



Phillips Brooks House Association Summer Newsletter

<http://www.pbha.org>

Fall 2011

The Power of SUP Love

Diana Bartenstein '12

SUP Program Group Officer

Ekene Obi-Okoye '12

PBHA President

As we tiptoed into Keylatch Summer Program's oldest boys classroom, we tried to make as little noise as possible, knowing how distracting visitors can be during a lesson. However, the group hardly noticed us as their senior counselor read to them. The only sound in the classroom was faint musical intonations from six-year-olds chanting with their Summer Harmony teachers one floor below. A moment later, the students became total chatterboxes as they predicted how the story would end and debated the implications of the characters' racial identities. All protested when told they would have to wait until the next day to continue the story.

Seven weeks of full day programming for more 800 children is an ambitious feat for 250 college and high-school youth supported by only a handful of professional staff. Yet this summer, as in many summers past, courageous students joined with families and community partners to undertake this challenge. Not only did those students commit to running programs, but they

also committed to running quality programs.

Whereas many think of summertime as a few months of carefree days and relaxation, every SUP senior and junior staff member equates uncomfortable heat waves with the even more uncomfortable reality of summer learning loss. Though a fair number of students across the spectrum lose some academic skills over the summer, low-income students are disproportionately affected. As a result, the achievement gap is widening.

SUP seeks to prevent summer learning loss, and this summer proved pivotal in moving SUP towards higher academic standards. During training weeks, all counselors visited classrooms to observe certified teachers in action while directors participated in newly improved trainings to help them coach and observe their counselors' teaching. A new "Curriculum Wiki" was started to allow counselors to save and share their best lesson plans from summer to summer. Furthermore, the new senior counselor in training position gave eight high-school students the chance to play an expanded leadership role in their programs by participating in extra training and teaching for a minimum

of five hours per week.

A first-hand example of one SUP director's impressive commitment to learning occurred late one night in Phillips Brooks House. It was senior counselor training, and the director was running on little sleep. The only way we could convince her to leave and get some rest was by promising to print and make copies of Massachusetts' academic power standards at every grade level to hand out the next day. As a result of many people's collective efforts, more than 80 classrooms that would have otherwise remained vacant over the summer were filled with literary magazines, long division, Greek mythology, and chromatography.

But while students have pushed SUP to think more about academics, this desire for improvement is fueled by what remains the most important part of SUP: genuine relationships formed between students and communities. As one senior counselor put it, "This is not a job to come and

play! You will enjoy yourself and the kids, as long as it's a true decision that you made to be a part of someone's life. Know that they don't always need help because of their class status, but they would like help because you really care." It is the power of love and caring that keep people coming back summer after summer and create a wealth of summer learning not limited to textbooks. We expect to see many familiar faces again in SUP 2012!



SUP 2011 is...

Love
Intense

Empowering

A Movement

Transformative

Inspiring

Incredible

Community

Words taken from quotes of 2011 SUP Directors

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One Big RYSE Family

Tho Nguyen '13

RYSE Co-Director

Dipona Bandy '14

RYSE Co-Director

Refugee Youth Summer Enrichment (RYSE) began its seven-week summer program with 120 high-school students in nine classes, and we ended up with one big RYSE family. Our immigrant and refugee students from more than 25 countries and extremely diverse backgrounds came together over the summer to learn English and prepare for their futures, make new friends, and form a community that will have a lasting impact on every RYSE student, teacher, director, and volunteer.

RYSE students and their families typically face many challenges, including learning an unfamiliar language and adapting to a vastly different culture. Often, recent immigrants face those struggles alone, without the support, resources, or understanding of their schools and work environments. Because the challenges facing low-income and immigrant families are exacerbated by language difficulties, RYSE focuses on quality ESL instruction to improve our students' speaking, listening, and reading skills, with each class taught by a college-student teacher who creates his or her own curriculum.

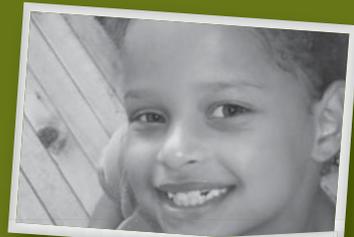
Our hearts were heavy as we learned our students' stories: their nostalgia for their home countries, their frustrations in learning English, how their high schools do not provide support in learning a new language and adapting, and how hard it is for them and their families to find jobs, among many other issues. But despite those setbacks, our students still have an enormous amount of enthusiasm and a willingness to work hard.

