



# Return to an In-person SUP



**Lourdes Vivanco '23**  
Summer Programming Group Officer

To say that this past summer was a time of regrounding, recommitting, and reconnecting would be a massive understatement. In our first planning meeting at the end of 2021, we were asked to imagine a Summer Urban Program (SUP) that a majority of the incoming student staff have never experienced before. We knew on-paper what it takes to run; we had photos, videos and the encouragement of the many SUP participants who came before us. We had some incredible staff who were former campers, previous directors, and even three SUP programming group officers, to whom we are grateful.

Eventually, we assembled a team full of students eager to make a difference this summer. Through all of the growing pains of starting almost from scratch, a beautiful SUP (experience) was born.

To run SUP in-person again meant that we had to reground ourselves in our community and service values. With the pandemic easing off, there was some opportunity to engage young people prior to the summer, but there was still a lot to teach. During our trainings, retreats, and planning sessions, we created a strong spirit of solidarity among the director staff. One of the deepest impacts SUP had on our staff was how they continued to live by SUP values outside of the classroom and offsite. They spent time in their communities for meals and outings. They went to the beach on the weekends and took care of one another during the summer's challenges. By the end of the summer, **the meaning of service was no longer something for them to learn, but something that they experienced and changed their way of being.**



“Some of our (SUP) kids loved their camp so much they insisted on coming back as JLincs or Junior Counselors in the future!”  
-SUP Director

This past year, SUP asked: "What does it mean to show commitment to a community and young people?". It looked like a child who hadn't had consistent schooling for the past two years gain confidence in their reading. It looked like 1000 members of the SUP community cheering during the Midsummer Celebration talent show. It looked like toasting marshmallows together over an open fire while camping.



For SUP 2023, we are looking forward to building on the amazing work that all our staff and young people accomplished. The summer created individuals who in learning the meaning of regrounding, recommitting, and reconnecting, have sustained and grown what they learned in during the school year and will continue to do so this coming summer.



# Our Own Community of Superheroes



**Maria Dominguez-Gray,  
Ed.M. '94**

Class of '55 Executive Director

You know that scene in the movie, *Avengers: End Game*, when after half of the Marvel superheroes had ceased to exist, they magically reappear in the 11th hour, at the end of the battle, to save the universe? I'm not saying PBHA saved the universe this summer, but reflecting back, we did have our own community of superheroes who showed up at just the right moment to breathe new life into our summer programs. That's its own kind of blockbuster story. PBHA programming was finally back in-person this past summer! SUP provided more than 700 children and teens with quality learning and employment opportunities while the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter and Y2Y Harvard Square offered shelter to the unhoused. The Adult ESOL Program continued to operate both online and in-person serving more than 700 recent immigrants with free English classes. More than 102 college students committed to making a difference and the vast majority of them not having past experience supporting

in-person summer program. The learning curve was hard and steep. As many of you know first-hand, PBHA is student-led and truly relies on an apprenticeship model in which senior student leaders mentor first-time student volunteers — showing them how to calm a rowdy field trip or how to counsel a shelter guest who is struggling. Returners help new volunteers understand that, yes, facing the world's inequities is very challenging work, but you are not alone, we can do this together; and in the end, you will look back at your experience with the joy of knowing the difference you made to others. You are part of a larger community and legacy dedicated to justice.



**98% of families say their  
child was safe and  
enjoyed SUP!**

The students were definitely not alone as they benefited from that community of support that showed up in new ways this summer. With the help of an anonymous donor, we were able to engage alumni coaches and graduating seniors to add extra capacity and institutional memory support at the shelters and SUP sites.

Alumni filled the gaps left by fewer experienced student staff. They helped make outreach phone calls to families who knew and trusted them, mentored volunteers, observed and supported student teachers in the classroom, introduced volunteers to long-term partners, and helped new directors reflect on how to best support their teams.

In addition, so many of you supported SUP financially to ease the burden of fundraising for the students, whether through attending the SUP Auction, awarding grants, or making an individual gift. The Class of '72, founders of the original SUP programs, rallied together to raise \$150,000 to support student stipends in memory of their beloved classmate, Emile Godfrey.

The PBHA staff, who have tirelessly guided and supported multiple program adaptations over the past two years, helped ensure everyone's well-being by providing socio-emotional support and food security for children, families, teen and college student volunteers who were still facing the negative effects of the pandemic. Our site partners welcomed our programs while teen counselors and families helped ground our student volunteers in their program communities, traditions and values.

Without question we had our own superheroes who made the stories of those impacted in this newsletter, and so many more, possible. The best part? This past summer wasn't the endgame, it was a renewed beginning. We're back!





**Kerry McGowan,  
M.Ed. '02**

Director of Programs

For two years, SUP's tarps, tents, sleeping bags, and coolers sat idle in storage in the basement of Hollis. Finally, this summer, we were able to take them out, air them out, and ready them for the adventures that were put off during the pandemic.

