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TOP STORY

## Fayette Leaders Academy redesigns classroom at East End United Community Center

By Frances Borsodi Zajac fzajac@heraldstandard.com Jun 18, 2019 Updated Jun 18, 2019



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Kendall Sisler, academy member, welcomes guests to the ribbon cutting for the 2019 Fayette Leaders Academy's community service project, which is a redesigned classroom at the East End United Community Center in Uniontown.

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Youths at the East End United Community Center in Uniontown are enjoying increased learning opportunities thanks to the 2019 Fayette Leaders Academy.

Members of the academy, a program offered by Fay-Penn Economic Development Council in partnership with Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, recently hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a redesigned EEUCC classroom as their community service project.

“From the beginning of this project, we knew we wanted it to be centered around kids,” said Kendall Sisler, academy member, who noted, “It was important for us that the classroom be a pleasant space for the kids where they are able to learn as well as promote social and personal growth.”

In collaboration with sponsors and community mentors, the academy provided the classroom with new carpeting, furniture, lighting and technology that includes a 3-D printer, additional printer, two computers and four tablets with four sets of headphones. They created a library area with a new rug, books and bookshelves as well as STEM activities.

Students also participated in a project with the academy by drawing pictures of what kindness means to them. Several were incorporated into a calendar.

“We felt very passionate about this community service project, the friendships we’ve made and the goals we’ve accomplished. On behalf of the Fayette Leaders Academy, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your commitment and donations to making this East End United Community Center classroom redesign a success,” said Tre’ Coles, academy member.

EEUCC officials were happy to be involved.

“Thank you all so much for choosing us to do your project. It really means so much,” said Keeley Forrestel, EEUCC executive director, who explained services offered by the center and noted, “We want to be a place where people feel welcome.”

Fayette Leaders Academy is an interactive, nine-month learning experience for business professionals that is facilitated by leaders from business, government, education, non-profits and the arts.

This year’s members include Sisler, Coles, Nicole Brosky, Mary Budinsky, Mary Conn, Amanda Cuteri, Benjamin Kisiel, Derek Marucci, Douglas Sanner, Brandie VanDusen, Barbara Velosky and Renee Witt.

Dr. Charles Patrick, Penn State Fayette chancellor, and Bob Shark, Fay-Penn executive director, thanked everyone involved in the program.

“I’m very proud of this cohort that has come together in a wonderful way. They’ve become friends and they’ve worked very well together to make things happen,” said Patrick. “We’re thankful for this partnership with the East End United Community Center and the valuable services they provide to this community and this region.”

Shark noted the academy has become “a world-class program” and said, “Our friends at Penn State Fayette have been invaluable since they’ve joined the program to add some additional capabilities.”

Several officials attended the ceremony, offering their thanks to Fay-Penn and Penn State as well as the sponsors and academy members, including Sen. Pat Stefano, R-Bullskin; Rep. Matt Dowling, R-Uniontown; Fayette County Commissioners Vince Vicites and Dave Lohr as well as Uniontown Mayor Ed Fike.

Tours of the redesigned classroom were available after the ribbon cutting.

Terry Burden, EEUCC board chairwoman, said, “I think it’s great the community reached out to us and wanted to do this because the kids are our future.”