



August 16, 2010

Kindergartners enjoy prepping at The Works for first year of school

BY ABBEY ROY
Advocate Reporter

NEWARK -- Among the colorful exhibits that greeted special visitors to The Works on Sunday was a sign with a message handwritten in crayon: "Welcome, Class of 2023!"

The class members, now kindergartners-to-be, roamed the facility with their families, stopping at tables occupied by representatives from schools across the county, making crafts and testing out The Works exhibits.

"It's a community celebration for kindergartners to kick off their year," said Katie Shay-Sutton, chairperson for The Works' second Kindergarten Kick-Off.

The event was sponsored by K12, an organization that provides children with online curriculums and educational tools.

In addition to school representatives, volunteers from the Licking County Library, Licking County Reading Foundation and Licking County Health Department were present with literature and information, and members of the Newark Fire Department gave curious tots a fire engine tour.

In the courtyard, Newark Police officer Al Shaffer tended to a line of children who were waiting to get their fingerprints scanned onto an identification card for their parents to keep.

Among them were April and Scott Leach and their sons, Shane and Shawn -- the latter of whom will be a student at John Clem Elementary this fall.

The family never had been to The Works before and had spent a couple hours enjoying the day especially for kindergartners, April said.

The event was designed to help upcoming students like Shawn become familiar with what to expect when school starts -- in a fun way, said Susan Leithauser, a member of The Works' development council.

"It's a partnership to ease the school transition," she said.

Also in attendance at the kick-off were Newark siblings Gabbie and Rileigh Boice and their younger brother, Braylon Bates, who will be entering kindergarten at Cherry Valley Elementary.

The three were making signs with their names in colorful construction paper while their aunt, Ami Binckley, watched.

Bates, 5, nodded his head eagerly when asked if he was excited to be a kindergartner.

Binckley smiled and helped him glue a dinosaur onto his sign.

"He's been having fun," she said.