With the help of RYSE, students have an opportunity to graduate from high school, enter college and the workforce, and become successful citizens. RYSE also organizes creative activities like college essay writing seminars, MCAS and SAT tutoring, and service projects. One of the main goals of the summer is to prepare our students for the college application process. Going through the college process can be a daunting task even for fluent English speakers in the U.S., and it is all the more difficult for recently-immigrated students. For that reason, RYSE wants to ensure that our students feel supported in that endeavor. This year, we continued our tradition of holding our very popular College, Career, and Opportunity Fair, which introduced students to area colleges, pre-college and career programs, and free SAT tutoring classes. Our students found it very helpful to speak to college admissions officers and learn more about their

future options. In addition, two of our assistant leaders (i.e., former students turned teacher's aides), Menyee and Sharada, designed a workshop on the timeline of applying to and preparing for college in high school. RYSE teachers themselves were encouraged to integrate MCAS and SAT preparation into their curricula, and most RYSE teachers stay in contact with their students after the summer to assist with the college application process and beyond.

Although RYSE's programming shows our dedication to the students we serve, our hardworking, determined, and optimistic students were what made this summer truly amazing. Jose, in one of the beginner classes, had to bear the death of his mother at age seven. However, Jose did not lose hope – he listened to his mother's words and truly believes that everything in this world happens for a reason. Jose works extremely hard and was one of the students with the best attendance. His courage, dedication, and excitement were contagious at RYSE. You could always see Jose with a kind smile and making conversation with other students. He advises RYSE students to "NEVER GIVE UP!" Otoniel ("Toni"), who was in the most advanced class, has returned to RYSE for three summers and has grown significantly as a student since he arrived in the United States three years ago from the Dominican Republic. Toni lives in Chelsea and had to commute by bus and train to attend RYSE, but he was always on time and ready to learn every day. His playful attitude, charming personality, and ability to make everyone around him feel welcome made him a great community member at RYSE.

These are only a couple of stories of our amazing students, but there are 100 more students that have equally inspiring stories and made equally valuable contributions to RYSE. At the end of RYSE, as an expression of the students' love for the community that RYSE had become, the RYSE LOVE 2011 Facebook page was filled with messages of missing RYSE, and immense thankfulness for the opportunity to learn together over the summer. Most importantly, RYSE students have been, and continue to be, very appreciative of each other. They are from all over Boston and all over the world, but they all share a common desire to learn English and succeed, and RYSE is lucky to be able to assist them with that.



Community Cousins

Community Cousins, founded in 1995 in Los Angeles by Diane Bock, strives to promote harmony among families of different demographic groups by fostering events that the families, or "cousins," can attend together. This was SUP's second summer partnering with Community Cousins, and the program was a tremendous success. Through Community Cousins, three camps (BRYE, SBOS, MHSP) held events involving four to nine families. Each ran one or two camp-specific events, and all came together for a SUP-wide luau at Castle Island. All three camps have committed to offering similar events during the term.



A Vehicle for Learning

Jesse McGleughlin '14
CYEP Co-Director

At the end of the summer, Cambridge Youth Enrichment Program (CYEP) campers complete evaluations about their experiences. I come into the classroom of five- and six-year-olds to help them fill those out. They are just learning to read and write. I read the questions out loud. "Can we draw the answers?," Lisa asks, bouncing slightly in her chair. "Sure," I respond. "You can draw and write." In response to the question, "What did you learn?," Lisa carefully draws each ingredient of playdough, outlining different containers of salt, flour, oil, showing the project through images.

What does it mean to come into learning? For the five- and six-year-olds, our newest and youngest campers, we aim to spark their curiosity and creativity, to make learning exciting. Lisa, in her evaluation, has, at age five, come into learning. She has found a way to express what she learned, to recall and remember, and then communicate. Here it is:

through carefully drawn images and the dictation of words, she is learning a process of representation and communication. She has found language, recorded it. She is in the process of reflection.

The six- and seven-year-olds participate in a team-building activity. They must, without speaking, cross the "lava" by stepping only on carpet squares. They must figure out a way to move the carpet squares to the other side of the "lava," one person on a square at a time, passing them forward, practicing balance. They too must figure out how to communicate, in their case without language. The first time through, they whisper and must start again. "No talking," their counselors remind them gently. Upon second try, a camper steps in the "lava." "C'mon," they groan, impatient. "How could you?" They are reminded not to blame each other, reminded it is a team effort. They begin again and again. Two people on a square, foot in lava, talking. When they get into a rhythm, they are triumphant. Their silence is bold

and focused. Tenzin Dolma nearly hops with excitement. Bryan motions for the final square. The campers on the "safe side" watch their peers make the final steps. They are building something.

