



# Project Launch blasts off

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NEWTON — Project Launch Newton, an after-school program will begin at Merriam Ave. and Halsted Middle Schools on Oct. 1 for students in grades four through eight.

The Newton public school district wanted to create a positive and healthy environment where students could spend their time after school. As a result, the have teamed up with Project Self-Sufficiency, a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and family stability through comprehensive services.

This new program has been made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Education.

Project Launch Newton is open to all fourth through eighth grade students and families in the Newton school district. Additionally, it is free to participate.

Programming will take place Monday through Fridays from school closing until 5:45 p.m. Bus transportation is provided through the program. There will be some activities and field trips that take place on Saturdays throughout the year. Snacks, recreational and educational enrichment activities are all included in this program.

The program will also run for a four-week period during the summer.

“We have plenty of exciting activities planned as well as educational field trips,” Shannon Gill Williams, Project Launch Project Director, said at the press conference Tuesday morning.

There are several different components to this program. There will be a sport/activity of the day which will consist of either a recreational sport or a hip-hop dance class to get the kids moving.

Snack + Nutrition will provide healthy snacks along with an information session on making healthy choices.

The STEM City Micro Society is a student-led initiative plan that will help to implement and build a model society and strong community.

There will be a themed project that will rotate on a quarterly basis. Projects vary in category from sciences to the performing arts.

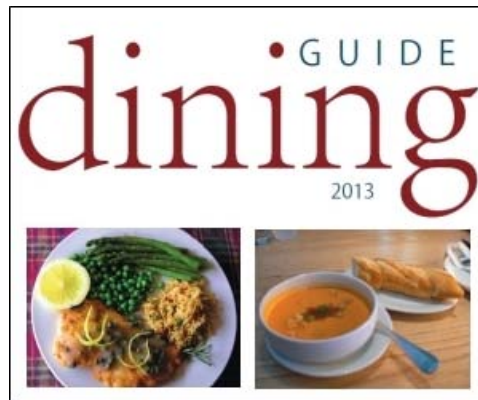
Various games will be available as activities to promote friendly interaction and communication.

Certified staff and mentors will provide assistance with homework assignments.

Monthly family dinners will be organized to show parents and guardians what the students have been learning through program participation.

Some field trips include visits to The Intrepid, the Liberty Science Center, Adventure Aquarium and Sandy Hook.

For Merriam Ave., there will be a Project Launch Newton table at Back to School Night Thursday Sept. 19 at



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7 p.m. For Halsted Middle School, there will be a table at Back to School Night on Sept. 26 at 7 p.m.

“This program gives kids an opportunity not to give up, but to catch up and get ahead. What is good for our kids is good for our county,” said Richard Vohden, Freeholder Director.

Additional information can be found online at [www.projectsselfsufficiency.org](http://www.projectsselfsufficiency.org) or the program’s Web site [www.projectlaunchnewton.org](http://www.projectlaunchnewton.org) in the near future.

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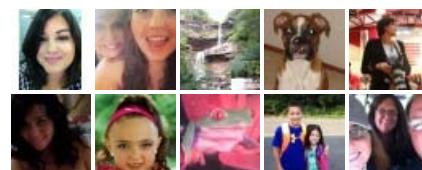
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