

# THE EPICENTER AT EDGEWOOD 2017 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

## EMPOWERING YOUTH

Since The EPICENTER opened in 2013, our youth programs have stood as our most significant means of impacting the Edgewood community. We are proud to say that, once again, our youth programs empowered hundreds of kids in 2017.

First, our after-school program, The Zone, served local elementary and middle school students for the third year in a row during the 2016-2017 school year, providing a place to study, build character, and relax after school. At The Zone, students receive homework help, a nutritious meal, and math and reading tutoring from caring employees and volunteers. Students also enjoy several fun activities, including intramural sports, STEM-related projects, and arts and crafts.



*Eight Leaders-in-Training (LITs) helped lead Camp EPIC activities this year. The LIT program is designed to help high school students develop responsibility and professional skills.*

Second, 184 elementary and middle school students attended Camp EPIC this summer. This year's Camp EPIC featured a variety of programming such as basketball; swimming; math, reading, and Bible lessons; and a field trip to Sight and Sound Theaters in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to see the play *Jonah*. 28 Camp EPIC students also participated in a STEM program led by JAMSQUAD, a nonprofit that restores and provides used bikes for Baltimore kids and teens. JAMSQUAD recognized all campers who participated in the STEM program and rewarded them with free bikes during the finale.

## MORE THAN SHOWERS

The EPICENTER's Come in Out of the Cold (COC) program provides showers to community members who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or transitioning out of homelessness. COC serves both general community members in need and guests of Harford County Hope for the Homeless Alliance's Emergency Rotating Shelter, which offers continual shelter in the evenings between December and March.

The EPICENTER has been able to develop compassionate relationships with numerous COC guests. We have also enjoyed several opportunities to connect COC guests with employment and housing opportunities, including one woman named Karen.

Karen landed a job and saved enough money to rent her own apartment after our shower facilitator, Angela Ward, informed her of an employment opportunity with Sephora and encouraged her to apply.

"Your services mean so much to the community, especially when society looks down on those who are experiencing homelessness," said Karen. "To go somewhere where people care about and believe in you—that was worth more to me than the showers themselves."

To help more people like Karen, The EPICENTER has decided to pursue funding to hire a case manager early in 2018. Our case manager will consult with participants in COC and other EPICENTER programs, create service plans based on identified needs, connect them with pertinent community resources to address both short-term and long-term needs, and encourage them to create and work towards personal goals.



*Angela Ward, The EPICENTER's Come in Out of the Cold (COC) shower facilitator. Karen, a former COC guest, credits Angela with helping her secure a job and a home.*

## NOT FOOD ALONE

One of the signature ways that The EPICENTER empowers community members in need happens through our monthly Food Giveaway events. During our Food Giveaways, we partner with Maryland Food Bank and Tabitha's House, provide 7,000 pounds of food to an average of 150 attendees, and invite health vendors to provide free services as well as information on healthcare, insurance, and housing opportunities to guests.

The EPICENTER hosted 11 Food Giveaways in 2017. While our Food Giveaways certainly impacted many community members in need this year, they often were just as much of a blessing to those who shared their services such as The EPICENTER's own Karl Staab from our Employment Readiness Program.

"I spoke with a woman who felt very discouraged at first because a criminal record had prevented her from finding work in the past," said Karl after our September Food Giveaway. "I assured her that we could help her, and it was amazing to see how much that gave her hope."

As many as one-eighth of our Food Giveaway guests speak Spanish. Accordingly, The EPICENTER provides translation services, Spanish guest survey forms, and Food Giveaway announcements in both English and Spanish so that guests with limited English skills can have a better understanding of the services available to them in the community.

## EPIC HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

Every month of 2017, we offered diverse programming to empower the Edgewood Community. Below is a glimpse of what we have done from the beginning of the year until now.

### Winter Highlights:

- In January, The EPICENTER provided more than 50 different services to 434 people as 2017's Project Homeless Connect host site, including on-site dental care, haircuts, and more.
- We showed love to children and families in the Edgewood community through our Valentine's Day Love Edgewood event. During Love Edgewood, we gave 500 hot dogs and cookies, offered free family photos, featured performances from EPIC Swag Step Squad, provided a nail salon for young girls, collected diapers for Chesapeake Diaper Bank and supplies for the Judy Center, and invited Extreme Family Outreach to make balloons for children. Approximately 450 people attended Love Edgewood.

### Spring Highlights:

- The EPICENTER hosted Edgewood High School's post-prom party to help local teens make positive memories after prom in a safe and supervised environment.
- We held our first annual Breakfast Fundraiser, through which we raised more than \$33,000.



