



# Phillips Brooks House Association Summer Newsletter

# 2012

<http://www.pbha.org>

Fall 2012

## Teachable Moments

**Carolyn Chou '13**

PBHA President

**Alan Silva '13**

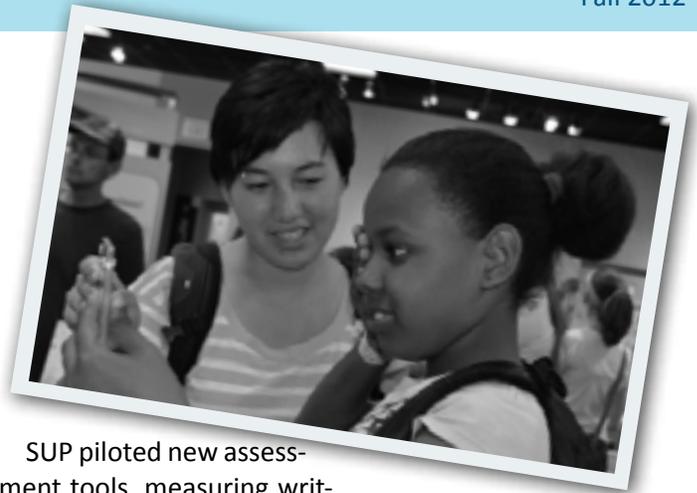
SUP Program Group Officer

One sleep-deprived night at Myles Standish State Forest, we were taking children on a late night bathroom run. Walking along, we noticed that the campers had stopped behind us. Thinking they would catch up, we continued on our way, but when we turned around they had not moved and were staring up at the stars in the sky. At that moment, we were reminded of the power of SUP to offer new experiences, create community, and provide teachable moments in every setting.

Every summer, 230 college and high-school students supported by professional staff teach, mentor, and build deep relationships with more than 800 children in Boston and Cambridge.

This is no small task! We were honored accept the challenge this summer and strengthen the tremendous work of past summers. We could not have done it without the support of our amazing community partners and the families of our campers. With our network behind us, we were able to run another successful summer of programming!

SUP, as many of you know, is not just summer camp, but an academically intense program that combats summer learning loss. After receiving the National Summer Learning Association's Excellence Award last year, we did not rest on our laurels but continued to think about how to better measure our campers' progress and make sure that we are providing high-quality summer curriculum.



SUP piloted new assessment tools, measuring writing gains as well as attitudes about learning, reading, and writing. We asked campers, "Do you like to read?" and "Do you think you are a good reader?" to capture not only their skills but their change in attitude, which can lead to continued gains throughout the year. In addition, we continued last year's classroom observations, with senior counselors observing teachers during training and directors giving counselors feedback on their teaching. We continue to think about

ways to make our programming stronger and capture the amazing, powerful work that is happening in every day in every classroom.

Building meaningful, lasting relationships is a critical component of the strong programming we offered this summer. SUP again valued relationships between campers, junior counselors, and senior counselors that began or continued to grow over the summer.

**continued on pg 2**

## SUP 2012 is...

**Powerful**

**Diverse**

**Influential**

**Data Driven**

**Motivating**

**Relationships**



continued from pg 1

These relationships run deep, and this summer we were able to continue those amazing relationships by hiring two former SUP directors as summer professional staff. Both worked with students with whom they had already built relationships over many years of youth work in Boston starting at PBHA, and they both mentored new students. In a groundbreaking moment, one of the two staff people, Nicole Young, officially held all the positions in SUP from camper to junior counselor to senior counselor to director to director of programs. We were incredibly fortunate to learn from these two amazing leaders and are proud to have them in the SUP family.

We were both thrilled to come back to SUP this summer, and while the summer certainly had its share of challenges, every time we walked into a classroom, we were filled with hope and joy. We supported directors through staff management and difficult conversations, and watched with pride as they built committed teams and held them to high standards. We watched kids laugh and explore, and we saw creative curricula that certainly did not come from a box. SUP reminds us that academics do not come at the price of innovation, and from environmental curriculum to music lessons to hands-on science activities, we observed kids learning and building both skills and confidence.

Neither of us can imagine a more powerful way to enter our senior year

of college, and we are grateful to the whole SUP community for supporting us in our journey. As we begin a new semester, we are reminded that those relationships do not end with the summer, and we all continue to connect with campers, junior counselors, and the staff as we move forward. We know that our relationships through SUP have certainly affected our outlook on the world and made us better people, and we look forward to continuing those relationships and watching the next generation take leadership and ownership of the program! If there is one thing we know, it is that one summer of SUP is just not enough.

