We want to wish everyone in our LEAP family a happy holiday season.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” As I think about this past year and the season upon us, I am moved deeply by the young college and high school students at LEAP who give so much to the children of our great city.

I get great joy at this time of year talking to young people who came up through LEAP and are now returning to New Haven from their colleges. I get to see children with huge smiles who are excited about presents from Santa (and yes, most of our kids are firmly on “team Santa exists”).

I want to share all of these moments of happiness with all of you because they are the result of the thousands of donors, volunteers, and friends who make LEAP possible.

My delight comes from knowing that LEAP has broad support from our wonderful board, local elected officials, school principals, community members and children’s parents who believe in our work and make it possible.

Dr. King also said that “Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

There is no question that at LEAP we have a full heart, a heck of a lot of soul, and enough love to share.

So please know how much we love all that you do for LEAP throughout the year. And have a wonderful New Year!

Henry Fernandez, Executive Director
LEAP is so grateful to individual donors and foundations who have made multi-year gift commitments (see current list below). Making a pledge to donate to LEAP in the coming years means that we can plan for the future, which has become more difficult with the decrease in predictable state funding. If you would like to make a multi-year pledge to LEAP to help secure the future of children in our community, please contact Rachel Kline Brown, Director of Development, at RKlineBrown@leapforkids.org or call (203) 773-0770.

The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven • George A. & Grace L. Long Foundation • Mr. Ben Ledbetter & Ms. Deborah Freedman • Liberty Bank Foundation • Mr. Henry D. Lord • New York Life Foundation • Pincus Family Foundation • The Ranis Family • Seedlings Foundation • Ms. Carol L. Sirot • Mr. & Mrs. Ben and Audrey Solnit • Mr. & Mrs. Stephen and Rachel Wizner

There are many ways to make a tax-deductible donation. You can send a check to our main LEAP office, call and give information over the phone to a member of our Development Team, or donate online. LEAP also accepts donations of appreciated securities and distributions from your IRA or other retirement accounts.

Multi-Year Commitments, the Gifts That Keep On Giving!

LITs on the Water Thanks to Canal Dock Boathouse

“It’s cold!”
That was Desteney’s first thought when she climbed aboard a canoe at the Canal Dock Boathouse for the first time. But soon she surprised herself by having fun rowing around the New Haven harbor.

Desteney was one of four LITs (13-15 year olds) and two counselors to participate in LEAP’s new partnership with Canal Dock this fall. John Pescatore, President of Canal Dock, coached LEAPers in the basics of kayaking and team rowing.

The LITs said they learned teamwork and communication. To navigate the choppy waters of New Haven in a six-person team, they had to match up the length and timing of each individual stroke, so the boat could turn and move as one body.

“Even though Mo almost made us fall off the boat once,” Desteney joked about her fellow LIT Monsia, “I had a great time.” Desteney said she would love to go rowing again—hopefully when the weather is warmer.
Buy a book for a LEAP child at Atticus Bookstore Café in New Haven to donate to a child in LEAP’s free after-school and summer program. With your help, every kid at LEAP will get new, exciting books to fall in love with and take home. Atticus will give all the books you donate to children at LEAP to build their home libraries!

Because of your donation, LEAP kids will read an average of 17 books a year and keep 5 books for their home library. LEAP serves over 1000 youth from low-income neighborhoods in New Haven.

Stop by Atticus Bookstore Café this winter and while you search for the perfect book to curl up with by the fire, be sure to get a book for a LEAPer, too!

LEAP’s Annual Halloween Festival and Thankful Dinner

LEAPers had a blast this holiday season! On October 25th, LEAP hosted our annual Halloween Festival at the LEAP Community Center. About 300 local children and families joined in on the games, music, face painting, costumes, fortune telling, haunted house, and trick-or-treating for candy.

Following, on November 26th LEAP hosted our Thankful Dinner at James Hillhouse High School. 400 LEAP children and youth attended the dinner, featuring a music performance, speeches by LEAP students, and of course plenty of Thanksgiving food for everyone. Eight-year-old Tiana expressed her gratitude for LEAP: “I’m thankful because LEAP makes me feel safe and happy. I love being in LEAP because of all the amazing counselors.”

Speaking of gratitude, we couldn’t have hosted the Thankful Dinner alone! Thank you to our wonderful volunteers and supporters, including Noble Wealth Advisors, Wells Fargo, Dr. Cindy Mann, Albertus Magnus College, LEAP parents, and university students. Special thanks to the Hometown Foundation, which donated 50 frozen turkeys for LEAP families and counselors to take home.

Thank you to all our kind neighbors and candy donors who helped give our kids a safe, fun, and spooky Halloween experience!
Thanks to our LEAP Year Event Sponsors!

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