



Children's in the Community Summer 2021 Newsletter

Children's in the Community is a quarterly newsletter that highlights UPMC Children's efforts in the community, celebrates the successes and achievements of program partners, and connects people and partners to important resources.

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Alleviating Hunger for Young Children and their Families

With the support of No Kid Hungry, Children's Primary Care Centers of Oakland and Turtle Creek can now better support the food needs of families with children ages 0 – 5. A new partnership between UPMC Children's, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Just Harvest, and Allegheny County's WIC program will make more resources available to families with young children who are experiencing food insecurity. At least 300 households will receive food box deliveries for one month, and assistance with other benefits including WIC and SNAP (food stamps). Funding will also support WIC training and education for primary care physicians and staff to improve linkages between primary care centers and WIC. Contact [Abby Carpenter](#) for more information.



CHAMPioning Access to STEM Education for Pittsburgh Students

UPMC Children’s and the University of Pittsburgh Medical School are CHAMPioning access to STEM education through the Career Help Advancement and Achievement Mentorship Program, or CHAMP. CHAMP aims to build diversity in science and health-related careers by increasing middle students’ exposure to and engagement in STEM and higher education opportunities. In its first year, CHAMP partnered with Pittsburgh Arsenal 6-8, where the CHAMP team distributed 50 STEM boxes and 350 wellness boxes to support students’ science lessons and basic needs. Thank you to the UPMC Children’s medical staff for their funding and Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation, Wal-Mart, The Education Partnership, Reading is FUNdamental, UPMC Health Plan, FashionAFRICANA, Kiya Tomlin, and Tim Owczarzak, DMD, for their donations and support. To learn more about CHAMP, please contact [Danielle Harvey](#).

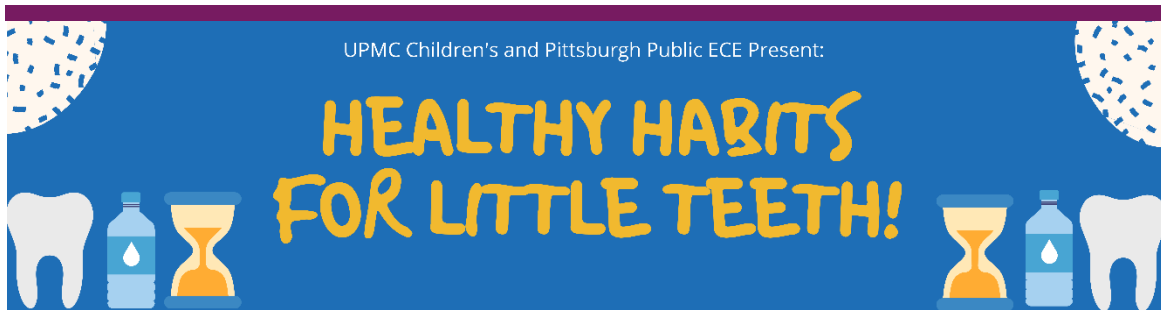


UPMC Children's Ranked in the Top 10 Children's Hospitals in the Nation

Again this year, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh has been named to the U.S. News & World Report Honor Roll of America's Best Children's Hospitals. UPMC Children's is the only pediatric hospital in the region on the Honor Roll for top 10 hospitals. You can read more about our award, including rankings in 10 of 10 specialties, [here](#).

Awakening to Mindfulness with Family Care Connection

Children's Family Care Connection (FCC) partnered with Awaken Pittsburgh to develop a mindfulness curriculum for families and family-serving professionals. FCC is now looking forward to offering the program this summer to parents, caregivers, and preschool aged children and their siblings. Thanks to a grant from American Eagle Outfitters Foundation, FCC is also expanding mindfulness programming for teens, too! This summer, local teens will have the opportunity to participate in outdoor yoga and mindfulness education. The program exposes local teens to these modalities to support self-awareness, stress reduction, and improved self-regulation. Thank you again, American Eagle Outfitters Foundation, for investing in and supporting local teens! Contact [Danielle Thum](#) for more details.



Encouraging Healthy Habits for Little Teeth

Earlier this spring, UPMC Children's and UPMC for You partnered with Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood and Early Head Start programs to offer "Healthy Habits for Little Teeth!" Through virtual education sessions, public health dental hygienists taught the importance of brushing, flossing, and choosing healthy foods for healthy teeth. Every participating child received their very own oral health bag containing a toothbrush, floss, toothbrush timer, water bottle, and an oral health education booklet.

