

PRESS RELEASE: November 24th, 2014

Organization:

Project R.I.S.E. (Realizing Individual Strength through Education)
Akron Public Schools
70 N. Broadway, Room 300
Akron Oh 44308-1911

Contact:

Rachel Breece, Child & Family Development Specialist
(330) 761-2969 / RachelBreece@gmail.com

Debra Manteghi, Program Manager & APS District Homeless Education Liaison
(330) 761-2969 / dmantegh@akron.k12.oh.us

Salvation Army hosts 7th Annual Project RISE Harvest Dinner for Local Families Experiencing Homelessness

This November, Akron's Salvation Army hosted the 7th Annual Project RISE Parent RISE-ing Harvest Dinner for the students and families experiencing homelessness. The Harvest Dinner gives these families and youth the opportunity to celebrate this festive time of year with food, fun and friendship. The evening included arts and literacy activities, parent-child activities, Thanksgiving dinner, giveaways, and entertainment.

The dinner was held in the gymnasium of Salvation Army. The tables were festively decorated with cornucopias and ribbon and the room was buzzing with excitement and fellowship.



Kenmore High School's FCCLA (Family Career & Community Leaders of America), led by Family & Consumer Science teacher, Cheryl Marez, brought 11 turkeys and helped set up, serve food and clean up. Students, staff and teachers from Kenmore High School donated enough money to allow the FCCLA to purchase the 11 turkeys.

The turkeys were prepared by Mrs. Marez' foods classes at Kenmore and the delicious meal was served to the 125 guests by the students from Kenmore's FCCLA. The stuffing was provided by Dr. Sandra Hudak and students in her foods program at the University of Akron. Rolls were provided by Pamela Machuga (a Project RISE volunteer and Ranger for the Cuyahoga Valley National Parks) and Glenda Keaton, a Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher at Garfield High School. Bob



A Young Student Excited About the Bracelet he Made During Small Group Activities.

Evans provided a Family Feast Meal and each shelter also contributed a dish.

Several generous community members contributed financially toward the dinner. The funds received were mostly generated by a mailing effort facilitated by Elaine Marcius, a retired Akron Public Schools Principal and Project RISE Advisory Council Member. Collected funds were used toward staff time, table decorations and extra food from Waterloo Catering in Akron.

Not only did the Harvest Dinner provide a wonderful meal for the students and families, but also engaging activities and giveaways. Before the meal, families worked on a colorful cornucopia activity together. The families had the opportunity to think about what they were thankful for, despite their hardships.



Following the dinner, attendees split up into several different age groups to do various age-appropriate activities. Activities were provided by Project RISE staff members Olivia Jerkes and Nancy Joseph, Kathy Marten and Sarah Rosenberger from The Akron-Summit Public Library and Patricia Wicks from Pathworks. Their activities were implemented with help from various Project RISE staff members. The parents had the opportunity to work on a group project with Project RISE volunteer, Jean Miller. Chuck Bell of First Book also attended the event, giving new books to each student.

After the activities, the students and families had the opportunity to watch traditional Native American dances performed by the Tonweya Dancers of Boy Scout Troop No. 74 from Firestone Park United Methodist Church. The audience was enchanted and captivated by the dancers, costumes and drumming. At the end of the performance, audience members were invited to join the dancers which made a special memory for the children and adults as well. Before they left, guests were given more donations to take with them. Giveaways included books, stuffed animals and school supplies.



Project RISE would like to thank everyone who contributed to the donations, food and activities. Without the donations and support from Kenmore High School's FCCLA, contributions from the Salvation Army and financial contributions from the community, this event would not have been possible.

Project RISE, managed by Debra Manteghi, is a federally funded program through Ohio Department of Education. This program is a collaborative effort by Akron Public Schools, local shelters and the Akron community to provide supplemental educational services to children and youth experiencing homelessness. During the 2013-2014 school year, Project RISE Identified and served close to 1,500 students experiencing homelessness. For more information on Project RISE and how you can help,

please contact Debra Manteghi at 330-761-2969 or dmantegh@akron.k12.oh.us