

Outen column: Lancaster Promise Neighborhood making a difference

Children are the future, but, in the wake of a pandemic and economic crisis, how can we ensure that all children are given equitable access to opportunities to ensure their future success?

Devoted to achieving academic success and restoring community pride, Lancaster Promise Neighborhood is a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) that seeks to create opportunity for all children and families in Lancaster County, especially the most disadvantaged. Eager to put their promises into action, the organization has developed a strategic plan in pursuit of uplifting our students and community.

All students deserve access to a high-quality education from birth in order to achieve academic success. Lancaster Promise Neighborhood is committed to making this necessity a reality by sponsoring extended-day programs at Clinton Elementary, A.R. Rucker Middle and Lancaster High schools.

Utilizing a holistic approach, extended day ensures that students are meeting grade-level targets through intense intervention, challenges learners to build intrinsic motivation and problem-solving skills during robotics inquiry labs, and develops healthy habits in each child's personal life. Additionally, ACT and SAT test preparation workshops prepare students for the rigors of college and beyond.

While the benefits of a high-quality education are immeasurable,

we cannot overlook the power of the community in contributing to the success of the future generation. Family buy-in is essential to achieving both academic and personal success.

At a recent Family Night event, more than 250 students and families gathered to enjoy performances from extended-day students, learn about a college career at USC Lancaster, and receive free books and information about college applications.

Lancaster Promise Neighborhood also sponsored a Project Runway event at Clinton Elementary. An enormous success, the event accomplished its mission of unlocking the confidence of its participants– a confidence that will transcend the runway and transform their academic and personal growth.

This transformation is the goal of all Lancaster Promise Neighborhood events – not just to enable students to survive, but to thrive; to take pride in themselves and, in turn, make their community proud.

True to its motto, “Whatever it Takes,” Lancaster Promise Neighborhood is striving daily to shine a light on members of our community who have been historically overlooked and forgotten. Due to its concentrated and ongoing efforts, it is equipping learners with the determination and resources required to compete and prosper.

Follow Lancaster Promise Neighborhood on Facebook for more information and opportunities to get involved.