

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, please contact:
Shelley Johansson, Marketing Manager
Johnstown Area Heritage Association
P. O. Box 1889
Johnstown, PA 15907
(814) 539-1889 x 308
sjohansson@jaha.org

JAHA and Greater Johnstown School District form partnership

*Goal is to increase students' access to museums;
initiative is part of GJSD's "Community Improvement Plan"*

(March 20, 2009; JOHNSTOWN, Pa.) – The Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) and the Greater Johnstown School District (GJSD) today announced a partnership designed to increase Johnstown school students' access to JAHA museums, especially the upcoming Johnstown Children's Museum. Through the program, Family Outreach Nights with free admission for GJSD schoolchildren and their parents will be scheduled at the Johnstown Children's Museum.

"As JAHA works to bring this new museum and new educational programs and workshops to Johnstown's children, it's important to us to make sure everyone has access," said Francis Fregly, JAHA's director of education. "This partnership with the Johnstown school district is a very direct way to do that, and we are excited about it. In fact, we hope to create partnerships with many area school districts."

Dr. Gerald Zahorchak, secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was on hand for the announcement.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Education hails this partnership as a terrific step forward for the Johnstown community. It is illustrative of how the schools and community can work together and sets an example for other areas in the state to follow," Dr. Zahorchak said.

The partnership will bring GJSD students to JAHA museums, but JAHA will also find ways to bring museum programming to Johnstown schools. On Friday, April 3, Farmer Jason, a nationally-known children's artist, will present concerts at West Side Elementary and East Side Elementary. On April 4, Farmer Jason will present a free, public concert at the Heritage Discovery Center at 2:30 p.m. The concerts are made possible by 1st Summit Bank and Greater Johnstown School District.

JAHA and GJSD are also planning additional ways to work together, including the following:

- After school/extended day programs
- Summer activities and camps
- Specially-designed workshops for students, parents and teachers of the GJSD, using resources available through JAHA's museums
- Programs designed for gifted students
- Other special projects, including local history curriculum revision

The partnership kicks off GJSD's Community Improvement Plan, which seeks to involve all segments of the community in the schools, including business and industry. The plan includes partnerships with organizations like JAHA. It also includes the planned expansion of the College Access Program, which in 2008 granted four Greater Johnstown High School students who went on to college \$1,000 per year for up to five years; GJSD hopes to be able to offer similar scholarships to every high school senior planning to attend college.

GJSD expects to announce more partnerships and elements to the Community Improvement Plan in the coming months.

The Farmer Jason concert at the Heritage Discovery Center also marks the first special event in JAHA's new education program. The education program is being launched as part of the upcoming Johnstown Children's Museum, and will feature special events as well as low-cost workshops for children, parents and educators. Seven workshops, designed for various age groups and on a variety of topics, are scheduled for April.

For more information about JAHA, the Johnstown Children's Museum and the educational workshops, visit www.jaha.org. For more information about the Greater Johnstown School District, visit www.gjsd.net.

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is a non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving and showcasing Johnstown's unique history to the nation through high-quality educational, cultural and recreational experiences. In addition to the Johnstown Flood Museum, the Frank & Sylvia Pasquerilla Heritage Discovery Center, and the Wagner-Ritter House & Garden, JAHA produces a wide variety of cultural programming. The Johnstown Children's Museum is currently under construction and will open in 2009. For more information on JAHA programs, museums and events, visit www.jaha.org.