

2016
NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION
EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER
LEARNING AWARDS



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From elementary schools to universities, the winners of the 2016 New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award and Founder’s Award, show the power of summer to create brighter futures for America’s children and youth. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) recognizes this year’s winning programs for demonstrating excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low-income students.

Research shows that most children lose up to two months of math skills during summer breaks, and lower-income children also lose two to three months of reading skills without practice. This cumulative loss contributes significantly to the achievement gap, yet only one-third of households report having a child enrolled in a summer learning program. These award-winning programs strive to curb these losses, while employing research-based practices to build 21st Century skills for college and career success.

“The Excellence in Summer Learning Awards helps to improve the quality of summer learning programs for thousands of children. NSLA highlights innovative and high caliber programs that ensure our youth are engaged and continue to grow academically and socially during the summer months,” said Marlyn Torres, senior program officer for the New York Life Foundation.



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, please visit www.newyorklifefoundation.org.

2016 HONOREES

NSLA FOUNDER’S AWARD
NSLA’s Founder’s Award recognizes drop-in and informal program models. **Big Thought’s Dallas City of Learning** captures the spirit of this award with its work to reinvent the way students spend their summer months through programs and experiences that connect to the passions and interests of its students.

EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARDS

**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 by closing the opportunity gap.

**The Clarence T.C. Ching PUEO Program
at Punahou School**
The Clarence T.C. Ching PUEO (Partnerships in Unlimited Educational Opportunities) Program identifies middle and high school students in public schools with academic potential but low economic opportunity and works to ensure a college-bound future for its participants.

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.

**Consolidated School District of New
Britain: Summer Enrichment Experience**
The Coalition of Consolidated School Districts of New Britain’s Summer Enrichment program works to improve the lives of youth through the study of community data to develop and implement strategies, align efforts, and evaluate progress of community engagement.

Dallas City of Learning (DCoL)

Dallas City of Learning (DCoL), a public-private citywide partnership convened by the City of Dallas and Dallas Independent School District and managed by Big Thought, continues to lead a groundbreaking national movement focused on ensuring all students have access to relevant, hands-on summer learning opportunities.

DCoL builds a powerful network of Dallas neighborhood, community, and city partners to create an expansive learning classroom that connects students to viable local and digital resources. This invaluable engagement stems summer learning loss and prepares young people for success by teaching them work force skills and giving them career exploration pathways.

“Summer learning loss is a very serious issue, particularly in underserved communities,” said Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings. “Dallas is very proud to be honored by the National Summer Learning Association, but there is still work to do. We want to keep servicing the children of Dallas and do our part in closing the learning gap.”

According to the new RAND Corporation findings from the National Summer Learning Project – funded by The Wallace Foundation – National Learning Study, elementary students with high levels of attendance in voluntary summer learning programs, experienced benefits in math and reading.


Learning comes to life at DCoL through student-driven exploration of subjects that resonate – robotics, dance, poetry, visual arts, theater, coding, 3D printing, design, and more. Through DCoL, students earned digital badges drawing on the power of today’s technology to fuse friendships and academic achievement via experiences fueled by hands-on production, teamwork, and creative thinking.

But Dallas City of Learning isn’t just mentally stimulating, it’s also nutritious thanks to a partnership with CitySquare supported by a generous grant from the Target Corporation. The “Lunch and Learn” events combine a balanced meal with teaching children about the importance of recycling, giving them a Dallas history lesson, and connecting them with the many educational opportunities available through DCoL.

“What has been done here in Dallas is a remarkable testament to our community’s ability to collaborate,” says Gigi Antoni, President and CEO of Big Thought. “We’ve been committed to stemming summer learning loss to close the opportunity gap and improve the academic and socio-emotional outcomes of our children.”

Since Dallas City of Learning’s pilot year in 2014, the mission has been to bring learning opportunities to the most under-resourced areas, or programmatic deserts, throughout various Dallas neighborhoods. In these areas, students and families lack access to technology, teaching and transportation. DCoL to the rescue via Turn Up! and Pop Up! events that brought laptops, printers, robotics, human instruction and more in an effort to help bridge the opportunity gap that disproportionately affects students in low-income areas. These Turn Up! and Pop Up! events, held at libraries, community centers, schools and museums, connect children to an unlimited array of real world resources.

DCoL is all about offering kids creative learning experiences, work force skills and career exploration pathways during the summer months, a crucial time when inactive and disengaged children can lose about 2 months of reading and math skills. DCoL promotes positive gains in reading, math and social skills, which in turn spark a child’s imagination and desire to learn.



