



LEAP Newsletter

Spring 2018

Donate Today: www.leapforkids.org



As we prepare for another summer at LEAP, excitement is high. In September, because of state budget cuts, we had to close our Dwight-Kensington site. But we reached out to donors in our community and raised the \$150,000 to reopen the site this summer. This support

reflects how all of us come together to make LEAP possible.

As a result of this site reopening, 100 additional children will have LEAP this summer and 20 additional college and high school students will be employed as senior and junior counselors. In total, some 550 children and teens will participate in LEAP this summer and about 115 will serve as counselors, junior counselors, life guards and swim instructors. You helped make this happen.

We will continue our commitment to literacy this summer, with children participating in reading and writing activities each morning for the six-week summer program. But we also believe that summer is a time to expand horizons and just have plain old fun. So children will get to camp overnight, learn to swim, join coding, cooking and arts classes, as well as tend vegetables in our garden, dance in our dance studio, and visit museums.

Throughout the summer, we encourage young people to explore New Haven. This is their city and there are so many remarkable opportunities that we work hard to expose them to. But it is only with the support of all of our partners, donors, resource providers and friends like you that we can Create A New Haven For Our Children.

Thank You,

Henry Fernandez, Executive Director

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Elm Shakespeare Company: A Rekindled Resource



Our Leaders in Training (LITs) worked with instructor Sarah Bowles from **Elm Shakespeare Company**, a New Haven-based theater company, to write, develop and perform an anti-violence play. This play drew from themes found in Shakespeare's writing while focusing on issues our youth think about today, including the recent discussions of school shootings. This opportunity helped our LITs expand their creative and intellectual abilities by taking stories they understood and presenting them back to an audience of peers and family members who saw the importance of learning from young people. Their performance was a great success!

HEARST foundations

LEAP is proud to announce a new \$50,000 grant from The William Randolph Hearst Foundation for our Children's and Youth Development Programs.

Marshall Screening with Writer/Attorney Michael Koskoff



Michael Koskoff & Henry Fernandez



LEAP Friends & Counselors



Michael Koskoff & Drew Days

The LEAP community came together on April 12th for a special showing of the film *Marshall* at the New Haven Bow Tie Criterion Cinemas, thanks to the generosity of the theater. Local attorney and screenwriter Michael Koskoff spoke to the group after the film and answered questions from LEAP counselors and friends about the behind-the-scenes creation of the movie. This important movie, starring Chadwick Boseman (*The Black Panther*), Sterling K. Brown (*This is Us*) and Josh Gad (*The Book of Mormon*) among others, tells the story of a young Thurgood Marshall, the crusading lawyer who would become the first African-American Supreme Court Justice in one of his career—defining cases that takes place in CT. Everyone was inspired by the movie and appreciated Michael Koskoff's wonderful insights.

19th Annual Julia's Run Benefits LEAP & Supports Literacy

Julia's Run for Children took place on Sunday, April 15th, a day filled with cool temperatures, but warm spirits. Over 250 runners participated in the 4-mile run and the .7-mile kid's fun run, all to celebrate the life of Yale student Julia Rusinek who passed away in 1999 just before her senior year from an undetected heart condition. Julia's love of running, writing, and working with kids came together in new ways for this year's event, raising over \$17,900 for LEAP. A new Leaders in Training essay contest enabled LEAP's young leaders to write about a challenge that they overcame. 14-year-old Ebriana Eden read her winning essay aloud at the ceremony, discussing her perseverance through the challenges of AP Physics. Our runners were in great form as well this year with Barrios Gilmar the male winner at 22:29, Sarah Merchlewitz the female winner at 30:11, and the fun run winner, Anoa Dawson at 5:03. Congrats and many thanks to all!



Thank you to everyone who generously contributed to Julia's Run!

