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**National Summer Learning Association Announces Winners
of 2016 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Awards**

***High-Quality Programs in Charleston, Honolulu, Detroit, New Britain, CT, and Dallas Are Using
the Summer Months to Close the Achievement Gap for Low-Income Students***

Baltimore (September 22, 2016) – School just started for millions of students, yet many kids are already months behind. According to [the National Summer Learning Association](#) (NSLA), sixty-six percent of teachers polled reported that it takes them at least three to four weeks to re-teach the previous years' skills at the beginning of a new school year. However, thanks to five engaging programs from across the country, new and creative ways are being implemented to tackle the summer slide. To honor these programs, NSLA is awarding them the coveted 2016 New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award.

Winners of the Excellence Award include:

- **Engaging Creative Minds: The Summer STEAM Institute** in Charleston, South Carolina;
- **The Clarence T.C. Ching PUEO Program at Punahou School** in Honolulu, Hawaii;
- **Wayne State University's Math Corps** in Detroit, Michigan;
- **Consolidated School District of New Britain: Summer Enrichment Experience** in New Britain, Connecticut.

The second annual Founder's Award, which recognizes drop-in or informal program models, will go to **Big Thought's Dallas City of Learning**, one of the nation's leading nonprofit organizations focused on building partnerships that close the opportunity gap through creative out of school programs.

The National Summer Learning Association will honor this year's winners at "Dare to Disrupt! The Pathway to Equity and Excellence in Education" conference on October 24- 26, 2016 in Seattle, Washington. As a special program feature, winners will receive an award designed and produced by the Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program (CPEP), a past award recipient that works to provide a transformative summer learning experience for students where they significantly improve their mathematics, creative problem-solving, and teamwork abilities.

"While it's easy to idealize summer as a time for freedom and relaxation for the 25 million low-income public school children in the U.S., it's often anything but a vacation," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of the National Summer Learning Association. "Thanks to programs such as our 2016 award winners and finalists, we are able to engage kids in exciting, hands-on learning opportunities over the course of the summer so they arrive to school better prepared and ready to learn."

Excellence Award winning programs strive to curb learning losses, particularly affecting low-income students who are disproportionately at risk to lose academic skills during the summer. While most children lose up to two months of math skills during summer breaks, lower-income children also lose two to three months of reading skills without practice. The cumulative effects of this "summer slide" contribute significantly to the achievement gap, yet only one-third of households report having a child enrolled in a summer learning program.

"The New York Life Foundation supports organizations that offer programs to help build stronger academic foundations for students in middle school during the critical after-school hours and summer months," said Marlyn Torres, Senior Program Manager, New York Life Foundation. "We are proud to have our name attached to an award that recognizes summer programs demonstrating excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy social and emotional development for children and youth."

Both annual awards recognize summer programs demonstrating excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low-income children and youth, as measured by the Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment (SLPQA) -- an instrument designed jointly by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and NSLA. Winning programs demonstrate exemplary practices in overall programming, including professional development for program staff and collaboration with community partners in fulfilling shared goals for student and family engagement.

The 2016 finalists also include Montgomery Education Foundation's Brain Forest Summer Learning Academy in Montgomery, Alabama; Latinitas Summer Technology Camps in Austin, Texas, and Generation Teach Summer Academy in Denver, Colorado.

2016 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award Winner Profiles

Engaging Creative Minds: The Summer STEAM Institute

The Summer STEAM Institute aims to prevent summer learning loss through engaging, integrated programming of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum and, by doing so, to close the achievement gap. Throughout the 2016 program, students danced as comets and planets to demonstrate the movement of our solar system; they followed the scientific method as they dyed textiles; they built paper rockets that flew from the potential and kinetic energy of a rubber band. All of these theme-based activities allowed children to learn and explore their intellectual curiosities in ways completely different than a school setting.

The Clarence T.C. Ching PUEO Program at Punahou School

Founded at Punahou School in 2005, the Clarence T.C. Ching PUEO (Partnerships in Unlimited Educational Opportunities) Program identifies middle and high school students with high academic potential, but with low economic opportunity. The program stems from Punahou School's firm belief that educated citizens contribute to community health and strength and that starts with preventing

summer learning loss and narrowing the achievement gap for Hawaii's students to ensure that all children have a chance at higher education. A student's journey through PUEO begins in spring of 5th grade and continues to graduation. The long-term commitment enables students and staff to build deep relationships that help to motivate and sustain them.

Wayne State University's Math Corps

The goal of the Math Corps is simple: to help as many of Detroit's children as possible graduate high school, fully prepared to go to college and completely confident in their own abilities to build good and decent lives for themselves and others. The Camp serves a total of approximately 400 middle and high school kids at two sites on Wayne State's campus. The 2016 program successfully worked to increase student achievement levels in mathematics with test scores rising from pre-camp averages typically around 35% to a post-camp average of at least 85%; develop positive student attitudes and habits with respect to self-esteem, motivation, responsibility, and discipline. Program staff nurtures a culture with students that promotes the values of kindness and integrity, teaches non-violence, and instills a sense of civic responsibility in everyone.

Consolidated School District of New Britain: Summer Enrichment Experience

With a mission to improve the life of youth, the Summer Enrichment Experience (SEE) is a partnership of Community Based Organizations and the School District who are committed to the success of the program and student outcomes. The SEE program instills in students an "attitude of gratitude" that is role modeled by every person who serves students. The three-week program celebrates both academic and social accomplishments through the "Community Meeting" where students introduce themselves, read aloud or discuss posters, maps, and other projects they have completed. The 2016 SEE program provided a systemic culture and spirit that connected children and staff to the theme "Your Place in the Community," and expanded inquiry-based learning opportunities in morning classes.

NSLA Founder's Award Winner

NSLA's Founder's Award winner, **Big Thought's Dallas City of Learning (DCOL)**, mission is to engage every young person in Dallas in summer learning – filling their time with programs, camps and experiences connected to their interests and reinventing the way they spend their summer months. DCOL is part of a groundbreaking national movement that is leading the push to make learning relevant, accessible, and hands-on by bringing together a city's organizations and businesses to prepare young people for success. Dallas City of Learning allows learning to come to life through student-driven exploration of subjects related to their interests – like robotics, dance, poetry, coding, design, and more. Through DCOL, students collect digital badges drawing on the power of today's technology to fuse young people's interests, friendships, and academic achievement through experiences laced with hands-on production, shared purpose, and open networks.

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NSLA's New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award and Founder's Award annually recognize outstanding summer programs or models that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low income young people between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade. Since 2004, in-depth Excellence Awards applications from

more than 500 programs serving nearly 500,000 youth have offered an unparalleled look at the summer learning landscape. In 2015, NSLA introduced the Founder's Award to recognize informal or wraparound summer learning models that can be implemented at scale in many community settings.

About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works in summer learning, develops and delivers capacity-building offerings and convenes and empowers key actors to embrace summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org

About the New York Life Foundation

Inspired by New York Life's tradition of service and humanity, the New York Life Foundation has, since its founding in 1979, provided \$220 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. The Foundation supports programs that benefit young people, particularly in the areas of educational enhancement and childhood bereavement. The Foundation also encourages and facilitates the community involvement of employees and agents of New York Life through its Volunteers for Good program. To learn more and for bereavement resources, please visit newyorklifefoundation.org