

LAMBERT'S POINT SUMMER PROGRAM

Good neighbor policy reaches out to youngsters living near the campus

by Jennifer Mullen

In 1992, about 25 kids from Lambert's Point, the community just south of Old Dominion University, came to campus during the summer months for a new program of recreation, academics, scholarship and employment.

Just seven years later, the program has evolved into an incredibly successful venture, with more than 200 neighborhood kids participating and its courses filling up long before the deadline.

The Lambert's Point Summer Program was created by Old Dominion as a community outreach initiative, according to Cecelia Tucker, assistant to the president for community relations and coordinator of the program since it began.

"There had been some tension between the university and the community for a number of years because of the university's past expansion into the Lambert's Point neighborhood," she recalled. "President Koch suggested that we begin this program as a way to be good neighbors."

Tucker, not one to shy away from a challenge, hit the streets and the phones, speaking with parents and encouraging them to send their children to the summer program.

Through word of mouth and publicity, the program has grown in popularity over the years and even expanded its offerings. Now, it's Tucker who gets the calls from parents wanting to enroll their children.

Open to kids ages 5 to 18, the summer program features four components: academics, recreation, employment and scholarship. The academics portion consists of three courses. "World in Motion/Computer Literacy" is a two-part course designed for students in grades 4 to 9 that offers hands-on discovery of science principles and computer skills. The Reading Program introduces children to the library and teaches phonics, spelling, grammar and syntax. In Marine Science Camp, participants are exposed to all aspects of oceanography through day trips to marshes and beaches, an excursion to the Eastern Shore, live specimen collection, classroom activities and a two-hour chartered boat ride.

Perhaps the most popular activity, the recreation component of the summer program, includes boys' and girls' basketball camps and a "Funtastic Summer Camp" at the nearby

Larchmont Recreation Center, which features activities from swimming to arts and crafts to field trips.

Since the summer camp doesn't open until 9 a.m. and most parents must report to work earlier, this year the university opened a morning program in Webb Center where students learned to play chess and other games from members of the campus police department and other volunteers.

For 30 of the older teens, the university offers paid clerical and groundskeeping jobs through the Youth Summer Employment Program.

With its many facets, there's something for just about everyone in the Lambert's Point Summer Program, according to Tucker.

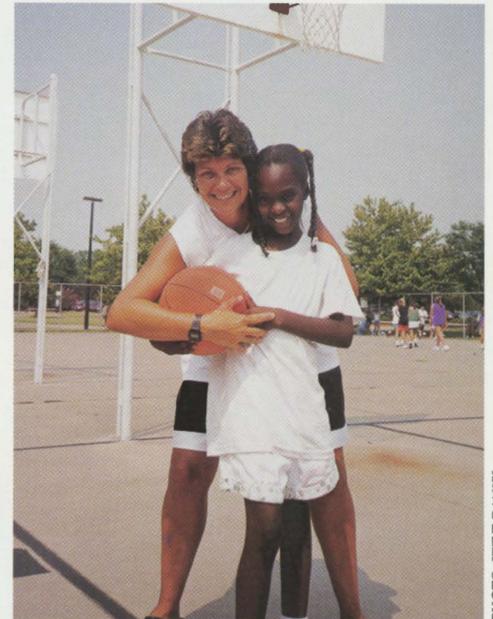
"This program provides a structured setting for the kids in the summer, and enhances their skills in reading, reasoning and problem solving," she said. "It also provides opportunities for earning money for books, clothes and other items."

Norfolk Southern Corp., also a neighbor of the Lambert's Point community, has entered into a partnership with Old Dominion by creating the Norfolk Southern Scholars Program. It provides an academic scholarship for a qualified Lambert's

Point Summer Program participant to attend the university.

It all comes down to being good neighbors, Tucker believes.

"The whole point of this program is to give these kids a chance," she said. "There are so many things in their environment today that cut them off from opportunities. Old Dominion is a big resource located next to this community that needs our help. It's our responsibility to provide it."



Lady Monarch basketball coach Wendy Larry offers encouragement to Shadei Terry-Coleman, 9, of Lambert's Point, who took part in basketball camp for the first time.

PHOTO: STEVE DANIEL



Cecelia Tucker visits with youngsters in the Lambert's Point Summer Program as they gather for a bus trip to Busch Gardens.

PHOTO: CHUCK THOMAS