

GO!



Franklin County wants every child to have a great summer filled with fun, active and educational experiences regardless of the family's ability to pay.

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GO! CAMPS INSPIRE LOCAL YOUTH TO BE..NEXT AMERICAN IDOL, NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, OLYMPIC ATHLETE

*Commissioners providing \$2 million
for disadvantaged children to “Go” to summer camp*

(COLUMBUS) — Nearly 2,300 children in Franklin County will be able to participate in enriching and memorable summer camp activities this year thanks to \$2 million in federal TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) incentive dollars for the GO! summer youth program. This is a 15% increase in funding from 2007.

Now in its third year, GO! Great Opportunities for Franklin County Kids, provides children of TANF-eligible families the chance to attend a variety of fun, educational summer camps. Programs start in June for children who have completed kindergarten through age 17. The program is funded by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the county Department of Job and Family Services and is managed by United Way of Central Ohio.

“As a mom and grandmother, I know how important programs like GO! are to children. Kids are given the chance to stretch their imagination and discover hidden talents,” said Franklin County Commission President Marilyn Brown. “And, this year, as more and more families struggle to make ends meet, the need to help parents provide for their children is even greater.”

Commissioners along with United Way of Central Ohio President and CEO Janet E. Jackson and Directions for Youth and Families Program Manager Iben “Chip” Smith participated in a “talent show” event today at the DFYF’ s Short Stop, 1066 North High Street, to kick off the program and promote the benefits of GO!

“As a Franklin County Commissioner, it’ s my job to make sure that all children have equal access to the tools and resources to help them become good citizens. Children eligible for GO! come from families that are struggling in this economy – families where money is tight, and paying for summer camp costs is really tough. We began this GO! partnership with United Way in 2006, and I believe it builds our future leaders, thinkers, and doers – our workforce,” said Brooks.

“Our kids are happier, healthier and safer when they are engaged in summer activities like these,” said Commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy. “I encourage parents to sign their kids up before the June 30th deadline.”

Thirty-three organizations are offering programs ranging from daytime camps to weeklong residential camps. In addition to traditional summer activities like arts, crafts and outdoor adventures, new camps focus on global warming, conservation and energy use, healthy lifestyle choices, youth employment as well as academics such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics — STEM — education.

“GO! reflects United Way’ s commitment to creating opportunities for a better life for everyone,” said Jackson, noting that the effort mirrors United Way’ s national Live United campaign. “The county and United Way are committed to helping all children and youth achieve their potential, not just those who come from families that can afford it.”

Flyers will be distributed to children in the Columbus Public Schools and made available at Job and Family Services Opportunity Centers, the Columbus Metropolitan Main Library and branches, City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Centers and Neighborhood Pride Centers. Space is limited and all eligible children must be enrolled by the end of June to participate.

Parents can also get registration information online at uwcentralohio.org/go or call the GO! hotline at 614-227-8738.