

School Stops in Summer; Learning Shouldn't

Summer Slide. Achievement gap. Summer Slump. Summer Learning Loss.

Those names all describe a pattern that affects many students: the annual loss of skills that occurs during the school break each summer.

Recent test score declines are enough to convince me that the negative effects of pandemic-era school shutdowns and remote learning, combined with summer slide, add up to a true crisis that we must address.



Education's role in national and local economic growth and competitiveness is not new information. Today's students are tomorrow's workforce and we cannot afford to allow them to be less than prepared. If you want your hospital to have nurses, technicians, researchers and physicians, you should be concerned. If you want to hire qualified employees or work beside qualified coworkers, you should care. If you want your child to be competitive to get into a good higher education institution, you should pay attention. If you want your computer-based car systems to work, you might want to weigh in on the problem.

We can amplify children's learning throughout the summer in our everyday lives. My husband and I recently had the joy of spending two full weeks with my granddaughters who live out of town. We packed the time with adventures and experiences as well as close quiet time at home.

In all those environments, we were intentional about finding ways to demonstrate how reading, math, science and technology are a real part of our lives. For the three-year old, we talked about letters, shapes, colors and tactile experiences. With the 11 year old, we discussed fractions and measurement as we cooked together. We demonstrated how their classroom education is present in everyday aspects of their lives.

I invite you to join me in keeping education top-of-mind in your interactions with children and youth -- from your kids to grandchildren, nieces and nephews or even the children of your friends. Make a conscious effort to find ways for kids to continue to learn during the summer.

We at UWDE support several excellent summer initiatives and below you will see information on Freedom Schools in Kent and Sussex Counties. Next week we'll tell

you about 21st Century Schools, another quality summer program. Stay tuned.

Sincerely,

Michelle

Michelle A. Taylor, Ed.D.
President and CEO
United Way of Delaware

Summer Programming That Makes a Difference

Freedom Schools were created by the Children's Defense Fund in 1995 to improve reading and language skills, connect children to medical and social services and improve conditions for children (whom they refer to as their scholars) and families in their communities.



They provide summer enrichment by offering

- High-quality academic and character-building enrichment
- Parent and family involvement
- Civic engagement and social action
- Intergenerational servant leadership development
- Nutrition, health and mental health programming

Freedom Schools create environments that support children's belief in their ability to make a difference in themselves and their families, schools, communities, country, and world.

Two Freedom Schools operate in Delaware: one serving New Castle County, and one serving Kent and Sussex Counties.

United Way of Delaware sponsors the Freedom Schools operated by **First State Community Action Agency** in Georgetown that provides services at locations in Kent and Sussex Counties: The Bryan Allen School of Excellence, South Dover Elementary, and the Downtown Dover Campus of Delaware State University. This summer, 160 scholars -- full enrollment -- are participating at those locations.

A Day in the Life of a Freedom School Scholar

Sandi M. Hagans-Morris Ed.D. is Program Director at First State Community Action Agency in Georgetown. She oversees the Kent and Sussex County Freedom Schools. We asked her to tell us about what it means to be a Freedom School.

Q What makes Freedom Schools an excellent choice for summer programming?

A. We provide a high-energy six-week program that incorporates a literacy component to help strengthen students' skills so they're ready to go into their new grades at school in the fall. This is a proven program that works.



Q. How does the Freedom Schools organization support you?

A. Freedom Schools operate in more than 20 states

In Their Own Words

with a fun, engaging, science-based agenda and curriculum. Administrators and class leaders travel to Tennessee to receive rigorous training in the Freedom Schools programming and its Integrated Reading Curriculum. We intentionally hire high-energy class leaders, often college students and young adults who can maintain the engagement level we need.

Q. How do you know this is a program that works?

A. In the first week we conduct student assessment with a Basic Reading Inventory that tests reading and vocabulary skills, and at the end of the six weeks we conduct post-testing. We consistently find that students maintain or improve their skills and do not suffer summer learning loss.

