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Scene & Heard:

Celebrating courage all around us - Winston-Salem Journal: Scene And Heard

By Cindy Hodnett Special Correspondent | Posted: Sunday, September 27, 2015 12:15 am



27SeptSCENE Keasia Dorsey (left) and Jarissa Jones at the Imprints Cares open house

Courage is sometimes defined as strength when dealing with pain or grief. Another definition is the ability to do something that is frightening. And all around us, people and organizations are stretching the boundaries of courage by overcoming personal adversities or by taking chances to help others do the same.

Imprints Cares open house

It is easy to become discouraged about the way our country takes care of our youngest citizens at times, especially when reading about childhood hunger, illness

or poverty. Last week, Pope Francis made headlines everywhere he went with his message and illustrative actions of the need to take care of all humans, and it seems more than fitting that the Imprints Cares open house occurred during the same time.

The next time you are sitting at the stoplight at Sixth and Broad Streets downtown, steal a quick glance at the Augsburg Community Center and take a minute to ponder what is happening behind the doors nestled in the historic church architecture. Now home to Imprints Cares, once known as ABCD (the Association for the Benefit of Child Development), the center is an educational safe haven and support organization for hundreds of children, championed by a team dedicated to helping families achieve success one child at a time.

During the Sept. 24 open house at Imprints Cares, dozens of kids enjoyed a bounce house, face painting, djembe drumming and the delectable options of three kid-friendly food trucks. While their little ones were entertained, parents learned more about the services offered by Imprints Cares, and staff members discussed plans for the future and how the community can help.

"The goal of Imprints Cares is to close the achievement gap for children before it begins," said **Melissa Payton**, fund development officer for Imprints Cares. "We have ready-for-school programs for children from birth to age 5, and we have expanded our learning center for school-age children. We want to create thriving generations of families."

Jackie Fayne and **Tammy Reid** are Bank of the Ozarks (formerly Bank of the Carolinas) employees who worked with Imprints Cares families last year. The duo said they were inspired by their experience with the organization.

"We worked with parents on financial literacy, helping them learn how to not overspend and to distinguish between needs and wants in some cases," Fayne said. "But we ended up learning as well. They shared their knowledge with us."

Paula and **Uriel Candela** brought **Janelly**, 3, and **Jael**, 5, for the festivities. **Lilia Morena** brought **Yarely**, 4, and **Maricela Munoz** carried **Yuridia**, 1, through the center as the group enjoyed the food and activities.

Board members **Jaye Powell** and **Paul Grosswald** talked about the work of Imprints Cares.

"I think a lot of people are surprised to find out that we do before- and after-school care programs," Grosswald said. "We serve over 200 families, many in their homes, and we help these families achieve success for their children in school and in life."

Powell agreed.

"Many of the programs are focused on reading and getting kids ready for school before they begin, and we help with parenting skills," she said. "We know if kids aren't ready for kindergarten, they have a tough road ahead and our goal is to make sure they are ready."

Jenny Whitley and **Susan Raymer** attended the event, as did **Karin Mikkola** and **Janelle Gibbs**. **Amanda Miller** manned the table for Sawtooth activities, and in an adjacent room, **Joseph Anderson**, **Gail Anderson**, **Sonji Anderson** and **Karim Anderson** of The Healing Force entertained young and old alike with djembe instruction.

Karim Anderson actually wore two hats for the evening — musician and food truck entrepreneur. Anderson's Kave Man Dogs were a big hit with preschoolers and their parents.

"I've been part of The Healing Force since I was old enough to pick up a drum," Anderson said, smiling. "I also love to cook and wanted to have a food truck, but didn't want to take out a loan to get started. This is a way to get into it and eventually grow it into something more."

The offerings of the Food Freaks truck were a hit, including the Elvis stuffed burger with bourbon-glazed apples, bacon jam, cheddar and peanut butter chutney. **Korbyn Edwards**, 5, enjoyed a Rainbow Italian Ice snow cone from Mike & Mike's Italian Ice, a now 5-year-old venture of **Mike Quinones**, a Charlotte high-school teacher during cold weather months. Korbyn's mom, **Kelli**, paused to offer kudos to the Imprints Cares staff.

"I appreciate how structured everything is," she said. "We've been to other before and after school programs that were not, and this is so much better."

imprintscares.org