriers to their success. In addition, Family Coach Adriana (read more about her in the Staff Spotlight section) is available for therapy sessions which can be helpful in working through life experiences and practicing healthy coping mechanisms.

For more information, contact:

- Toni Beasley | Women’s Rap | 412.728.0440
- Neil Walker | Fathers Trying Together | 412.728.2892



Parent Perspective: Cecilia Essex

Cecilia Essex first became acquainted with the Center and Family Development Specialist Victoria at her first Community Voices meeting where “parent leaders from across the Allegheny County Family Support Network come together to discuss issues affecting their children, families, and communities.” She had been trying to attend meetings since the summer, but personal issues got in the way. Still, Cecilia believes that everything happens for a reason.

Though she isn’t enrolled, Cecilia has been attending the Maya Program at The Homewood Early Learning Hub every Tuesday. Victoria helps her with transportation to the events, and she has been consistent and persistent. Cecilia sees this as a good thing. She is expecting her fourth child and appreciates the opportunity to be around currently pregnant and new mothers. The program mainly focuses on pregnancy, but instructors are great at addressing issues of older children since many of the program attendees have children already. The program comes with other benefits like earning Maya bucks and free things for the mothers and babies.

In addition, Cecilia has also attended the Parent-Child Interactions group. Together, she and her children listened to a reading of, “Where the Wild Things Are” and created masks. Her children loved it and have started making masks at home now.

In the future, Cecilia plans to officially enroll as a parent here at the Center. She is pleased with the atmosphere and the support her FDS has shown her, and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with her and her children.

At Family Support, we want to celebrate our parents’ growth and achievements in education, employment, community, and interacting with their child.

Reach out to your Family Development Specialist to learn how you can share your thoughts and accomplishments surrounding your and your child’s development.



Staff Spotlight: Neil Walker

I believe that everything happens for a reason and that we all have gifts and talents that can be utilized to enhance the lives of others. Understanding this precept has led me on the path of using my life experiences, failures, and successes to serve as a life coach, mentor, and counselor, eventually leading me into my current position of family development specialist.

I am delighted to work with men and their children to support their needs and to coach them on specific and crucial areas such as manhood, responsibility and accountability, legal support, parenting, transportation, barriers, relationships, and ensuring that their children receive all they need developmentally in order to enhance their educational experience.

I truly believe that no child should be left behind and that every child deserves every opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

I work from a strengths-based perspective, understanding and utilizing the support systems that these individuals may or may not have in place. My efforts have taught me to be introspective about myself and my biases, which has been helpful in this field. I am delighted to say that teamwork is a big part of our successes, and I am grateful to work with individuals that are passionate and compassionate about the things they are doing. The Trying Together staff has been very supportive in this work with fathers and their children, and encourages training and education to support our endeavors.

Upcoming Events

Homewood-Brushton Family Support Center: 579 Rosedale Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

- Community Check-Up - Mondays | 1:00 - 4:00 pm | Ages 21 and under
- Father's Trying Together* - First and Third Fridays | 6:00 - 8:00 pm
- Women's Rap - Second and Fourth Fridays | 6:00 - 8:00 pm
- * Parent-Child Interactions - Third Wednesdays | 6:00 - 8:00 pm

The Homewood Early Learning Hub: 7219 Kelly Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

- Toddler Life - Tuesdays | 5:30 - 7:30 pm | January 22 - March 5
- Come Play - Tuesdays | 10:00 - 11:30 am
- Raising Readers Together Club - Thursdays | 5:45 - 7:30 pm | Ages 6 and under

Homewood Community:

- Open Computer Lab Hours - Mondays through Fridays | 2:00 - 5:00 pm | Pitt Community Engagement Center
 - Raising Readers Together Club - Wednesdays, Now - 3/27 | 5:30 - 7:00 pm | Ages five and older | Willie T's Barbershop
 - Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center (WPRDC) Office Hours - 2/22 | 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Pitt Community Engagement Center
 - Carter G. Woodson Academy: Six Week Course for Parents and Children - 2/23 | 9:00 - 1:00 pm | Pitt Community Engagement Center | RSVP Required
 - Job Fair - 2/23 | 10:00 am - 3:00 pm | Ages 16 and over | Pittsburgh Zoo
 - Gun Violence Prevention 101 - 2/24 | 9:30 - 10:45 am | Rodef Shalom Congregation
 - Operation Better Block Community Meeting - 2/28 | 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Operation Better Block
 - Black History Movie Night: Mama I Wanna March and '63 Boycott, - 2/28 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Pitt Community Engagement Center
 - #HerMission: Women-Led Service Project - 3/9 | 10:00 am - 4:00 pm | The Mission Continues
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To view the full newsletter visit tryingtogether.org
