



FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

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Executive Director's Note

Happy Holidays to everyone in the LEAP family! 2022 was a big, exciting year for LEAP, with lots of growth -- the opening of the Q House, our largest summer program in New Haven ever, hundreds more children, and two new neighborhood sites.

In 2023, our plan is to strength-

en our programming and ensure that we are not just bigger but better. Just two examples -- we are piloting a new phonics based curriculum to help address the crisis, due in part to the pandemic, that only about 16% of New Haven third graders are reading at grade level. We are also deepening college access programming for our teenagers, drawing on some wonderful programs that have

worked well elsewhere.

All this improvement is possible because of your support. So, when we share our love with family this holiday season, please know that our family includes you. Thank you for all you do!

Henry Fernandez

Executive Director



Save the Date • 28th Annual LEAP YEAR EVENT

Thursday, February 23, 2023

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL OPTIONS • ADDITIONAL DINNERS ON FEBRUARY 25

HONORING
Rosa DeLauro
Toni Walker
Bonnie Scarborough

VIRTUAL RECEPTION & BOOK SIGNING
5:30–6:15 p.m.

Followed by an elegant evening of fine dining and conversation

FORMAL INVITATION TO FOLLOW

GUESTS OF HONOR
Michelle Wilde Anderson
Deborah Archer
Reginald Dwayne Betts
Jennifer Clair, Home Cooking New York
Nicholas Dawidoff
Ross Douthat
Beverly Gage
Bill McKibben with Mary Evelyn Tucker
Michael Morand
Priyamvada Natarajan
Q House Food Entrepreneurs with CitySeed
Lisa Sanders
Allyx Schiavone
Braxton D. Shelley
Marci Shore
A. Douglas Stone
Les Ballets Trockadero
Stephanie Wiles and Jessie Park, Yale Art Gallery

We are committed to continuing this cherished event, which is why we will have both in-person and virtual options this year! To keep the tradition alive and support our local businesses, there will be a dinner option available for both in person and virtual guests. For more information about the event, visit www.leapforkids.org/lye. If you have any questions, please email Alison Bonds at abonds@leapforkids.org.





Spooky Halloween Festival & Turkey Distribution

Spooky sights and tasty delights at the Q House

The Q House hosted a spooktacular event enjoyed by all ages! Over 400 members of the community came together. On the plaza, there was dance, drumming, hot chocolate, apple cider, and face painting. Inside, zombies, vampires, and superheroes got crafty in the arts room. Classic Halloween movies entertained many in the conference room transformed into a theater. Trick-or-treaters patiently waited their turn to enter the “spooky village” in the gym where over 25 local businesses and organizations came to give out candy. LEAP co-hosted this well-received event, which was open to all members of the New Haven community! LEAP also organized LEAP the Turkey Giveaway that included a turkey, mashed potatoes, fruit, and canned sides, all donated by partner organizations. 165 turkeys and food bags were distributed to community members!



Fall 2022: LEAPers Explore New Activities

From ballet to science experiments, LEAPers tap into their curiosity

This fall, over 450 children in our after-school program participated in exciting activities that challenged, surprised, and excited our LEAPers. From balancing on tip toes in ballet, to spinning beats in music recording, and making slime in science experiments, the opportunities were endless! LEAPers were excited to build mini aquariums as they learned more about the environment.

Familiar favorites returned too including yoga, basketball, and African dance. Children in our program practiced movement and creativity which helped them with their self-confidence. We were grateful to partner with local orga-

nizations and individuals to provide these activities.

Jakira, an 8 year-old LEAPer at Fair Haven West says she appreciates her counselors and enjoyed getting to do outside activities. Her favorite subject is math and she even won an award at school for math.



Jakira, 8, Fair Haven West site



Kids on the plaza at the Halloween Festival



Food bags for the Thanksgiving distribution

Counselor Support: Care Packages, College Tours, & Counseling

Showing up for our junior and senior counselors

Our dedicated team of counselors, many of them former LEAP kids, give their time and energy to mentoring the children in our program. This fall, we were grateful to support them in their academic journeys by providing one-on-one sessions with college counselors from Ingenius Prep who answered common questions about the application process and guided our high school students through brainstorming their personal statements.

In November, a group of 27 counselors and Leaders in Training (LITs) visited Spring-

field College and Western New England University. On the tours of the schools, eager LITs asked questions about course offerings and how to get involved with extracurricular activities.

We also provided 35 care packages to our counselors who are in their first year of college. We know that the first year of college is a difficult transition time. In addition to these care packages, counselors have access to one-on-one weekly check-in phone calls with a member of the staff to talk about school, friends, family, or anything else.

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The Latest at the Q House

Getting the scoop on all the wonderful things happening at the Q House

The Dixwell Q House was well utilized this fall—whether as a site for LEAP’s afterschool program or serving as a stage for the New Haven Ballet to perform The Nutcracker in December—kids, families, and adults from all over the community experienced the space to the fullest.

October saw the end of the CitySeed Farmer’s Market on the plaza and was celebrated with an apple festival. Then, Governor Lamont came to visit the counselors during counselor training before our after-school

program started. Additionally, Q House’s music studio was up and running this fall with a full recording booth! The Q House serves as a home to the visual arts too; providing space in the lobby for installations from community members. The new Q House adult basketball league shot some hoops this fall after a few days of tryouts.

From its beginning, the Q House was intended to cultivate a feeling of togetherness and empowerment, and this fall it has done just that and more!



Creating A New Haven For Our Children

Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc.
 31 Jefferson Street
 New Haven, CT 06511
 Phone: (203) 773-0770
 Fax: (203) 773-1695
 www.leapforkids.org



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