



LEAP Newsletter

Spring 2017

Donate Today at www.leapforkids.org



LEAP is fast approaching our 25th summer program and we expect it to be one of our best ever. Our curriculum and training team is working hard to expand and improve our summer literacy effort. For the first time, 50 summer AmeriCorps counselors will not only impact children's literacy in the classroom, but also will work with parents to expand home libraries.

With the turmoil in our country and world right now, LEAP is an important safe, tolerant and welcoming space. Over 550 children will take part in LEAP's summer program this year and they will do so knowing that there is a community of college and high school student counselors, LEAP staff, neighborhood partners, volunteers and donors who care deeply about their future and their place in America.

If you want to get a sense for just what kind of community that you and everyone involved in LEAP helps build every day, I recommend taking a look at a recent 2 minute video available on our website. The video provides an op-

portunity for young adults who came through LEAP to talk with teenagers who are in LEAP now. You can watch the video here: www.leapforkids.org/LIT.

While the stability of LEAP is important, we must also continue to innovate. That is why we are very proud to have just received a Google RISE award for our work with children and computer science. LEAP was one of just 29 winners around the world and 11 in the United States. We are using the award to support a new robotics program as well as our computer coding classes, also funded by a grant from the Community Fund for Women and Girls. Similarly, this summer marks the second year of our partnership with the Peabody Museum, allowing for 200 children to experience an innovative science curriculum both in the classroom and on overnight camping trips.

As always, please know that we could not do all of this without your support!

Henry Fernandez
Executive Director

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Congratulations To Neubert, Pepe & Monteith P.C. Scholarship Recipients

Each year, the New Haven-based law firm, Neubert, Pepe & Monteith P.C., provides a generous \$2,500 college scholarship to four LEAP high school seniors. Following a rigorous application process, these four talented young students were chosen. We wish them well as they begin their college careers!



Devin Torres
Amistad High



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18th Annual Julia's Run Benefits LEAP



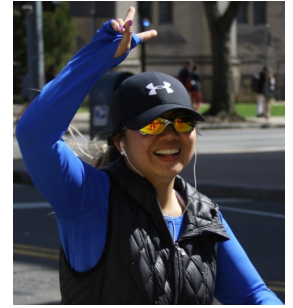
Nearly 250 runners took part in this year's Julia's Run for Children on Sunday, April 9th. It was a beautiful day to celebrate the life of Yale student Julia Rusinek who

passed away in 1999 just before her senior year from an undetected heart condition. She was an avid runner and writer who loved working with kids. To honor Julia's memory, the Rusinek family donated \$14,000 in proceeds to LEAP from this year's run, with a grand total of almost \$214,000 donated over the past 18 years!

The runners finished the 0.7 mile children's fun run

and a 4-mile course in great form! Top place finishers in the children's run were 11-year-old Assata Dawson – first place; 11-year-old Ariella Sobel – second place; and Aidan O'Driscoll – third place. Six-year-old Alexandra Rouwenhorst ran the children's run for the fourth year in a row!

Many thanks to all of our sponsors and donors listed below along with JB Sports and volunteers from LEAP, Yale University's McDougal Graduate Student Center, University of New Haven's Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority, and Julia Rusinek's family and friends.



Thank you to all those who generously contributed to Julia's Run!

Julia's Run Sponsors: Yale University, Gould Injury Law (888-WIN- FAST), Hands on Moving, Whitney Pediatrics with Dr. Cindy Mann, and Fairhaven Furniture

Raffle prizes were donated by Woodbridge Running Company, Ashley's Ice Cream, Froyoworld, Pamela Hirth Designs, The New Haven Hotel, and Trailblazer/Denali. Food was donated by Yale University's Jonathan Edwards College, Starbucks, Donut Crazy, Trader Joe's, Elm City Market, Edge of the Woods and Stop & Shop Amity.

LEAP's New Summer AmeriCorps Program

LEAP is thrilled to be an AmeriCorps program this summer! In 2016, LEAP received a three year grant from AmeriCorps that will fund 50 AmeriCorps counselors who will expand the literacy work we do over the summer months to continue to address the achievement gap between low-income students of color and their higher-income counterparts.

We have already begun recruiting college student counselors for what we are calling LEAP's Literacy Corps. Counselors will be trained not only in how to implement our literacy curriculum in classrooms but also on how to work with parents to help build home libraries and to get kids reading at home. These approaches are part of our strategy to help stop the "summer slide" in which low income children lose on average 2 to 3 months of literacy skills every summer.



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If you know someone who would make a good AmeriCorps Member and LEAP counselor, please have them visit our website at www.leapforkids.org to get an application and schedule an interview.

LEAP Year Event 2017: A Great Night of Community Learning & Giving!



With 31 dinners, 31 fascinating Guests of Honor, over 60 generous Dinner Hosts, and 460 gracious dinner guests, this year's LEAP Year Event held on February 23, 2017 was a great success. A record breaking number of sponsors – 72 in total – and a generous and dedicated group of participants (many of whom come year after year) helped to raise almost \$150,000 for LEAP programming for children and teens! Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's LEAP Year Event such a successful, interesting and enjoyable evening.

LEAP is proud of our Recent Grants!

USA Swimming Foundation Make a Splash • Henry E. Niles Foundation, Inc. • NewAlliance Foundation • The Curran Foundation • Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation • United Illuminating Company & SCG Company



LEAP Swimmer, Turned Instructor

I took a lifeguarding course during my senior year of high school. When I completed the course, I got an application for LEAP from my high school lifeguard instructor. I remembered learning to swim with LEAP and thought it would be cool to work there. So I interviewed and got the job!

Do you work with a lot of kids who are initially afraid of the water?

Yes, a lot! I'm usually the one who works with those kids because I know how to be patient and gentle, which is what those kids need the most. Some kids have had traumatic experiences with the water, and we need to ease them back into it slowly. I hear a lot of stories of kids who almost drowned.

There's a lot of research that shows that because of a long history of racism and segregation, many black and Latino adults never received adequate swim instruction.

I can see that...we have two girls who were taking LEAP's community swim

lessons and their parents actually started coming here too for our night lessons. They signed up their daughters because they wanted them to learn to swim, and that's when they heard about our adult classes. They were excited because they had no idea how to swim.

Do you get the feeling that kids feel safer in and near the water after taking swim lessons with LEAP?

While I can only speak for the kids I work with, I would say definitely. I know I'm teaching them skills that will keep them safer in the water.

Any final things you want to share about the swim program?

I just want to say that I love that LEAP has a swim program for both LEAP kids and the community. I am so excited to work at a place where anyone can learn to swim!



CALL (203) 773-0770
TO REGISTER FOR
SWIM LESSONS.

We recently sat down with Shanahia Fernandez, a junior at Southern CT State University, and one of LEAP's eight swim instructors. Shanahia first learned to swim with LEAP when she was just six years old. Given her experience swimming and teaching with LEAP, we wanted to hear Shanahia's thoughts on the challenges facing swimmers of color and the importance of LEAP's Aquatics Program in the community.

How did you reconnect with LEAP after taking swim lessons here when you were younger?

Creating A New Haven For Our Children

Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc.

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Save The Date for LEAP's Annual Read-In on the Green July 14, 2017, 10 am to 12 pm



**Show kids that
Reading Matters!
Volunteer to read to
LEAP children on the
New Haven Green!**

**Contact
Ronnetta Holmes
to volunteer:
(203) 773-0770
rholmes@leapforkids.org**