

Sam E. Hill Community Center

Sam E. Hill has provided preschool services to the Knox County community for the past 51 years. In 1993, Knox County Schools through its Title I program broadened the scope of services. The school is now a Family & Community Service Center. The goal of the Center is to work in partnership with parents, community leaders, businesses, state and local service agencies, public and private organizations to create a network of prevention and intervention program that can effectively resolve the diverse problems facing families today.

The primary purpose of the Center is to ensure that every child has an opportunity for success. The philosophy guiding the development of the Community Service Center is that the child must not be viewed as an island unto itself, but should be fully integrated with the family unit and school community.

Sam. E. Hill is located at 1725 Delaware Ave. in the northwest sector of Knoxville, TN known as the Lonsdale Community. The school is immediately adjacent to low-to-moderate income single-dwelling housing. In addition, a large, federally subsidized housing project known as Lonsdale Homes is across the street from the school. The population of the community is predominantly low-income and racially mixed.

Although widely portrayed in the media as a haven for illegal drug trafficking and drive-by shootings, the Lonsdale community nevertheless has a history of self-pride and respect. Evidences of the community's pride include welcome signs, community gatherings, open partnerships with this school, and an annual community celebration.

Sam E. Hill does not draw its student population from the Lonsdale community alone; instead all preschool children who live in Title I school attendance zones all over Knox Co. are eligible to attend. Sam E. Hill accepts students from 18 months to 5 years of age. In addition to living in a Title I school zone, all toddlers (children 18-36 months of age) must be funded with a CAC childcare certificate. Older preschool children may or may not have this same certificate.

Children 3-5 years of age are grouped into preschool classes staffed by a certified teacher, a teacher assistant and a foster grandparent. The center also houses a special education developmental preschool class and a severely emotionally disturbed class for Knox Co. Schools. Extended daycare services are provided to families who are working or attending school past 3:00 p.m. each day. The center also provides a Summer Enrichment experience and maintains a social services staff.

Sam E. Hill Center's longevity as a community program is evidenced by its strengths. The strengths of our program lie in the following areas: (1) diverse teaching strategies (2) variations in classroom design to meet developmental levels (3) parent involvement (4) community partnerships and enhancement of student learning. Weaknesses lie in the areas of improving school climate and finding and retaining teachers of high quality. Community partnerships will be strengthened to focus on safety issues, crime prevention and campus appearance.

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