



Phillips Brooks House Association 2021 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

www.pbha.org



The Only SUP of Its Kind

Casey Soto '22 & Remi Owoseni '22
Summer Programming Group
Officers



We are Casey Soto and Remi Owoseni and we had the pleasure of directing PBHA's Summer Urban program (SUP) this past summer. We both decided to direct SUP because we knew that this summer would be different from any other SUP. We saw it as an opportunity to vision, dream, and show up for our communities.

We call SUP 2021 "the only SUP of its kind." SUP 2021 required us to innovate and create a hybrid camp model. We took the best parts of last summer's fully virtual SUP - its small online classes, 1-1 connections between youth and counselors, and supply deliveries to campers' homes. We added more structure and 1-1 learning time so children could receive much needed personalized attention after a year of disrupted education.

However, keeping some activities virtual presented a new challenge. Many students felt fatigued after a year of online learning. The SUP 2021 team met the challenge and more. Among our favorite memories was dropping by an online classroom to find Mission Hill senior counselor Josh Caven dressed in a dragon costume, roaring and celebrating every time a camper answered a question correctly. Small moments like that capture the creativity and joy that every staff member put into SUP this year.

We also added in-person components: campers spent real time with each other in person! "Magic School Buses," or PBHA vans were filled with outdoor equipment and games to increase the fun of outdoor in-person activities, and tables and tents set up each day for shade became outdoor learning spaces. We watched Chinatown campers rediscover the magic of blowing bubbles on Boston Common and experience the delight and chaos of playing an in-person version of Among Us. Some program activities took place in physical classroom spaces (to which we had limited access) but also at local libraries and community centers who were excited to welcome children back.

At the beginning of the summer, we sat down with our team to talk about what we needed to make this summer happen and how to face unexpected challenges with resilience and love. We landed on Joy, Wellness, Support, and Community as SUP 2021's core

values. We witnessed joy in our campers as they reveled in friendly competitions of kickball and water balloon fights, and painted beautiful camp murals. Counselors had conversations with our youth about identifying emotions, identity and empowerment, and problem solving. We embraced wellness and support by creating mindfulness practices, enabling us to not only check in with our physical bodies but also our hearts and minds and build uplifting community spaces.

SUP 2021 was truly unlike any other. This year, we gave ourselves the time and the space to dream. We tossed around "what-ifs," narrowed possibilities, thought about likely outcomes, hypothesized about the state of the world, and most importantly focused on what our youth needed from us. We built strong relationships with each other. We prioritized joy and wellness. We celebrated and supported each other. We are so proud of our staff and our youth for creating such a wonderful summer experience and are so excited to see everyone come together again next summer.



There is Always Time for the Right Work

Maria Dominguez-Gray, Ed.M. '94
Class of '55 Executive Director



An approach to management we teach PBHA students is adaptive leadership or an emerging model that embraces change, experimentation, and innovation. Adaptive leadership enables individuals to handle challenges and adapt to the evolving environment around them. This summer, our evolving environment was shaped by a range of challenges caused by the pandemic including limited access to indoor spaces, families stretched thin for resources, COVID safety guidelines that changed on a weekly basis, and no Harvard housing for students engaged in service resulting in a limited number of college students able to stay in Greater Boston. As vaccines became available and the country began to reopen, we were able to run more programs in person where possible and keep the best of online accessibility where most helpful.

One guiding principle of adaptive leadership is "There is always time for the right work." PBHA's 2021 summer programming continued to be grounded in the strength of adaptation and knowing that, despite the odds, we would make time and space for the work that was most needed. With the support of our partners, the Harvard

Square Homeless Shelter was able to reopen its doors in June thanks to an investment in renovations to ensure safer air quality. The Y2Y Harvard Square Shelter, having weathered the unimaginable marathon of staying open every day since March 2020, welcomed student volunteers back in greater numbers this summer. On the other end of the spectrum, PBHA's Adult English Language Learner Program opted to expand online services to better meet the busy schedules and accessibility needs of their students, and as a result grew to serve an unprecedented number - more than 600 - of learners.

When the country reopened, SUP families needed to return to work and as the summer approached, the possibility of operating in person became more realistic and the need more pressing. We were committed to being there for our families to meet their needs as best as we could, but we didn't really know how we would do so given the challenges. We turned once again to the creativity, resilience, and generosity of our student leaders, staff, college and community partners, alumni and supporters to imagine and make a summer like no other.

In the end, we were proud to be able to offer a hybrid SUP model. Youth participated part time in online classes with innovative curriculum taught by students around the country and part time in person with activities facilitated by college students and high school students in Boston and Cambridge neighborhood parks. As COVID restrictions relaxed, children from each program were also able to safely participate in local field trips, one of the more beloved parts of the SUP experience. Programs hiked the Blue Hills and Franklin Park, spotted whales on a

whale watch, and went bowling.