How to communicate effectively? Each CYEP class learns this. Each counselor must create a system, a classroom culture, an environment of dialogue. Because the oldest campers must communicate well with each other so that they do not capsize the boat they are sailing on the Charles River. Because in their project on culture and self-expression, the campers articulate who they are and share this, typed up on poster-boards that line the walls. The oldest girls do rigorous projects on self-expression, self worth, identity. And to communicate well, they must ask each other about who they are, what they care about, what matters. When the first- and third-grade classes pair up as reading buddies, the older campers read to the younger



ones. The advanced first graders help their older buddies with challenging words. It is a captivating image: these young campers engrossed in sharing a book about whales. So engrossed that Juan Carlos rushes to his classroom each morning to reread the story, quiet until he is asked about whales and instantly spouts facts about the humpback.

In each classroom, communities build environments of dialogue, collaboration, and connection. These environments become the vehicle for learning. Language becomes the tool through which to communicate, the way to engage with each other and the world.

Meet SUP 2011's Six Summer Scholars

Louise Wills
PBHA Staff

Every summer, SUP's 30 directors nominate exceptional members of their staff for one of three named Summer Scholar awards, each of which is accompanied by a cash grant to cover a portion of the awardees' summer salary. CHAD senior counselor and rising sophomore Emily Wong '14 received this year's *Ellsworth S. Grant Award*, Nominated by both her directors, Emily "created innovative curriculum and helped out with projects outside of camp time, too. She used her phenomenal skills to design the CHAD T-shirt and Yearbook, which included a picture and piece of artwork or writing from every single student."

Edward S. Fleming Award winner Kevin Meers '14 "poured his heart into his class. The

atmosphere he created was one of kindness and respect for all. He brought patience, love, and kindness to the classroom every day and also a dazzling curriculum that included an egg drop project and mini research projects on different world cultures paired with trips to the library." Jorge Santana '14 (Fitchburg State), also an *Edward S. Fleming Award* winner, was praised as "one of the most dedicated members of the Mission Hill staff. A resident of Mission Hill and a former junior counselor, his experience and wisdom were invaluable. On top of making timeliness and professionalism consistent priorities, he was incredibly understanding and always willing to help out. Jorge set a great example for the staff and was an excellent role model for campers both in and outside his classroom."

No less remarkable are the

three *Maye R. Zoffer Awardees*. RYI's Michael Heller '13 "was the senior counselor that directors wish for! He significantly helped RYI's fundraising efforts and maintained exceptional curriculum, classroom management, and overall positive energy. Through his consistent hard work and dedication Mike helped make camp run smoother and his students absolutely adored him!" Bong (Emmie) Nguyen '14 (Bates) joined BRYE when she first moved to the United States as a camper. Last year she returned as a junior counselor, and this year BRYE was so fortunate to have her as a senior counselor. Emmie was a fabulous asset to BRYE. She was a model for every other class as she was always the first to have all her campers ready to go. Emmie wants to become an educator when she graduates and went the extra

mile continuing to train herself as the summer wore on by reaching out to former teachers and directors. She worked relentlessly to always find ways to improve her students' experience and learning." Finally, former NAYEP camper, junior counselor, and senior counselor Taquana Peters '13 (UMass Amherst) "was committed to building strong mentoring relationships with program youth." A Mashpee Wampanoag, Taquana took pride in "developing a comprehensive curriculum for the entire camp, along with teaching campers Native dances, showing them how to make Native clothing, and introducing them to issues facing the Native community today."

