

2019  
NATIONAL  
SUMMER LEARNING  
AWARDS



national summer  
learning association

# 2019 SUMMER LEARNING AWARDS

The 2019 Summer Learning Awards honor programs that provide high-quality summer learning opportunities to children and youth in traditional and non-traditional settings. This year, the National Summer Learning Association named four exceptional summer programs the winners of two coveted national awards: the 2019 New York Life Foundation's Excellence in Summer Learning Award and the inaugural Lands' End Love Learning Award.

## About the New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Awards

The New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award recognizes 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. Defined by its rigorous application and selection process, this award has recognized enrollment-based programs employing staff who work directly with youth since 2005.

"We congratulate the winners of the New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award. Out-of-School Time programs are critical to providing learning opportunities to help prevent summer learning loss. These award-winning programs exemplify the best in high-quality and innovative programming that help children realize their full potential both academically and socially," said Marlyn Torres, senior program officer at New York Life Foundation.

## About the Lands' End Love Learning Award

2019 marks the inaugural year for the Lands' End Love Learning Award, which aims to shine a spotlight on quality programs that bring learning to life in informal learning spaces and support families in meaningful ways. The award honors a summer program with an exceptional focus on environmental stewardship, STEM/STEAM (science, technology, engineering, math, arts).

"We are thrilled to be supporting the National Summer Learning Association and couldn't be more pleased that the Lands' End Love Learning award honoree is the Thompson Island Outward Bound program in Boston. As a company who prides itself on our commitment to kids and education, we are excited to continue to support families beyond the academic school year," said Matt Trainor, Senior Vice President, Brand Creative, Lands' End.



NEW YORK LIFE  
FOUNDATION



## 2019 HONOREES

### EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARD

Andy Roddick Foundation  
*Austin, Texas*

ESLAsC Reads Across National Parks  
*Columbus, Ohio*

MERIT Health Leadership Academy  
*Baltimore, Maryland*

### LANDS' END LOVE LEARNING AWARD

Summer Connections | Thompson Island  
Outward Bound Education Program  
*Boston, Massachusetts*



# Andy Roddick Foundation (ARF)

Austin, Texas

## 2019 EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARD

This summer program thoughtfully integrates captivating themes across its academic and enrichment activities like a superhero summer theme overlaying educational lessons on bats and echolocation. The program encourages respectful conversation and learning, and encourages deep family engagement activities to keep children learning when they are back home.

Relationships are the cornerstone of ARF's values. During the program, staff members maintain low group ratios so youth have the opportunity to connect with a caring adult. They personally connect with every child, every day and each week, and send home notes to parents highlighting moments where they have seen youth shine.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

During the summer of 2018, the father of a 4th grade girl was deported. She felt down and struggled with her studies at the end of the school year. The summer program helped her blossom. She began smiling and having fun. During writing activities in the program, she wrote poetry to and about her dad, which she said made her feel connected to him. By the end of the program, her mother expressed how much her daughter loved the program and how much it helped her.



### WINNING STRATEGY: PROGRAM RESULTS

High-quality programs use two or more standardized methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data as evidence of its impact on youth. By using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, site directors and staff can ensure that they have rich and varied data to plan for improvement.

### SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS (2018)

256

YOUTH SERVED  
AT 2 SITES

1:12

STAFF-TO-  
YOUTH RATIO

232

SUMMER  
PROGRAM HOURS

205

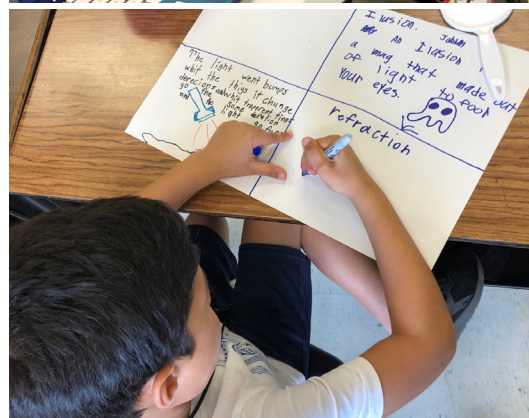
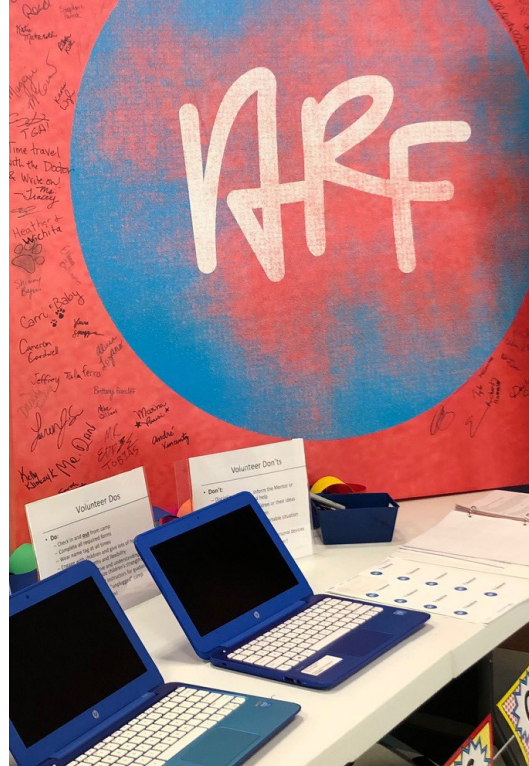
AVERAGE DAILY  
ATTENDANCE

