



# LEAP Newsletter

Summer 2017

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At LEAP, we just finished our 26<sup>th</sup> summer program. It was a great summer for kids and counselors. Over 550 children and teens participated, supported by over 110 high school and college student counselors and instructors.

We strengthened our literacy program, adding new books, increasing counselor training and helping families build home libraries by giving each child a dozen age-appropriate books to take home and meeting with parents to discuss reading techniques. Our partnership with AmeriCorps allowed us to provide additional supports to our college student Literacy Corps Members, including an educational award to help pay for college after their service to our children.

This summer we expanded our groundbreaking natural science initiative with the Peabody Museum, doubling the number of children who take part in the classroom, field and camping curriculum. Our computer learning center ran projects in robotics, Python

programming language and website design. And, with advice from the USA Swimming Foundation, we had a trial run of a new community swim team that we hope to continue during the school year.

With all these great activities, the state and federal budgets continue to concern us. We rely on state funding for about 20% of our budget, which is down from 50% just a few years ago. We have worked hard to replace the cuts in state funding with donations from local individuals, foundations and corporations. We are proud that the community has responded so positively to LEAP, but unfortunately, we anticipate that we will need to continue to replace government funding rapidly over the next two years.

That is why your support matters so much. We could not serve so many children in New Haven's neighborhoods, free of charge, without the support of people like you. So, thanks for all you do for LEAP!

Henry Fernandez  
Executive Director

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## **New Summer Activities Were A Big Hit With Our Campers!!**

LEAP partnered with amazing educators, organizations, and volunteers to offer summer enrichment activities including camping, photography, art, yoga, gardening, spoken word, cooking, and these exciting opportunities:



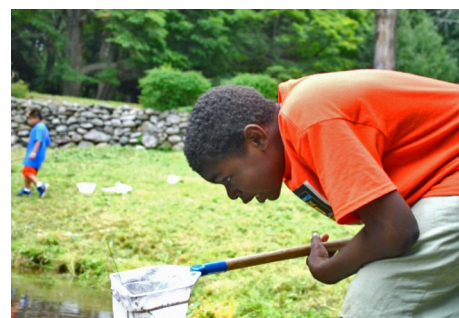
### **Knitting**

Kids had the opportunity to learn to knit from a group of dedicated and talented knitters! Miss Joyce, pictured here, and the other knitting teachers had as much fun teaching as the kids had learning.



### **Sculpting**

Renowned New Haven-based sculptor Susan Clinard worked intensively with our teenage girls to create awe-inspiring sculptures and masks. According to Ms. Clinard, "The girls kicked it!"



### **Experiential Science**

Campers had a blast doing science-related activities through our Outdoor Corps partnership with the Peabody Museum. The Calabresi Farm was an exciting place to camp and explore nature — and learn to love science.



# LEAP's Annual Read-In Was A Great "Read-Indoors" This Summer!



Rain did not dampen spirits for our annual LEAP Read-In, typically held on the New Haven Green but relocated indoors this summer. Campers listened to stories read aloud by a wide range of volunteer readers: elected officials, teachers, businesspeople, librarians, Americorps Vista volunteers, community mem-

bers, and LEAP alumni. The New Haven Public Library's Readmobile was once again on site, along with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra's Instrument Petting Zoo, allowing kids to play a range of musical instruments. Special guest readers included U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Mayor Toni Harp, and State Senators Martin Looney and Gary Winfield.



## Thank you to these donors for supporting LEAP's literacy programs!

- Community Foundation of Greater New Haven • Friends of Kang Yun •
- NewAlliance Foundation's Hi 5 High Impact Literacy Award •

## LEAP's Summer AmeriCorps Program In Action!

LEAP is grateful to our 50 AmeriCorps counselors from local colleges and universities who led LEAP's summer literacy program as our Literacy Corps! Counselors participated in nearly three weeks of training, including topics such as diversity and inclusion, first aid, classroom management, and, of course, literacy. Many counselors expressed their excitement for reading both in their personal lives and in working with LEAPers. Marshall James, a rising senior at Albertus Magnus College, said the training helped his "confidence level and enthusiasm for wanting to teach the kids."

