

# Community Connection

## Pottstown YMCA celebrates children

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Area children and parents crowded the gym at the Pottstown YMCA for the "Week of the Young Child" event, held Sunday, April 11.

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Connection Editor

Where can you find a clown, a calf, a rescue truck and enough games and activities to fill an afternoon? If you guessed the Pottstown YMCA, you're right.

On Sunday, April 11, the Pottstown YMCA kicked-off a community-wide event to celebrate the Week of the Young Child, sponsored by PEAK, the Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness, the school readiness initiative of Pottstown School District.

"We are thrilled with the turnout this year," said Mary Rieck, PEAK Coordinator. "More than 500 people attended this year's event."

PEAK works with community early learning programs and agencies to improve the readiness of children entering kindergarten. With a mission of "All Pottstown children will enter kindergarten ready to learn and achieve," the PEAK initiative focuses on community outreach, family engagement, quality improvement, health and wellness and kindergarten transition.

Twenty community agencies provided family activities, including a petting farm, Pippin the Clown, the Goodwill Fire Company's fire and rescue truck, the Pottstown Police Department, the Reading Phillie's mascot Screwball and a moon bounce.

In addition to fun for children, various organizations provided free resources for parents with young children, including Mission Kids, who provided 10 boxes of books that were distributed to the attending families.

“This is just the start of what we have planned,” said Mary. “There is a host of other fun and informational events for children and parents during the Month of the Young Child.”

“We encourage everyone in the community to take advantage of the opportunities to learn and grow.”

Other events happening during the Month of the Young Child include Congressman Jim Gerlach and Representative Tom Quigley reading to classes of children at Montgomery Early Learning Centers. 500 copies of “What a Treasure!,” the featured book for the Pennsylvania One Book Campaign, will be distributed to three- and four-year-old children in community early learning sites through a donation from Pottstown Rotary Club.

“Pottstown School District is reaping the benefit of the community partnership through children entering kindergarten ready to be successful and families receiving needed services much sooner,” said Mary. “We look forward to continuing this important partnership that will have the long-term impact of higher graduation rates and a more stable community.”

The PEAK initiative is funded through Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, Pennsylvania Children’s Trust Fund and other grants and donations.

For more information on PEAK, visit the Web site at [www.peakonline.org](http://www.peakonline.org) or contact the Mary Rieck at 610-970-6655.