Here Comes the Sun

Shining a light on inspiring summer learning programs
National Summer Learning Association

Our vision is to ensure that every child is safe, healthy and engaged in learning during the summer months.

Our mission is to connect and equip schools, providers, communities, and families to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to our nation’s youth to help close the achievement gap and support healthy development.
“Virtually all of the advantage that wealthy students have over poor students is the result of differences in the way privileged kids learn when they are not in school....America doesn’t have a school problem. It has a summer vacation problem ...”

Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers*, pp. 258 - 260
What’s possible in the summer?
Summer Opportunities

- Build their academic skills
- Build their confidence
- Expose them to their future
- Inspire them to lead
- Strengthen them physically
- Build their network of support
Core Questions

- Why are you running a summer program?
- What needs of youth will you meet?
- How will you know you were successful?
- Programs can reduce summer learning losses and even lead to achievement gains
- Voluntary, mandatory, and home-based summer program programs all found to have positive effects
- Studies have found effects of summer learning programs endure for 2 years after the student has engaged in a summer program
Research-based program design
Keys to Success

- Students must attend to reap benefits (85% ADA)
- Research indicates certain program characteristics are linked to student achievement gains
  - Smaller class sizes (1:5-1:8)
  - ~150 hours per summer, at least two consecutive summers
  - Providing individualized instruction
  - Involving parents
Keys to Success

- Best program practice
  - High-quality instructors (credentialed teachers)
  - Aligning the school year and summer curricula
  - Including content beyond remediation
  - Tracking effectiveness
Keys to Success

- Remove structural barriers
  - Provide transportation
  - Offer full-day programming
- Entice students
  - Food (breakfast, lunch, snacks)
  - Engaging enrichment activities
  - Camp-like atmosphere
  - Experiential learning
Shining a Light on Quality Practices...

- Intentional Learning
- Health and Nutrition
- STEM
- Engaging Older Youth
- Summer Culture
Shining a Light on...

Intentional Learning
Partnering with Schools

- Speak the language of schools
  - Use data
  - Help improve outcomes
  - Employ teachers
  - Bring resources to the table
GO Project

Key to Success:
Develop a focused profile of the learner you will serve

- Recruit from underperforming schools
- 48% of participants have IEPs
- 15% are English Language Learners
Key to Success:
Offer individualized support

- Low adult to youth ratios
  - Teaching assistants, residents, high school and college students, parents
- Pre-meetings
Key to Success:
Track Effectiveness Beyond Youth Outcomes

- Track parent attendance and engagement as a core outcome
- Track staff and youth retention
- Track fidelity to profile of youth they serve
THINK Together

Two-Year Growth on STAR Test (2008-2010):

Students Participating in THINK Together for Two Years

vs

Students who Did Not Participate in THINK Together for Two Years

*Increases in scores among participant groups are significantly greater (p<.01) than the comparison group of non-participants
Shining a Light on...

Health and Nutrition
There are two sides to the summer health coin: On one side, many young people are gaining weight at an alarming rate. On the other side, food insecurity rates increase and many young people are hungry.
Organized Activity Participation and Obesity

**Activity Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Obese (%)</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>School &amp; Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tbody>
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Why Sports in the Summer?

Rosewater (2009)

- Youth who participate in organized sports are higher achievers (grades, dropout rates, homework completion, educational aspirations)
- Sports help youth feel more connected to school, attend school regularly, and connect with a positive peer network
- The effects on academics are more pronounced for low-income youth
- More affluent youth are more likely to participate
- Opportunities dwindle as kids move from elementary to middle, then middle to high, with boys having more opportunities than girls
- Summer programs have a tremendous opportunity to build confidence in sports that will help build school attachment

- Girls and older youth need extra attention
Ohio State LiFE Sports
LiFE Sports

Keys to Success

- Sports available in school (volleyball, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, track)
- Intentional Focus, Tracking Effectiveness
- Setting High Expectations
- Adult Role Models
- Long-term commitment
DC Scores
DC Scores

“School districts are squeezing out content areas such as physical education, athletics, team-based learning, and creativity in the classroom. We feel the summer is a critical time to supplement what students are receiving less of during the year. This includes addressing gaps in creative learning and physical activity.”
Shining a Light on...

STEM
STEM Text Poll
What STEM in Summer is, and what it isn’t...

1. Youth engagement in STEM is critical for future involvement in science careers.
2. Informal science learning contributes to a science-literate citizen.
3. Exciting science and relevant STEM in OST are essential in support of formal science.
4. Touching, feeling, exploring is part of the magic of science learning.
5. Science careers become more of an option when youth learn what scientists do, watching them, talking to them and getting interested in the process of research and discovery.

6. Science learning is a relationship matter. Kids need to interact with kids, and they need adult scaffolding and support.
7. Youth development with its focus on relationships, relevance and resiliency (a new RRR!) represents the foundation for most OST programs and is also a significant foundation for informal science learning. That is why they belong together.

- Gil Noam

Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency
Harvard University
Project Exploration
Chicago, IL
Project Exploration offers girls and minorities the opportunity to work with STEM professionals as peers and mentors through a framework of youth development.
Shining a Light on...

Engaging Older Youth
The seven strands of Best Practice

1. Set High Standards
2. Be Intellectually Challenging
3. Be Relevant
4. Embody Respect, Fun, and Enthusiasm
5. Build Relationships among Youth, between Staff and Youth, and between Staff and Families
6. Promote Improved Attendance and Retention
7. Provide Extra Help For Those Who Need It
Download the guide:

www.summerbestpractices.org
Breakthrough Collaborative

- Program for middle school youth designed to inspire them to attend college
- High school and college staff, teachers
Shining a Light on...

Summer Culture
How do participants know they belong to something special?
How do you celebrate their success?
Camp Fiver
OASES
Morning Rally!
National Summer Learning Day
June 21, 2012

www.summerlearning.org/SLD

Put your event on the map!
Summer Changes Everything™ 2012
Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh

Early bird registration at summerlearning.org/conference
RED

Pump, pump, pump it up!
Pump that red team spirit up!
Keep, keep, keep it up!
Keep that red team spirit up!
Shout, shout, shout it out!
Shout that red team spirit out!
Goooooo summer learning!
BLUE

I don’t know but I’ve been told (repeat)
The blue team’s looking mighty bold (repeat)
I don’t know but it’s been said (repeat)
In summer camp my wings will spread (repeat)

Sound Off!........SUM-MER!
Sound Off!........LEARN-ING!
Sound Off!....SUM-MER LEARN-ING IS GREAT!
THANK YOU!

www.summerlearning.org