STUDENTS SAW SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES IN MATH AND READING

W/S

WINNING STRATEGIES

- Community system engaging local partners and the city’s organizations and businesses to prepare young people for success
- Innovative use of digital badging as a visual representation of a skill to connect young people to their social lives, interests, communities, talents and their future career
- Break down access barriers –technology and transportation– by directly coordinating summer programs

Consolidated School District of New Britain: Summer Enrichment Experience

In 2011, a group of community based organizations joined with the school district to pilot a small summer program to reach the district’s struggling readers. Since then, the program has grown and been rebranded the Summer Enrichment Experience. This true partnership between the community and school district has resulted in a program in high demand by families. Its unique approach to an extended school day integrates traditional and experiential learning opportunities grounded in Common Core Standards to keep children engaged and coming back year after year.

The Summer Enrichment Experience in New Britain is one strategy of the Coalition for New Britain’s Youth, a citywide group of community stakeholders committed to improving the lives of New Britain’s youth from birth through age 24. The Coalition includes parents, educators, government officials, health and social service agencies and others as members and uses reliable data to develop common strategies, align efforts, and evaluate progress toward achieving their shared vision: ensuring the children and youth of New Britain have the skills they need to be successful in life.

The Summer Enrichment Experience has grown from 100 students in its inaugural year to almost 600 students today. Last year, almost 60 percent of the students suffered no learning loss after participating. Chronic absenteeism has also dropped by 11 percent for students who attend the Summer Enrichment Experience for multiple years.

In the 2011-2012 school year, 22 percent of New Britain K-3 children were chronically absent from school. As a result of a community-wide effort to increase attendance, that number was reduced to 10.68 percent this past year. District-wide, chronic absenteeism has dropped from over 25 percent in 2011 to 16 percent in 2015-16. In addition, five-year-olds entering kindergarten with an early childhood experience increased from 38 percent in 2003 to 80.41 percent in 2015, on par with the Connecticut state average. In addition, New Britain was the only city in Connecticut to demonstrate student improvement on standardized tests in August 2013.



THE PROGRAM HAS GROWN FROM 100 STUDENTS IN ITS INAUGURAL YEAR TO ALMOST 600 STUDENTS TODAY.

60 PERCENT OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCED NO SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

WINNING STRATEGIES

- Summer Enrichment Experience has partnered with an extensive network of strategic partners that share the same “kids first” mentality
- The school district partners with community-based organizations to amplify the effect of the program on school-aged children in a city
- The Summer Enrichment Experience is a data-driven program that garners positive results for participants

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

Partnerships in Unlimited Educational Opportunities (PUEO) was founded at Punahou School in Hawai’i in 2005 in collaboration with the Hawai’i State Department of Education, and reflects Punahou President Dr. James Scott’s commitment to the public purpose of private schools which have a role to play in helping public school students realize their college goals. PUEO, meaning ‘owl’ in Hawaiian, aims to identify public middle and high school students, grades 6–12, in the middle 60 percent, with academic potential, but low economic opportunity, and motivate them to develop the skills and confidence that will enable them to excel in school, attain their college aspirations and contribute to Hawai’i’s future.

PUEO’s stability over the past 12 years, is due in part to very generous support from the program’s namesake, the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation, along with founding and sustaining grants from other foundations and individuals. PUEO began with just 40 students from three public school districts and now serves more than 300 students in grades 6-12 from all over Hawai’i and has had an important impact on graduation and college acceptance rates for those students.

During students’ first two years in the PUEO program, they can be found in highly interactive summer classes which have them building bottle rockets and operating flight simulators, diving to study marine life or learning magic tricks to present to audiences of their peers. Third year classes focus on skills development with reading, writing and math, followed by four summers of courses for Department of Education (DOE) credits which they can then use toward graduation from high school.

These DOE credits afford students more academic freedom during the school year to explore their intellectual curiosity and enter elective courses or Advanced Placement classes, which in turn allow them to improve their placement in college. In addition to learning, PUEO participants also visit college campuses in Hawai’i, and have access to PUEO college counselors who meet with them throughout their senior year, allowing for more individualized attention in the college application process.



