

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 28, 2013

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COUNTY-FUNDED SUMMER CAMPS CONTINUE MATH AND READING LEARNING AFTER THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR ENDS

Today, Franklin County Commissioners approved \$1.7 million for summer camp opportunities for local youth. For the first time ever, camp vendors were required to integrate math and reading enrichment activities aimed at mitigating summer learning loss in addition to offering fun, active camp experiences.

Camps will implement the Learn 4 Life reading and math readiness program activities. Learn 4 Life is a community-wide collaborative of educators, business leaders, colleges and universities, child and family service agencies, faith-based organizations, civic leaders, charitable foundations and public officials. This diverse group has come together to create a new cradle-to-career educational support framework designed to provide central Ohio's children and students with a pathway to personal and professional success.

According to the Learn 4 Life website, 'in 2010-2011, less than half (48 percent) of 8th grade students in Columbus City Schools were deemed proficient in mathematics, compared to a 74 percent statewide average.'

"Strengthening our local economy begins with supporting the education of our community's youngest residents," said John O'Grady, President of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. "Franklin County's investment in these summer camp opportunities enables young camp-goers to obtain important life-skills that will translate into important employment skills as a job-seeker later in life."

In 2011, the National Governors Association reported that 'in the past decade, STEM jobs grew three times faster than non-STEM jobs. This research shows that falling behind early not only leaves students at risk for staying behind, but it also creates difficulty finding a job.'

Summer camp programs will also focus on keeping kids active. Last year, Franklin County became the first Ohio County to take the National *Let's Move! Cities, Counties and Townships* pledge and joined the effort to increase activity among local youth as well as increase access to healthy food options for youth and families.

"I am proud to have been board president in 2006 when we began these child-centered summer activities," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Investing in our next generation will ensure Franklin County's economy remains robust, and that we have workforce capacity in the future."

Since 2005, Franklin County has made investing in quality, summer-time learning opportunities for kids a priority. "Summer camp can be so fun," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "These young campers will have the opportunity to swim, hike, rope climb, dance and paint in addition to creative approaches to math and reading. I'm glad that the commitment to our youth continues today and has expanded to ensure that youth are active during the summer months, too."

Fifty-three camps are being offered throughout Franklin County this summer. The program will serve 1,474 low-income Franklin County youth ages 5-13 years.

Camps begin in mid-June and are offered for a minimum of 8-weeks. Interested families can now apply on-line at <http://ifs.franklincountyohio.gov/>.

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