Aware of the increased disparities many in our communities are facing in the wake of the pandemic, we also prioritized providing SUP families with food security, technology, and housing eviction support. Additionally, we continued to strengthen the social emotional curriculum for the campers and wellness support for staff. Our Mid-summer Celebration, held virtually, captured the joy of programs through Zoom and in-person performances, celebration of our partners, and even some live Kahoot! trivia and freeze dance.



Another principle of adaptive leadership is "What you pay attention to grows." We have learned many lessons and grown in many ways through the pandemic, but one of the most important is that when we pay attention to participants in our programs who need our support, and pay attention to moments of joy, belonging and collective care, what we grow is a resilient community, grounded in justice, able to take on even the greatest of challenges. As the country reopened its doors, hopefully we were able to open hearts, minds, and perspectives. And that is always the "right work."

Cultivating Joy

Loey Bull '23
Director, Cambridge Youth Enrichment Program (CYEP)

Going into my second summer with Cambridge Youth Enrichment Program (CYEP), I was really looking forward to seeing the returners continue to grow while also welcoming new kids to the program. One lunch during the first week, I asked a few kids if I could sit at the table to eat with them. They were all enthusiastic about making space for me and one of them even said, "Of course you can! We all love you, Loey!"

I'm certain that some kids were anxious about making friends and about adapting to the summer with CYEP. I was too! It was my commitment to make sure that my campers had a

great experience but to my surprise, they were there for me as well.

This summer required major structural changes to the program and we were faced with the task of creating a hybrid program that best served CYEP families and staff. This required a lot of flexibility and trust in one another to effectively execute. For example, some junior and senior counselors were completely remote while others were hybrid or completely in-person. We also ran camp from two sites and split the days by rising grade level to maintain small groups for health and safety.

It was incredible witnessing the creativity of counselors who collaborated to create curriculum, the patience of families who had to adjust to the

hybrid program, the optimism of the kids and their capacity to show up daily with excitement, and the determination of my two co-directors as we worked together to ensure things ran smoothly.

One of the most special moments of CYEP this summer was when the kids and counselors surprised me with a big card they'd all signed for my birthday in the last week of program. It was so thoughtful and was such a generous way to show their appreciation and happiness for me. From the very first week to the very last, I found myself in a supportive community that helped to create (per the words on the PBHA website) one of the hardest summers I'll ever love.

Together, we made a difference for:
181 Teen and College staff members
409 Campers & Families

"SUP was the absolute highlight of my entire summer. I knew that every day with my campers was going to be a great day. I saw it in their smiles, their cheerful faces, in them running around on the playground and having just the time of their lives" - SUP Senior Counselor



Thank you to our 2021 PBHA Summer Program donors!*

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Adaptability & Mindfulness

Samuel Ward '22, Tatiana Quintanilla '21 & Florence Darko '23
Directors, Franklin I-O



This summer, Franklin I-O welcomed campers from the Dorchester community to participate in programming centered around adaptability, curiosity, and mindfulness. Our program thrived virtually as well as in-person, with counselors and students utilizing endless internet resources and enjoying the great outdoors (and indoors on rainy days). Our team of senior counselors was spread across the United States, with leaders logging in all the way from California to locally in Massachusetts. Our campers participated in daily journaling and restorative

circles, played their fair share of hop scotch and Taboo, and made paper airplanes and self-portraits. Every Friday, all the counselors and campers convened on Zoom for a camp-wide meeting where we enthusiastically recited Franklin I-O's camp chant despite lagging video and delayed audio.

Learning to be adaptable was the primary task for Franklin I-O as we navigated being unable to bus campers to and from programming along with the continued challenges of remote programming. In order to become comfortable in the discomfort of the unknown, we encouraged each other to be curious, discovering new ways to engage with each other (like exploring our personalities while playing the online game skribbl.io) and learning about the world (through our natural science projects at Harambee Park). Mindfulness kept us tethered to our goals of mutual investment and personal development. With our weekly journals and circles and Middle Up's Hip Hop Therapy Workshop, we learned how to express and ar-

ticulate our emotions, how to actively listen to each other, and how to communicate respectfully.

By the end of camp, the counselors and campers had formed lasting friendships and mentorships and couldn't contain their excitement at the possibility of returning to camp the following summer. Most of all, we learned the importance of collaboration - between counselors, campers, families, and community members - in making an unprecedented summer and unforgettable experience.

"SUP pushed my understanding of what summer camp and community actually can be. I learned that community is way beyond what I've even imagined it to be. The possibilities are endless as long as everybody's willing to put in the work" - SUP Director

Reigniting Curiosity

Kate Johnsen '02, Ed.M. '14
Deputy Director

Loss was an all too common experience during COVID. For the SUP community, one of our greatest losses was the inability to take campers to new places, to spark curiosity and joy through discovery. Experiential learning has been a cornerstone of SUP since its inception. In the 1980s Key-latch toured Latino communities along the Eastern Seaboard. SUP programs have traveled to New York, Washington D.C., New Hampshire, Maine, and Philadelphia.

