

Phillips Brooks House Association **2015** Summer Newsletter

<http://www.pbha.org>

Fall 2015

SUP Love

Jennie Ling '16

SUP Programming Officer

An afternoon at the playground quickly turned into a science lesson for Trayvoni and Eddy at Franklin IO. Instead of complaining that the slide was covered in sand, they decided to push rocks down to see how far they could travel. They tried tossing rocks with different amounts of force and played with the amount of sand on the slide. Trayvoni quickly noticed that the sand was preventing the rocks from moving down the slide and excitedly explained the phenomenon to his new friend: "I just love science so much!"

Because of SUP, Trayvoni's excitement and long-growing interest in science was taken outside of the classroom and

into the playground. Meanwhile, campers built rockets out of plastic bottles in South Boston, and all of the Chinatown Adventure campers went on a camp-wide trip to Wood's Hole Marine Biology facilities. All it took for these incredible lessons and field trips to happen was a passion among the director team to bring STEM curriculum into their camps, which speaks to the power that SUP has to inspire all the youth we serve.

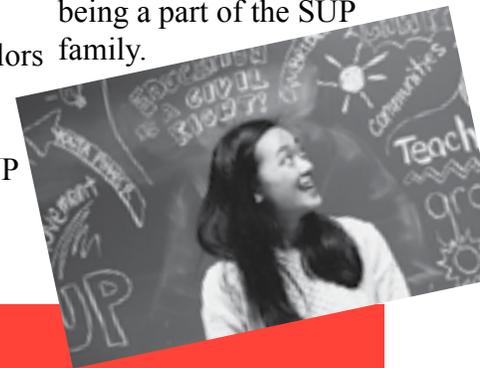
In addition to their passion for STEM, the director's overall excitement and passion for their camps set the tone for the 120 Senior Counselors and 90 Junior Counselors, who were dedicated to the academic, social, and emotional growth of

over 800 youth in Boston and Cambridge. With the support of professional staff, our college and high school students took on this ambitious challenge by teaching, mentoring, and building relationships with each and every one of the campers. From a camp-wide musical at CYEP to a classroom challenge to read 10,000 pages, there was intentionality in every lesson, initiative, and interaction.

This commitment to running quality SUP camps extended beyond the summers as an undergraduate. This summer, we piloted the alumni observation program, where former SUP directors and senior counselors in the Boston area observed all counselors in their classrooms and provided feedback and coaching. Their prior SUP experience and current experience as teachers

helped Senior Counselors improve the quality of their lessons and classrooms within the first two weeks of camp.

The desire to constantly improve SUP is driven by the deep relationships formed over the course of one or many summers. This "SUP Love" is the reason people come back, it explains why campers look up to Junior and Senior Counselors, and describes the force that inspires everyone involved. I hope this publication shows you how SUP continues to transform lives, and most importantly how SUP loves. Thank you for your support and thank you for being a part of the SUP family.



SUP 2015 is...

**BRYE ♦ CHAD ♦ CYEP ♦ FIO ♦ KSP ♦
LEADERS ♦ NAYEP ♦ RYSE ♦ RYI ♦ SBOS**

What Does it Take?

Maria Dominguez-Gray
Class of '55 Executive Director

In June, Boston's Mayor Walsh and the new Boston Public School Superintendent, Dr. Tommy Chang, held a press conference showcasing the importance of summer learning initiatives like Summer Urban Program in reducing the opportunity gap for low-income children. "When we create opportunities for our young people," Mayor Walsh said, "we set them on a pathway to a successful future, and build a stronger city." The Mayor went on to issue a challenge to do more-- a mandate which has been echoed by Cambridge leadership and across the country.

But what does it take to do more-- to truly make a difference in children's lives each summer? In 2015, 798 children learned, played, developed relationships, and discovered new worlds through PBHA's 12 camps. Yet, while the number of children reached is an important measure of success, we know that it is how we expand opportunities for our campers which truly impacts their development. What it takes is an approach to programming that truly values each person and a supportive environment which allows the whole child to thrive.

The Summer Urban Programs foster meaningful relationships and embody a strong sense of community and belonging for every youth. One Junior Counselor reflected in the post-evaluation, "I loved the strong community that we created with families and staff. The kids

learned to love each other like a family and feel safe." The theme of family, is repeated throughout the survey comments and grounded in the camps' intentional efforts to foster community among staff and families while valuing individuals' backgrounds. At the Native American Youth Enrichment Program final show, the oldest class created a sculpture of the different clans (age groups). As they spoke about the rabbits, bears, buffalo and coyote clans, they reflected on the importance of their community and working together, their own development and responsibility for younger youth. Keylatch campers from Boston's South End had the opportunity to get to know children from Chinatown Adventure through a pen pal program. These communities are adjacent, yet experience a cultural divide, and as children built relationships through letters and in person, they took the lead in coming together.