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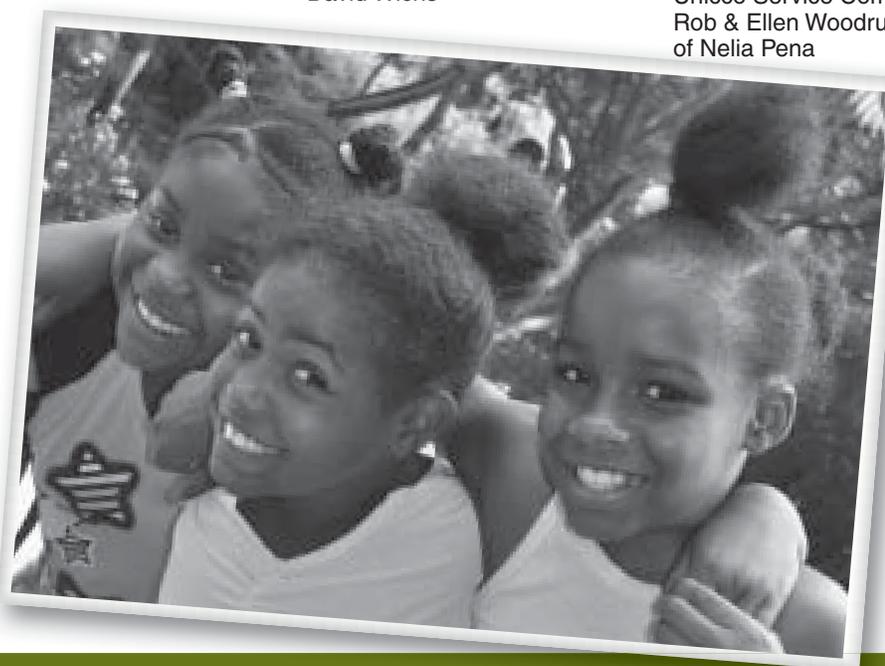
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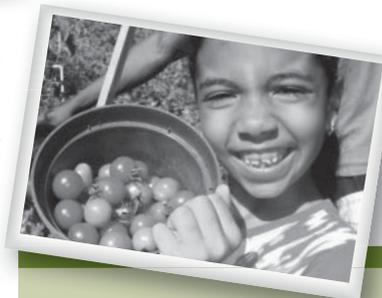
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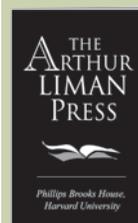
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Christopher Loney
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PBHA & IOP Bring Civic Education to SUP

Seth Pearce '12
Full Time SUPport

This summer, the partnership between PBHA and the Harvard Institute of Politics (IOP) reached new heights. PBHA and the IOP's two collaborations, the Senior Counselor Political Track and Summer Civics both had incredibly successful summers.

Now in its second summer of operation, Summer Civics visits each of our SUP camps to teach a civic curriculum. The program seeks to build on students' understandings of community and politics and attempts to remedy the lack of civic understanding in American society.

This summer's directors, Paul Leroux '14 and Caroline Cox '14 took the program to a new level. Along with senior counselors Chuks Obi '11 and Amanda McGowan '13, they redesigned the middle-school curriculum to make it developmentally appropriate for SUP's younger campers. This effort proved extremely successful, yielding much-loved activities like Civics Island,

in which six-year-old campers set laws for imaginary societies.

This summer also marked the fourth year of the PBHA-IOP Senior Counselor Political Track. Senior counselors interested in including political themes and projects in their classroom apply for the political track and as members of this track receive additional training from PBHA and the IOP. During the summer, these counselors infuse politics into their curriculum and lead their campers in a political action and community engagement project with a community partner.

Some of this summer's political track highlights include South Boston Outreach Summer (SBOS) counselor James Hawrot's '12 curriculum about sustainability and food production. For their project, James's seven- and eight-year-olds worked with South Boston Grows to plant vegetables in their community farm and distribute them to community members. Michelle Matsuba '14 continued Mission Hill Summer Program's (MHSP) three-year partnership with the

Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Initiative (REEP), teaching her students about environmental justice issues and working on an advocacy project. Kevin Meers '14 and Chisom Obi-Okoye, a rising sophomore at Dartmouth, led their Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment (BRYE) campers in learning about immigration rights and governmental structures. They even held elections for a BRYE camper council that met with the directors every week to discuss camp issues.

This summer's PBHA-IOP partnership brought political and civic education to campers all over Boston and Cambridge. It engaged so many of them in taking action as responsible citizens and learning more about the society in which they live. We cannot wait to see where the partnership goes from here!



