

The Hamden Journal

Hamden, Connecticut

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May 7, 2010



SoHa KidFest Helps Celebrate “Week of the Young Child”

Dancing, moon bouncers, crafts, and a police canine demonstration were some of the many activities that entertained and delighted hundreds of children at the *SoHa KidFest* at the Keefe Community Center on April 14, an event designed to celebrate national “Week of the Young Child.”

But, it was the strong community support for Hamden’s youngest children that thrilled Susan Rubino, Hamden’s Youth Service Coordinator and co-chair of Hamden’s Partnership for Young Children, who spearheaded the KidFest, in collaboration with several municipal departments in Hamden. “As the old cliché goes, ‘it takes a village to raise a child,’” Rubino said.

“Children everywhere need support from all corners – from their parents, their teachers, and their community.”

In Hamden, it was evident that the community, from the Mayor’s office to Main Street, is committed to its children. Mayor Scott Jackson kicked off the event by reading an official proclamation designating the “Week of the Young Child” in Hamden. “I encourage all citizens to work to make a good investment in early childhood in Hamden,” said Mayor Jackson.

A variety of arts and crafts kept young hands and minds active. P.L.A.C.E., the multicultural children’s museum and creative arts center, sponsored tile painting, which was supported by a PACK grant through Hamden Community Services. Lakeshore Learning supplied an abundance of materials to make crafts and also provided two volunteers for the event.

Volunteers from Experience Corps, literacy tutors ages 56 and older, handed out free books. Terry Hare, one of the younger Experience Corps volunteers at age 56, loves her work at Ridge Hill Elementary School. “Assisting in the classroom makes such a difference,” she said. “I love it!”

The fire department brought a ladder truck for children to climb on and the police department held a canine demonstration. Businesses, including TD Bank, supported the event and are committed to the ongoing work of Hamden Youth Services.

“Week of the Young Child” helps focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families, and recognizes the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

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