At SUP, we believe that bridging the opportunity gap also takes creative, relevant, hands-on learning. Camps strive to engage children in activities of creative expression that help them realize their stories matter. This summer, Cambridge Youth Enrichment Program's campers co-wrote a musical based on their collective camp experiences that they produced for their families and broadcast on Cambridge Community Television for the greater community audience. The oldest English Language Learners in the Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment program read *I am Malala* and wrote essays about their

own stories and acts of courage.

Most importantly, perhaps, we know it takes a commitment to believing in each young person's future and developing a belief in themselves and their purpose. In a discussion about barriers to college in a classroom of high school immigrants from the Refugee Youth Enrichment program, a young man expressed his frustration with the lack of in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants that makes any possibility of higher education an impossible goal in his mind. In a future class, the counselor brought in community organizations and resources for the young people to make the goal of college more achievable. Later, two PBHA counselors who immigrated to this country were invited by Michelle Obama, along with other first generation college students from across the country, to the White House to discuss the challenges they will face in college and to ask for their leadership in helping their peers succeed.

What it takes is not easy, in fact it's incredibly challenging at times, yet each year these individual moments of community, creative learning and belief in self bring us a little closer to achieving the opportunities our children deserve. Thank you for your part in doing what it takes.



Celebrating Culture

Diana Acosta '15
Keylatch Director

"We are KEYLATCH, the mighty mighty Keylatch!" This was the end of the Keylatch chant that could be heard around the Villa Victoria on the day of the Betances Parade. The parade is the opening to a three-day annual Betances Festival weekend that includes a variety of performances, food, and activities. The festival is a celebration of Latina culture and Puerto Rican cultural pride organized by one of Keylatch's community partners, IBA or Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion. Betances is named after Ramon Emeterio Betances, a Puerto Rican revolutionary known for his efforts in Puerto Rico's independence movement of the 19th century, for his activism in the abolition of slavery, and his contributions to medicine.

Like most summers, the Betances Plaza (where Keylatch families and staff gather every

morning for sign-in) became the starting point of the parade. The Keylatch campers and staff were excited to be wearing their sapphire blue camp shirts and were ready to carry the banner that each group had helped make throughout the week. The idea was to offer each camper a space to contribute to the banner, so campers were able to add their handprints and name in colorful paint. As soon as we started the parade, the kids were ready to go chanting our morning line-up song: '*Everywhere we gooo, people wanna know, who we are so we tell them, we are Keylatch the mighty mighty Keylatch.*' Festival attendees, families, and Keylatch alumni cheered the kids on throughout the parade as campers enthusiastically danced to the music around us or chanted the Keylatch song.

It became a space for campers to not only demonstrate their Keylatch pride but also to share with others their community

pride. Part of Keylatch's mission includes to "*deepen cultural and community pride,*" which was a highlight throughout our summer projects, making Betances a unique opportunity to show our camp focus and the campers' hard work. The parade is significant in that it was a time to recognize that personal narratives and all families' stories matter and that we can be festive and loud about it. As one camper from Oldest Girls shared with us 'I am Betances and even if the South End is changing, my Puerto Rican roots live on.'



Keylatch at the Betances Festival

Spotlight On Three Years with Google

PBHA has entered its third year partnering with Google. Before the summer begins 'Googlers' come to PBH, as part of Google Serves week, to help students and staff stuff binders for counselors, fill first aid kits, organize books, and ensure camping supplies are complete and ready to use. Middle school students from selected SUP camps received a great opportunity to visit the Google Cambridge campus.

While at Google, students learned about career opportunities and new technological advances being worked on. When taking the tour they

were given hand-on activities with regard to coding and learned new ways of thinking about the world and technology.

One of the major goals of this partnership with Google was to bridge the achievement gap of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for children of color and girls. The Google visits gave each of the campers, the female campers in particular, the opportunity to see that they are capable of obtaining jobs pathwayed by an interest in STEM.

They got the chance to

ask the 'Googlers' questions regarding their career path, what they like about Google, and how they ultimately ended up there. Campers walked away from the visit, not only with sunglasses, but with new ways of thinking about their careers before they reached high school.



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Shaquanda Brown
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'We Are BR-IO'



Bushra Guenoun '17

BRYE Director

We will make this collaboration better. We will make this the best collaboration for our campers. This summer, directors from the Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment (BRYE) and Franklin IO Summer Program (FIO) decided that their main goal for collaboration was for their campers to get to know each other and understand the other camp and its campers. Youth finding the similarities between them would create more unity of their two camps combining. The answer to this goal was simple; pair campers together so they can know one another.

Young campers from FIO were paired with older campers from BRYE while older campers from FIO were paired with younger campers from BRYE; a mentor-mentee friendship was formed. Campers met and took part in fun activities that promoted allyship and team-building. The paired campers became pen pals exchanging letter via directors every week to one another until the anticipated field day that was being created by the older campers. The

oldest kids were placed with the task of making the BRYE-FIO field day. Prior to the creation oldest campers were given a brief overview of how collaboration was going to work and the youth had a chance to take part in group and team-building games together. Campers were divided by materials such as: buckets, balloons, and rope; they were given the task of coming up with a game that was centered around the materials that they were given. They were given a strict instruction that the stations had to be; fun, inclusive, safe, and have a take away.