LEAP added some 6,000 new culturally relevant and engaging books to our library, while re-vamping our literacy curriculum. One exciting addition is the graphic novel *March* by Congressman John Lewis and Andrew Aydin. This history of the Civil Rights Movement told in graphic novel format was read by all of LEAP's 11 and 12 year olds.

The AmeriCorps counselors also took their literacy strategies and shared them with children's parents during home visits. In addition, we supported parents in building home libraries by ensuring that LEAP children got to keep many of the books they read over



the summer. Each child got to take home at least 12 new, age-appropriate books to read and re-read after the summer program ended.

LEAP also introduced a new standardized computerized reading assessment, called the "SRI," to determine children's reading levels at the beginning and end of the summer.

Thank you to our wonderful Literacy Corps counselors and to AmeriCorps, The United Way of Greater New Haven, and the Friends of Kang Yun Foundation for providing us with the support to expand our literacy program!



## LEAP's New Swim Team Takes To The Water!



Some LEAP swim team members and coaches.

With support from the USA Swimming Foundation, LEAP ran a seven-week competitive community swim team this summer for children ages 6 to 15. We spent the Spring semester teaching local teenagers to be swim coaches under the guidance of an experienced coach and these young people led our new team six days a week. LEAP's hope is that we will be able to build a year round swim team so that children from New Haven neighborhoods can experience the fun and challenge involved in competitive swimming. We are looking for sponsors and donors who are interested in supporting the development of this team. Congrats to all of the children, parents and coaches who participated.

## Thank You to Our Recent Donors (500+) and Grantors

- Bank of America Foundation • Community Fund for Women & Girls • Eugenie Copp •
- Priscilla & Robert Dannies • Garden Homes Fund • Jack & Jill of America, Inc. • Susan B. Kerley •
- Ethel & Abe Lapides Foundation • Hannah & James Leckman • Roslyn M. & Jerome Meyer •
- Ruth DuPont Lord Charitable Trust & Henry D. Lord • Seymour L. Lustman Memorial Fund • Sara H. Ohly • Key Bank Foundation • Ann Baker Pepe & Greg Pepe • Cyrus M. Quigley Foundation • Sassafras Foundation • TD Charitable Foundation • United Way of Greater New Haven •
- Wells Fargo Foundation •

## It's LEAP's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

In honor of our 25th anniversary, we have done some looking back. We have served over 20,000 kids; trained over 2,000 high school and college students to be counselors and leaders; taught over 2,000 people to swim; and helped children read over 100,000 books and write over 40,000 lines of code!

Thousands of former LEAPers now serve in New Haven and around the country as teachers, school principals, state legislators, firefighters, police officers, philanthropists, social workers, professors, business innovators, and other occupations that began with their time at LEAP. They have served on nonprofit boards, worked for the government and on political campaigns, and run for office. Every day, they make the world a better place and make us proud.

We caught up with Michele Stein, now a contractor for Head Start, to see how she has been doing since her time as a senior counselor in the mid-1990's. She called LEAP a life-changing experience. When she entered college, she wanted to major in anthropology before LEAP helped her realize that she wanted to study psychology and become an educator. She later got her Masters in Education from Harvard, and is now working on a Masters in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell.

She told us, "LEAP taught me the importance of really being a part of the community that you serve. Because of LEAP, when I became a teacher in Brooklyn, I chose to live on the same block as my school."

Michele can credit more than her career choices to LEAP-- she met her husband at LEAP in the summer of 1995 when they were both working as counselors. They now have two children.

Michele said, "I made lifelong friends at LEAP and I still stay in contact via Facebook with several of my LEAP kids. It's nice to see them doing well."



Michele when she was a LEAP Counselor



Michele and her husband, former LEAP counselor Christopher Stein, today

## 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 LEAP Year Dinners & Reception Thursday, February 22, 2018



We hope you can join us for this amazing evening! With over 25 dinners to choose from, you are sure to have a wonderful evening of learning and conversation while supporting LEAP at the same time.

To be a LEAP Year Event Sponsor, please contact Rachel Kline Brown, Director of Development, at (203) 773-0770 or [rklinebrown@leapforkids.org](mailto:rklinebrown@leapforkids.org)