

## Helping Children and Families Succeed-From Preschool Through Life



*Holy Cross Mission Statement: To provide comprehensive educational opportunities for eligible families and their children birth to five in collaboration with community partnerships in a safe, diverse environment.*

Holy Cross Head Start is a school readiness and family development program helping children and families succeed from preschool through life. Along with meeting the educational and socialization needs of pre-school children, Holy Cross Head Start provides support to families as they work to achieve their goals. Comprehensive services in the areas of health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities and social services are provided. In addition, Holy Cross Head Start strives to involve parents and other community members by offering a variety of enriching parent involvement and volunteer opportunities.

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. is one of the many Head Start pre-school programs serving children 3 and 4 years old and families throughout the country. Holy Cross is a literacy based program with certified teachers for each classroom. A research based curriculum, bilingual staff, family style meal service along with a variety of different program options including part day, full day and Universal Pre-K are just a part of what makes Holy Cross Head Start unique.

Holy Cross Head Start is a delegate agency of Community Action Organization of

Erie County. Children who are or will be three and four years old, according to date of birth guidelines of the school district which the Head Start center serves, are welcome to apply to our high-quality program. Head Start is federally funded, with no cost to enrolled children.



### **Holy Cross provides services for 499 children ages 3-4 years old and families in Erie County, New York in the following areas:**

Holy Cross Center  
150 Maryland Street  
Buffalo, NY 14201  
716.852.8373

Northwest Center  
155 Lawn Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
716.877.5022

Central Center  
89 Military Road  
Buffalo, NY 14207  
716.875.1506

Dewitt Center  
368 Dewitt Street  
Buffalo, NY 14213  
716.424.0571

Parkside Center  
169 Sheridan Parkside Drive  
Tonawanda, NY 14150  
716.876.0100

North Buffalo Center  
203 Sanders Road  
Buffalo, NY 14216  
716.464.7771

#### Service Options:

Holy Cross offers a range of program options to fit the needs of families including: Full Day and Half Day classrooms, integrated classrooms with Cantalician Center and Universal Pre-K through Buffalo Public Schools.

Holy Cross also collaborates to assist families with the following: Read to Succeed, Eat Well Play Hard, Buffalo State College, D'Youville College, University Pediatric Dentistry, Cornell Cooperative Extension, EPIC, Catholic Charities WIC, Lead 716, Lead Prevention Program, Gateway Longview, Baker Victory, Buffalo Public School District and the Ken-Ton School District.



Find us on the web:

[www.holycrossheadstart.org](http://www.holycrossheadstart.org)

## AGENCY WIDE FAMILY EVENTS

### Annual End of the Year Event

On May 31st, 2019, Holy Cross Head Start held their Ninth Annual End of the Year Event at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. This year's event was a dance with the theme, "A Toy Story Celebration!" where all of HCHS children and families were invited to enjoy dancing, desserts, fun photos and quality time with their family and friends.

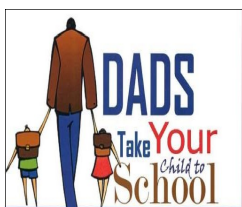


This event had 1031 children and families in attendance and was completely sponsored through generous donations from the community. Family engagement and the involvement of parents in the education of their children is a vital component of Holy Cross Head Start. With the success of our End of the Year Event, we hope to continue to provide our families with this opportunity in the future.

### Dads Take Your Child to School Day

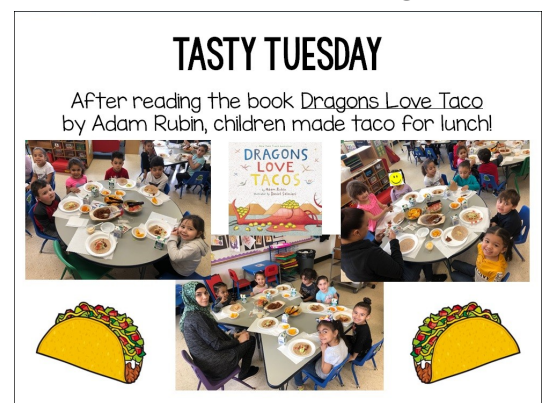
Each September HCHS participates in the state-wide event that celebrates the special relationship that fathers have with their children. Fathers, step-fathers, foster fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, godfathers or any significant male caregiver are invited to accompany their child to school and participate in a special activity.

Dads who participated received a special certificate and were encouraged to volunteer throughout the school year and share their special talents. This year's Dads Day was celebrated with 306 male role models on Tuesday, September 18th, 2018.



