Following a popular 12-year tradition, Allendale Association recently held its campus-wide Summer Olympics for its young residents. Adding to the excitement, Chicago Bears’ Chairman George H. McCaskey officiated at opening day festivities, another much-anticipated tradition.

McCaskey not only led the ceremonial parade—accompanied by a squadron of police cars, courtesy of Lake Villa PD—but stayed to chat with kids and staff at the 121-year old campus/residential facility, serving youth in crisis.

“It was great to see the kids full of team spirit and cheering on their teammates.”

George H. McCaskey, who also presided over the first event, Tug of War!

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The event serves to underscore the importance of teamwork and good sportsmanship. Residents from all nine cottages—as well as Allendale’s Benet Lake, Wisconsin facility—kicked off the competition by choosing a country to represent. The kids researched their respective country’s culture, colors and lifestyles, decorating their cottages and even serving ethnic dishes. This year’s chosen countries included Italy, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Uruguay and Batswana, among others.

Every day brought a new wave of activities, including a triathlon, kayak relays and foot races. The activities were planned by Allendale’s Therapeutic Recreation team. Many were centered around Cedar Lake, which backs up to Allendale’s 120-acre property.

“The kids learned the value of sportsmanship,” observed Lauren Perry, Allendale’s Therapeutic Recreation Manager. “No matter the abilities, everyone was appreciated by their peers and the whole campus came together to support the youth.”

After each competition, the winners would take their place on a podium crafted by Allendale’s talented woodshop students.

“It’s a true privilege having Mr. McCaskey come to our campus to have the chairman of the Chicago Bears take time out of his busy schedule to spend an afternoon with the children demonstrates not only his commitment to community but made all of the staff & youth here at Allendale feel valued and special. I cannot express enough what his visit meant to all of us.”
--Jason Keeler, Allendale President

Koorig Dr Pepper (KDP) and the national non-profit KaBOOM! awarded the Allendale Association a “Let’s Play Community Construction Grant” that will be used to create an inviting play space for the children and families of Allendale to enjoy adventure and exploration through play.

The playground build is made possible by Let’s Play, an initiative by KDP to provide the funding, equipment and play spaces to help local families make active play a daily priority. Through Let’s Play, KDP and its partners are committed to helping create safe and inspiring PLAYces for children at Allendale’s Lake Villa campus to learn, explore, grow and just be kids.

“Replacing and upgrading the quality of the play area on campus for our younger youth is long overdue,” said Jason Keeler, President of Allendale. “Play time enables them to ultimately experience the simple joy of being a kid as they learn, grow, and heal from past traumas.”

The Lake Villa campus is in need of vibrant playground equipment that invites children to climb, run, jump and challenge themselves with various activity stations. The only useable play equipment on campus was built in the early 1980s out of wood and metal piping. Fundraising efforts continue for the project at Allendale! If you would like to contribute: Call 847-245-6204 or visit www.Allendale4Kids.org

The training was presented to an audience including many Lake County public school teachers, administrators and counselors. The content of this conference grew out of requests from school professionals who learned of the RESTArT™ model through Allendale’s School-Based Mental Health Project, which is funded by the McGraw Foundation.

The content of this conference focused on “conflict cycles” as well as the importance of engaging everyone working with the youth to develop a “shared understanding” of them. Along with the presentations and discussions of case examples, the conference included a panel of both current Allendale staff as well as staff from local schools who responded to audience questions about applying the model.

“This is my third year at Murphy & my third year of consulting with Allendale staff. Under- standing this model of behavior management has helped me feel more prepared to work with teachers about student behavior. I have seen the basic Alaio model of behavior intervention work really well at our school as well as staff from local schools who responded to audience questions about applying the model.

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