



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Henrico County, Virginia
Program Title: Holman Middle School's Sensory Spring Experience
Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

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1. Summary

Henrico County Public Schools' Holman Middle School holds the "Huskie Egg Hunt," a sensory-friendly event designed to create an inclusive experience for prekindergarten students with special needs. Organized by the school's chapter of the Family Career Community Leaders of America, the event features crafts, face painting games, an Easter Bunny, egg hunts and refreshments. The event aims to offer a fun, accessible environment where children can engage in activities at their own pace, while celebrating the arrival of spring. The event was attended by around 35 families from Henrico County Public Schools, including those in the school division's early intervention program. Through fundraising and generous donations from local employers like Wegmans, Wawa and Cabela's, the program required no funds from Henrico County Public Schools. Feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive, with parents noting the positive effects the event had on their children, particularly those with autism. The event not only brought joy to participants but also fostered a greater sense of community, highlighting the power of inclusivity and care in creating meaningful experiences for everyone involved.

2. The Problem or Need for the Program

Organizers identified a community need for inclusive events specifically tailored to children with special needs, particularly prekindergarten students. The Huskie Egg Hunt was created to provide a sensory-friendly environment for these children, who often face challenges at typical events due to overwhelming stimuli or social dynamics. The FCCLA chapter recognized these challenges and developed the idea for the Huskie Egg Hunt. Henrico County Public Schools is committed to providing equitable educational opportunities for all students, including those with exceptional needs. The event aligned with the school division's mission to foster inclusivity and ensure that all students, regardless of ability, have access to enriching experiences.

Description of the Program

The Huskie Egg Hunt was conceived by the Family Career Community Leaders of America chapter at Holman Middle School as a community outreach initiative to support children with special needs, particularly Henrico County prekindergarten students. The event aimed to create a sensory-friendly, inclusive space for children with exceptional needs to enjoy seasonal activities without feeling overwhelmed or rushed.

The planning process began in the fall when the FCCLA chapter identified the need for a specialized event. Early in the planning phase, the team reached out to local businesses, including Cabela's, Wegmans and Wawa, to secure donations for supplies and refreshments. This support helped offset costs and ensured that activities were free for families. In January, the chapter contacted Cabela's to try to line up a visit by their Easter Bunny mascot and approached Wegman's and Wawa for financial contributions.

The event was set for March 22, a half day for the school division, to avoid conflicts with other school activities and spring sports. A signup form was created so families could select activities for their children, making the event both organized and personalized. The planning committee focused on providing various sensory-friendly activities that were fun and also appropriate for children with different abilities. Activities included arts and crafts, face painting, fairy hair, balloon animals and a traditional egg hunt. To minimize sensory overload, the event was designed to be flexible, enabling families to move between activities at their own pace.

Flyers were distributed to all HCPS schools that participate in the division's early intervention program and included a QR code linked to an RSVP form for easy registration. In addition, the Henrico County Public Schools' exceptional education director was notified to ensure that all eligible families received the invitation.

Members of Holman Middle School's Student Council Association played a critical role by volunteering their time and skills to set up and supervise activities. Their involvement made sure the event ran smoothly and that children had opportunities for meaningful, enjoyable experiences. Additionally, students from the FCCLA chapter took on leadership roles, organizing activities, coordinating with volunteers and interacting with families. Their efforts were also instrumental.

Wegman's and Wawa both contributed funds for refreshments for the families. Cabela's Easter Bunny mascot added a special touch to the event by posing for photos with the children and bringing smiles to the attendees.

The Huskie Egg Hunt was a community effort, with contributions from both the school community and local businesses. It provided a valuable opportunity for students with special needs to participate in a traditional spring event in a way that was both enjoyable and considerate of their sensory needs.

3. The Cost of the Program

The total budget for the Huskie Egg Hunt was \$150. These funds were primarily used to purchase supplies for crafts, face painting supplies and fairy hair, the main activities requiring materials. The costs were covered through fundraising efforts at Holman Middle School, with no HCPS funds required in the event's development or execution. Additionally, local businesses, including Wegman's, Wawa and Cabela's, contributed in-kind donations, such as refreshments and the Easter Bunny costume. The event also benefited from the efforts of the school's Student Council Association and FCCLA student volunteers, who volunteered their time and energy.

To replicate the event in other communities, costs would depend on the scale and scope of the activities. A similar budget would be necessary for arts and crafts supplies, face painting and

event materials. However, community partnerships and volunteer involvement would help reduce costs significantly. The event could be replicated with similar business partnerships, fundraising efforts and the support of local organizations and schools. It is important to maintain the sensory-friendly aspect of the event, which requires careful planning and coordination to ensure that the activities remain accessible to all children.

4. The Results/Success of the Program

Holman Middle Schools' Huskie Egg Hunt was a resounding success, as evidenced by both participant feedback and the overall enjoyment of the children and their families. Approximately 35 families attended, all of whom had children with special needs. The event provided a unique, sensory-friendly space where children could engage in age-appropriate activities without feeling overwhelmed. The positive outcomes were measurable in terms of both qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Nineteen families gave feedback using a form distributed via a QR code. All responded with the highest possible ratings. Family comments expressed the event's positive effects on their children, with one parent noting that it was "the happiest I have seen my child in recent months." Several parents highlighted the patient and kind attitudes of the student volunteers and others appreciated the range of activities that were thoughtfully designed to meet the varying needs of the children. One parent commented that the event "extended beyond coloring pages" and included activities that engaged their child in a way that was both fun and beneficial.

The success of the event was not only measured in positive feedback but also in the sense of community it fostered. The inclusion of local businesses such as Wegman's, Wawa and Cabela's helped create a strong partnership that supported the program. The involvement of Holman Middle School's FCCLA chapter and Student Council Association also provided students with an opportunity to develop leadership, organizational and community service skills.

The event demonstrated the power of inclusivity and the positive impact of offering children with special needs the chance to participate in traditional activities in an accommodating and supportive environment. The joy on the children's faces, the appreciation from the parents and the collaboration between school and community partners all contributed to the event's success.

5. Worthiness of Award

The Huskie Egg Hunt is an excellent example of community collaboration, student leadership and inclusivity. The program not only addresses a significant need within Henrico County for sensory-friendly events for children with special needs, but also creates a space where these children can enjoy spring activities at their own pace. The positive feedback speaks volumes about the event's success, highlighting the positive emotional effects on the children who participated. Another parent praised the "patient and kind" student volunteers, demonstrating the care and commitment the FCCLA and SCA students put into the event. The event's success, achieved with minimal costs and supported by local businesses, makes it a replicable model for other communities. The Huskie Egg Hunt was a celebration of inclusion, community and positive impact, making it deserving of a VACo award.

9. Supplemental Materials



Group Photo of all participants



Participants at various craft stations



FCCLA Members at the Fairy Hair station ready to serve

