

So much is going on with us! Read on to find out...



COMMUNITY LODGINGS

Opening Doors to Independence

Community Connections

Your monthly update on what we do and how you can help

Get ready for Fitness Fridays!



Fitness Friday starts on May 6th and runs throughout the summer. This program is designed to promote physical health, provide knowledge for how they can get exercise in their own homes and communities, and to motivate students to keep fit for our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade New

Brookside students. The program includes written and physical pre and post tests to track their individual results. Activities include yoga from Mind the Mat, soccer courtesy of the Alexandria Soccer Association, dance, "capture the flag" and more. Many thanks to Running Brooke for your grant to make this possible.

Thank you - Spring2ACTION



We did it! We really REALLY did it!

- We had **14 free agent fundraisers** (our staff and board) working for us

- We raised \$11,290 (before fees)

- We received \$8500 in matching grants, including **\$7500 from the Mason Hirst Foundation**

Our grand total (after fees) was \$18,690! This will allow us to send 20 of our kids to a week of camp at the Animal Welfare League during our summer program AND help fund a therapist for our families in Transitional Housing.



We could not have done it without you -

THANK YOU!

Meet our Staff - Jasmin Witcher

This month's lucky staff member is Jasmin Witcher - development director extraordinaire. Jasmin writes our grants, contacts our donors, and generally keeps our lights on and programs running. Despite her busy schedule, Jasmin agreed to answer our ten questions - [just click here](#).



Affordable Housing - We're Renovating!

Our affordable housing units are getting a makeover! Our Elbert Avenue apartments are getting 6 new kitchens and 28 bathrooms by January of 2017. Our maintenance team, Eric Lopez and Nelson Vasquez, aim to replace two bathrooms and one kitchen per month.

Our six affordable housing apartments at 607 Notebene Drive also get an upgrade, beginning in the fall. Each of the apartments will be completely gutted and rehabbed, and we will add two additional affordable housing apartments as well. The entire project will take 4-6 months. Our families residing in those apartments will be temporarily moved to another nearby apartment.

Youth Education Update



Our youth education program keeps our kids busy! Here's our New Brookside kids at their "Race to the SOL (Standards of Learning" party, collecting stars for every 20 minutes they read during program hours. Our kids celebrated the halfway mark to the SOLs by having a party, crafts and games. Look closely - can you see the

Minion bookmarks they made?

Big thanks to George Mason Elementary School for hosting a Family Literacy Program for our elementary students and their parents at our Fifer Learning Center.

Our Girls' Mentoring Program saw the George Washington Middle School's production of *Hairspray* to support one of our mentees who starred in the production. The girls also made over \$400 at their bake sale held at the Del Ray Farmers' Market - go girls!

Transitional Housing - Youth Employment Program Begins

Charlyne Braxton, our transitional housing case manager, does so much more than transitional housing! Charlyne also created our Youth Employment Program, where middle and high school students from our learning centers learn interview skills for competitive job placements, in partnership with the city's [Workforce Development Center's](#) program. Seven students are enrolled, and we are already hearing great things about their preparedness, maturity and knowledge. Well done Charlyne!

Looking for a few good volunteers!

We've got two great ways for you to get involved! First, we are still looking for volunteers for our kids' summer program that runs from **July 5 - August 12** between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 pm at our three learning center sites. Or, if events are more your style, we're planning our second annual (if we do it twice in a row it's annual, right?) Open Doors breakfast. Please [click here for an application](#).

And Finally...

Did you forget to buy a Mother's Day present? Never fear, [click here](#) (and it helps

us too).

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STAY CONNECTED:

