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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Head Start Families Relocated on Heels of Markham Elementary Closure

Portland - Students in the Head Start program at Markham Elementary were welcomed into a new temporary home while the school undergoes repairs from the recent winter storm. The program will shift services for 18 children to another Neighborhood House Head Start location at the Children's Center at Stephens Creek Crossing.

It took quick planning for the staff to continue services the first week after the school was closed. The first priority was supporting families with food and meals. Head Start teachers worked on plans for take-home bags with activities and resources for at-home learning. The family service and nutrition team helped to connect Markham families to the Neighborhood House Free Food Market.

Then they started coordinating how to move the Markham students into available space. Neighborhood House also runs a Head Start program at the nearby Children's Center at Stephens Creek Crossing, where there was one open classroom.

Staff created classroom space to keep the Markham children together and make sure they felt welcome and safe in their new environment. The nutrition team made sure they had enough food on site to provide meals to all the new children. Some families needed transportation help, especially those with Markham elementary students reassigned to a different school campus.

Importantly, the Markham Head Start teachers were able to stay with their classes at the new location, creating a sense of continuity for their young charges.

"We are thrilled that we have this space and the opportunity to continue to teach many of our students," said Julia Pitner, Mental Health and Inclusion Manager for Head Start program. "Supporting our students, families, and staff is always our number one priority."

Families were also given the option for online school, which includes small group and story time, weekly education bags, and family service well-being check-ins.

According to Portland Public Schools, the Markham campus will be closed until at least mid-February. Head Start will continue the relocated program until Markham is reopened.

Learn more at www.nhpdx.org/early-childhood/

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