Supporting School and Community-based Health Professionals

The UPMC Children's [Pediatric Education Series](#) (PES) offered a variety of virtual learning opportunities over the past several months, on topics including: sickle cell disease, working with transgender and gender-expansive youth, social-emotional wellbeing for teens, and clinical pathways of care. Free to anyone who was interested, the webinars were viewed by more than 1,100 school and community-based health professionals. PES webinars offer professional continuing education for nurses and Act 48 credits to those working in school environments. Forthcoming topics include vision health, diabetes management at school, ADD and ADHD, and more. You can view recordings of the series [here](#). Please contact [Heather Anderson](#) for more information or to make a topic request.



Promoting Safety During Summer Break (and Beyond!)

The UPMC Children's Injury Prevention team is back on the road! This summer, the team is partnering with Pittsburgh Public Schools' Summer BOOST program to bring the [Injury Prevention Home Safety Van](#) into neighborhoods throughout the region, providing wheels safety education and free bike helmets for kids. Visit our [website](#) to find out when the Injury Prevention Home Safety Van is coming to your area. The Injury Prevention team is also able to provide virtual home safety education presentations to groups; contact Jordan James at 412 692-5931 to schedule a session, or Marie Pagnotta at [412-692-5868](tel:412-692-5868) to request the Injury Prevention Home Safety Van . Please check out our website at CHP.edu/BeSafe for information about keeping kids safe, all summer and all year!

Expecting Respect Through the Summer Months

Throughout this unusual school year, the Expect Respect team held weekly social-emotional learning and leadership support groups for middle

school students. This summer, team members will continue regular check-ins with Expect Respect program participants across 36 schools to provide resources, wellness checks, and support as we emerge from the pandemic. Expect Respect groups will begin again in the fall! For more information about Expect Respect, or to get involved, contact [Lisa Ripper](#).

Today's school nurse is so much more than the stereotype of "ice, lice and band-aids."

School nurses serve as a **critical health hub** for students, ensuring that students are **ready for learning** by **managing complex, chronic conditions**; identifying and **addressing mental health issues**; **leveling the field** on health disparities and promoting healthy behaviors; enrolling children in health insurance and **connecting families to healthcare providers**; **handling medical emergencies**...and now, navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic by testing, **tracking and vaccinating** students and school personnel.



School nurses are essential...for healthy kids...healthy schools...and healthy communities.

Partnering with School Nurses to Strengthen Child Health

School nurses are essential for healthy kids, healthy schools, and healthy communities. UPMC Children's Community Health and clinical resource management, along with the Pennsylvania Pediatric Health Network, recently launched a School Nurse Advisory Group, comprised of 25 nurse and nurse practitioners who care for children and adolescents in pre-K, K-12 schools in Allegheny and surrounding counties. The advisory group aims to strengthen communication and collaboration between clinical and school-based health professionals, improve quality and continuity of care for children, and reduce unnecessary emergency visits and unnecessary school absences. For more information about the School Nurse Advisory Group, please contact [Anne Marie Kuchera](#) or [Colleen Tipping](#).

Reducing the Burden of Covid-19 Through Education and Vaccination

Children's Community Health is working together with UPMC's vaccine team to offer Covid-19 vaccines in partnership with school and community organizations throughout the region. This spring, the team visited more than 75 locations, administering nearly 12,000 vaccinations. If you are interested in scheduling a vaccination clinic at your school or community organization, please complete this [form](#).

If you are interested in learning more about the COVID-19 vaccine or you have questions, the Community Vaccine Collaborative's Speaker's Bureau, comprised of researchers, physicians and the Community Health Deputies, can help with information and presentations to community groups. A presentation can be requested [here](#).



Caring for Children in the East Hills Community with the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

To help kids who reside in the East Hills community get caught up with well-child visits and immunizations, the UPMC Children's mobile health unit, the [Ronald McDonald Care Mobile](#), is visiting the East Hills Community Center as a routine stop. Located at 2291 Wilner Drive, the Community Center will host the Care Mobile the 4th Monday of every month. At the kick-off event on June 28th, Miracle Dental and Vision to

Learn joined us, providing dental services, vision screenings, and glasses for children. Children and families interested in being seen by the Care Mobile in the East Hills or at any location can call or text the Care Mobile at [412-352-1060](tel:412-352-1060) or view the entire Care Mobile schedule [here](#).