Middle Up! for College

Khadijah Williams '13
Full Time SUPport

Middle Up! is a new initiative that aims to empower our middle-school students so that they have the option to attend and succeed in college. Through incorporating relevant high-school and college readiness lessons into everyday curricula, e.g., understanding financial aid and time management, middle-school students learn what it takes to get into college. In addition, *Middle Up!* incorporates service learning projects designed to teach students concepts and skills important for high school and college while doing work that benefits their communities. Integral to the success of *Middle Up!* program is providing each student and family with individualized and structured support. Senior counselors work with students and families to identify the goals and aspirations of each student. Those goals and aspirations are then broken down into social and academic areas, and detailed action plans are developed to ensure that the goals are achieved. We call the plans Individualized Support Plans (ISPs), which are then passed on to the programs our students attend during the school year to make sure that there is continued support and growth.

As well as focusing on students' long-term goals of making it to and graduating from college, we also focused on students' current and more short-term goals and needs. One of our *Middle Up!* senior counselors wrote, "Before the ISP, I didn't know one of my oldest girls was dyslexic." She

continues, "Through the ISP meeting, I discovered that her teacher called her names and often yelled at her in class. I used the information gained from the ISP to empower my student and convince her of the fact that her learning disability was not going to limit her." At Keyatch one oldest boy had a gift for the arts. Prior to *Middle Up!* the senior counselor supporting this young man did not know that there were free, public high schools that focus on the arts in Boston. Because of this program the senior counselor had this information and was able to provide his student with the necessary support to help him enter the Boston Arts Academy.

To ensure that our staff was prepared to implement the *Middle Up!*, senior counselors receive an intensive workshop on college and high-school access. Specifically, they receive training on how to navigate the complex high-school application and placement system in Boston and how to support their students and families on selecting the high school(s) that is/are most appropriate for them and their future success. Additionally, they identify the unique challenges that low-income and first-generation college students face and are trained to support students and families so that those challenges can be overcome.

The first year of *Middle Up!* was a phenomenal success. Over the summer 97% of *Middle Up!* classrooms visited three colleges over the summer while participating in college tours and workshops. Some of the colleges visited included Suffolk, UMass Amherst, Harvard, Northeastern,

Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and Bunker Hill Community College. The college visits were meant to break down the barriers to college access by having campers step foot on a college campus, see college life, and ask current students and college administrators questions about financial aid, programs for low-income students, and more. And to make sure that families were preparing our students for high school, since that is the first hurdle in making it to college, we held a High School Night. We walked through the complicated Boston Public School high-school placement process and provided tools to help families support their youth.

Will SUP continue *Middle Up!* in years to come? "YES, definitely" grins Diana Bartenstein '12, the SUP Program Group Officer. But the most important response came not from one of our student leaders but from a happy camper from Dorchester, neither of whose parents went to college, "When I grow up, I want to go to Tufts! That field trip was awesome!"

The Garden of Peace

Elizabeth Borghesani

Secretary, Anne E. Borghesani
Community Foundation

In July 30 enthusiastic campers from the Franklin I-O Summer Program visited the Garden of Peace Memorial to Victims of Homicide in Boston (www.gardenofpeace-memorial.org). The Garden recognizes those lost through homicide and motivates others to work to prevent violence. Undeterred by temperatures in the upper 90's, the campers walked through the Garden looking at the stones engraved with the names and dates of birth and death of more than 500 Massachusetts victims. They identified the stones of victims who died as babies and as old people, some who were relatives, including the stone of President Kennedy and his brother, Robert. Sadly, many of the campers have witnessed violent death in their own neighborhood and even in their own family and knew some

of the victims in the Garden. They talked about the large black granite orb representing the heaviness of grief and the soaring Ibis sculpture expressing hope for a world with less violence. They also noted that all the stones are equal, yet unique, as are all the victims lost to senseless violence.

Campers also discussed grief after murder and ways to express it. For good grief, "We put a victim's name in the Garden, place flowers on a grave, or keep a photo in our homes." And when asked for an example of bad grief, one 12-year-old thoughtfully replied, "When we get angry and fight back, hurting someone else." The visit fostered Franklin I-O's goal of engendering peace in the community through teaching principles of conflict resolution, anger management, and teamwork.

The Anne E. Borghesani Community Foundation (www.inannesspirit.org) has been a supporter of Franklin I-O

since 2006 and facilitated the campers' visit to the Garden. Our mission is to reduce the incidence and effects of violence by promoting the development of healthy children and families *In Annes's Spirit*.

A graduate of Lexington High and Tufts University, Anne, who had just turned 23, was brutally murdered by a stranger in March 1990. Anne's life was just beginning; Anne will never fulfill her dreams.