Q. What does a typical day look like?

A. Students arrive at 7:30 a.m. The day begins with breakfast, followed by group cheers, chants and songs to start a high-energy day. We move into the reading curriculum that's customized to scholars' age and reading levels. We enjoy the participation of guest readers during this time.

One of the best times of day is when we practice DEAR -- Drop Everything and Read. Everyone in the building at that time from custodians to teachers and parents must stop what they're doing and read for 15 minutes. This reinforces the message that reading is important for everyone all throughout life.

The day ends at 3 p.m.

Q. Is it all work and no play?

A. Absolutely not! After lunch and recess, we have a wide variety of activities and experiences. We've recently had visits from members of art leagues, a culinary arts program and field trips.

Q. Does the Freedom School program impact families?

A. We have Parent Night once a week. We tell the parents that while the program is free of charge, their fee is to attend Parent Night. It's not a typical lecture-based parent event, we do fun and engaging times -- things like playing Family Feud.

Q. What would you like to see as the future of the Freedom Schools program in Delaware?

A. I'd like to see more programs within the small towns across the state. We currently serve youth who travel to our locations from towns all around us and transportation is often an issue for those families, especially those parents who have to be at work in the early morning. More local settings would open the program to more students and make it more convenient for families to participate.

Staff member, Donald

Thomas: "Freedom School is something that every student should experience. The information that is passed down through the 6 weeks is immeasurable. Kids can learn and have fun without realizing it."

Parent, Shannon Saunders said: "Freedom School is Amazing!!!"

Eighth grade scholar said: "Freedom School is a place where I can go to learn and connect with people my age. I learn new things every day and its very interactive."


Eighth grade scholar said: "This is my second year attending Freedom School. I love it because its helped me broaden my vocabulary and it makes reading fun."

Site Tester Darlene Collins, Certified Elementary Teacher, said: "Freedom School is an excellent resource and tool for students. It was a great experience and opportunity for me as an educator. I like it because it closes the gap for reading between summer and when school begins. It is a well-rounded program. I see a great future for the scholars."





Freedom School Scholars on a fieldtrip to Killens Pond State Park


If you want to learn more about Freedom Schools in Delaware, if you would like to volunteer to be a Guest Reader, if you would like to help establish more locations, or if you'd like to donate to support the program, please contact [Ken Livingston](#).



August 2nd | 10am – 12pm

Delaware State University | MLK Building on the 2nd Floor Dover, DE

<p>AGENDA</p> <p>Doors Open - 9:30am</p> <p>10:00am - Program begins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and Opening Remarks Recognize partnering organizations and Board Members History of Freedom Schools in DE <p>10:30am - 10:40am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom School Chants <p>10:40am - 11:15am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Aloud <p>11:15am - 11:20am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement Chant <p>11:20am - 11:45am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Share Outs <p>11:45am - 12pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closing Remarks 	<p>Freedom School Locations:</p> <p>First State Community Action Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Dover Elementary School DSU Downtown Dover Campus The Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence <p>Peter Spencer Family Life Foundation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortlidge Academy Howard High School of Technology <p>Partnering School District/Universities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital School District Caesar Rodney School District Red Clay School District Public Charter School (Sussex County) Delaware State University 	<p>Special Guest Readers</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Dr. Stephanie Armstrong</p> <p>Novice Educator Development & Student-Teacher Coordinator</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Michael Simmonds</p> <p>Director of Federal Program and Alternative Operations</p> </div> </div>
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Click link to register → bit.ly/harambee2023 ← Click link to register

ATENCIÓN PERSONAS EMPRENDEDORAS EN DELAWARE:

¡Regístrese hoy y
haga oír su voz!



Sus conocimientos son valiosos y pueden ayudarnos a mejorar la experiencia de acceso a recursos del estado para emprendimientos. Sus respuestas permanecerán confidenciales y anónimas.

Utilice el enlace para registrarse y participar en un grupo de enfoque pagado para compartir sus pensamientos sobre el asunto.

El grupo focal para emprendimientos tendrá lugar el 3 de agosto de 2023 de 12:00 a 1:30 P.M.