### Week of the Young Child

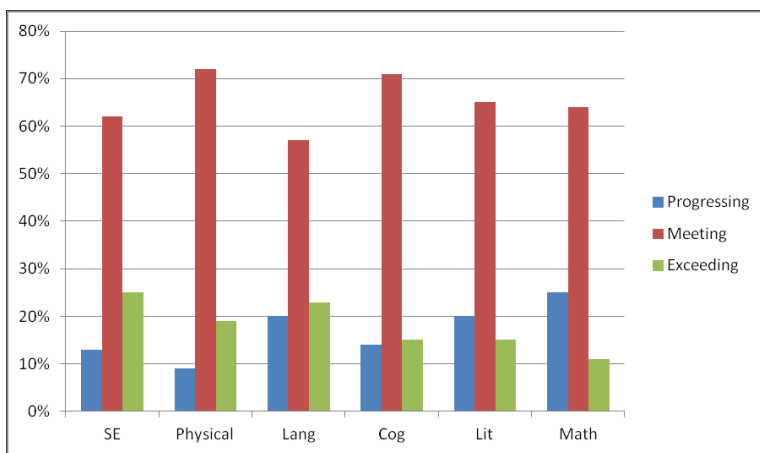
During the week of April 8th-12th, 2019, teachers, caregivers and families celebrated young learners. The Week of the Young Child is sponsored by NAEYC and has daily themes which include: Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday and Family Friday. Each classroom/center planned special activities throughout the week with the families to celebrate early learning.



## PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN

To help prepare children and families for kindergarten and beyond, school readiness goals were created using learning objectives from the Creative Curriculum's *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment tool. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is utilized not only as a framework to guide children's learning but is also the main database used to collect, analyze, and interpret assessment data. *Teaching Strategies GOLD* is based on 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school readiness and goals that focus on the success of the five essential domains and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, State Early Learning Guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

### HCHS Spring 2019 Assessment Data



Assessment from the Fall 2018 data shows that 37% of HCHS children were meeting or exceeding expectations. Spring 2019 assessment data showed that 83% of HCHS children were meeting or exceeding expectations.

### Read to Succeed

Read to Succeed Buffalo integrates the CARE program with an Early Literacy Intervention Specialist who provides support, monitoring, professional development and data on 7 classrooms across 2 centers. The specialist works with the teachers and students to increase early literacy skills by providing literacy rich activities and classroom environments to support children's reading success. With the Read to Succeed program, our HCHS children have shown significant growth in alphabet knowledge, concepts of print and phonological awareness and are now better prepared for kindergarten.



### Charter School Fair

Throughout the school year HCHS Case Managers assist families with completing Kindergarten registration paperwork and determining which school is best for their needs.

On February 7th, 2019 HCHS held a Charter School Fair which hosted 11 local Charter schools which linked 46 families to schools of their choice. In addition to Charter schools, representatives from the Early Childhood Direction Center provided information for families who have children with special needs to ease the transition from the Committee on Preschool Special Education to the Committee on Special Education for their children going to Kindergarten.



## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Holy Cross Head Start promotes an inclusive setting for all children, with our teachers individualizing instruction to meet the developmental needs of each child. Holy Cross works closely with families to provide accessible resources for parents who have concerns about their child's development. Parents who have educational concerns are given information about referrals, evaluations and services through their local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Holy Cross Head Start works closely with school districts and evaluating agencies to assist in the CPSE process to ensure that students who qualify receive services and support at school. In partnership with Cantalician Center and ECMC-PEDS, we provide speech screenings for each child at our summer screening days or within the first 45 days of school.

We recently partnered with Cantalician Center to start a collaboration classroom at our Northwest Center. Cantalician Center, is a special education agency that supports students with developmental disabilities. Students in this classroom will learn together in an integrated setting with agencies implementing a co-teaching model.

A key strength of our program is that we proactively teach and

help develop strong social/emotional skills for children within our pre-school curriculum. In 2012, Holy Cross Head Start was awarded a two year grant through the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation and the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills (PEDALS) program to assist in addressing social and emotional concerns. This led to the implementation of the *Second Step Early Learning Curriculum* for all classrooms. We continue to utilize the curriculum in each of our classrooms and find it a valuable resource for teaching social-emotional skills. Our agency promotes Positive Behavior Strategies and uses resources learned through trainings in the *Pyramid Model Program for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children*. The NYS Education Department has partnered with *Pyramid* to provide resources for preschool programs across NYS.