## Take a Bow, SUP's 2012 Summer Scholars

**Louise Wills**  
Senior Development Coord.

Every summer, SUP's 30 directors have the unenviable task of choosing only six exceptional staff members for a named Summer Scholar award, each of which is accompanied by a cash grant to cover a portion of the awardees' salary.

And the *Ellsworth S. Grant Award* goes to...Cyatharine Alias '15! A Chinatown Adventure senior counselor, Cyatharine was, in the words of her directors, "not only a teacher to her campers but a friend as well. She came in with energy and a positive attitude that made them excited to learn. Her fun and interactive curriculum of literacy, math, and public speaking was proof of her dedication to ensuring that her campers enjoyed learn-

ing each and every day."

*Edward S. Fleming Award* winner Leslie Montes '14 was, according to her Key-latch directors, "a reflective and committed senior counselor. Leslie gave serious thought to empowering her campers, incoming sixth-grade students, through challenging academic work and community-centered reflection. Leslie's genuine care for her campers was displayed in her teaching, as she asked them to consider and take action against the social injustices in their South End community." The second *Edward S. Fleming Award* winner, South Boston's Ben LaRocque '15 faced a different sort of challenge. His directors wrote of him, "Ben had the most difficult group of campers (by far), but he walked into his classroom every day

with a positive attitude. He somehow managed to teach them and manage their behavior while developing a meaningful relationship with his junior counselor. Ben never stopped caring and was incredibly invested in his campers and their learning/camp experience. Just fabulous."

Of the three *Maye R. Zoffer Awardees*, Meredith Arra '15 was praised for "coming in with a smile on her face every single day. Campers in every grade fell for her and her patient and understanding nature. She laid a strong foundation of health consciousness in Chinatown's youngest campers with a

curriculum focused on nutrition, fitness, and safety." Dorothy Villareal, also in the Class of 2015, "was an amazing role model for her rising third-graders. She constantly challenged herself to teach better by always thinking about the needs of the students and creating a safe learning environment. Dorothy's commitment to her campers and their families did not end with SUP, as she is continuing to teach and mentor her students in the Key-latch Afterschool Program."



## Summer Matters

**Maria Dominguez Gray**  
Class of '55 Executive Director

Summer matters. It matters to PBHA's children, youth, and families who face urgent needs, and it matters as a time of realized or missed opportunity to build a foundation for the future. Summer matters because low-income students without access to structured learning lose more than two months in reading over the summer. It matters because more than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities and as a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college. It matters because low income children are already at an increased risk of obesity and gain weight more rapidly during summer and out-of-school time without organized activities.

Summer matters because violence and the factors that contribute to violence are on the rise in our communities, and parents want to know that their children are in a safe, loving environment. Yet, low-income and working-class parents struggle to find safe, quality programs they can afford. Summer also matters as a time for teens to feel safe and have a productive and encouraging job where they learn long-term skills, take responsibility for their community, and earn a paycheck to help with the family bills. PBHA's Summer Urban Program (SUP) matters because it gives participants the opportunity to learn and experience new things, serve as leaders in their communities, and develop meaningful relationships with positive role models.

SUP has embodied the core value that summer matters for decades, yet every year, we strive to grow and improve our ability to make summer matter even more for every child and

teen we engage. This past year, we identified 5 long-term outcomes for our youth programs, informed by input from key stakeholders, including children and parents:

Children use the necessary competencies and beliefs to achieve **academic** success in school.

Children take advantage of opportunities toward established **goals** and make plans that show hope and determination.

Children access resources and support through positive **relationships** with adults, peers, institutions, and family.

Children have leadership, feel belonging, and show responsibility in their **communities**.

Children use positive social skills and self-awareness to make **healthy life choices**

**"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."**  
~Anne Frank

In SUP 2012, we worked to align our activities and services to those outcomes, building on time-proven best practices and introducing innovative approaches. In one such innovation, a small group of senior counselors across camps trained with increased focus on literacy activities and co-developed a writing rubric to better assess and support their campers' writing. The pilot group of students, entering 3rd and 4th grade in the fall, provided writing samples on personal narrative prompts throughout the summer (average of 4.89 hours per week according to weekly reports, more than for any other age group). Through South Boston on Stage, children read a book with their class; wrote, produced and



performed a show based on that book together; and each received a copy of the book for their at-home library. The Native American Youth Enrichment Program introduced an intergenerational story-telling project and Key-latch reinforced literacy through daily read-aloud and journaling. The Refugee Youth Enrichment Program hosted a successful college and career fair that included schools and other post-high school opportunities and piloted a new leadership initiative for participants through the Assistant Leaders program.