SUP campers have visited cultural institutions in Boston, Niagara Falls, the Capitol, Mt. Sunapee, Myles Standish Campgrounds, and the Aquinna Reservation. In 2020, senior counselors did everything they could to continue to expose campers to new environments, but no matter how interactive or dynamic the online field trips were, they did not spark wonder.

In 2021, the SUP community rediscovered wonder. The SUP 2021 model incorporated field trips. Campers from South Boston Outreach Summer went on a whale watch in Boston Harbor and saw different species of whales.

Junior Leaders In Community (JLinC) participants hiked the Blue Hills. Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment campers picnicked at Castle Island. Campers from the Native American Youth Enrichment Program visited a farm focused on indigenous practices and sustainability. New environments provided catalysts for imagination, social connections, and joy. Friendships were forged on hikes, boats, the farm, and at the beach. Most importantly, SUP reclaimed the magic of expanding horizons and the hope that discovery ignites.

We Have Everything We Need

Thu Pham '23
Director, Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment (BRYE)



If you had visited Townfield Park in Dorchester this past summer or any of Boston Refugee Youth Enrichment's (BRYE) Zoom classrooms, you would have seen two things happening: joy and learning. For the first time in its history, BRYE ran a hybrid model and almost every student opted into in-person programming.

Early on, it was easy to get caught up in the seemingly endless logistic impossibilities, and more importantly, the worry at the forefront of our minds: how would we continue to create the same sense of BRYE love, family, and support for the community with this new model?

Innovation was present in all aspects of the camp. In the absence of vans, staff planned out walking routes to

accompany students to and from program. For our outdoor in-person programming, we brainstormed and made sure to use all supplies and the natural features of the space to our advantage. In-person and online staff collaborated to create engaging and creative curriculum, ensuring that students had continuity between both aspects of camp. Those adjustments involved much planning and discussion with community members and staff, and I attribute BRYE's success this summer to the resilience, dedication, and energy of our participants, staff, and community partners.

Students arrived everyday eager to learn, whether it was about quadrilaterals, each other's home countries, or a volcano made out of limes. Staff and students were rarely ruffled by adversity, even throughout the hot (and sometimes rainy) days outside, technological difficulties, or long walking routes to and from the program. Our community partners, specifically the Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (VietAID) and the Dorchester branch of the Boston Public Library, were with us every step of the way. They made our full-day model possible by providing lunches and allowing BRYE students to participate in literary activities in their space. They also offered invaluable insight and advice about the Dorchester community, which was especially critical given that BRYE had not entered the physical space for so long.

The most rewarding part of the summer was seeing meaningful relationships form between campers and staff alike, especially after such an intense period of social isolation. A few memories from this summer will always stick with me: on one of the first days of in-person programming, witnessing two participants recognizing each other from a breakout room in their online class, and then sticking with each other for the rest of camp; senior counselors, junior counselors, and participants engaging in fun conversations that made the long walking routes seem like seconds; and the somber goodbyes on the last day of programming, with promises to keep in touch for years to come.

"I have become more confident and flexible. I've seen myself go from not knowing very much about teaching at all to being able to make a curriculum in a few short hours. That growth is something that I can fully attribute to being a SUP counselor. It has been an absolute pleasure, I am so glad that I did SUP this summer" - SUP Senior Counselor



SUP is...

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Reopening Harvard Square Homeless Shelter



Fahedur Fahed '22
Director, Harvard Square Homeless
Shelter (HSHS)

I had the honor and privilege of directing the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter (HSHS) during its reopening this summer. It feels surreal that I have been staffing HSHS for seven ye-

ars now, and it all started my freshman year of high school with the weekly Club 4 dinner shifts. Because my family was fortunate enough to be placed in Cambridge public housing, it has been ingrained in me to return what was given to me and to do everything I can to help guests secure employment and housing opportunities.

We were told the shelter's renovations would not be completed until the fall, and we unfortunately missed all of the grant deadlines we typically receive each year. However, as the summer approached, the timeline for the renovations drastically shortened and there was hope for a summer shelter opening. Without any sources of funding, I turned to the HSHS alumni and peer network and launched a crowds-

ourcing fundraising campaign via Click & Pledge. We raised nearly \$20,000 to help cover the costs of in-shelter operations and the inaugural summer iteration of the Street Outreach Program. This was the hardest summer of my life, but the most invaluable because I loved the transitional model for the same 15 guests with a focus on intensive case management. As a result, it drove my passion for investigating the intersection of health and homelessness. I have dedicated my senior thesis to the positive feedback loop between homelessness and chronic opioid addiction, and I now strive toward one day practicing addiction medicine and working at Boston Health Care for the Homeless.