



The Children's Home Society of New Jersey with Trenton School District and Trenton YMCA Receives 21st Century Grant for Afterschool Programs

Committed community partners, The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHS of NJ), Trenton Public Schools and The Trenton YMCA announce a \$2.5 million 21st Century Learning Community Centers Program Grant that has been awarded to enrich the afterschool programs at the Dunn and Kilmer Middle Schools. CHS of NJ will receive \$500,000 in each of the next 5 years to enable the partnership's vision of enhancing student year-round learning and bringing more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) experiences, cultural and civic activities, and lifetime fitness and sports activities.

The new 21st Century Program developed by CHS of NJ supports Trenton Public Schools Superintendent Francisco Durán's middle school redesign, incorporating the district's emphasis on improving middle grade education and using STEM as a means of focusing students on academics. Durán has promoted greater collaboration with community partners, saying, "We will assemble the variety of resources necessary to provide Trenton students with an engaging, enriched and strong school experience from early morning to 6:00 p.m. and throughout the summer." The Trenton YMCA will provide swimming lessons for students and their parents all year, as well as boating, physical fitness and nutrition, arts, and youth leadership development activities. Each seventh grade student at the two schools will have a free Trenton YMCA membership. Samuel Frisby, Executive Director of Trenton YMCA noted, "The additional summer activities will mitigate learning loss during the months out of school and offer safe, fun options for the children in our community."

21st Century funding specifically provides the opportunity to strengthen CHS of NJ's Trenton's school-based programs working with 235 more Dunn and Kilmer students, adding to the agency's school services currently reaching over 2500 Trenton students ages 3 to 15. For 27 years, CHS of NJ has partnered with Trenton Public Schools and offered its successful daytime and afterschool program called KIKS (Kids Intervention with Kids in School). CHS of NJ services now can be expanded to include students at Kilmer. The "Middle School Engineering Challenge" is one of the core STEM activities of the new 21st Century Program. Over the course of 10 afterschool sessions, teams of students will research, design, build, test, and demonstrate their own bridge or tower using popsicle sticks and glue. Each team's resulting structure will be tested for strength and durability. The curriculum was adopted through CHS of NJ's partnership with Rhodia, Inc., a Cranbury-based manufacturer of specialty chemicals, whose employees use this and other hands-on STEM-focused projects as teaching tools in their volunteer work as "Science Ambassadors" at schools across North America.

Donna Pressma, President & CEO of CHS of NJ, summarized this remarkable 21st Century grant saying, "It is only through strong community partnerships that we can achieve our goal that every student experiences a quality education and becomes the best learner they can be. Our curriculum also teaches our youth to ensure their lifetime health through exercise and good nutrition, and inspires hope for a productive adulthood with the real possibilities of well-paid high-technology, science, engineering and math careers of the future."