84 PERCENT OF PUEO GRADUATES GO ON TO COLLEGE

Through this seven-year program – students typically enter in 6th grade and leave upon graduation from high school – students are immersed in educational summer school courses, small group mentoring classes and group activities throughout the school year and see a 99 percent high school graduation rate as compared to an 80 percent national rate and an 82 percent rate for Hawai’i. Moreover, 84 percent of PUEO graduates go on to college as compared to a state average of 63 percent for Hawai’i’s Department of Education students.

This remarkable level of success comes from the program’s design which ushers students through their formative middle and high school years, engaging them with interactive summer classes in basic engineering, marine biology, Hawaiian culture and even magic, coupled with group activities throughout the traditional academic year.

“The PUEO Program at Punahou School is honored to have been selected by the National Summer Learning Association as a recipient of its yearly Excellence Awards,” said Dr. James Scott, President of Punahou School. “It is a testament to the work the program and students have done and a tribute to all those the Program has helped to achieve their dreams and aspirations.”

While the program is proud of the students’ high school graduation and college acceptance rates, it is equally proud of the strong sense of community it fosters among its participants. Comprised of more than 300 children from nearly 80 different schools across Hawai’i, the program creates bonds between students that would have never formed had they not been in PUEO. As they graduate and go off across the country to college, they are always bound by this sense of ‘ohana (family) and the Hawaiian culture imbued in them by PUEO.

WINNING STRATEGIES

- Sense of community forged among diverse group of students that supports them throughout life
- Seven years of summer immersion and year-round programming that usher students through the formative years of middle and high school
- Belief in the power of partnerships between private and public schools to help students achieve their goals

The Wayne State University Math Corps

The Wayne State University (WSU) Math Corps in Detroit began as a humanitarian effort on the part of faculty and college students in 1992 to provide children in Detroit with the kinds of educational and lifetime opportunities that all kids deserve.

For more than 100,000 children in Detroit, the promise of a better life through a good education is oftentimes only a dream. For many of these children, a typical school day consists of having to walk through a metal detector just to enter a failing school. Little is expected of these students and even less is provided. Today, the Math Corps provides a powerful mathematics enrichment and mentoring program built around a six-week summer camp for Detroit public school students, with the goal of helping as many students as possible graduate high school, fully prepared to go on to college and confident in their abilities to pursue their dreams – and help others do the same. The Math Corps stands on the belief that every child has a unique and special greatness within them, and that with hard work and the support of a caring community, that greatness can be realized.



TEST SCORES TYPICALLY RISE FROM 25% TO 85% IN 6 WEEKS

The camp serves approximately 400 middle and high school students at two sites on WSU's campus. The students are broken into teams, each with ten middle school and five to seven high school students (paid as teaching and program assistants) and one college student who heads the group. The college and high school students, most of whom are program alumni, serve as both teachers and role models for the younger students.

The Math Corps uses its own revolutionary curriculum that allows a large amount of material to be taught in a short amount of time – and by non-professionals. The Math Corps classes for both middle and high school participants provide the opportunity to learn basic skills, while engaging in advanced mathematical thinking. Students enjoy activities not traditionally found in a regular classroom such as robotics, art, chess, and juggling. In addition to instruction in math, and more importantly, the Math Corps focuses on broader social and emotional issues and strives to teach values like kindness, integrity, and civic responsibility. The program works to care for and support students in the moment, while preparing them for their futures by developing positive attitudes and habits related to self-esteem, motivation, and responsibility.

Over the course of its 25-year history, the Math Corps has seen consistent positive results year after year. The academic needs of the students are assessed by a diagnostic exam given before the start of camp and daily monitoring throughout. In summer 2015, for instance, the seventh grade average pre-camp test score was 30 percent and the post-test score improved to 89 percent. Eighth graders averaged a pre-test score of 17 percent and post-test scores jumped to 82 percent; ninth graders averaged a 32 percent pre-test score and an 80 percent post-test score. Additionally, the camp's seniors posted an ACT math average score of over 20.

The program has consistently seen changes in the social and ethical thinking of its participants. Students acquire a set of linguistic and social habits centered on the concept of greatness that facilitate academic and personal success and allow them to cope effectively with challenges and obstacles. They also gain a set of mathematical and non-mathematical practices and ways of communicating that help construct a long-standing and powerful identity with the program.

Since its inception, the Math Corps has worked to provide Detroit's children with the educational and social opportunities they deserve. It is beyond simply a program – it provides kids with the much-needed support they need to believe in themselves and their dreams.

