

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

New summer camp works with non-native English speaking families

Charleston, SC – Christina Vivas, a Charleston County School District (CCSD) Bilingual Parent Advocate, supports the district’s non-native English speaking families each school year. Under the leadership of Chris Hagy, ESOL Curriculum Specialist, she’s an extension of the schools by purposefully immersing herself into the communities that the district serves.

Like most educators, she knows the importance of avoiding the summer slide by providing learning opportunities throughout the summer.

With support from the local community, she and CCSD Coordinator of Adult Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Aimee Herring launched a Newcomers Summer camp for children, after noticing a large influx of non-native English speaking families to CCSD this past school year.

The ESOL Newcomers Summer Program was a partnership between CCSD ESOL program, CCSD Adult Ed’s ESL program, and numerous CCSD community partners in North Charleston area.

The three-week camp, which ended June 27, was packed full of educational opportunities for students, siblings, and parents.

Students rotated between classes and learned about themselves, their family, and their community, and doing it all in English. From art to math to music, the students experienced literacy education in a fun, camp-like environment.

Adults participated in ESOL classes, a Latino Literacy Project program, and a Parenting Partners program that were provided taught while the children were in their classes.

Rounding out each week were Family Fridays, which were sponsored by community partners. Community representatives were on hand to share information on topics such as health care, and education.

At no charge, breakfast and lunch were provided by CCSD’s Nutrition Services.

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica Taylor
Chief of Staff

Very limited Title III funds were available to operate the program and pay for staff, so Vivas relied heavily on volunteers. Also, community partners donated bikes to each student as well as packed book bags, toiletries, and a back-to-school outfit.

"Literacy for parents is as equally important as it is for the students," said Vivas. "We are fortunate that some of our volunteers included former ESOL educators and Adult Ed students from across the district.

It was a successful, all-hands-on-deck approach. Vivas hopes to add additional grade levels next summer.

"I've done grass-roots efforts all over the country, and there are a lot of different cultural factors one has to consider when launching something like this," said volunteer Terese Shelton. "I am impressed with Christina's ability to reach out to stakeholders and create this collaboration with faith groups, community leaders, and educators. This Newcomers Camp will prepare kids academically for the next school year by engaging all of their senses in an environment so organic that it addressed all of their needs as we went along."

For more information, contact the Office of Strategy and Communication at (843)-937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.