

# Arthur R. Edington Education and Career Center

*As a positive place for connection and enrichment, the Arthur R. Edington Education and Career Center tips the scales towards positive outcomes in Buncombe County.*

“Having a space where people can come and do things in their community is good,” states Shuvonda Harper, who manages scheduling and more at the Edington Center. Harper was born in the Southside neighborhood, the historically African American neighborhood where the Center is located, and is deeply involved in her community.

While synergy between people is what makes the Edington Center so special, the building itself holds historical value. It was originally the Livingston Street Elementary School for African American students. After integration it became the W.C. Reid Center, a City of Asheville Parks and Recreation facility, before it's current incarnation.

Today, murals on the front of the building, created by neighborhood youth, send the message: you matter, there is success in your future, reach high.

A true hub, the Edington Center is always bustling with activity, housing a variety of organizations. These groups create a resource grid and help create uplifting neighborhood norms.

Harper shared a bit about the groups that convene at the Center:

## Green Opportunities

Green Opportunities (GO) provides training programs and a pipeline to employment. Their Kitchen Ready program teaches culinary skills. People are able to come to the Southside Kitchen to get a nice fresh lunch. It's donation-based and 100% of the donations go to the students. The GO Build program teaches carpentry and building. They sell cutting boards and knife racks and do custom builds. This money goes back into the students as well.

## Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

The owner of the building, Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA), supports the many activities that occur at the Center.

## Word on the Street

This is an online magazine created by youth of color. They really work hard and meet at the Edington Center three days a week.

I enjoy having the young people here, they are smart, really creative kids.

## My Community Matters

The RCHACA youth group meets in the summer. They hire residents to work as counselors, and the kids who participate are kids from our community. The kids get a stipend to participate. The group teaches leadership skills and life skills. The goal of the RCHACA is to give the youth in the community the tools they need to pursue jobs or a college education.

## Forever Living Clothes Closet

Stephanie Maewether, who was a resident of the Southside community, started this donation-based clothes closet. Her mission is to make sure you look good when you go for your job interview or begin a job.

## Southside Community Garden

The garden grows healthy food which is pesticide free. In 2016, close to a 1,000 pounds of food was harvested and used in the kitchen



*The Southside Community Garden provides healthy food.*



*Come to the Southside Kitchen to enjoy a nice fresh meal.*



*Murals on the front of the building were created by neighborhood youth.*

*Synergy between people is what makes the Edington Center so special.*

or by neighbors. Their mission is to keep our community healthy, to have fresh food that we know where it comes from.

## FreshLo Project

FreshLo stands for fresh food in low income communities. They provide free Grab-n-Go healthy snacks Monday through Friday in the afternoons. This is made possible by a grant from the Kresge Foundation.

## UpFront Sports Management

Coach Sherman Williams serves as a mentor to a lot of youth. He provides training in various sports. He also offers tutoring and help with college readiness in partnership with Positive Changes Youth Ministries.

## Positive Changes Youth Ministries

Dewana Little provides college readiness programs for teens who will be the first in their families to attend college. This past summer they took a group to visit 15 colleges in five days. Since then, they've had quite a few who have applied to schools and have gotten a response.

## Partners Unlimited

Anderson Davis provides lessons for high school students needing credits to graduate. He also offers SAT and ACT prep.

## Residents' Council of the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

The Residents' Council of the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (RCHACA) is the main hub for all of the public housing communities.



*Shuvonda Harper manages scheduling at the Edington Center.*

Photo: Ami Worthen

## Southside Community Advisory Board

The Southside Community Advisory Board has been a huge influence on keeping the integrity of the space and keeping it community focused and led.

Of these groups, the Edington Center is made possible by a partnership between HACA, RCAHA, Upfront Management Sports, GO, Partners Unlimited, and the Community Advisory Board.

“I love to see the flow of the building,” Harper says, “the adult students during the day and the kids after school. The kids have a creative place to come and hang out with peers, learning about their community and how they fit into Buncombe County.”



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