Several camps focused on cross-community peace building initiatives, including a Franklin-IO expeditionary learning activity to the Garden of Peace—A Memorial to Victims of Homicide through which children shared stories, questioned, and reflected on the causes of violence in their community. Leaders! continued to provide needed summer jobs for teens who worked as junior counselors as well as mentorship and life and jobs skills development despite government cuts to 15 of our funded positions.

As a final thought, it is important to note that what was accomplished this summer was because the professional, college- and high-school students staff, SUP partners and supporters decided that our children and families *matter*. We are truly appreciative to all of you for making SUP 2012 happen and look forward to next summer.

# Thank you to our 2012 PBHA Summer Program donors!\*

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# BRYE Celebrates Diversity

**Francesca Smith '14**  
BRYE Director

As one of the two SUP camps that specifically serve recent immigrant students, Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment Summer embraces diversity as one of its core values. To promote this in the classroom, BRYE staff members are typically encouraged to be very intentional about celebrating the many differences and similarities of the students in their curricula and activities. This summer, our senior and junior counselors achieved that in their classrooms by creating comfortable spaces for students to learn about each other's unique backgrounds while finding commonalities. One senior counselor had her students create and present life maps, which depicted their lives in their home countries and their process of immigrating to the United States. Another senior counselor helped her students create BRYE passports that they were able to fill out and decorate after they learned about each of their classmates' countries.

This summer, our campers represented 13 different nationalities. We were very proud to reflect this diversity in our staff members as well—together, our SCs and JCs spoke nine different languages, a majority of our JCs were past BRYE campers, and eight of our nine SCs came from recent immigrant families. On the very first day of staff training, SC Abi Mariam saw an opportunity to take advantage of our diversity and proposed the creation of a new camp event: BRYE International Day. Despite the little free time staff had to themselves after long camp days, intensive curriculum planning, weekend camping, or Community Cousins events, JCs, SCs, and BRYE directors poured their energy into making International Day a success.

The full-day event began with a JC-led activity about personal identity and unity. Each student was given two strips of paper and asked to write two parts of their identity that make them special and unique. Camp-

er Christopher proudly declared: "I am a really great dancer," and his classmate Ibrahim chose to write "I am African" and "I am good at soccer." Afterwards, staff members connected each student's strip into one long, colorful paper chain that was hung in our main hallway as a powerful visual reminder of the rich diversity and unity of the BRYE community.

Afterwards, the JC "tour guides" led their students through the eight different "countries" in which their SCs had expertly transformed their classrooms. Rotating through a series of 30-minute stations prepared by each SC, students learned about the culture, geography, and traditions of Vietnam, Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Ethiopia, China, Mexico, and Fiji. With each rotation, students entered

a new country and were able to sample pastries from Cape Verde, make Chinese paper lanterns, learn traditional Dominican and Mexican dances, listen to contemporary Vietnamese music, and

more.

All campers were eager to learn new things about their teachers and love the hands-on approach to learning about the many cultures housed right in their own camp. Most were proud to see his or her country represented in the lessons. Some students were surprised and excited to see an SC enthusiastically teaching about a country to which she didn't even have any familial ties. On her experience teaching about Fiji, SC Rachel Bloom noted that she thought this was a valuable lesson for the kids because it demonstrated that "we can embrace, respect, and learn from other people and countries, regardless of whether or not our families or ourselves are natives." In each classroom, the enthusiasm for learning was palpable, and we hope that this exciting event helped our students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Overall, it was a magical day at camp that marked the creation of a wonderful new BRYE tradition!



97 % of campers surveyed responded that they learned new things this summer.

*"I Learned how to solve hard math problems, about past presidents, and about my community and my ancestors."*  
- Keylatch Summer Program Camper, age 9



99% of parents surveyed would recommend our camps to other parents.

*"This was my child's first experience of attending camp. I'm glad we chose FIO for her 1st time."*  
- Franklin I-O Parent



# Building 'Bridges

**Andrew Iannone '12**  
CYEP Director

"You have to time it just right!" Tessily, an oldest girls camper at Roosevelt Towers instructs Juan Carlos, a camper in Newtowne Court's 1st grade classroom. "You have to drop it a little early! Now!" The egg falls from Juan Carlos's small hand and it starts its free-fall to the floor below, where I am walking with a bike helmet on my head. Tessily's advice was spot-on and the egg makes a direct hit, exploding into yolk and shell on my head. The 25 campers and six counselors of the Exploratorium Bridge explode into cheers and laughter. Juan Carlos is beaming.