Julia's Run \$500 Mile Sponsors: Yale University, Gould Injury Law (888-WIN-FAST), Hands on Moving, & Dr. Cindy Mann **Raffle Prize Sponsors:** Escape New Haven, Woodbridge Running Co., Trailblazer, Midori Im & Family, Ashley's Ice Cream, Froyoworld, Trailblazer, Jane Palmieri, Moon Rocks Cookies, Yorkside Pizza & The Rusineks. **Food Sponsors:** Yale University's Jonathan Edwards College, Starbucks Coffee New Haven, Donut Crazy, Trader Joe's of Orange, Elm City Market and Stop & Shop Amity. **Volunteers:** The Coast Guard Academy & LEAP Counselors.

Thank You For Supporting LEAP Year Event 2018!



31 dinners with amazing guests of honor and generous dinner hosts, 71 sponsors, over 450 dinner guests & a fabulous pre-dinner reception at Hopkins raised over \$190,000 at the wonderful LEAP Year Event 2018!

Thank You to Our Recent Grantors

• CHEFA (Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority) • City Missionary Association of New Haven, Inc. • City of New Haven Youth Violence Prevention Grant • Curran Foundation • Frederick A. Deluca Foundation • KeyBank Foundation • Liberty Bank Foundation • Mara W. Breech Foundation • NBC Connecticut/Telemundo Connecticut/NBCUniversal Foundation Project Innovation Grant • NewAlliance Foundation • Lewis G. Schaeneman Jr. Foundation • United Illuminating Company & Southern Connecticut Gas Company • USA Swimming Make a Splash • USTA New England • William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund • William Randolph Hearst Foundation •

LEAP Alum Teaches Planned Parenthood Class

We interviewed Seth Poole, a LEAP alumnus who now works as the Youth Development Specialist and Educator at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. Seth teaches classes on sex education to LEAP's Leaders in Training (LITs) in which they discuss sexual and gender identities, positive relationship habits, and sexual health issues. He talked to us about what first brought him to LEAP and what impact he hopes to have on young people with his work.

How did you first hear about LEAP? My brother was a senior counselor and he was part of the first crew of LEAP employees. I was 16 and I started the summer between my junior and senior year. There really were no other options for teen employment in the city.

Why did you want to get involved with LEAP? In our neighborhood, there were not a lot of father figures. So, young people were always looking for sanctuary and safe places. My house was pretty much a community center; everyone would come over. And I was just used to taking care of my siblings, cousins and little kids when our parents were at work. LEAP gave me the opportunity to do the same thing and get paid to do it. So, LEAP offered an opportunity not only for employment, but also to pay it forward.

Why did you choose to work in sex education? I just saw a lack of sex education growing up and a lot of trauma as a result of unsafe sexual activity or early teen pregnancy.

I thought about how I could have a hand in combating these issues. When the opportunity arose, I realized it would be important to deliver lessons as a Black man in a position that is not traditionally held by men of color.

What would you say was the most impactful part of LEAP for you? It was important for me to have training and professional development available at such a young age to figure out the specific actions I needed to take to achieve personal success. If we give young people the tools that they need in young adulthood, like college prep and understanding credit or debt, then they'll be much better off.



Seth Poole, Planned Parenthood

Creating A New Haven For Our Children

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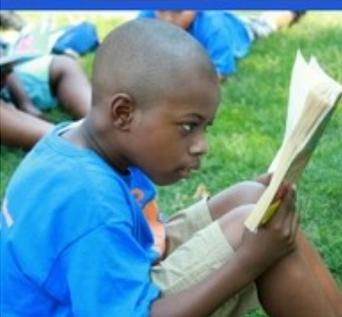
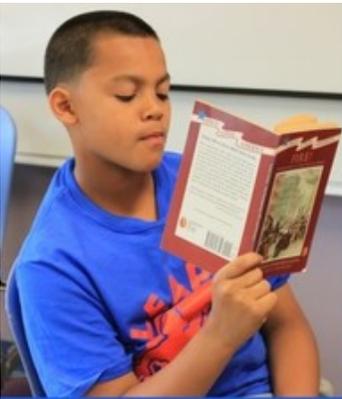


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Save The Date for LEAP's Annual READ-IN on the New Haven Green Friday, July 13, 2018 9:30 to 11:30 am



Help us show our
LEAPers that reading
really matters!

Volunteer to read to LEAP
children on the New Haven
Green and enjoy a wonderful
morning of reading &
community.

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