Walking for Children's

On June 5th, more than 3,200 walkers from 300 teams in 41 states came together for [Walk for Children's](#). Congratulations to our friends and colleagues at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation who raised nearly \$800,000 in critical funds that will be used to advance pediatric healthcare. Thank you to all in the community who walked, donated, cheered, and supported this incredible effort. View the [highlights](#) shared by UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and from walkers across the country.



Community Health Staff Spotlight: Family Care Connection (FCC) Community Nurses

Children's in the Community shines a spotlight on the six incredible community nurses of UPMC Children's Family Care Connection (FCC). Pictured in the photo from left to right, (back) Belinda Woods, Connie Adams-Johnson, Suzie Rubiano, Katie Smith, (front) Denise Scherer, and Gretchen Bence. FCC community nurses wear dozens of hats in their service to children and families in and around the neighborhoods of Braddock, Rankin, Lawrenceville, Mt. Oliver, Penn Hills, and Turtle Creek. In addition to providing clinically-oriented services and health education, community nurses offer pre- and post-natal guidance to pregnant individuals and new parents, lactation support for breastfeeding moms, health literacy training for English language learners, and asthma education for youngsters and their caregivers. They also assist families with basic needs and mental health supports, serve as medical liaisons and healthcare advocates, and more. Any day of the week, you might see our community nurses delivering emergency food boxes to homes, accompanying children and families to medical appointments, or helping folks get connected to community-based resources and programs. Thank you Belinda, Connie, Suzie, Katie, Denise, and Gretchen for your valued service to our children, families, and community!

Community Connections:

CAREing for Children with Asthma

In January 2021, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh Asthma Institute, launched the Community Asthma Registry (CARE). CARE helps families with children and young adults with asthma get connected with asthma resources, events, and research studies in their communities. Interested families can email communityasthmareg@chp.edu.

P-EBT meal benefits for children ages 0-5 will go out to families in JUNE!

To be eligible, families must:

- Now get SNAP benefits (**food stamps**), or got them sometime after October 1st
- Live in an area that has virtual school or blended virtual and in-person



**If you think you are eligible for SNAP,
Apply at compass.state.pa.us**

If you need help applying for SNAP,
you can find more information here:
<https://tinyurl.com/ykkrjsb>



Accessing School Meal Benefits

Seeking access to school meal benefits? In Spring 2020, Pennsylvania distributed benefits through the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) to help families purchase food to replace meals lost during pandemic-related school closures. In May 2021, the state again began issuing payments for the 2020-2021 school year for school-age children (grades K-12), and in June for children ages 0 to 5. For answers to questions about P-EBT, check out [Just Harvest's FAQ page](#).



Fresh Access to Local Food

Farmers market season is here! Every May to November, the Fresh Access program supports Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP (food stamps), recipients to use their benefits at farmers markets and participate in the region's local food economy. SNAP recipients can shop at their local Allegheny County farmers market (see locations [here](#)), visit the market's Fresh Access tent, and use an EBT card to purchase tokens for SNAP-eligible foods. Plus, for every \$5 spent in SNAP/EBT at the Fresh Access tent, recipients receive a free \$2 coupon for fresh fruits and

vegetables. This season, those who received P-EBT to replace their child's missed school meals can use their benefits at the market, too!

Steel Smiling

Steel Smiling, a nonprofit organization, aims to bring mental health support and awareness to Black residents of Allegheny County through advocacy and empowerment. The programs provide free individual and group therapy sessions, psychoeducational programs, and mental health first aid training courses to community members, students, and mental health practitioners. Beams to Bridges, their mental health workforce development program, equips Black children, youth, and families with the knowledge needed to serve as community health workers. Steel Smiling also provides free therapy sessions to Black community members. To get involved or learn more, go to <https://www.steelsmilingpgh.org/>. Visit the Community Health [website](#) for more resources.

Children's Community Health Division works together with health care and community partners to improve health outcomes, reduce health disparities, and elevate quality of life for children and families in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play. Visit [UPMC Children's Community Health](#) to learn more about our services and programs. Contact [Anne Marie Kuchera](#) for questions or more information.
