



March 2010

Helping Children, Families, and Schools in Laurel, MD
Volume I

Side by Side, Inc.
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Family Academy Launched

Side by Side's second Family Academy, in October 2009, "turned my whole family around," parent Fumi Barrow said afterward. "It was **life-altering**. ... Now we have **more positive, effective discipline** in place. My teenage daughter is talking to me more and actually wants to be close. Her whole attitude has changed."

Parents have been enthusiastic about Side by Side's first phase, the Family Academy, launched in September 2009. It's the **first parent academy program** in Prince George's County, Md., and the Prince George's public school system sees it as **a model** for similar initiatives around the county.

Side by Side designed the academy after teachers at six Laurel schools identified **parental involvement** as a key issue. The monthly academy serves families from the seven Prince George's elementary schools in Laurel. It serves them a free dinner, presents parenting workshops in both English and Spanish, provides enrichment activities for students and furnishes child care for preschoolers.

Parenting topics have ranged from discipline and communication to how to help children be better readers. **Enrichment activities** have ranged from African drumming to nature programs with live animals.

Upcoming academies:

March 25, 6-8 p.m., Deerfield Run Elementary
April 17, 8:30-11 a.m., Scotchtown Hills Elem.
May 15, 8:30-11 a.m., Laurel Elementary



photo by Steve Noyes

Endorsements

"This program, the first parent academy in Prince George's County, has had a profound impact on the lives of many students and families."

Dr. William Hite, Superintendent of School, Prince George's County Public Schools

"We know that when parents become partners with the school system, their children thrive and achieve at high levels. Side by Side is committed to extending the work of our school system by helping to build strong 'demand parents.'"

Rosalind Johnson, Prince George's County Board of Education

"I will be sharing the insights that I gained with colleagues here at the Maryland State Department of Education. I wish you every continuing success in your mission to ensure that all students and their families are able to have the best possible educational opportunities."

Dr. John Smeallie, Deputy Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education

"All Laurel citizens have a tremendous stake in our local public schools. I support Side by Side's vision of rallying community support to make our schools the best they can be, and urge others to do the same." – **Craig Moe**, Mayor of Laurel

"We applaud Side by Side, Inc. for embracing the vital task of supporting our public schools. Our children are indeed our future."

State Sen. **Jim Rosapepe** and Dels. **Barbara Frush**, **Joseline Peña-Melnyck** and **Ben Barnes**

Quick Facts

No. of Family Academies held: **6**
Average attendance: **99**
Total no. of families: **109**
No. of schools represented: **7**
Average no. of volunteers: **30**



Homework Club Planned

Side by Side is planning its second phase, a community-wide tutoring program, to begin in fall 2010. Meanwhile, it is partnering with Southern Management Corp. to create a Homework Club at Laurel Park Apartments, one of Southern's five residential facilities in Laurel. The club will host approximately 20 elementary-school students four afternoons a week, giving the children a positive alternative to spending the afternoon in an empty apartment. The expected start date is April 6.

How You Can Help

Side by Side depends on volunteers and financial supporters to carry out its mission to help the Prince George's public schools in Laurel, Md., to be the best that they can be.

Volunteers: We need volunteers to help us plan programs; help us serve food and supervise children at our Family Academy; help with our Laurel Park Apartments Homework Club; or tutor an elementary-school student. An hour a week, or two hours a month, is a great help! To find out more, email sidebyside@sidebysidelarell.org or call 202-710-5555.

Donors: Our budget for the 2009-2010 school year is \$32,000. Help us reach that budget by donating online at www.sidebyside.org or by sending a check to Side by Side, Inc., 15808 Kerr Road, Laurel, MD 20707.

Side by Side is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

Thanks to Businesses

The following professionals and businesses have helped us get off to a great start in our first year with free or discounted goods or services. We are truly grateful.

AirTran Airways
Asahi Japanese Restaurant, 13919 Baltimore Ave.
Best Buy 14160 Baltimore Ave.
Bottom Dollar, 410 Sandy Spring Road
Bowie Baysox
Chuck E. Cheese, Laurel Shopping Center
Daedalus Books, Columbia
Domino's Pizza, 7711 Sandy Spring Road
El Charro Restaurant, Laurel Shopping Center
Famous Dave's, Route 1 at Laurel Lakes
Hey Red! Inc, 641 Main St.
IHOP Restaurant, 15004 Baltimore Ave.
Latin Image Salon, 13929 Baltimore Ave.
Laurel Lakes Cleaners
Laurel Tavern Donuts, Route 1 and Main Street
Laurie Something Special Coffee
Ledo Pizza, Route 1 and Cherry Lane
Jill M. Mooty, CPA
Russell Nemecek (graphics)
Pasta Plus, 209 Gorman Avenue
Red Lobster, Route 1 at Laurel Lakes
Red Sky Steak & Fish House, 14707 Baltimore Ave.
Reddemeade Equestrian Center, Silver Spring
Rocky Gorge 4 Seasons Golf, 8445 Old Columbia Road
Sports Card Heroes, 634 Main St.
Starbucks, Route 1 and Contee Road
Three Brothers Restaurant, Route 1 and Contee Road
C. Michael Walls, Attorney