



SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We are excited about all that is going on at LEAP. Our new sites are up and running, welcoming kids after school. Our high school seniors are getting college acceptance letters. Our classes at the Q House have started, with new opportunities for parents and children to paint or perform yoga together, for community members to take cooking classes, and for neighbors to join in exercise and capoeira to get in shape.

Every spring is a new beginning, but this year it feels even more so. We are excited to re-open our evening

swim classes, and to teach kids how to ride and fix bicycles.

Based on the past two summers, we are preparing for a June, July, and August where the pandemic reaches its lowest levels. Kids and counselors can take off masks for outdoor programming, while smiling, laughing, reading, running, learning, and just getting to be young in our great city.

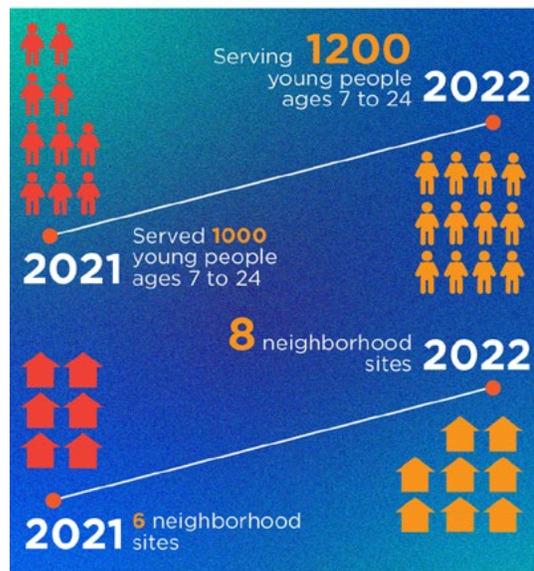
Our enthusiasm is only possible because of all our friends and supporters. So, thank you! And happy Spring!

Sincerely,

Henry Fernandez
Executive Director



LEAP IS GROWING »



AND THIS SUMMER »

- 800 CHILDREN'S PROGRAM SEATS
- 100 LEADERS IN TRAINING SEATS
- 150 JUNIOR AND SENIOR COUNSELORS EMPLOYED
- MORE THAN 1000 YOUTH SERVED

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NEW ACTIVITIES AT THE Q HOUSE

From wellness to art-making

Living up to its mission, the Dixwell Community House (known as the Q House) kicked off its first series of free classes for the community in March with great success. All are welcome to try something new, explore, and connect with other community members.

There is a full range of classes to choose from, all of which are led by community organizations or local instructors. They include Art Classes and a variety of movement classes such as Fitness, Capoeira, and Yoga & Meditation for youth and adults. Classes run for 5 or 6

weeks. A new series of classes has just started, and they run until May 15th.

Those interested can subscribe to the Q House newsletter on www.dixwellqhouse.org for the latest offerings. Many of the classes are offered during after-work hours, including weekends. All activities are free of charge for now.

We hope to see you there!

THE LEAP RIDERS

LEAPers behind the handlebars

LEAP is excited to announce our latest enrichment activity: LEAP Riders! LEAP Riders is a cycling and bike safety program piloted last summer by our Children's Program Manager, Lee Osorio. In the program's first full semester, Lee is working with 25 LEAPers at three sites to teach them the basics of biking, from performing the "ABC Quick Check" to how to stay safe on the road. In Lee's words, "As an instructor, it's really gratifying to see that when [LEAPers] leave LEAP and ride on the road, they really understand how to keep themselves as safe as possible". Moreover, LEAP Riders also promotes leadership, with each group having a "pack leader" who takes on extra responsibility among their peers.

In May, Lee and soon-to-be LCI-certified LEAP Site Coordinators Jahvon and DK will be leading all 25 children on a 3-mile graduation ride from Clinton Avenue School to the Q House. We are so grateful to our partners — Bike New York, the New Haven Coalition for Active Transportation, the New Haven Police Department, Bradley Street Bike Co-Op, and Devils Gear Bike Shop, as well as all our donors who contributed bikes, equipment, or funds to make this program a success.



SPRING CURRICULUM: BLACK PRE-HEALTH AT YALE

Intersections of STEM and identity

Our young LEAPers explored Black History Month, Family, Self-Care and Joy in February. From scientists, to hip hop musicians, and athletes, March celebrated Women's History Month. In April, STEM took over stirring curious and inquiring minds. Each week's lesson was paired up with reading excerpts to question, ponder, and exchange ideas and thoughts. A special highlight of this spring component was the partnership and lesson collaboration with Black Pre-Health Students at Yale (BPHY), a student organization that provides resources and support to Black students in health-related fields.

Students from BPHY taught a guest lesson about Rosalind Franklin's contribution to the discovery of DNA structure for Women's History Month. LEAPers discussed thoughts on how they felt about Rosalind's work being stolen, the challenges for women to become scientists, and the importance of recognizing women in science. Afterward, LEAPers dove deep into DNA by making candy DNA! Using Twizzlers, gummy bears, and toothpicks, LEAPers created what DNA looks like when zoomed in with a microscope and held it in their hands (then their tummies once they got to eat up their creations!).

Israa Mustafa, BPHY guest teacher shares that "LEAP was such a wonderful experience! The students were so engaged and responsive. It's experiences like this that emphasize the importance of centers like LEAP in building community, strengthening confidence, and giving opportunities to Black children and their communities. It makes me hopeful that BPHY could not only impart long-lasting benefits to the Black students at Yale but also to New Haven youth."



Crochet club



Dance classes in the Q House



Hooping it up!



Top: Food entrepreneurship classes with CitySeed
Bottom: LEAP's new bike program in action!



A candy model of DNA



Scientist to be



Plant potting in the spring



Top: Detective work
Bottom: LEAPers and their creations





SPOTLIGHT: ALYSSA

New Haven senior finds success

For Alyssa, being a LEAP counselor is not so much a job as an opportunity to connect with her community and become a better leader. She calls her students “my girls” and fondly remembers LEAP’s Outdoor Saturdays during COVID, the only day of the week when she could see them face-to-face. She is still deciding but anticipates studying family medicine, family law, or psychology so she can become a professional resource for families.

Alyssa is choosing between generous offers from John Hopkins University

and Wesleyan University. “The college process was a JOURNEY,” she shared, “but I had so many people behind me who helped me get to this spot.” Alyssa credits her family and LEAP, especially her site coordinator and the Counselor Development team, for helping her.

Alyssa fully immersed herself in LEAP’s pre-college programming, including college tours, SAT prep, AP tutoring, and essay advising. “The crazy thing is that my after-school job offered to give me free SAT prep and then paid me to take it!” At LEAP, she was able to mentor younger students while simultaneously working towards her academic goals.

As she heads off to a bright future with a warm and open heart, we at LEAP are cheering her on!

LEAP-ING OFF TO COLLEGE!

Supporting the college process

This year, 39 of LEAP’s Junior Counselors are graduating seniors, and so far, 30 of them have finalized their plans to attend a college or university. Of the 30, more than two-thirds will be the first in their families to attend college. While some seniors are staying local at UCONN and SCSU, others are traveling out of state to schools such as Virginia State University. Congratulations all!

LEAP provides our counselors with resources to help them succeed, including PSAT/SAT prep, scholarships, and college workshops. LEAP also provides students with the opportunity to tour schools, including HBCUs. This spring, LEAP is resuming our weeklong College Tour, when 35 JCs and LITs will visit the Carolinas to tour institutions such as Benedict College and Shaw University.



April 2022: LEAP high school students pose in Coastal Carolina University’s Brooks Stadium!

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