97%

OF STUDENTS SAID THEY LEARNED NEW  
THINGS IN THE PROGRAM

91%

OF GUARDIANS FELT THEIR CHILD WAS  
READY FOR THE NEXT GRADE



Photos courtesy of the Andy Roddick Foundation

# ESLAsC Reads Across National Parks | Columbus State Community College-ESL Afterschool Communities

Columbus, Ohio

## 2019 EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARD

Columbus State Community College has operated year-round out-of-school programs for Immigrant and Refugee (I/R) students since 2004. The programs initially ran through the College's Language Institute in response to the request of parents attending Basic English courses. The ESL Afterschool Communities (ESLAsC) program was developed over several years in response to this request. The program has a long history of addressing the educational and cultural integration needs of Columbus' growing I/R population.

ESLAsC focuses on fluency by offering daily reading, and exposing students to a wide variety of genres. Students read for 20 minutes every day followed by a comprehension activity. Students in ESLAsC's summer program receive 45 minutes of teacher literacy instruction three times a week, as children within I/R families can face language and cultural barriers to learning. ESLAsC is a bridge from school to home for families, strengthening the connection between the two while addressing the community's needs.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

One of the program's goals is to maintain or increase student's reading levels. During a final assessment, a student asked to read a level above his current benchmark. Having arrived in the U.S. three years prior, the student had experienced difficulty with reading on his grade level. ESLAsC's staff supported him in challenging himself. Upon hearing that he passed the higher level, he immediately said, "I'm only one level away from my grade level!" His unexpected achievement was a huge breakthrough for him.



### WINNING STRATEGY: UNIQUE PROGRAM CULTURE

A positive program culture encourages a sense of belonging. This happens when youth and staff frequently refer to the programs values and intentionally weave them into activities and behavior. A strong, positive culture that's unique to the program can make summer fun and help improve attendance and retention.

### SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS (2018)

56

YOUTH SERVED  
AT 3 SITES

1:5

STAFF-TO-  
YOUTH RATIO

42

SUMMER  
PROGRAM HOURS

47

AVERAGE DAILY  
ATTENDANCE

98%

OF STUDENTS MAINTAINED OR  
INCREASED THEIR READING LEVELS  
BASED ON FOUNTAS & PINNELL  
ASSESSMENTS

89%

OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS READ 180  
MINUTES OVER THE THREE-WEEK SUMMER  
PROGRAM (RESULTS EXCEEDED PROGRAM  
GOAL OF 80% FOR BOTH OBJECTIVES)



Photo courtesy of ESLAsC Reads Across National Parks



# MERIT Health Leadership Academy | Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens (MERIT)

Baltimore, Maryland

## 2019 EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARD

MERIT's razor-sharp focus on supporting high school students interested in careers in health and its rich partnership with John Hopkins School of Medicine and School of Nursing set a standard in summer STEM programming. Students in the program work in paid hospital and lab internships take advanced classes; receive college, and career guidance. With its continued nurturing of a diverse group of students, the program stays true to its mission of reducing health disparities by changing the face of health care and making the profession more inclusive and representative.

A holistic model that promotes academic, professional, and personal growth complements the MERIT summer program. MERIT is changing the face of health care one scholar at a time. By providing long-term mentorship, rigorous academic support, and career opportunities to students underrepresented in medicine, MERIT is increasing diversity among the next generation of health leaders.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

For MERIT scholars, nothing compares to the unique, even life-changing, experience of shadowing health professionals in the field. From discovering a goal of being a cardiac surgeon, to admiring the skills of emergency services responders, or witnessing the miracle of birth during a rotation in the gynecology and obstetrics department, clinical internships provide many students with experiences they never forget.

The story of one scholar's experience illustrates the profound impact of these opportunities. As she entered an addiction clinic for her internship, Alicia suddenly realized she had been there before. Alicia was in the same clinic she had visited as a child while her mother was battling drug dependency. Working with the very same doctor that treated her mother, Alicia was able to interact with patients struggling with a disease she knew all too well. Fueled with a new passion, Alicia used MERIT's help to improve her SAT scores by an incredible 340 points and earn a full-ride scholarship to Howard University. She currently has a 3.5 GPA and dreams of becoming a pediatrician.



Photo courtesy of MERIT Health Leadership Academy

# 96%

OF SCHOLARS AGREED THAT BECAUSE OF THE SUMMER ACADEMY, "I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE"



### WINNING STRATEGY: ENGAGED LEARNING

Engaged learning allows youth to transfer and apply learning in different contexts. Learning environments that are supportive, interactive, and engaging promote interests, challenge youth, and create belonging associated with higher levels of youth engagement.

