

# SPLASH offers safe place for students

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By Heather Tyrrell, News Editor

Instead of students coming straight home to an empty house, those who are in grades 3 through 8 have a different place to go thanks to a local church.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ, located at the intersection of Olde Swede Road (Route 662), Old Airport Road and Weavertown Road, Douglassville, started an after school program, St. Paul's Links After School Hours a.k.a. SPLASH, right after school started for the 2010-11 year.

Program Director Marlene Dadey came up with the idea for SPLASH.

"Today many people rely on a cell phone as their babysitter," Dadey said.

Dadey presents the questions: What would parents do if there was an emergency and all of the lines were tied up and what would parents do if they arrived home and there was already an intruder in the house?

"Children need a safe environment and that is what SPLASH has to offer," she said.

The program, which has been certified by the state, is open from when school ends for the day until 5 p.m. five times a week, but parents or guardians can choose the option of their children attending just a few days out of the week if they want to. Those who go with this option must let Dadey know which days their children will be there.

SPLASH has three students from Daniel Boone Middle School enrolled in the program. A total of 30 students can be enrolled in the after school program. Dadey is aiming for 10 or 15.

On clear days during the early fall and spring, the volunteers of the program walk with the DBMS students to the church. During rainy days and the winter season, a New Rhoads bus picks up the students and takes them to the church.

A new Rhoads bus is also available to pick up students at Amity Intermediate Center. The program is not offered on inservice or snow days. There are plenty of activities to keep program members busy. They have the choice of doing homework, playing board games and table games (ping pong and air hockey.)



Director of St. Paul's U.C.C.'s program, St. Paul's Links After School Hours (a.k.a. SPLASH) Marlene Dadey and two members, Faith Hughes and Sabrina Gonzales spend time together after the students finished a game. News photo by Heather Tyrrell

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Hanging out and playing basketball are other options in the gymnasium.

A supervised computer room is available to use for homework and not for e-mail or instant messaging.

The adults that supervise the after school program have to go through a criminal background clearance, said Marianne Reinert, a volunteer with the program.

Many of the volunteers are retired school teachers.

Pastor Steven Simpson said he is glad that the church can be used to help out community members.

"Any time someone has needs and we can help fill those needs, we're happy," Simpson said.

Dadey came up with the idea for the after school program in 2009. The program began the first day of the school year.

She said State Representative David R. Kessler's office was very helpful with informing her what she needed to do in order to get the program certified by the state.

Daniel Boone Middle School students Faith Hughes and Sabrina Gonzales, talked about what they like about St. Paul U.C.C.'s after school program.

"I like how we can bake cookies for our parents," Hughes said.

Gonzales said she has a fun time hanging out with Faith and baking cookies.

The girls also like to play games and basketball.

Daily fees for the program are \$15 and it costs \$60 for a full week. Those interested in the program are welcome to schedule a visit or call Dadey for more information. Dadey can be reached at 610-689-9364 or e-mail

[SPUCCAMITY@aol.com](mailto:SPUCCAMITY@aol.com).

Information about the program will also be listed on the church's website, [www.stpaulsuccamity.org](http://www.stpaulsuccamity.org).