



DRAGON EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Community Learning & Resource Center

Fall-Winter-March 2022

A project providing services and programs to students, families, and the community so that all can be successful in school and life.

The **DEC**

NEWS AND UPDATES

Holiday Food Distribution!

In December the DEC sponsored a special food distribution to help with holiday meals for families of the District. A phenomenal job—our great volunteers constructed... then packed 200 boxes!!! All this in about 2 hours!!! Thank you to Country Neighbor for providing the food items. SPECIAL RECOGNITION goes out to all who helped... Ezra Tackett and AJ Raffa led AACS Leadership students who worked hard to lift, carry, and pack boxes (30-50# each) until the work was done. We could not have pulled it off without their help. Also to our volunteers: , Ed Burke-RSVP, Cheryl Charillo- AACS Spanish Teacher, Christine Sueffert- AACS School Board, Mr. Lynch,



Saybrook UMC, and the DEC Crew Jen Bunnell, Meghann Stell, Carmen Kuula... as well as the newest member of the DEC Team... Molly Lynch! Molly has been volunteering with us and we are pleased to have her join us in our work to help the students and families of AACS. (She is also a very active member of the PTO!) WELCOME, MOLLY!

CDI To Begin Regular Dental Services At Upper DEC!



The past three years Cleveland Dental Institute— CDI— has provided over 700 dental services to students on the Wade Elementary Campus. We are thrilled to announce that now CDI is going to be providing dental services on a regular basis at the Upper DEC (Lakeside HS and Jr HS)!

COVID-19 Safety Protocols will be in effect. Services will be made first to those who had signed CDI Application Forms/Permission Slips via Final Forms.

The DEC staff will be coordinating the appointments for students to receive dental services. Parents interested in having their child receive dental services can complete an Application Form located on Final Forms. We appreciate the support of the AACS Administration and CDI for their continued commitment to this vital service addressing the oral health needs of the AACS District.



The Strong Foundations, Successful Futures— Community Learning & Resource Center Advisory Group consists of: Ashtabula County Community Action Agency, Community Counseling Center, LEADERSHIP Ashtabula County, and the Ashtabula Area City Schools.

Special "Guests on DEC" Black History Month

In celebration of Black History Month, "Guests on DEC" featured stories honoring and acknowledging the sacrifices and accomplishments of Black Americans. With the help of RoLesia Holman, AACCS Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, sixteen (16) guests read twenty-three (23) books allowing us to schedule posts on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (with a few extra days as well) throughout the month of February! We were so privileged to host such a diverse group of community members as they shared these inspiring stories connected to black history. You can see all of these posts on the DEC Facebook page, click on the "Videos" @dragonempowermentcenter

We also introduced a new feature...Chapter Books. On Tuesday night's a longer book for the older students was read until over several weeks the story was completed. We will continue the Chapter Books in the near future, but if you enjoyed them please let us know. Send us a Comment on our Facebook page.

The purpose of "Guests on DEC" is to help increase literacy and expose kids to more words. Research shows that children who have access to larger vocabularies have greater reading comprehension and general academic success. So how does reading stories help? Because stories contain vocabulary words not used in daily conversation, this is an excellent way to expand vocabulary. The content of the stories also provide listeners with new information and concepts to expand their understanding of the world.

"Guests on DEC" airs every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:30 pm, Repeats on Saturday mornings at 10:00 and 10:30 am. Please plan to watch the stories and share them with others.



MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING BLACK HISTORY MONTH "GUESTS ON DEC" READERS

LaTonya Jackson
Valerie Gonzalez
Jennifer Polak
RoLesia Holman
Dr. Joe Gerics
Mrs. McMannes
Miss Tina
Dr. Markiel Perkins
Dr. Kelly Washington
Doug Gill
Mariel Sallee
Miss Melissa Brodhead
Tim Ranck
Erika Picasso
Tim Fleming & Family
Sal Jackson

We appreciate you sharing your time and talent!

Vision Assistance Still Available For Students

The DEC is still able to provide the Vision Assistance Program to help students and their families cover the costs for a professional vision exam and purchase a pair of glasses.* The services are more limited based on the Eye Doctors available to complete an examination in cooperation with the DEC.

We will provide assistance to as many students as we can until our funds run out. If you have or know of a child who is having difficulty seeing... refer them to the DEC Vision Assistance Services. Once they call the DEC, we will help find a provider and get them scheduled for an appointment.

To find out more call 440-855-0081.

Thank You To Our Generous Sponsors For Funding These Services!



Anonymous Donor



DEC attends Conference Nights

Fall- Special Guest-Ohio Governor's Imagination Library!

Our goal at the DEC is to connect students, families, and the community with the resources and services that can help them to be there best. We were excited to attend Conference Night last fall to offer winter coats, hats, and gloves, and talk about the DEC. We were also excited to have Meghann Stell, ACCAA representative for the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library, join us to sign up children birth to age 5 to receive a FREE Book every month!



For more information about the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library visit-<https://www.facebook.com/Ashtabulacountyimaginationlibrary>



We Are Open! Stop in!

