



# DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services



July 2021

## **Family Centers, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh collaborate to "make and celebrate community"**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Grable Foundation, Allegheny County's Family Support Network and the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh have spent much of the last year reimagining the traditional ways that families connect and building community through "making."

The Making and Celebrating Community project was initially designed to be a series of in-person sessions held by the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh at local family centers; however, when the pandemic struck, plans were quickly changed.

From January 2020 through June 2021, the centers received monthly maker kits and instructions on how to use them. The centers then distributed the kits to families and held Zoom workshops so everyone could participate in the activities together.

The culmination of the project was a Making and Celebrating Community event that was held July 16 at the Children's Museum. More than 500 families were invited to the event, and attendees were treated to an art show that displayed their maker kit creations and activity tents with projects like wand-making, ice painting and weaving. UPMC's Care Mobile, Mobile Safety Center and Vaccine Machine offered immunizations and injury prevention tips. The families also received free ice cream from Millie's and books from the Buzzword Collaborative. Staff from the family centers volunteered to facilitate the activities which contributed to the event's overall success.

"The activity kits the Children's Museum put together were a huge hit for our families and our staff. The culminating event at the museum was a great opportunity to bring everyone together, and to display that even though we were all isolated for many months, we are still a community," said Emily Bengel, family strengthening program coordinator in the Office of Community Services (OCS). "Everyone was disappointed for this project to come to an end. We're excited to continue to work with the Children's Museum on opportunities to provide more in-person maker sessions at the Family Centers."