

CAMBRIDGE MATTERS – July 2023

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I have often heard that we focus most often on what is known or familiar to us or what is of most concern to us. For me it is on juvenile justice and k-12 school issues.

When I go on social media, I see what appears to be ever present concerns and complaints about children in our community and bad behavior. It is almost like the major source of our problems here involve the children in our community.

While we all know that is not the case, it is important that we also hear about the positive things happening in Cambridge and Dorchester County related to our youth. That does not mean that we can ignore those youth who are creating challenges. Understand, however, that the challenging youth are a small portion of the youth living here.

What follows are some examples of positive things that our youth and their parents are doing:

Almost twenty students graduated this spring from the Nursing Assistant Program at DCTC. Most of them are going on to college to seek a degree in nursing or other health related career and about ½ of them have already passed their test that qualifies them to work as a Nursing Assistant.

At the graduation of the class of 2023 from Cambridge South Dorchester, Principal Stover announced that this class had the highest percentage of students graduating since he became the Principal.

At a scholarship event I attended for a friend who has given over \$90,000 in scholarships to Dorchester County students over the past 18 years, the stage was filled with young people that will be going on to some post high school education

or training because of their achievements and funds supplied by donors, foundations, and colleges.

In recent months, Captain Patton told me that he had almost two hundred youth participating in the Police Athletic League (PAL) winter basketball program and had up to 250 parents in the stands cheering on their children.

Jordan Pearlstein has started a skills development basketball program that he is running at the YMCA that has a computer program component being run at the Pine Street Police Substation . He is hopeful of growing this initiative out into the county to help other youth that may not have any after school programming.

Dr. Stafford is running her summer program with three youth that she was able to hire with ARPA funding from the city. Cambridge has hired ten youth to work for the city in various positions to earn a salary and learn about how government works.

The Campaign for Grade Level Reading has some preliminary and somewhat positive first-time data on how it is helping to improve early childhood education here with plans for what it will be able to do with funding from the J2W Foundation that is supporting this effort.

Over the winter, Moving Dorchester Forward, a local nonprofit, supported the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP) that worked with local parents to help them develop skills to improve their parenting and communicate more effectively with their children. A graduation event was held at Cabin Fever earlier this spring.

Dedra Harris and others have started the New Creation Marching Unit initiative for youth and adults and have obtained some funding to help buy some of the instruments that the band will need in order to both practice and perform at events here in Cambridge and elsewhere.

On the 4th of July, the YMCA and Cambridge Multi Sport ran the Gerry Boyle Firecracker kids triathlon with the help of many volunteers where over one hundred youth from five to fifteen years of age participated. The crowd of parents,

family, and friends were all over the YMCA property cheering on the kids as they swam, biked, and ran different distances based on their age. It was a wonderful event that was a perfect expression of the importance of community, volunteers, and parental support for the children of our community.

The Pine Street Elks are funding a variety of programs that are making a difference here for children and families in Cambridge.

This is just a short list of positive things happening here in Cambridge and Dorchester County. I know that there is much more going on, so let's start sharing more about what we are doing here that is positive to balance out the negative that we too often hear.

Thanks for reading.

Steve