

## Summer Round Up

With the school year in full swing and winter on its way, MUSA would like to say thank you for another fantastic summer season. Over 70 school-age youth enjoyed swimming, weekly field trips, crafts, physical activities, and programming from a variety of community partners. Our summer collaborators this year were: The Outdoor Classroom, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Carnegie Science Center, Animal Friends, Carnegie Library of Homestead, Literary Arts Boom, Boy Scouts, and the Braddock Youth Project (BYP).

Some memorable summer moments included: creating a tile mosaic, swimming, learning about dog safety, creating a published comic strip series, working on physical fitness, performing in the talent show, and exploring the earth and stars from inside an inflatable planetarium.



This summer was a great year for field trips as well! Youth visited:

- Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium
- Pirate's game at PNC Park
- Raccoon Creek State Park
- Outdoor Classroom's site on a nature reserve
- Idlewild
- Round Hill Park
- Roving Art Cart
- Northmoreland Park for the end-of-summer picnic.

Thank you to all of the wonderful families that took part in the summer fun!

**We cannot wait for next summer! Enrollments for Summer 2015 will take place in March 2015. Check out [www.musasv.org](http://www.musasv.org) in February for more information!**

## Website and Facebook Page

MUSA's website and Facebook page have been revamped! Be sure to check out [www.musasv.org](http://www.musasv.org) for program and enrollment information. 'Like' our Facebook page, MUSASV1, for pictures and information regarding closings and program schedules.

## Afterschool Program Staff

MUSA is excited to announce that Margie Savolskis is the new Afterschool and Summer Program Director! Margie has been with MUSA for one year and has a wonderful relationship with children, families, and staff. There are sure to be big things to come with Margie at the helm! Congratulations Margie!

This school year, MUSA has welcomed back many friendly faces to our before and afterschool programs. Thelma Tucker and Kaitlin Craycraft continue to work at the before school program. Kaitlin also serves as the Park Afterschool Program Site Supervisor. Gabby DeMarchi, Rikki Varhola, and Allison Dominick have returned as Assistant Group Supervisors at Barrett Elementary and Park Elementary. Jennifer Walsh will also be making an appearance at the Barrett Afterschool program every other Friday. In addition, MUSA is excited to welcome our 2014-2015 AmeriCorps member Jeremy Moore.

### MUSA Listserv

**The MUSA Listserv is a weekly email that is sent to parents at each of our programs. Emails will include information on program/school closings, special events, program updates and more.**

**It is important that our families are able to receive timely information. Please consider submitting your email address to Margie Savolskis at Barrett or Kaitlin Craycraft at Park to be included on the listserv.**

### Keystone STARS Update

MUSA's Afterschool Programs are currently a Keystone STARS Level 2. MUSA will begin working towards a Keystone STARS Level 3 in January 2015. This means increased program quality and higher learning standards at our afterschool sites. For more information on the Keystone STARS program, visit [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

## Monthly Community Service Projects

New this school year, MUSA afterschool youth will participate in a monthly community service project. MUSA believes in teaching this generation of young people the importance of serving others and their community. In September, youth collected winter clothing items to be donated to Rainbow Kitchen. In October, youth participated in a cleanup project at the local play space. To celebrate Veteran's Day in November, youth made cards that were sent to a local veteran's organization.

If you or your children have an idea for a future community service project, please contact Jeremy Moore or Margie Savolskis at (412) 461-1800. MUSA hopes that our youth will both enjoy the projects and learn important lessons about community awareness, diversity, and generosity.



**Cleaning up the playground!**

## Parent Resource Corner

Winter weather often prevents families from getting outside, leading to an inevitable build up of cabin fever. To fight the boredom, try setting a winter reading goal. Make a colorful chart that lists weekly goals, head to the Carnegie Library of Homestead, and settle in with a good book and some hot chocolate. When your child accomplishes their weekly goal, allow them to cross off the goal on the chart so that they can see their progress. Then, reward them with a "prize." The prize can be as small as allowing your child to choose their favorite activity for the weekend or taking them to the dollar store to pick out a toy. At the end of winter, set a larger prize to reward your child for a winter's worth of reading. According to the National Education Association, practicing reading skills at home does not only help kids with their reading ability. In fact, studies have shown that reading regularly at home helps to improve math skills as well!

For parenting resources that address everything from child development to budgeting tips, visit Pennsylvania's Promise for Children at: [www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com).

## Upcoming Events

### MUSA Holiday Party

MUSA's annual family holiday party will take place on Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-8:30pm. The party will be located in the Steel Valley Council of Governments Gymnasium at 1705 Maple St. Homestead, PA 15120.

There will be a special holiday performance by each program. In addition, all MUSA youth in attendance will receive a gift from a surprise visitor. Family members are welcome to attend. There will be plenty of pizza and cookies for all!

Please RSVP by December 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Family Conference Night

Each year, MUSA hosts a parent conference night, where families can meet with the afterschool program director and executive director to ask questions, discuss concerns, and share ideas about the future of MUSA programming.

This year's afterschool family conference night will take place on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-6:30pm in the cafeteria at Barrett Elementary School, 221 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Homestead, PA 15120. Families of both Barrett and Park youth are encouraged to attend on a walk-in basis.

If you cannot attend the family conference night but would like to meet with MUSA staff, please contact Julia or Margie at (412) 461-1800. We look forward to seeing you there!

## CCIS

**MUSA accepts CCIS funding (Child Care Information Services) at both afterschool sites. CCIS is a state-funded subsidy that covers a portion of child care costs for parents who are working or attending an education program.**

**To see if you qualify or for more information, call CCIS at (412) 261-2273. Call now for spring or summer funding as CCIS availability fills up quickly!**

# Happy Holidays!

