



SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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Executive Director's Note

I am so excited about our summer program. It feels like we are really back from COVID. Our kids went overnight camping, our teens went to Washington, D.C., we kicked off a robust swim program, and we ran camps in seven New Haven schools.

Of course, there are still pandemic ramifications. We started a new phonics program for 7 and 8-year olds to address the big literacy gap built up over the last three years. And, we added a full time social worker for the first time to address the national mental health crisis that has impacted so many youth.

The centers we manage are doing great. The new Q House has been fully embraced by the community, and we are excited about everything from our basketball leagues to GED classes to

July movie nights attended by hundreds of neighbors. Our 108-year-old Jefferson Street building is showing its age, but we have a \$1.9 million federal grant to renovate it and six architecture firms answered our requests for proposals to design our 2024 renovations. We will be choosing one soon.

As always, none of what LEAP does would be possible without you. We rely on donors, supporters, volunteers, and partners to make LEAP possible. So, please know you did a lot this summer and made so much of a difference in young people's lives. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Henry Fernandez



ConGRADs to Our Counselors



Scholarship Recipients: Tu'prece Kelley, Santos Caro, Josh Tomlinson, Demarley Barrett, Kania Colon, Astou Diallo, Destiny Bennett

Our Youth Development Program offers college resources to support our young people in the pursuit of higher education. This year, we celebrated 24 counselors who graduated from high school, which is a 100% graduation rate (compared to 81% for New Haven Public Schools overall)! We awarded \$13,000 in scholarships to seven counselors to celebrate their commitment to LEAP including the inaugural Annie B. Veale Scholarship, created in memory of our beloved late receptionist.

Astou Dialo, a Jay Bovilsky Scholarship recipient and recent immigrant from Senegal, credits LEAP with helping her to pursue a career in Forensic Science at the University of New Haven. Working at LEAP has helped her become more confident in her communication skills. Dialo also said that LEAP has "helped with English because [she is] an English Learner."



LEAPer & Counselor at Fair Haven South site.



LEAPers on playground at Hill South site.



LEAP's Annual Read-In Shined on Through the Rain

Volunteers share the joys of reading!

On July 14th, almost 800 LEAP campers and 60 volunteers gathered together at our annual Read-In Event. Though rainy weather prevented the event from occurring on the Green as usual, the event was quickly relocated to LEAP's school sites where volunteers were able to share their love of reading with eager students.

They chose from a collection of new books to read to small groups of LEAPers after participating in large group discussions and chants and cheers. Henry Fernandez kicked off the day at the Dixwell site with some remarks to inspire students and volunteers alike. Some of the attendees included Alder Jeanette Morrison, State Rep. Pat Dillon, NHPS Assistant Superintendent Keisha Redd-Hannans, and State Sen. Martin Looney.



LEAP's Outdoors Adventures!

Hiking, camping, and more as LEAPers explore nature

LEAP's Outdoors Adventures expose the children and their counselors to surrounding natural wilderness, which few have experienced before. They explored nature on hikes at Sleeping Giant State Park and overnight tent stays at Putnam State Park. As they got comfortable in the woods, LEAPers learned about the insects and played games like flashlight tag and football.

Donovan, a 6th grader, says that his "favorite thing was playing sports in nature." By night, the campers would gather together to build a campfire and roast s'mores before going to their tents!

The trips were a great success thanks to the counselors' dedication and sense of adventure.



LEAPers on a hike.



Keisha Redd-Hannans reads to LEAPers.



Roasting marshmallows over the campfire.



Jamilah Rahsheed reads to LEAPers.

LITs Dance Away at Week-Long David Dorfman Dance Camp at CONN College

Experiencing college life as a dance student

“Going here encouraged me to want to further my education and do more for myself...I think it was a really good idea to have us here,” reflected 15-year-old Ca-Mi about the benefits of spending a week studying at Connecticut College. Ten of LEAP’s Leaders in Training participated in an exciting new partnership program between LEAP and David Dorfman Dance Company, thanks to generous support from Celeste Myers. Living as college students for the week, the girls got to attend daily dance classes taught by professional dancers ranging

from modern to African dance, take poetry and sociology classes with Connecticut College professors, and go on outings on and off campus including to the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, Ocean Beach Park, and on a sailboat trip. The week culminated in a performance the girls had prepared throughout the week that included dance and poetic reflections. Charlese shared about the process of creating the performance, “Here they let you say something and they’ll take that in and add it into the dance. They just let you express how you feel.”

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Creating a New Haven for Our Children Since 1992





The CitySeed Farmer's Market at the Dixwell Q House Plaza.



Public officials and community members celebrate opening of Cornell Scott Hill Health Center at the Q House.

What's New at the Q House?

New health center, summer movie nights, free bike repairs, and more!

The Q House Community Center has had quite a busy summer. In June, Cornell Scott Hill Health Center (CSHHC) celebrated its opening at the Q House. This CSHHC facility offers services for adult medical health, dental, women's health, pediatrics, and adult behavioral health.

Additionally, during July, the Q House hosted a series of Thursday movie nights on the plaza and track for eager crowds of over 100 each week. Movie screenings included *The Wiz*, *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, and *Annie* (2014).

The summer season also welcomed a new partnership with Bradley St. Bike Co-Op! They offered free bike repair services throughout July. Bike repairs can often be cost prohibitive, limiting vital transportation options and recreational opportunities for the community. We were grateful to host this partnership to be able to provide this service to the community!

We saw the second year of CitySeed's Farmers Market on the Q House plaza and welcomed a few new vendors. In addition to regular monthly classes open to the community for free, the Q House also began providing Friday snacks organized by Kitchens Operations Manager, Tony Evans.

Those interested in taking classes can subscribe to the Q House newsletter at www.dixwellqhouse.org.

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