*The EPICENTER's Food Giveaways provide community members in need with a broad array of health-related resources.*

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*Each month, The EPICENTER provides **7,000 pounds of food** to an average of **150 families in need** through our Food Giveaways. Through our last four Food Giveaways alone, we have provided **free chiropractic care for 41 guests, 40 free blood pressure screenings, 4,075 free diapers, and much more.***

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*The "I Love Edgewood Nail Salon" from February's Love Edgewood event.*

### **Summer Highlights:**

- During our June EPIC Golf Tournament, we raised more than \$30,000 to support Camp EPIC.
- During Camp EPIC, The EPICENTER partnered with AmeriCorps. Eight AmeriCorps volunteers helped lead Camp EPIC activities, and The EPICENTER organized a project through which our AmeriCorps volunteers painted a kitchen for one of our Food Giveaway guests.
- 150 students in need received free haircuts and school supplies through our second Free Haircuts and More back-to-school event, which we hosted for the second straight year in partnership with Harford County Department of Community Services in August.



*150 students in need received free haircuts and school supplies through our Free Haircuts and More event in August.*

### **Fall Highlights:**

- In September, The EPICENTER provided a free dinner event between the new administrative team of Edgewood Middle School and 19 Edgewood Middle families. The event served to help attendees get to know the new Edgewood Middle principals, hear their plans for the school, and learn about resources that exist in the school and community for families.
- We hosted Mountain Christian Church's Edgewood Trunk-or-Treat event in October, where 53 trunk hosts gave approximately 2,500 pounds of candy to 1,613 people.
- Harford County Health Department's Tobacco Cessation Program offered free Smoking Cessation classes at The EPICENTER for six weeks from early November through mid-December.
- At the beginning of December, Extreme Family Outreach hosted one of its "Holiday of Hope" 2017 Christmas parties at The EPICENTER, sharing food, music, dancing, and gifts with 350 local families.

### **More 2017 Highlights:**

- Community members continued to develop professional skills, search for jobs, and prepare for interviews through The EPICENTER's employment readiness counseling. Additionally, 7 people graduated from The EPICENTER's Jobs for Life workshops, which consist of 12 weeks of employment readiness classes.
- Harford County Department of Social Services offered free parenting classes at The EPICENTER to help local parents strengthen relationships with their children.
- An average of 72 people attended our recovery programs each week, which include Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Al-Anon meetings.
- The EPICENTER continued to offer various weekly fitness classes to help community members stay healthy, including Zumba classes, Karate classes, and R.I.P.P.E.D. classes.



*The EPICENTER received an award from Chesapeake Professional Women's Network (CPWN) to host our first Mother's Day semi-formal next May.*

## **HELP US DO MORE IN 2018**

At the heart of The EPICENTER's mission lies our desire to empower the Edgewood community and see it thrive. As we look back on 2017, we give thanks for how your continued support has enabled us to do just that in many ways.

With your help, The EPICENTER will continue many of these same efforts in 2018—and we will be able to bless the Edgewood Community in new ways as well. Check out the next page for some practical steps you can take to empower the Edgewood community with us.

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**Help us do more in 2018.** One of the main reasons The EPICENTER has been able to accomplish so much this year has been the generous support of donors and volunteers like you. Want to know how you can help?

**Volunteer.** We always need extra hands to help sort, pack, and transport food boxes during our monthly Food Giveaways. In addition, we are looking to offer Come in Out of the Cold more days each week and could use a few kind and caring friends to help facilitate the program. Our Zone and Camp EPIC kids look to caring volunteers to give them the guidance and encouragement they need to thrive, and we always could always use a hand in our office.

To serve with us, please complete our volunteer application at The EPICENTER during our business hours or at [epicenteratedgewood.org/volunteer](http://epicenteratedgewood.org/volunteer).

**Donate.** Any amount you give is welcome, appreciated, and will go a long way. \$12/week or \$48/month covers the cost of transportation for The Zone for one student in need. \$585 covers the cost of Camp EPIC for one student in need. \$20,000 will help us purchase a vehicle to provide transportation to Zone and Camp EPIC students. We also welcome donations of travel-size toiletries and flip-flops for our shower guests.

If you would like to donate, please visit our website at [www.epicenteratedgewood.org](http://www.epicenteratedgewood.org). Checks can also be mailed to The EPICENTER at Edgewood, 1918 Pulaski Highway, Edgewood, MD 21040.

**Share your ideas.** The EPICENTER exists by “Edgewood for Edgewood,” and we would love to hear more ways that we can be a blessing to the community.

If you have any ideas regarding activities you would like to see at The EPICENTER and/or in Edgewood, feel free to give us a call at 443-981-3742, write us on Facebook, or email us at [info@epicenteratedgewood.com](mailto:info@epicenteratedgewood.com).

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### THE EPICENTER THANKS OUR 2017 GRANTORS:

Mountain Christian Church  
Harford County Government  
APGFCU  
United Way of Central Maryland  
The Drescher Foundation  
State of Maryland  
Macy's, Inc.  
Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
The PepsiCo Foundation, Inc.  
BGE  
Chesapeake Professional Women's Network

**WE ALSO THANK ALL DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!**