## Return to Camping

Over one week in July, we rotated in and out groups of campers from all the SUP programs. Swimming, outdoor games, walks in the woods, blueberry picking, grill-cooked food and s'mores by the campfire were once again part of the SUP. It was not without challenges, however, to plan a return to the wilderness of the Myles Standish State Forest in Carver, Massachusetts. The decision was made to do a scaled-down version of pre-pandemic camping, when every camper had had the opportunity to spend an overnight in the woods. This summer it was necessary to limit participation to the older (11-13 year olds) campers, reasoning that for some, this would be the last chance for them to go on a camping trip with SUP. With the pandemic still simmering, we needed to take precautions that were not a part of previous camping trips – transporting children by bus



to allow for social distancing, spacing out campers in the tents, having covid supplies on hand as contingency. The weather (mostly) cooperated, remaining dry though it was one of the hottest summers on record.

Judging by the nightly difficulty of getting campers to go to sleep, the excitement of being outdoors once again created memories for campers of their SUP experience. Due to the hard work of the staff, support, directors, senior counselors, and junior counselors, an intimate encounter with nature is again a part of the SUP experience.



**Tatiana Burgos '18**

Summer Director of Programs

This past summer was my 21st year of being a part of the Keylatch Summer Program and I had, as always, the most amazing experience! Summer 2022 was definitely different from all of my previous ones because instead of directing, I was now coaching student directors and counselors as they created their own vision of Keylatch.

When I was a student leader, I would often just pick up from where I left off from the previous year. It was straightforward – it's my community, after all: I know the

## Alumni Coaching: Filling in the Institutional Knowledge Gap

families, I know the staff and I love the work. However, in my new role as an alumni coach and Summer Director of Programs, I had to take a step back and think about what it really meant to be in those roles. This summer wasn't just about running camp, it was also about making sure that I kept Keylatch's foundation strong while also helping my students create and plan their own summer experience.

One of the great things about SUP is that it encourages student leaders to fully envision and create. I believe that we succeeded in doing just that by, first, grounding our student leaders in learning about South End and making sure they heard from those who had been involved with Keylatch for years, like myself. Student leaders saw Keylatch's impact on its participants and connected them to their work, mission and values. I don't think the same level of learning would have happened if someone other than an alum was going through this process with them. There's something unique about having support from someone who has extensive lived experience with SUP - both as a

and as a student leader. Knowledge and best practices from the past are easily accessible. And for this particular summer, where we were finally back in-person, it was *especially* tough. However, alumni coaches miraculously filled in gaps that no one else could have.

**Solidarity and support from alumni coaches proves how building strong and confident student leaders benefits SUP and PBHA in the long-run.** I am forever grateful for the experience and I am hoping to be able to do it all over again during SUP 2023.





## Hiren Lami '24

President and  
Director, Mission Hill  
Summer Program

Midsummer 2022 was a beautiful event! This summer, we were able to host the first full Midsummer celebration in person since 2019. It was so exciting to see members of our communities come together and create this space for

# Midsummer 2022: Prioritizing Joy

collective joy with one another. We started discussing the logistics before camp even began, planning our return to Stony Brook and all of the preparation it would take to recreate the joy of Midsummer within the 2022 context. Once we finally arrived at the actual day of Midsummer, it felt like I was stepping into one of the many photos of past Midsummers. I was transported to a timeless space of community across SUP. Because so much of our senior staff was new this year, we were creating the vision as we worked to realize it. Thankfully, we had a fantastic junior staff cohort and campers who knew exactly what they were doing! I was lucky enough to work with our junior counselors on imagining Midsummer Carnival. It was amazing to hear them suggest activities they enjoyed as campers and the traditional carnival games that they were looking forward to leading in their first year in-person.

I love how much ownership our young people take in planning this event each year.

As we led Midsummer planning meetings, we were intentional in pausing and hearing from the experiences of our junior staff. They truly hold a vision and care for SUP in such a vital way. I learned so much from them as they taught our young people choreography, helped facilitate games, and served dinner during the celebration. Our campers even advised us of the best prizing and how to position the dunk tank. **The young people we work with hold so much knowledge, and Midsummer 2022 was so much better thanks to their stewardship.**



## Y2Y and Summer Shelters

### TJ Dulac '22

Director, Youth to Youth Network (Y2Y)

Summer 2022 brought another successful season at Y2Y Homeless Shelter! We offered sanctuary to more than twenty young adults (whom we call guests) seeking emergency shelter this summer. Guests commented that Y2Y was the shelter they felt safest at in the Boston area, as we offered a haven of physical and psychological safety through conversation, games, and relationship building. Ten student staff—seven from Harvard College—ran the shelter operations, navigating joyful and challenging moments serving one of the most vulnerable populations in our community. One of the highlights of the summer was a kayaking outing: I was left in the wake of a few guests in a race along the Charles River. Y2Y staff also helped several guests obtain apartments during their stay at Y2Y. Perhaps most importantly, we built solidarity this summer, grounded in our common humanity and equality. At a final staff reflection, common themes resounded: gratitude, transformation, community, and ongoing commitment to fighting the social injustice of young adult homelessness.





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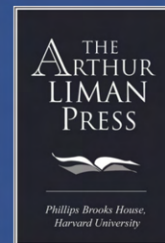
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Phillips Brooks House Association  
Harvard Yard  
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