Huron-Rm A132

DEC is a Resource Center for you!

*It's still cold out !

FREE Winter Coats/Boots/Accessories

*Learn about our services

*Hygiene Products-Other supplies

*...more

**All Services Are Free!
How can we help?**

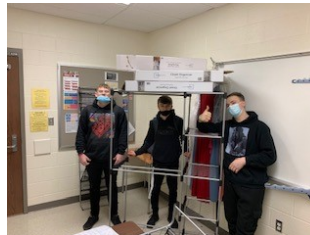
Winter Conferences- FEBRUARY DEC was Open!

There is still a bit of cold weather and the DEC has some lovely coats to keep our Dragons warm! The DEC was open during Conference Night for families to stop by. If you are struggling with an issue that is making it hard for your child to come to school ready-to-learn, you can call any time- not just during Conference Nights. Contact the DEC at 440-992-1230 or 440-855-0081.



Students help provide services at Upper DEC!

The DEC is so excited to have a Resource Room at Lakeside High School! Many thanks to Dr. Perkins for providing a dedicated space on campus. The space features a clothing bank, hygiene and other supplies available to any student or families in need. A huge "thank you" to Mrs. Raffa's Leadership students who helped to get the room ready for all the supplies! GREAT JOB, GUYS! In need of an item? Contact Mrs. Jahola or Mrs. Raffa.



Help Us Build

Donations can be made payable to:



ACCAA
PO Box 2610
Ashtabula, OH 44005-2610
Memo- SFSF-CLRC

SO GRATEFUL TO OUR SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY!



Christmas Joy thanks to Generous Donations!

Two local families had an AMAZING Christmas holiday thanks to the kindness of the AACS Administrative staff! In lieu of exchanging Christmas presents this year AACS Central Office employees made a financial contribution to DEC to purchase Christmas for two families. As you can see by the abundance of items the group was very generous! Thank you so much!

Kent Nurse Association Donation

The generosity of the Kent Nurse Association continues with their most recent donation to the DEC. They stopped by the DEC to present Jen Bunnell, Community Resource Coordinator, with the gift cards and clothing items they collected. Finn also just happened to be there to help express our gratitude for the support! We are so grateful to our friends from Kent Nurse Association for helping the students and families of the AACS District!



Essential Items Donated by AACSE Union

The DEC was so glad to accept a basket full of socks and underwear collected and donated by AACSE union members! These essential items are always in demand and we appreciate the kindness of AACSE in supplying these to meet the needs of our students!



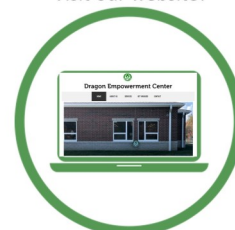
For the second year in a row, the DEC was privileged to provide support this holiday season to the 18 Rising Scholar students. The program works with 7th grade students of AACS as they advance through high school. Upon successful completion they are eligible for college scholarships. We commend these students for their hard work and dedication. For more info: <https://www.kent.edu/ashtabula/rising-scholars>

Did you know the DEC has a website!

Thanks to our AmeriCorps VISTA Member, Jesse Wheeler, the Dragon Empowerment Center has a website to help keep you up-to-date on what's happening! Be sure to bookmark the site and visit often...

<https://decashtabula.wixsite.com/dragoncenter>

DRAGON EMPOWERMENT CENTER
Visit our website!





Tutoring Continues

The DEC is very fortunate to have the assistance of wonderful volunteers through the Retired and Senior Volunteer (RSVP) Program. Our dedicated volunteers help provide vital one-to-one academic help to our Dragons. If you would like to help tutor a child please call the DEC at 440-855-0081. (You do not have to be part of the RSVP program– but if you want to join contact 440-210-3044)



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

DEC on hand at "It Takes A Village"



The DEC is always working to increase our services for our Spanish speaking families. The ESL Festival "It Takes a Village" held at the Lakeside Jr. High gym on October 23, 2021 was an excellent opportunity to meet many students and families. The DEC, along with our parent organization Ashtabula County Community Action Agency, were on hand to offer many resources and materials about available services. Thank you to Cheryl Charillo, AACCS Spanish Teacher for organizing this fun and informative event.



Interested in attending? Call DEC @ 440-855-0081 and get on the waiting list.

The DEC partnered with Catholic Charities of Ashtabula County to hold the popular Parent Café' in late 2021. Several families attended 3 sessions to get and give support through a guided discussion with other parents. They identified their strengths, needs and challenges while gaining confidence in their ability to meet their needs and the needs of the children in their care.

New Literacy Feature Started

Every day at 4:00 pm, the DEC posts "Word of the Day" on our Facebook page. You will see a word, the part of speech that it is, and a definition. Just one more feature to help increase literacy skills... so pop on and get your daily vocabulary boost!

Word of the Day

trajectory noun

The curved path along which something (such as a rocket) moves through the air or through space

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<https://decashtabula.wixsite.com/dragoncenter>

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**STRONG
FOUNDATIONS.
SUCCESSFUL
FUTURES**