W/S WINNING STRATEGIES

Everything begins with loving every child in the program – placing students first and always wanting all good things for them – while believing in the greatness within each one

Teach kids to “be yourself,” provide them with a second “family” and immerse them in a culture that promotes kindness, integrity, and achievement

Empower students with the gift of mathematics, through a revolutionary curriculum

The Summer STEAM Institute

Picture yourself in the backseat of your mom’s or dad’s car, pulling up to your local college campus-based summer camp. As you open the car door, you are greeted by music, a bubble machine, hula hoops, games, and activities, as well as staff and administrators personally greeting you as you step onto the sidewalk. You quickly realize that this is not your average summer camp.

In fact, the Summer STEAM Institute (SSI), presented by Engaging Creative Minds (ECM) in Charleston, SC, is unique. An outgrowth of ECM's in-school program providing arts integrated, hands-on classroom experience, the Institute is designed to inspire students to become imaginative, adaptable, and productive adults, resulting in stronger communities and a more capable South Carolina workforce.

The Institute – staffed by future teachers, teaching artists, and STEM professionals, as well as high school students who serve as junior counselors to earn community service hours – runs for six weeks during the summer and includes six classes each day: theatre, music, visual art, dance, athletics and a STEM block. Each week has a STEM theme (chemistry, physics, computer science, etc.) that the staff create collaboratively and in a multi-disciplinary, integrated manner. For example, students dance as comets and planets to demonstrate the movement of the solar system. They follow the scientific method as they dye textiles in plant-based dyes like indigo.

One theme in 2015 was Rhythm, Robots, and RAM (Computer Science), which was brought to wonderful reality as the students built SeaPerches – underwater ROVs – and then drove them in a pool. In dance, students experimented with movements inspired by coding. In theatre, they crafted characters and wrote scripts to demonstrate what would happen if robots developed feelings and intelligence. In visual arts, they made robotics-influenced puppets out of recycled materials. In another class, they built paper rockets that flew from the potential and kinetic energy of a rubber band, and then composed music to accompany videos of the rocket flights.

All of these themed based activities culminate in a weekly showcase that students perform for their parents and other invited guests, giving them enormous pride in their work. They also create green products based on the themes that they then sell at the parent showcase as a fundraiser for the program. And doing all this on a college campus (The Citadel and the College of Charleston) adds to the feelings of prestige and pride.



63 PERCENT OF STUDENTS SHOWED NO SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

The results are impressive. In the 2014 school year, 63 percent of students showed no summer learning loss based on their MAP standardized test scores, per the Charleston County School District report.

Moreover, according to the students surveyed who attended all six weeks of the program, 87 percent reported that the activities helped them learn, nearly 10 percent more than activities they do in school. Nearly 85 percent said the SSI activities were fun and interesting, about 30 percent more than activities at school. Only 3.2 percent reported they were bored at SSI, 27 percent less than at school.

And three-quarters said they looked forward to attending SSI every day, about 12 percent more than at school.

The program's profound impact extends beyond the students to the teachers. As counselor Lindsay Perry so succinctly notes: “This experience at Summer STEAM has really taught me the importance of myself as a role model, and how when you become engaged and interested in what the students are learning, then they are much more interested themselves...Arts integration is a really great way to make somewhat disinterested concepts come to life and be really intriguing for kids.”

W/S WINNING STRATEGIES

Six weeks of engaging classes covering theatre, music, visual art, dance and a STEM block, all staffed by future teachers, teaching artists, and STEM professionals

Integrated, hands-on classroom experience designed to inspire students to become imaginative, adaptable, and productive adults, resulting in stronger communities and a more diverse workforce

Weekly showcases of the information learned that week in which the students perform for their parents and other invited guests, giving them enormous pride in their work

ABOUT THE NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARDS

The New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award and Founder's Award recognize outstanding summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low-income children and youth between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade.

Since 2004, the Excellence in Summer Learning Award program has been a critical strategy of the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to support the growth and visibility of high-quality summer learning programs. Over time, it has matured into a program with far-reaching implications for improving the quality and impact of the summer learning field as a whole.

In 2015, NSLA introduced the Founder's Award to further expand its reach and better document outstanding practices and unique informal or drop-in models for summer learning in the field. The awards overall provide a growing knowledge base that NSLA uses to educate policymakers, funders, and the public on best practices and standards of quality for summer learning. With in-depth applications from more than 500 programs serving more than 500,000 youth, the Excellence Awards recognition offers an unparalleled look at the summer learning landscape.

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, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.



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