

Free health screenings, resources and fun for children and their parents in Baltimore

April 20, 2009

When times are tough, families seek free community services more than ever and Project HEALTH Baltimore responds to this need. Two of their current offerings are HealthFest 2009 and their four Family Help Desks.

HealthFest 2009 is a Global Youth Service Day event for families in Baltimore being held on April 25, 2009. This will be Baltimore's second HealthFest, which had 300 participants in 2008; half of the attendees were children. 500 participants are expected this year to take advantage of the free health screenings and family focused resources on hand.



Project HEALTH volunteers from The Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University and The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, along with students from other campus groups and Baltimore City high school students, will support the health fair registration, health screenings, children's recreation activities, and refreshment distribution.

Health screenings will be provided by volunteer professionals of The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and School of Nursing. Screenings offered include such evaluations as blood sugar and lead levels, height and weight, blood pressure and heart health. Families attending the fair also will be able to interact with over 20 community resources aimed at good health outcomes.

Sonia Sarkar, programs manager for Project HEALTH Baltimore, said that the agency's Family Help Desks have had more requests for services and higher numbers of volunteer outreach this year. They are able to provide volunteer case management and referrals for needs in such areas as: employment, food, utilities, child care, after school care, and health insurance. The Family Help Desks are located at the Baltimore City Health Department Druid Clinic, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, John Hopkins Harriet Lane Clinic and Baltimore Medical Systems St. Agnes Clinic.

Baltimore's Project HEALTH Family Help Desk model is an outgrowth of Boston Medical Center's own model, which was founded in 1996 by physicians and Harvard undergraduates. The

model has resulted in a new method of delivering health care for families in need, and establishing a network of student leaders devoted to health, social justice and advocacy issues towards changing health care systems. Project HEALTH Baltimore was created in 2006 and has since recruited 237 students who have provided over 18,000 volunteer hours to help over 2,000 families.



HealthFest 2009 will run from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the Edgcombe Elementary School located at 2835 Virginia Avenue in Baltimore.