
BARRY GLASSMAN
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE



BILLY BONIFACE
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

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For more information, contact:

Cindy Mumby

Director of Governmental & Community Relations

410-340-5376

camumby@harfordcountymd.gov

First Harford County Youth & Family Resource Festival Draws 1,000 Attendees

BEL AIR, Md., (May 5, 2017) - There were smiles all around as nearly 1,000 attendees gathered for the first Harford County Youth & Family Resource Festival on April 22 in the APG Federal Credit Union Arena at Harford Community College in Bel Air. This unprecedented festival was developed by the Harford County Department of Community Services' Local Management Board and Office of Disability Services to connect families and youth of all abilities from birth to young adulthood with local resources and organizations. More than 110 local exhibitors shared important resources with families throughout the day on topics including summer camps, tutoring, summer employment, services for children with disabilities and delays, behavioral health services, college application support, and fingerprinting and ID services.

"We saw many smiling faces on Saturday as families discovered the vast resources for youth of all abilities right in our own backyard," said County Executive Barry Glassman. "I would like to thank our volunteers, professional staff and sponsors who brought these resources together for the first time at this informative and fun event for Harford County's next generation."

Families happily joined in interactive workshops from Do-Re-Wee Music Academy, Mama Bear Yoga and a sensory story time provided by the Harford County Public Library. Parents received useful information on a variety of topics including homework strategies, anxiety in middle school, and internet security. Entertainment at the event included appearances from Disney princesses, the Harford Community College mascot "Screech", and a Touch-a-Truck experience thanks to the Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, among many other interactive activities with exhibitors.

“As first-time parents to 1 ½ year old twins, we found this free community event to be very informative,” said Matt and Jody Millholen of Bel Air. “Our family enjoyed the entertainment and was impressed by the huge variety of vendors with many useful resources for families.”

Harford County Department of Community Services would like to thank its sponsors including APG Federal Credit Union, the APG Federal Credit Union Arena, Harford Mutual Insurance Company, Jones Junction, Challenge Island, Towson University Northeastern Maryland, the Epicenter, the Goddard School, Growing Smiles Pediatric Dentistry, Harford County Public Library, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, Harford County Public Schools, Bel Air Athletic Club, Harford County Department of Social Services, and Catholic Charities Villa Maria Behavioral Health Services of Harford County. Special thanks also goes to in-kind donors including the Arena Club, Charm City Run, Chick-fil-A, Critical Hit Games, Edible Arrangements, Harford County Sheriff’s Office, Kelly’s Hair Design, The Magic Continues, the Michael Stewart Foundation, Nelco Video, Pat’s Pizzeria, Saxon’s, Silver Spring Mining Company, and Wegmans as well as the more than 50 volunteers who helped make the festival a success.

“Sponsoring the festival was a natural fit for APGFCU,” said CEO Don Lewis. “We are committed to building stronger families for a stronger community, and to the inclusion of individuals of all abilities.”

All attendees are encouraged to complete the feedback survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCFamilyFest> for a chance to win one of three \$50 gift cards. Public feedback will help to guide and enhance future events.



Harford County Youth & Family Resource Festival volunteers from the “boys 2 MEN” program strike a pose with Harford Community College’s mascot “Screech”.



Families exploring more than 100 exhibitors at the first Harford County Youth & Family Resource Festival.

Additional photos available upon request.

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