# 91%

AGREED "I AM MORE COMMITTED TO WORKING IN A CAREER THAT HELPS TO ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES"

### SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS (2018)

# 84

YOUTH SERVED  
AT 3 SITES

# 1:4

STAFF-TO-  
YOUTH RATIO

# 203

SUMMER  
PROGRAM HOURS

# 79

AVERAGE DAILY  
ATTENDANCE

# Summer Connections | Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Program

Boston, Massachusetts

## 2019 LANDS' END LOVE LEARNING AWARD HONOREE

This year's inaugural Land's End Love Learning summer award winner brings learning to life on a spectacular 204-acre island classroom in the Boston Harbor. The Summer Connections curriculum for middle-schoolers combines hands-on science (such as studying native species and climate change) with the best of Outward Bound's approach to teamwork and resilience (as when the students work together to climb a 50-foot alpine tower). The Island is just one mile from downtown Boston by ferry, yet a world away for urban students looking to expand their horizons. In order to close opportunity and achievement gaps, lessons from the summer programming inform the Island's year-round partnership with the Boston Public Schools. Summer Connections runs for 5 weeks and each is themed around one of the Outward Bound Pillars (Physical Fitness, Self-Reliance, Craftsmanship, Service, and Compassion).

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

At the start of the program, one scholar named Jaiden found himself grappling with perseverance and displaying compassion for peers. After many conversations and support from staff, he made huge gains and was able to use tools to cope with difficult emotions when he was upset. When two of his peers were engaged in a tense situation, Jaiden asked to mentor one of them using his newfound skills. Jaiden conveyed the "ripple effect" of his friend's actions and helped his friend understand the personal and wide-ranging impact of his choices. Jaiden then facilitated a conflict resolution using techniques taught by the program to resolve the situation.



### WINNING STRATEGY: ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

Creating or synthesizing information enables youth to think "outside the box" and expand their knowledge or skills in new ways. This includes when they come up with a plan, design a project, or create an ending to a story. Encouraging curiosity and being open to new ideas, are important skills in all fields.

### SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS (2018)

72

YOUTH SERVED  
AT 1 SITE

3:16

STAFF-TO-  
YOUTH RATIO

216

SUMMER  
PROGRAM HOURS

58

AVERAGE DAILY  
ATTENDANCE



Photos courtesy of Summer Connections

# IS A SUMMER LEARNING AWARD IN YOUR FUTURE?

**Apply for the 2020  
Summer Learning Awards Today!**

**Submission Deadline:** December 4, 2020



Each year, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) recognizes the outstanding work done during the summer months on behalf of our nation's youth. Candidates for the Summer Learning Awards are exceptional summer programs, models, and systems that keep children and youth 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.

Applications for the awards are scored based on concepts from the Summer Learning Program Quality Assessment, developed by NSLA in partnership with the David P. 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.

► Visit <https://www.summerlearning.org/summer-learning-awards/> to learn more.

*NSLA's national media partner, Clear Channel Outdoor Americas, donated local billboards to celebrate this year's winners.*

## Quality Makes for Excellence

At the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), we believe children deserve an amazing summer filled with fun and engaging learning opportunities through quality summer programs that help them thrive year-round.

Years of research has shown us that participation in high-quality summer learning programs can improve children's reading and math skills, engagement in school, motivation, and relationships with adults and peers. Here are several indicators which NSLA uses to identify high-quality programs that display excellence in summer learning.

### AWARD-WINNING PROGRAMS:

- Provide a SAFE and supportive environment
- Incorporate a MINDFUL approach that values different learning styles and nurtures the social, emotional development of children
- Find ways to make sure children and families feel INCLUDED
- Incorporate LEARNING opportunities for children
- Use strategies to keep children meaningfully ENGAGED

Courtesy of Aim High, San Francisco, California – 2018 Summer Learning Award winner.





#### 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 nearly \$280 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 and Grief-Sensitive Schools Initiative. To learn more, please visit [www.newyorklifefoundation.org](http://www.newyorklifefoundation.org).



NEW YORK LIFE  
FOUNDATION

#### ABOUT LANDS' END

Lands' End is an American lifestyle brand with a passion for quality, legendary service & real value. Founded in 1963, Lands' End is based in Dodgeville, Wisconsin and specializes in casual clothing, luggage, and home furnishings.

Lands' End employees passionately support giving back to the community, and the company focuses on the programs and issues that Lands' End employees care about most. The company partners with local and national not-for-profit organizations to raise awareness of important issues, do some collective good and help people in need. Many of these relationships go back for many years, reflecting the company employees' deep commitment to challenges like education, the environment, homelessness and more.



#### 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. Driving NSLA's work is the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.



national summer  
learning association



national summer  
learning association

[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

National Summer Learning Association | 575 South Charles Street, Suite 310 | Baltimore, MD 21201

© 2019 National Summer Learning Association