Ten years ago, wishing to confront the problems contributing to violence in our society, Anne's friends and family created the Anne E. Borghesani Community Foundation. We have partnered with the Phillips Brooks House Association to support Franklin I-O because of its demonstrated commitment to building a healthy community in Dorchester.

Members of our Board have visited the camp and observed the innovative curriculum offered to the students,

designed to reinforce reading, writing, and analytical skills in a respectful and safe environment. The students are curious and engaged in their work. An invaluable component of the program is the mentorship provided by the senior counselors to the high-school junior counselors. For some of these junior counselors, it is their first personal relationship with a college student. We are especially supportive of their cooperative work with BRYE campers to understand anger management and conflict resolution and reduce neighborhood tensions. At the closing ceremony the sense of energy and community among the campers, their mothers and fathers, and their counselors as they celebrate their summer's accomplishments, is proof of the program's success.

The Magic of SUP

Maria Dominguez Gray

Interim Executive Director

Sometimes we are reminded of the magic of SUP when we view it through another's eyes. This year, PBHA's Summer Urban Program is the proud recipient of the Excellence in Summer Learning Award through the National Summer Learning Association. I had the privilege of accompanying Sarah Pitcock, senior director of program quality for the association, on a site visit in July as one of the finalists for the award.

SUP has made great strides over the past few years in the quality and consistency of focused curriculum development and training to prevent summer learning loss among participants. We planned our site visit with Sarah excited to showcase the variety of our quality programming. However, as can be the case in this work, we ran into a few logistical

stumbling blocks. At RYI, we just missed the outstanding community service curriculum through our collaboration with REEP about healthy eating. The field trip visit with BRYE at the Museum of Science fell on the hottest day of the summer and the building was so crowded with families seeking air-conditioned activities, we could barely keep up with or hear the classes. I was a little disappointed because I knew that these missed moments would have given great insight into what makes SUP great.

Towards the end of our visit, Sarah shared an observation, which is so true to the fabric of SUP. I realize that I do not always stop to recognize the depth of its impact. She noted how remarkable it was that almost everyone she met had a deep shared commitment to the children, ownership over the programming, and was either returning or planning to return.

I replayed the day in my mind and saw with fresh appreciation the series of conversations that led her to this conclusion and forgot the "missed moments." Sarah met directors and senior counselors who had participated in the program as campers and junior counselors and for whom the well-being of their children and SUP extended far beyond a job. She met Harvard students back for their second, third, or fourth year who spoke with conviction about the change SUP had made on their lives and perspective. She witnessed creative, innovative curricula and activities for children, such as acting out Peter & the Wolf through Summer HARMONY, a RYSE supermarket field trip to learn applicable English, and a book-writing series for fifth graders. Each of those lessons were a clear contrast to pre-packaged curriculum shipped in a box, recited on automatic — they had life, relevance, excellence.



When I received the phone call that we had received the award, I was overjoyed, and when asked for a quote, I had cause to reflect on the other key ingredient to the magic of SUP. I shared, "We believe that SUP's strength is grounded in the dedication and support of our parents and community partners." We are truly lucky to have amazing partners who help support us with sites, resources and advice that shape the quality of what SUP is well beyond what we could ever achieve on our own. It is those partnerships that make it possible for our young people to return every year, that make them feel part of a larger community, and that inspire them to do their best for children. I have to say, the ingredients comprise a pretty great recipe for excellence. See you all next year.

PBHA Receives 2011 Excellence in Summer Learning Award

Phillips Brooks House Association received the 2011 Excellence in Summer Learning Award from the National Summer Learning Association.

This annual award recognizes summer programs demonstrating excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for young people, as measured by the Association's Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs. Winning programs also demonstrate exemplary practices in overall programming, including supporting staff, schools and other program partners in fulfilling shared goals.

Research has established that low-income students are disproportionately at risk of losing academic skills during the summer. While most children lose

up to two months worth of math skills during summer breaks, lower-income children also lose two months of reading skills. Excellence Award winning programs strive to curb these losses while also employing other research-based practices to build 21st century skills, confidence, parental engagement, and future aspirations.

"This year's Excellence Award winners are nothing short of inspiring," said Sarah Pitcock, the Association's senior director of program quality. "This diverse crop of programs is evidence that regardless of subject matter or setting, young people thrive when summer learning programs build positive relationships, self-efficacy and knowledge in equal measure."



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