The grand day finally came; campers walked onto a huge field to find 12 different camper led stations along with a bouncy house, snow cone machine, cotton candy, and DJ booth. Junior staff were in charge of leading the stations that were not student led. Senior staff were in charge of five BRYE campers and five FIO campers. At each station campers were given a challenge in which they had to overcome together. Proceeding through these stations it became clear to the campers that the reason that they collaborated with one another was because they had to overcome the tension between their camps so they could be friends.

"The BRYE collab was an example of what I envisioned my campers experiencing this summer," said a FIO senior counselor. "We paired up BRYE and FIO campers and had them perform a series of problem-solving games (e.g. egg drop) which allowed them to work with other campers and helped them to build new friendships while having fun at the same time. After the collab, my campers would frequently ask when they could see their BRYE friends again and often would walk over to the other side of the cafeteria to say hi to their buddies. Additionally, it gave me a chance to work with a BRYE SC and to get to know some of the BRYE campers (many still say hi to me in the hallway) which was awesome!"

After finishing the team building stations, the day was not over yet the last station was a reflective station. There was vast plain white banner, the campers were tasked with putting their handprints on the banner and writing a short message. The banner was hung at the BRYE site so every day the campers were reminded of the fun day they had with their new FIO friends.



Fighting for a Common Goal

Shaquanda Brown '15
RYI Director

"Inner city children have a harder time" is a common phrase used around many cities when discussing the few opportunities that children have in the inner city. Healthy food options are scarce in a place with many people. Corner stores which offer items like; chips, sweets, and colored water and sugar are places that most children frequent on a day to day basis. Along with food, many youth of color struggle with their identity and how they can possibly be an influential part of their community.

Roxbury Youth Initiative (RYI) took a look at the items that plagued youth of color in the inner-city and built a project. Live Healthy, Be Healthy was a new initiative started by RYI last summer and was expanded this summer. In its mission RYI prides itself of being a place where students have the chance to be themselves and grow into the best person that they can be. Through activities that took a look at identity, advocacy, and healthy living, campers at RYI were starting to see the change that they can in their lives and the lives of others in their communities. Having this new initiative, it was a great pleasure to have Ayanna Pressley, the first black congresswoman, come to visit the campers at RYI. Ms. Pressley wants to ensure that youth of color and their communities have the resources needed to achieve great things.

During her visit to RYI, Ms. Pressley took a tour of the camp



site and talked with directors, counselors, and campers about the issues they see in their neighborhood and what they believe can be done to ensure that these issues begin to get fixed. The topics discussed included; hours of the school day, abundant numbers of corner stores, and violence.

Campers were given the opportunity to ask Ms. Pressley planned questions about how she came to be a congresswoman, how she plans on helping the community, and her favorites activities to do. At the end of her visit, Ms. Pressley took a special few minutes to tell campers that they can be and do anything that they put their mind to. They should never give up on what they want to do and to never take no for an answer when someone tries to stop their progression.

RYI was amazed and grateful for the ideas that Ms. Pressley expressed to their campers. Her presence alone, as the first black congresswoman, gave campers and staff members another push in realizing they can do anything they put their mind to.

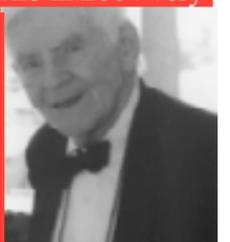
The RYI community came out of this experience with a renewed dedication to youth leadership and service.



Thank you, Ellsworth S. Grant

"As a Harvard freshman, I found PBHA an oasis of friendship and useful activity outside of classes. Without it, I would have drifted unhappily through my freshman year. Instead I gained confidence and maturity."

PBHA would like to honor the late Ellsworth Grant '39, who in 2004 very generously created an endowment to cover the salary of an unfunded first-year student working for SUP.



Beating the Odds



This summer PBHA was one of the 70 non-profits in the country chosen to nominate youth to participate in the 2015 Beating the Odds Summit; as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative. This initiative is a way to inspire all students in America to surpass high school and 'reach higher' for their future. Over 130 college-bound students, who overcame obstacles and still continued on to finish high school, were honored by the First Lady.

PBHA sent two first generation college-bound youth, Henry Santana and Wen Ping Gao, to the summit for their long time engagement in PBHA.

Henry attended the Mission Hill Summer Program as a camper and counselor, and attributes his success to his time at Mission Hill; he has entered his freshman year at Lasell College. Wen Ping has spent three years at Chinatown Adventure Summer Camp and the after-school program. Her determination to continue on her educational path is due to her interest in

studying the things that she enjoys most so she can make the most of her college experience. Wen Ping has entered her first year at Macalester College.

PBHA wishes them the best of luck in college and beyond!



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