Teachers also implement daily mindfulness activities through the *Calm Classroom* program. Children learn simple research based techniques to help develop self-awareness, mental focus and inner calm. Teachers also lead *Theraplay- Sunshine Circles*, large group teacher directed activities for children, that help

foster positive relationships with adults and peers.

Holy Cross Head Start advocates for families who have children who are experiencing mental health or behavioral challenges in their lives. We screen all children for social emotional needs using the Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional Questionnaire. Families review the results of the questionnaire with staff, and if warranted, a referral for additional services or classroom support is made to address any concerns. We recently started working with Gateway Longview to refer students and families to their CFTSS (Children & Family Treatment & Support Services) program that provides at home or in-school counseling support. Also in the upcoming school year, Cantalician Center will be providing additional behavior support and consultation for our students as part of our collaboration.

The Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator is a special education teacher who is able to provide consultation or direct support for children in need of classroom modifications, academic support, behavior plans, special education referrals, counseling referrals or additional resources to meet the needs of families.

## HCHS represented at the ACEs Symposium hosted by The Junior League of Buffalo

Holy Cross Head Start's Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator, Silvia Steele, was joined by well respected, community professionals to be a part of a panel discussion regarding the effects of trauma at the Adverse Childhood Experiences: How They Impact a Child's Development Symposium on September 18, 2018. The Junior League of Buffalo hosted this centennial symposium to bring to light the many issues and barriers that are related to those suffering from trauma. During this panel discussion, facilitated by Monica Brown, Program Officer for the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, they explored how to help children who experienced trauma and the effects it can have on a child's health, education, social and emotional development, and long term professional and personal prospects. They also looked at the many approaches available to the community to mitigate these experiences and provide resources for those agencies who are working with children that are already affected. Silvia specifically spoke about the many things that Holy Cross Head Start does when working with children who have or who are currently experiencing trauma and the strategies implemented in the classroom to assist that child.

## Holy Cross Head Start as Regional HUB for the Cavity Free Kids Program

Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. is the local HUB for Erie, Niagara, Genesee and Orleans Counties for the Cavity Free Kids Oral Health Program created by the Delta Dental/Washington Dental Service Foundation. Leading this outstanding program is Holy Cross's very own Health Coordinator-Christine Tedesco. With her leadership, HCHS and CFK have increased collaborations within the community.

The goal of CFK is to increase oral health awareness in our children, families and community and increase the awareness on how having good oral health leads to ones over all good healthy state. Knowledge is a powerful tool to decrease the amount of dental caries in our children. The children at Holy Cross Head Start, Inc. brush their teeth daily. They receive oral health education through the Cavity Free Kids curriculum by performing dental educational experiments, crafts and other activities. They will build a solid foundation for developing good oral health habits for the rest of their lives.

On March 7th, 2019 HCHS had a successful CFK health fair with over 200 attendees. University Pediatric Dentistry provided free dental screenings on any children without a dental home along with many vendors providing information for families.

## A Healthy Start

All children that attend Holy Cross Head Start receive 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. All meals follow the nutrition guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are low in sugar and high in vitamins.

Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to participate in menu planning and can review and make suggestions to the meals that are served to their children. Nutrition staff collaborate with teaching staff to teach and model healthy eating activities in the classroom. The Nutrition Sub Committee of the Health Services Advisory Committee meets throughout the school year to discuss nutrition issues relevant to the community and the families enrolled in Head Start. Many community members are present at the meetings including, Cornell Cooperative Extension Eat Smart New York program, Catholic Charities WIC, D'Youville College Dietetics Department and Buffalo State College Dietetics Department.

New for this school year the Eat Well Play Hard program provided nutrition education to teachers and children by implementing new and fun ways to introduce new foods to children. Teaching staff were given curriculum binders with resources and activities to do along with fun snack ideas.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors works closely with the Executive Director, Cortland Purks, to oversee the program. The Board is made up of people from various professional and community backgrounds. The Board meets quarterly each year and participates in the Federal Review and Strategic Planning for the agency.



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**Ms. Tania Fuentes, Vice President**  
**Mrs. Delilah Ventura, Treasurer**  
**Ms. Davida Black-Heubach, Secretary**  
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**Rev. Gregory Gallagher, O.M.I.**  
**Ms. Ada Marilyn Collado**  
**Ms. Nan Gallivan**  
**Ms. Danielle Porter**

**Holy Cross Head Start, Inc.**  
**150 Maryland Street**  
**Buffalo, NY 14201**

**Main Number: 716.852.8373 - Fax Number: 716.854.7046**

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