CYEP has a unique structure; the camp is split into three sites, each a fully functioning camp. Our Jefferson Park site serves 70 North Cambridge students; the Newtowne Court site serves 50 East Cambridge students between the ages of six and 10; the Roosevelt Towers site serves 40 East Cambridge students between the ages of 10 and 13. Those three sites collectively make up CYEP and a lot of thought and energy each summer is spent on finding opportunities to bring all three sites together to build a cross-Cambridge CYEP community. This goal ties deeply to CYEP's mission of reducing the neighborhood tension that has traditionally existed between North and East Cambridge.

While weekly, camp-wide field trips are long-standing traditions at CYEP, this summer, the directors and counselors began a new initiative, called 'Bridges, in order to increase the amount of cross-site collaboration and learning that happens at CYEP. 'Bridges, by bringing campers from every age-group and each site into a classroom together, cultivated a feeling of community in our campers and encouraged older campers to serve as mentors for younger campers. Each director, along with three senior counselors and three junior counselors, led

five weeks of curricula that explored topics beyond the usual math and literacy activities of each camp day.

Jefferson Park director Danitra Wansley '13 led the Journalism Bridge, which aimed to build critical thinking and interviewing skills while showing a practical application of this summer's focus on writing. Danitra ensured that literary engagement extended beyond the classroom and challenged campers to think like reporters. Newtowne Court senior counselor Catherine Copping '13, a member of The Harvard Crimson, also gave campers a behind-the-scenes tour of the University Daily's headquarters, including a sneak peek at the newspaper's printing press.

A pair of Bridges sought to expand CYEP's emphasis on providing nutritional guidance for our campers so that they may lead healthier lives and make healthier choices. Roosevelt Towers director and Wheaton College student Nephthalie Bernard '14 led the Health and Fitness Bridge. Nephthalie sought to introduce campers to the many different ways one can exercise. Thorough the exploration of yoga, meditation, Zumba, and other fitness programs, campers came to see that you don't need a gym to stay fit. Meanwhile, inside, Jefferson Park director Madalyn Durgin '14, showed campers how to make fresh salsa and guacamole using easy to find vegetables as a part of the Cooking Bridge. As Madalyn walked them through the recipe, campers eagerly wrote down the ingredients on index cards that they compiled into a recipe book they took home.

Another pair of Bridges introduce campers to their creative side. Myhra Sadiq '14, a Newtowne Court director, led the Visual Arts Bridge, incorporating traditional and alternative approaches to art, including painting,



origami and papier-mâché. For the final two weeks, campers in the Bridge worked on a mosaic piece that served as a centerpiece at CYEP's end-of-summer final shows. Roosevelt Towers director Jared Sawyer '14 challenged campers to explore their dramatic capabilities in the Performing Arts Bridge. Campers practiced singing, dancing, and acting in this engaging workshop. It was heartening to see normally quiet campers come alive on stage and show aspects of their personality that were normally hidden in the classroom.

Finally, I had the pleasure of introducing campers to topics in science through my Exploratorium Bridge. Science curricula are oftentimes under-prioritized at camp, so I made it my mission to show the fun side of biology, chemistry, and physics to my campers. From exploring chemical reactions using Mentos and Diet Coke to modeling potential to kinetic energy changes using clothespin catapults, campers in Exploratorium discovered the experimental side of science. The most inspiring moment of the summer came during Physics Week, while campers worked out how objects in free-fall behave. Although I was being pelted from above by children with eggs, I knew each hit meant that they had timed their drops perfectly with my movements below. They were learning physics, and, judging by their laughter, loving it.

Collaborative learning combined with community bonding: is there anything else more SUP than that?



## PBHA Moves for Health

This past summer we partnered with Boston Moves for Health, Mayor Menino's ambitious campaign to improve health and fitness by encouraging children to help reach the city's goal of moving 10 million miles this year. The Midsummer Celebration allowed us to showcase the initiative with 1,200 participants from across programs through zumba, a basketball tournament, races and a full audience workout. At Midsummer the PBHA community took more than 5.5 million steps. The Mission Hill and Roxbury Youth Initiative programs partnered with the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project to introduce a food justice community service learning curriculum. Through this partnership, children worked in local community gardens and "flower bombed" vacant lots around the neighborhood.

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