



RUNNING FOR A CAUSE



COLUMBUS EAST
HIGH SCHOOL
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Heidi Smith beamed as she explained how her senior project would ensure that some Columbus children from low income families will have healthy food this summer.

"Not many people pay attention to the fact that a lot of kids don't have good food after school gets out in the summer," she said.

"But it's vital that they're not only getting food, but also that it's healthy food that will teach them lessons for the rest of their lives."

SENIOR PROJECT HELPS RAISE MONEY FOR HEALTHY SUMMER FOOD

Source: THE REPUBLIC. Home News Enterprises, L.L.C. Vol 2009 No. 124

Smith, who soon will graduate from Columbus East High School, dedicated her senior project to raising funds that will purchase healthy snacks for children attending this summer's supervised playground program at the Ninth Street and Pence Street parks.

Food for the Summer

In summer 2006, thanks to a grant from Bartholomew Consolidated School Corp., Columbus Parks and Recreation and Lincoln-Central Neighborhood Family Center began serving lunch at select city parks and sent children home with healthy snack packs once a week.

"Especially as the economy started getting worse, kids weren't getting anything for lunch," said Kathy McPeek, recreation program manager at Parks and Recreation.

McPeek said the feeding programs drew about 10 children per day the first year.

That number had

more than doubled by 2008.

She said she expects an even greater need this year in light of the economy, particularly in



As part of her senior project at Columbus East High School, Heidi Smith organized a 5K run fundraiser for Eighth Street and Pence Place summer playgrounds.

Photo: Joe Harpring
for THE REPUBLIC

areas of Columbus with the greatest economic disadvantage.

McPeek said the department had hoped to increase sending snack packs three times a week, and the idea clicked with Smith at this year's Senior Project Opportunity Fair.

"I liked it because I want to study elementary education in col-

lege, and I'm also interested in health and fitness," she said.

"Being active and eating right can change kids' lives."

With the goal of raising \$250 for healthy summer snacks, Smith sought business sponsorships and organized a walk/run, a Cold Stone Creamery fundraiser and a garage sale. She raised \$455.

Supervised Programs

This summer, supervised playground programs will operate at Pence Street, Ninth Street, Harrison Ridge and Parkside Elementary Parks.

High School and college-aged leaders will offer crafts, games, sports and more.

"There's a lot of fun activities," McPeek said.

The seven-week program will begin June 8 and run from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. weekdays at most sites. McPeek said BCSC and St. Peter's Lutheran Church will continue to provide lunches for weeks after the program ends.

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Participants in the Kollect 4 Kidz run included, from left, Ethan Hill, Michael Kurtz, Alison Reed and Ashleigh Schneckengerger.

Photo: Joe Harpring for THE REPUBLIC

Anyone under age 18 can participate in the free lunches; activities are geared toward children ages 6 to 12.

McPeck said no registration is required, though organizers ask that parents complete a medical release form. Field trips will require a permission slip.

Smith said she hopes the feeding program will help children have a better summer.

She also hopes her project inspires younger high school students to choose senior projects that benefit the community.

"Our town is so much better for all the community ser-

vice people do," she said. "I hope students realize the difference they can make."

Come out and play

WHAT: Supervised summer playground programs. **WHERE:** Pence Street, Ninth Street, Harrison Ridge and Parkside Elementary parks.

WHEN: 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. June 8 to July 23, weekdays at Ninth Street, Pence Street and Parkside parks and Monday through Wednesday at Harrison Ridge Park.

EXTENDED LUNCHES:

BCSC will provide lunches at Ninth

Street and Pence Street parks from June 8 to July 31. St. Peter's Lutheran Church will provide lunch at Ninth Street Park from Aug. 3 to 7.

ACTIVITIES: Lunch, crafts, games, sports and more. **WHO:** The program is geared toward children ages 6 to 12, but anyone under age 18 can participate in the lunches.

COST: Free; lunches for individuals over 18 are \$2.50. **DROP IN:** No registration is required. **INFORMATION:** 376-2680.