

Community partners lead enrichment after school



Halley Chavez-Ramirez adds a walkway to her Leprechaun trap at the Lewes After School Program (more [pictures](#)).

Children at the Lewes After School Program learn quilting from volunteers, play educational games on an iPad or join a cooking demonstration.

These are just a few of the rotating variety of academic, enrichment and recreational activities open to the children through the program, which is a community outreach program of Lewes Presbyterian Church in partnership with **Richard A. Shields Elementary School** and the **Cape Henlopen School District** and supported by a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. The Sussex County Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Delaware, Inc. and the Sussex County Parent Information Center also partner in support of the program.

Program activities usually begin with a snack and homework. After homework is completed, the children can join other activities. These include academic offerings such as KidzMath, LEGO Story Makers, LearnZillion.com, and the Literacy Education Assistance Pups (LEAP) reading fluency activity. Enrichment and recreational

activities include arts and crafts, character development, art class, chorus, self-selected games, quiet reading, and the Jump Bunch health and fitness activity.

The program exists to address the needs of Shields Elementary School children who are at risk because of academic deficiencies in reading and/or mathematics, incomplete work, home situations that impede school progress, and/or behavioral issues that will benefit from positive peer and adult interactions.

Four staff members are assisted by more than 40 volunteers. This provides a high adult-to-child ratio and allows for individual and small group assistance. The program focuses on the positive development of the whole child with a broad array of experiences and activities.

Program objectives address grades, state test scores, attendance, parent participation and classroom teacher survey results. Last year 87 percent of the children had grades of 80 percent or better in reading and 74 percent had grades of 80 percent or better in math. The program's student retention rate was 93.75 percent and average daily attendance was 93.3 percent. It also fosters strong family engagement: 81 percent attended at least one family activity. Teacher survey ratings gave 90 percent of the children positive ratings for behavior and 100 percent of the children had positive ratings for peer relations.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is a competitive federal grant program managed by the Delaware Department of Education. For more information on how schools and community organization partners can apply for a 21st CCLC grant, please contact John Hulse at (302) 735-4100 or john.hulse@doe.k12.de.us.