

Press Clippings 08/20/2019

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Elgin Area School District U-46 opens preschool doors Aug. 21

Submitted by: Elgin Area School District U-46

One week after classes resumed for kindergartners through 12th-graders, Elgin Area School District U-46 opens preschool doors Wednesday, Aug. 21, at nine locations.

The school district's play-based preschool curriculum serves about 1,500 young learners each year.

In an effort to welcome students and their parents, preschool teachers have spent the past week visiting nearly every incoming preschooler at home. The district has made these visits a priority for more than 30 years.

"We recognize that parents know their children best so in order for us to be working in partnership with our parents, we need to be able to share information and build that trusting relationship," said Peggy Ondera, the district's director of early learners initiatives. "It's how we start to build that relationship between home and school."

On a recent August afternoon, Independence Center for Early Learning teacher Janssell Cuadrado and paraeducator Katie Cantu visited Miriam Miranda and her mother Maria Lopez in their bi-level home in Streamwood. Young Miriam clung closely to her mother during the conversation as the adults went over the daily routine and Lopez asked questions about uniforms (none) and snacks (they are provided) at the half-day program. New to the district, Lopez said no one visited her or her two older children in the past.

"I like it," Lopez said. "The other two (older children) cried on the first day of school. I think this visit will make her feel more comfortable, more at home."

Independence Center for Early Learning is located in Bartlett and is one of three free-standing district preschool centers serving children, ages 3 to 5. U-46 operates the other six centers within elementary buildings at Horizon, Huff, Liberty, Lincoln, Ontarioville, and Sycamore Trails.

In addition to these programs, the school district's five high schools run preschool programs on a part-time basis that are designed to give high school students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and explore early education as a career.

U-46 works in collaboration with community groups that in recent years have taken early childhood learning into the community. In partnership with the Alignment Collaborative for Education and the Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, there are now more learning resources in local laundromats, pediatrician offices, and even community and government buildings such as the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Three Elgin laundromats are now participating in the popular "Literacy in the Laundromat" project that features books and signs suggesting easy educational activities for families to do with their children. A spring 2019 grant through First Book is allowing

early childhood providers to distribute 20,000 books to children in the community. Learn more about our early childhood services on the district's Early Learners website page at www.u-46.org/Domain/5422.

Families whose preschool students qualify for bus services can find their bus pickup and drop-off times and locations posted on the Parent Portal under "Transportation."

Join state, local dignitaries to kick off Elgin 2020 Census Campaign

Submitted by: Gail Borden Public Library



Volunteers in a parade unit promote the 2020 Elgin Complete Count effort during the annual Elgin Fourth of July Parade.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the federal government allocates almost \$19 billion in annual funding for critical community services in Illinois.

Experts estimate that each person counted represents \$1,500 in federal funds for Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Plan (SNAP), Section 8 Housing Vouchers, National School Lunch Program and more.

With the population count from 2010 for Elgin being approximately 108,000, it means that Elgin would receive approximately \$162,000,000 per year in federal grant funding if there was no population growth and everyone is counted.

However, officials believe that Elgin has grown since 2010 and even more funding is at stake to support the people who live here. The census takes place every 10 years.

Along with a number of organizations, the City of Elgin and Gail Borden Public Library District are committed to the Census campaign.

Recently, the Gail Borden Public Library District was awarded two grants from Forefront and the Illinois Secretary of State to conduct a public education campaign for boosting participation in hard-to-count communities.

The Elgin Census Kick-off will be at 9:15 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 29, with the "Debut of World's Largest Census Tablet" at Gail Borden Public Library, 270 N. Grove Ave. in Elgin. There also will be crafts and refreshments.

Volunteers are welcome, as members of organizations or individuals wanting to help.

The committee would like to specifically thank the funding bodies and the Grand Victoria Foundation, a member of the Forefront funders group.

Assistant City Manager Laura Valdez-Wilson of the City of Elgin and Denise Raleigh of the Gail Borden Public Library (who chaired this effort in 2010) are co-chairs for the 2020 Elgin Complete Count effort.

The leadership of the committee is gratified that so many organizations and people have already committed to be part of this effort.

The Mayor's Advisory Committee consists of 17 community leaders: Honorable Manuel Barbosa, retired federal judge; Brian McGuire, Hanover Township Supervisor; Scott Berger, Kane County Office of Community Reinvestment; Carole Medal, Gail Borden Public Library executive director; Michael Brown, Amita St. Joseph Health president; state Rep. Anna Moeller; state Sen. Cristina Castro; Steve Monroy, MALDEF Attorney; Gene Crume, Judson University president; Linda Deering, Advocate Sherman Health president, Franklin Ramirez, Elgin Township Supervisor; Jaime Garcia, Centro de Informacion executive director; David Sam, Elgin Community College president; Carol Gieske, Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce CEO; **Tony Sanders, Elgin Area School District U-46 CEO**; Ana Lalley, Elgin Chief of Police; and Todd Stirn, Burlington Central Unit District 301 superintendent.

Subcommittee chairs include: **Karla Jimenez**, Amber Peters, Bob Langlois, Elisa Lara, Jaime Garcia, Liz Clemmons, Molly Center, Elena Gardea, Ketkesy Herena, Perry Maier, Pastor Abi Raices, Alan Thavisouk, Mike Lee, Carol Gieske, Linda Ramirez and Kathy Meisinger. Karen Fox assists with facilitation of the committee.

Nearly 100 people have already agreed to join the Census effort, but this campaign needs everyone to be successful. The message is simple -- being counted makes a difference to the future of this community:

1. An accurate count brings financial support for services in the community;
2. An accurate count can bring jobs to the community;
3. An accurate count impacts democratic representation;
4. By law, the census information is not shared with anyone, including federal, state and local agencies.

Some organizations already included in the 2020 Census effort: ACE Alignment Collaborative for Education, Administer Justice, Advocate Sherman Hospital, American Association of University Women, Amita St. Joseph Hospital, Boys & Girls Club of Elgin, Burlington Central Unit District 301, Centro de Informacion, Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Coalition for a Safe & Healthy Elgin, Community Crisis Center, Community Organizing and Family Issues, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, Elgin Community College, Elgin Cooperative Ministries, Elgin Hispanic Network, Elgin Partnership for Early Learning, Elgin Police Department, Elgin Township, Explore Elgin, Family Service Association of Greater Elgin, Forefront Democracy Initiative, Fox Valley Initiative, Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice, Goosehead Insurance, Hamilton Wings, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Judson University, Kane County Office of Community Reinvestment, Kane County Teachers Credit Union, Lao American Organization of Elgin, Latino Treatment Center, League of

Women Voters, Literacy Connection, MALDEF, New Life Covenant Church, Open Door Health Center, PADS of Elgin, Raise the Floor, Reflejos, Renz Addiction Counseling Center, Salvation Army, School District U-46, VNA Healthcare, Wayside Cross Ministries, Women on the Brink, Youth Leadership Academy, YWCA of Elgin, and Xilin Association.

In addition, staff of state Rep. Anna Moeller and state Sen. Cristina Castro are on the committee.

For more information about the 2020 Elgin Census Campaign and Complete Count Committee, visit gailborden.info/census.