Executive Director's Note

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer!

At LEAP we had our largest summer camp ever, with over 700 children and young teens attending and over 160 local high school and college students serving as counselors across 7 neighborhoods. We added new sites, more children, and expanded our curriculum. This was on top of the almost 1,000 people who have participated in activities at the Q House, which we are honored to manage.

This summer was much closer to “normal” than the last three years. In addition to mornings filled with literacy, we returned to swim classes, camping, and field trips with children visiting Mystic Aquarium and children’s museums in Hartford and Boston.

I am very proud of both our full-time staff and our amazing counselors, many of whom graduated this year and are headed off to great colleges ranging from UCONN to Johns Hopkins University.

Our work is more important than ever as kids, families, schools and our community deal with the academic learning loss and social and emotional issues that emerged from COVID. You are more important than ever as well. Your support throughout the last three years has allowed LEAP to be a respite and beacon.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Henry Fernandez
Executive Director

ConGRAD-ulations to Our Counselors

Scholarship Recipients: Marie Cisse, Ahmad al Zouabi, Alyssa Findlay, Juan Boone

Our college access resources in the Youth Development Program prepare our counselors for their futures in and beyond the classroom. This year we celebrated our forty-five counselors who graduated from high school and college! Additionally, LEAP was proud to award $10,000 in scholarships to four counselors to celebrate their commitment to LEAP. At the ceremony, the New Haven Independent captured the excitement of the scholarship recipients who reflect ed on their journey with LEAP: “I was lucky and got to learn about engineering, and I want to be able to give back to my community and see myself working with LEAP throughout my time at Tufts and after I graduate,” said Stiefel-Williams Scholarship recipient and LEAP senior counselor, Marie Cisse.
LEAPers engaged in fun, hands-on activities through a brand new curriculum! Our dedicated curriculum staff introduced units that centered on the unique and beautiful cultural backgrounds of our young LEAPers and asked them to connect what they read in the classroom to their own lived experiences. Curriculum units included Cultural Connections, Music Makers, Outdoor Adventures, The Artist in Me, and I Matter, You Matter, We Matter.

All of our LEAP kids engage with the same units, however the books and activities within each unit are tailored to specific age groups. Additionally, our curriculum addresses the different learning styles of children in our program. For example, we offer visual activities to support their reading. Group book discussions were complemented with reflective journaling activities and creative projects like collages and hand-made instruments from recycled materials.

LEAP’s summer enrichment activities that we refer to as “resources” expose the youth in our program to a wide variety of programs that are aimed to nurture children’s intellectual growth, expose them to new skills, and cultivate their curiosity. We partner with local instructors who bring their expertise and willingness to teach such as Smiling Spirit Yoga, Iyaba Arts Puppetry, and Drums No Guns Commission Inc. who taught African drumming. David Dorfman Dance taught the teen Leaders In Training modern dance. This summer, LEAPers experimented with watercolor painting, learned chess, and practiced different strokes in the pool during swimming lessons.

8-year-old LEAP returner, Madison, says, “My favorite resource was with the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, because we made rice balls to squeeze when we get stressed or sad.”
LEAP’s Annual Read-In on the Green
Celebrating the joy of reading and inspiring a love for storytelling

Our annual Read-In on the Green supports our summer literacy curriculum and encourages LEAP children and teens to read beyond the classroom. The Read-In returned this summer to its original location on the New Haven Green after having to adapt the format last year to five different sites.

This year’s Read-In welcomed over 65 volunteers who read books to approximately 700 children. The morning began with classic LEAP chants to get the kids excited and featured guest speakers including Board of Education members and other local officials. Volunteers chose books to read from a selection LEAP provided or were allowed to bring their own. One volunteer brought the books to life, rapping the words and dancing with the kids, while another, Elaine Carroll from the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, provided musical accompaniment to her reading by playing the flute.

In our 30th summer, we are delighted to see the joy of reading being passed on from generation to generation.

JOIN US TODAY:
www.leapforkids.org/donate

Creating a New Haven for Our Children Since 1992
What’s New at the Q House

Farmer’s markets, new community classes, and more

The Q House Community Center located in the Dixwell neighborhood continues to thrive as it offers growing and diverse free classes to the community. Classes run for 5-week periods and are open to youth, adults, and families. Local instructors and community organizations teach classes including art, fitness, zumba, yoga, capoeira, cooking, line dancing, and meditation.

This summer the Q House hosted several exciting community events including the Delta Free Market, which collected donations of clothing, books, household items and more, and offered them to community members for free.

This summer, CitySeed, in partnership with LEAP, launched a weekly Farmer’s Market at the Q House plaza. The market features fresh produce from local Connecticut farmers to address the lack of affordable healthy food options in the Dixwell neighborhood.

Additionally, the Dixwell-Newhallville Senior Center and the Stetson Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library are officially up and running! Cornell Scott Hill Health Center will also be housed at the Q House and the construction of its space is moving along!

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

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT GRANTORS!

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SAVE THE DATE
LEAP’s 28th Annual LEAP Year Event
(with In-Person and Zoom options)
Thursday, February 23, 2023

Please join us on Thursday, February 23, 2023 for a wonderful evening of learning and conversation. LEAP Year Event 2023 will have in-person and virtual dinner options to choose from, each with fascinating guests of honor and generous hosts! To be a LEAP Year Event Sponsor, please contact Alison Bonds, Deputy Director of Development and Communications, at abonds@leapforkids.org.

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