

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.


PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Henrico County
Program Title: Springer Preschool Academy: Parent Night Out
Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: John A. Vithoukas
Title: County Manager
Signature: 

Overview/Summary of the Program

Springer Preschool Academy is a high-quality, full-day preschool laboratory operated in conjunction with the early childhood education program at Highland Springs Technical Center in Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS). The early childhood education program is designed for high school juniors and seniors interested in careers working with young children. The Springer Preschool Academy opened its doors during the 2007-08 school year. Henrico school employees can choose to enroll their preschoolers in this academy just as they would another local preschool program.

The Parent Night Out (PNO) program began in fall 2012 as a fundraising event for the Highland Springs Tech Center chapter of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, the student organization that supports early childhood education. The one-night fundraising event became an ongoing request from parents. They enjoy it because it is in a trusted, familiar place where their children can spend one evening a quarter with friends. The program allows parents to run errands, have a date night or take part in other activities. The PNO program was developed so that current preschool clients could receive childcare on one designated Friday evening per quarter.

Problem or Challenge

The Parent Night Out has developed into a program with three major benefits:

1. It provides a worry free, safe and familiar environment for preschoolers while their parents enjoy an evening activity;
2. It provides additional hours for those

students working toward Child Development Associate certification. The certification requires 480 hours, which is a tall order for students and almost impossible to complete in the two-year program attendance. The PNO provides additional hours for the students who want to reach this goal. The program teachers are present to document the hours for the students' portfolios. 3. Finally, the program is a fundraiser for the Family, Community and Career Leaders of America, Highland Springs Tech Center chapter; the \$25 participation cost (with \$5 for each additional sibling) helps pay expenses for the state leadership conference.

Springer Preschool Academy is a full-day preschool lab operated in conjunction with the early childhood education program at Highland Springs Technical Center. The daily center hours are 7 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, once a quarter for the PNO Friday night program, those hours are extended until 10 p.m., at the cost for parents of \$25 per child. For each additional sibling, the fee is \$5. School starts in September and the first Parent Night Out is scheduled in December to allow parents the opportunity to complete holiday shopping. Valentine's Day weekend in February has become the most requested time to hold a PNO. Parents have been asked to provide input for additional sessions. March and April are also months when PNOs have been held.

Springer Preschool Academy Parent Night Out offers two preschool classrooms: one comprised of 2- and 3-year-olds and one comprised of 4- and 5-year-olds.

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Henrico County, Virginia

Participating preschoolers are invited to bring their sleeping bags, favorite stuffed animal and pajamas. The program focuses on the positive development of young children in a high-quality learning environment. Activities include: arts and crafts, science experiments, games, movies and snacks. Dinner options are also available. Homework and project help is available for older siblings participating in the Parent Night Out.

High school students enrolled in the early childhood education program attend daily classes onsite where they learn concepts such as: child development; creating a safe and healthy learning environment; curriculum planning; and promoting positive and productive relationships with families. In addition to traditional classroom instruction, students interact daily with preschoolers to apply the concepts taught in the classroom and gain real-world experience. Our students plan future careers in childcare, teaching, child psychology, pediatrics and many other child-related professions. Being a part of Springer Preschool Academy provides students a better understanding of both the challenges and rewards in working with young children.

Springer Preschool Academy's Parent Night Out primarily serves students already enrolled in the preschool; however registration was also extended to teachers who work in close proximity.

The program was developed as a collaborative effort between our parents and Springer Preschool staff members. Springer Preschool Academy is operated and funded through the Career and Technical Education department of HCPS. Six of

the center's seven staff members are under the supervision of the principal at Highland Springs Technical Center. The county's family and consumer sciences educational specialist, an HCPS administrator, serves as the center's program director to provide support with curriculum, day-to-day administrative operations and development and organization of the PNOs.

Use of Technology

The PNO program uses a variety of technology:

- Flat screen televisions
- iPads
- Wireless Internet
- Four computer stations
- Various subscriptions to online learning websites

The Cost of the Program

There is very little cost to run the Parent Night Out program. Teachers volunteer their time to help their high school students reach the required 480 hours to be eligible for the Child Development Associate certification.

Orders are taken for dinner and if parents choose to be included, they pay an additional \$5 for the meal. However, light snacks are provided at no additional charge.

Results

Parent Night Out has proven to be a successful program in meeting its specified goals. From September 2012 to September 2015, the program raised \$1,200 for the Family, Community and Career Leaders of America chapter.

Parents have had positive responses. “I look forward to PNOs because I can afford to pay childcare for my three children and have a date with my husband,” said Kim Hodges, mother of a three-year-old.

Parent-participant LaRhonda Mason said, “I enjoy having my son stay at preschool to play with his friends. He never wants to leave at normal pickup time and he gets so excited to change into his pajamas. You can’t beat the rate, either.”

Parent Night Out enrollment has stayed constant since 2012. Because of student-teacher ratio regulations, there is a cap on the number of students admitted each year to the academy as well as a cap on the number of PNO participants.

Students classified as juniors for the 2015 school year are the first class with the opportunity to meet the hours-requirement for the Child Development Associate certification within Springer Preschool Academy. While there are opportunities for students to gain extra hours outside of school, making the opportunities available within our program benefits our students.

The success of Parent Night Out has been a springboard for additional services to help the families we serve. In 2014 we extended services into the summer, offering a four-week “Summer with Friends” program.

Springer Preschool Academy is a unique and innovative program. It has enhanced learning for students, provided a needed service to teachers and other school employees and provided a safe and healthy learning environment for preschoolers. The academy provides low-cost, high-quality childcare. For students and for Henrico County Public Schools, it provides a cost-effective solution to the concern of filling critical teaching positions. It also helps address transportation issues for students wanting real-world childcare experience.

The Parent Night Out program provides parents a quarterly night out for dates or errands while their child is cared for in a familiar, safe and fun environment. The high school students who work and learn at the academy enhance their educations in early childcare and earn extra hours towards the Child Development Associate certification.

We have presented an overview of our program at statewide conferences and received considerable interest from other school divisions. Many wish to speak to our teachers and specialists about the program. Parent Night Out has been a model for others Virginia counties seeking similar solutions for their school systems. Without a doubt, our program is a success.

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Henrico County, Virginia

Program Category: Health and Human Services

Submitted By: Mac Beaton, director of career and technical education

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PARENTS NIGHT OUT

KIDS NIGHT IN

Parents do you need a night out for dinner and a movie with your spouse? Or do you need to start holiday shopping for the kids? We are here to help you out with that! We will take your kids off your hands Friday, Dec. 13, 2013 from 5:30– 10:30 PM at Springer Day Care. We will supply: age appropriate games, movies, activities and snacks. All supervision is provided by certified teachers and Early Childhood Education students.

Cost: \$20.00 per child, additional siblings 5.00 each.

Age restrictions: 2 years of age and potty trained through 12 years of age.

Older children are welcome to bring their homework and or projects to work on!

Please bring your child's sleeping bag, pillow pets or blanket.

Kids are welcome to wear their favorite PJ's!



\$3.00 Optional Dinner Menu

Grill Cheese sandwich
Fruit cup
Juice
Holiday Cookie

Late pick up will start at 10:35 PM anytime after 10:35 PM we will assess a \$1.00 charge for every minute after.

