



For Immediate Release
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National Summer Learning Association Accepting Applications for 2018 New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Awards

Summer Learning Programs around the U.S. vie for coveted honor, acknowledging their unparalleled work helping a half-million children have meaningful summers

Baltimore, MD (October 20, 2017) – [The National Summer Learning Association](#) (NSLA) is seeking applications from youth-serving organizations nationwide for the 2018 New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Awards. Candidates for the Excellence Award are outstanding summer programs that keep elementary and secondary school students learning, safe and healthy during the critical summer months. They show strong outcomes in helping students cement the skills they have learned during the academic school year through creative curricula, unique programming and effective family engagement strategies.

The winning programs are available to children in K through 12th grade and offer myriad learning opportunities through literacy, the arts, STEM, sports or other creative enrichment models. NSLA will announce winners during National Summer Learning Day celebrations in July 2018 and the winners will receive a monetary award - up to \$10,000 - from the New York Life Foundation. Previous winners and more details are available [here](#). The deadline to apply is Thursday, December 21.

The summer months are difficult for millions of children and youth who lose access to enrichment opportunities, free and reduced school meals and caring mentors once the academic year is over. Many children can lose up to two months of progress in math during summer break; a phenomenon known as the "summer slide." Moreover, these learning losses are especially acute for low-income youth whose reading and math achievements are often compromised.

"It is imperative to make sure students are learning during the critical summer months. The Excellence Awards spotlight exemplary programs that use creative methods to set kids up for a successful school year and a successful future," said Matthew Boulay, Founder and CEO of the National Summer Learning Association. "The programs NSLA selects and honors have distinguished records in cultivating children's intellectual curiosity and providing a model for other educators to emulate in their quest to offer meaningful engagement."

"There is no greater investment than that in students and their futures," said Marlyn Torres, Corporate Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Senior Program Officer, New York Life Foundation. "The Excellence in Summer Learning Awards find summer programs that set the standard for quality education and help thousands of children across the nation keep pace with their peers, academically and socially."

There is an expanding body of research that shows summer learning and after-school programs help to level the playing field. They support the most underserved students in communities across the country and offer exposure to organized sports, the arts as well as STEM opportunities to minorities and girls, all while reversing the summer learning slide that plagues so many students. A seminal research [study](#) from RAND Corporation/Wallace Foundation found students who spend more than 20 consecutive days in free, voluntary summer learning programs experience educationally meaningful benefits in math and reading.

Education experts will measure programs against the Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment, developed in partnership with NSLA and the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. NSLA staff, in addition to education and summer learning experts in the field, review applications, conduct interviews and site visits with a short list of semi-finalists.

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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. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.