



LEAP Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2022

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As we close 2021, we are thankful for so much. While we remain in the midst of a global pandemic, at LEAP we have managed to expand, serve more children, and do so in person and safely.

We've worked with community partners, the City of New Haven, and the Q House Advisory Board to open the new Q House in the Dixwell neighborhood. This historic institution opened in the 1920s and has been a beacon in New Haven's Black community. We are thankful the community trusts us to manage the new Q House and help keep this history alive.

We've improved our curriculum for children and training for high school and college student counselors. We've made investments in new staff, books, lesson plans and training sessions. We are thankful for the leadership of our curriculum and training team and our youth counselors who make this happen every day.

We've reopened our pool, allowing us to provide swim classes for young people for the first time in over 18 months. We look forward to expanding further and teaching more children to swim in 2022. We are thankful for the young people who share their love of swimming and lead our swim classes.

We know how important it is for children's mental health to return to a semblance of normal. It's why we worked so hard to reopen safely. We are thankful that all our over 100 staff members are vaccinated and committed to keeping children safe.

Finally, we are thankful for you. Without our donors, partners, and friends, none of this would be possible. Happy holidays and happy new year!

Sincerely,

Henry Fernandez, Executive Director

Save the Date

27TH ANNIVERSARY

LEAP YEAR EVENT

Thursday, February 24, 2022 WITH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL OPTIONS
ADDITIONAL DINNERS ON 2/26 & 3/3

HONORING

Sydney Perry and Alder Jeanette Morrison

RECEPTION & BOOK SIGNING

5-7 p.m.
Dixwell Q House
197 Dixwell Avenue, New Haven

Followed by an elegant evening of fine dining and conversation

FORMAL INVITATION TO FOLLOW

We are committed to continuing this cherished event, keeping the tradition alive and supporting our local businesses. We will offer both in-person and virtual dinner options from which guests may choose. For more information about the event, visit www.leapforkids.org/lye. If you have questions, please email Wildalaz Bermudez at wbermudez@leapforkids.org.

GUESTS OF HONOR

Emily Bazelon & E. Danya Perry
Murray Biggs & Jacob Padrón
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Shawn T. Wooden
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Joanne Samuel Goldblum & Colleen Shaddox
Linda Greenhouse
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Andrew Rubenoff
Timothy Snyder
Andrew Solomon
Joan A. Steitz
Rory Stewart & Shoshana Clark Stewart
A. Douglas Stone
Stephanie Wiles

LEAP is Growing: Here's How!



This year, LEAP is growing our impact to reach more youth with our nationally recognized academic, mentorship, and leadership development programs. LEAP is managing the Q House, a newly reconstructed, state-of-the-art community center, and we're working with the building's partners to develop programs and services for young people and their families, serving people of all ages.

We're also expanding LEAP's core programs to serve an additional 250+ young people. In addition to the Q House, we're opening another in the Quinnipiac Meadows neighborhood, an area with high needs but few youth programs. The Leaders in Training (LIT) program will grow from 75 to 100 teens this summer, and to support this growth, LEAP will train, hire and support an additional 50 youth counselors.

Eveyon, 15-year-old LIT and aspiring LEAP counselor, said he likes the Q House because he can work with younger LEAPers. "It's kind of dope working with kids. You get to see how different they are. When I see them, I see how I was when I was younger. So it's like, I want to treat them how I was treated – with respect and care."

Grantor Spotlight: TD Charitable Foundation

LEAP was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the TD Charitable Foundation to support our year-round programs in closing the literacy gap and helping students recover from over a year of learning loss. Thank you to the TD Charitable Foundation for helping LEAPers grow as lifelong readers!

And, thank you to all of our recent grantors - we can't do this without you!

- The Allstate Foundation • Carolyn Foundation • City of New Haven • Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation
• The Echlin Foundation • Friends of Kang Yun Foundation • Henry E. Niles Foundation • John E. Scully Charitable Foundation
• Julia Rusinek Memorial Fund • Nellie Mae Education Foundation • Petit Family Foundation • PwC Charitable Foundation
• Smart Family Foundation of New York • TD Charitable Foundation • Trinity Church on the Green
• Webster Bank • William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund • The William Randolph Hearst Foundations

Dixwell Q House Ribbon Cutting Draws Hundreds



Over 700 community members turned out on Saturday, November 6, for the grand opening of the Dixwell Q House. After 17 years of closure, the newly reconstructed Q House features a full-size gym, art, recording, and dance studios, a commercial kitchen, and more! The building will also serve as the permanent site for the Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center, the Dixwell/Newhallville Senior Center, and the Stetson branch of the New Haven Free Public Library. LEAP will manage the building and offer programs for an additional 100 LEAP children and community members of all ages.

Braving the chilly temperatures, the audience included former Q House members and their descendants, Q House supporters and advocates, community organization representatives, and elected officials including Governor Ned Lamont, Senator Richard Blumenthal, Mayor Justin Elicker, and former Mayor Toni Harp. After a ceremony of performances and speakers, attendees went on short tours of the Q House, led by LEAP's youth counselors. Thank you to everyone who worked to make this historic day possible for New Haven and the Dixwell community!

New Haven families can now register their children for the LEAP program at the Q House on our website www.leapforkids.org. Stay tuned on social media for more announcements on Q House programs!

Gratitude and Giving Back



Every Thanksgiving, LEAP celebrates our own tradition by giving back to our community. This year, we made sure that no family goes through the holidays without having their basic needs met. Thanks to the generous donation of Marcum LLP, more than 70 families went home with a turkey this Thanksgiving. LEAP also gave out additional healthy foods and vegetables accompanying the turkeys.

To date, this fall we have given over \$33,502 for rent and groceries directly to families in need, with another \$51,000 that will be distributed during the remainder of this holiday season for a total of over \$250,000 of aid during the pandemic. LEAP will also distribute additional food and turkeys during our Holiday Giveback in December. From our LEAP family to yours, we wish you a happy holidays!

Power Moves, Empowered Youth!



LEAPers had a blast dancing to Latin music and learning new moves at the Fair Haven North site. As they danced, the gym was transformed by their joyful laughter and energetic moves. Kahtoure, 8 years old, expressed her excitement for dancing saying, “When music starts and my favorite songs come on, it makes me happy.”



In the Q House’s spacious new gym, LEAPers learn to play tennis with coach Sam who teaches them all the basics of tennis. The young athletes took turns practicing their ready position, keeping an eye on the ball, and hitting with forehand and backhand strokes. LEAPers were learning to play tennis for the first time and having fun! With every stroke, they are developing their hand-eye coordination and strengthening their bodies and hearts through aerobic exercise.



Our 7 and 8 year old LEAPers were engaged and focused while playing a classic game of chess, led by LEAP partner SPORT Academy. As part of the regularly scheduled programming, students skillfully showed off their problem-solving, creativity, and concentration skills while practicing the art of patience and visualization. They were joined by volunteers from Yale New Haven Health, who provided tips for mapping out moves.



LITs and young LEAPers explored a sampling of Maker Space stations that will be regularly offered by Q House partner, the Stetson Branch of the NHFPL. From coding mini robots with markers, creating 3D art and mixing music with the DropMix game, the creative juices were flowing!



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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