

# Connects

A Newsletter for our Neighbors in AVONDALE

This is Cincinnati Children's quarterly newsletter to highlight our partnerships, upcoming events, opportunities and ways to get involved.

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Cincinnati Children's employee volunteers work to get South Avondale Elementary School ready for students this fall. CEO, Michael Fisher, Principal, Michael Allison and Reds COO, Phil Castellini chip in to help.

## Cincinnati Children's & Reds Community Fund Volunteer Day at South Avondale Elementary

On August 6, over 50 employees from Cincinnati Children's and the Reds Community Fund volunteered at South Avondale Elementary helping the school prepare for the return of students in late September.

Morning and afternoon volunteers worked at various locations on the school campus, following a comprehensive set of health and safety guidelines.

Inside the school, upgrades were made to the food pantry and "groom room," which provides clothes, supplies, changing rooms and other necessities for the nearly 400 students.

Exterior work included painting a retaining wall, mulching and installing picnic benches for an outdoor classroom.

"Seeing all the Cincinnati Children's and Reds employees volunteering today sends a message that we work together in order to uplift one another," said Michael Allison, principal of South Avondale Elementary.

Joining the volunteers and principal Allison were Cincinnati Children's president & CEO Michael Fisher and Reds president & COO Phil Castellini.

"This is just one more way that we get to connect with the children of the Avondale community to help support them and their families," said Fisher. "And the partnership with the Reds has been very special. It's a chance for our employees to give back outside the walls of the medical center."

"The collaborative effort that comes in these big makeover projects takes our work in the community to the next level with the help of partners like Cincinnati Children's, P&G and the Zoo," said Castellini.

Volunteers also assembled more than 600 backpacks with school supplies, 1,000 P&G personal care kits and 200 snack packs which will be made available to students from South Avondale as well as Rockdale Academy.



Cincinnati Children's Bobby Rodriguez thanks volunteers for their commitment to the community.

Bobby Rodriguez, Cincinnati Children's vice president of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, addressed the volunteers in the afternoon session and worked on the outdoor crew.

"It's an honor for the Cincinnati Children's family to be here connecting with our community," said Rodriguez. "This is my first event and I am very proud that we are helping out today and following all the safety policies and regulations. It's been a real pleasure to be part of this day with the Cincinnati Reds."

Due to COVID-19 the majority of the community makeover was forced to move to 2021. However, Cincinnati Children's and the Reds Community Fund identified immediate needs at South Avondale Elementary School for this year.

## Partners Pull Together to Provide Free Wi-Fi to Avondale Students

As students head back to school this year, where they learn and how they learn will look different than ever before due to COVID-19. Cincinnati Public School students are set to start a distance or home-based learning plan until at least late September.

Now more than ever all students need access to technology. With that in mind, Cincinnati Children's and other community partners have launched "Connect our Students" a program to provide free Wi-Fi access for K-12 students across Cincinnati.

South Avondale and Rockdale Academy are included in the pilot program. All students in both schools are eligible for the free Wi-Fi service.

School leaders like Rockdale principal Dr. Jaren Finney are excited about the opportunity. "This is awesome for parents and students in our schools. This is going to help our kids stay connected in a



Dr. Jaren Finney, Principal Rockdale Academy

blended experience with the capacity to learn in class and then not miss a beat when they need to learn online from home."

For years there has been a digital divide. Children without access to technology often lag behind their counterparts creating an achievement gap. The digital divide became more evident in March when schools transitioned to remote learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The opportunity for free Wi-Fi for our families, helps close that gap providing resources that parents may not have had. We want to have 100 percent participation" said Finney.

If you have a child that attends either South Avondale Elementary School or Rockdale Academy, call Cincinnati Bell at (513) 566-3895 to sign up for the free internet access. Cincinnati Bell will then work with the family to send a self-installation kit or send a technician to your home to install it.

## Partnering to Bring COVID-19 Testing and Flu Shots to the Community

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual First Ladies Health Day will go on despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. This year critical coronavirus testing and flu vaccinations will be offered for the whole family.

“We believe we’re offering the right services at the right time,” said Dena Cranley, co-chair of the First Ladies Health Initiative. We’ll be going into COVID-19 hotspots where there is the greatest need.”

This year health day is Sunday, October 11. Traditionally, health day offers a large variety of screenings and health information in numerous churches and recreation centers across greater Cincinnati.

**When:** Sunday, October 11, 1 – 4 pm

**Locations:**

- Allen Temple AME
- Price Hill Recreation Center
- Mother of Christ Church
- Seven Hills Neighborhood House
- New Life Temple Church
- **South Avondale Elementary School**
- New Prospect Baptist Church
- Westwood Methodist Church

Due to COVID-19, this year is different. “We’re very focused on the number 1 health concern for most people right now and that’s staying healthy and coronavirus free,” said Barbara Lynch, co-chair.

“We know that flu seasons can be unpredictable. It’s more important now than ever to protect children and families,” said Anne Mescher, Cincinnati Children’s, clinical manager.

Cincinnati Children’s and Kroger are again partnering with the First Ladies Health Initiative as well as The Cincinnati Health Department and the Ohio National Guard.



### COVID-19: Mask Up to Slow the Spread

- The CDC recommends that you wear a mask in public and when you are around people who don’t live in your household.
  - Wearing a mask over both your mouth and nose, helps prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
  - Masks are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.
  - For a list of COVID-19 Community Resources, visit [www.communityrelationsconnect.org/community-resources](http://www.communityrelationsconnect.org/community-resources)
- Masking is not a substitute for social distancing and hand hygiene.

## Critical Care Building Art Program Engages Avondale Students

When the Cincinnati Children’s Critical Care Building opens next year it will feature the art creations of many Avondale students.

Several students at North Avondale, Rockdale Academy and South Avondale are part of a program that for months has engaged school children from across the region to design artwork for the new building.



2nd grader Myloh Chambers

Local artists partnered with Cincinnati Children’s to host workshops involving 17 schools (before COVID-19 shutdowns) and several community groups. The artists provided the materials and tools needed to create 150 art pieces that will be displayed in patient rooms, corridors, ED waiting, meeting rooms, and staff spaces.

**Congratulations to our student artists!**



### Want a Career in Construction?

Thanks to the Uptown Workforce Development Initiative, 28 residents of the Uptown and nearby areas have been hired for full-time careers in construction and related fields. Fourteen more participants are on track to finish the program, which teaches basic construction skills.

For more information, contact Stanley Warrenhuffman at 513-532-5165 or [swarrenhuffman@eastersealsgc.org](mailto:swarrenhuffman@eastersealsgc.org)

**We want your ideas!**

Are there stories you would like to see in this newsletter? Please let us know! Call 513-636-5327 or email [communityrelations@cchmc.org](mailto:communityrelations@cchmc.org)