<https://bit.ly/3pRwlPz>



**POR FAVOR RESPONDER
ANTES DEL 31 DE
AGUSTO DE 2023**

LABOR.DELAWARE.GOV/WDB

"A CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS"

Parents, Community Members and Educators

Please join us for our monthly "A Conversation with Parents." Pertaining to education, health and financial stability for your family, these conversations provide a safe space for you to discuss issues with others and share your experiences and life lessons.

July 18th & 25th, 2023

"Providing Support For Your Child - Part 1 & 2"

Learning how to emotionally and academically support your child/children

Participants Will:

- Gain an understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Increase knowledge of social-emotional skills
- Learn strategies that teach children accountability and build resilience

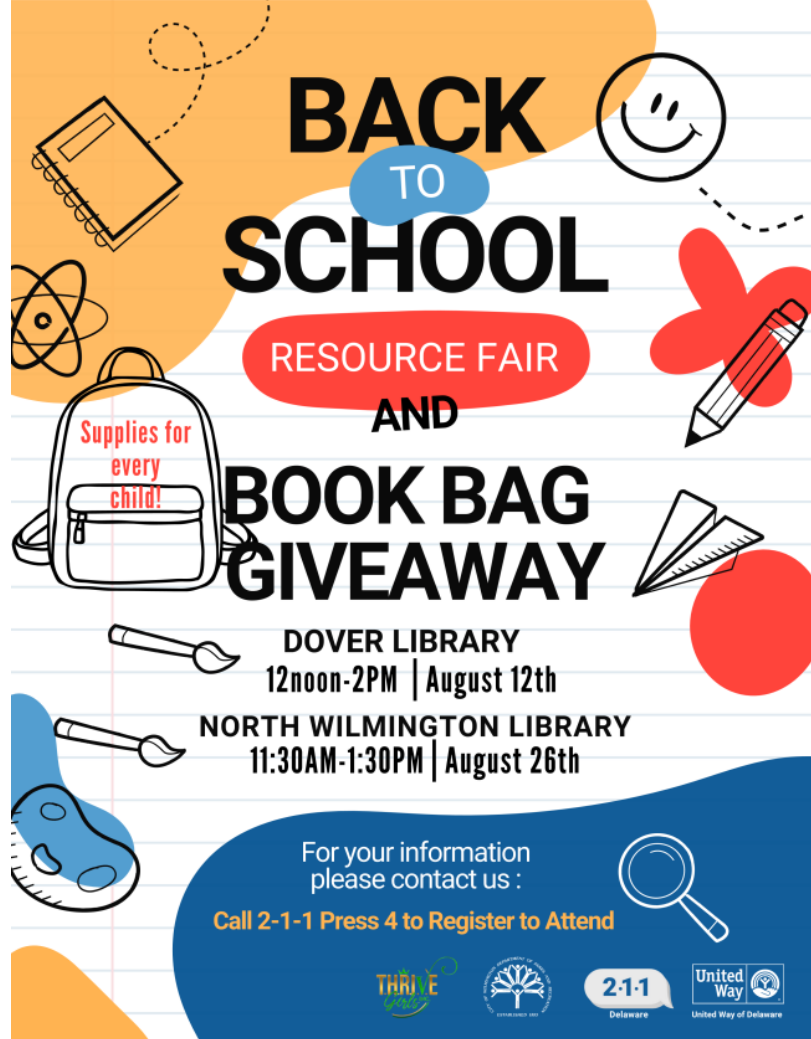
Location: North Wilmington Library
3400 N. Market Street, Wilmington, De

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Registration is strongly recommended.
Register at <https://bit.ly/convoparents>



For more information contact: Ken Livingston at klivingston@uwde.org



Support Our Work

Live United!

If you would like to support our efforts to help build a better Delaware, please donate to United Way of Delaware [here](#). You can make a one-time donation or a recurring monthly contribution. When you give to the United Way of Delaware you're joining individuals and organizations who are working together to improve life for everyone in Delaware and Salem County (NJ). We appreciate your support.



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