



## Lehigh Valley's Summer Learn Coalition

United Way created the [Lehigh Valley Summer Learning Coalition \(LVSLC\)](#) so our children continue to thrive even when school's out. The Coalition strives to increase access to quality summer programming for low-income youth across the Lehigh Valley.

[Visit United Way's Summer Learning page for a full list of LVSLC members.](#)

## Results of the First Ever Lehigh Valley Summer Learning Assessment

### *Only One-Third of At Risk Youth Are Being Served*

In Summer 2014, members of the Lehigh Valley Summer Learning Coalition served over 14,000 youth, from pre-school through 12th grade. Of the youth, 67% lived in Allentown, Bethlehem or Easton, our three areas of greatest economic need.

A total of 26,000+ students in our three largest cities (Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton), not including pre-school age children, live in poverty and need the benefits of quality summer learning opportunities to be able to read and perform at grade level. **Currently, only one-third of all students who need these opportunities are being reached:**

- 41% in Allentown
- 13% in Bethlehem
- 60% in Easton

## *With additional funding, we could double the number of kids served*

Last year, there were 640+ spots available for students that went unused and an additional 6,800+ spots that could be made available with additional funds. **Our program providers could serve 7,500+ children and teens** - doubling the number of low-income youth connected to quality summer learning programs from 36% to 63%.

## *School Districts play a leading role*

Our school districts are the leading providers of summer learning, through the primary use of federal funds. However, across the three targeted districts, between 74-93% of funding goes to support middle and high school remediation, with only 7-26% supporting preventative academic measures at the elementary school level.

Low-income students not reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade are 13x more likely to drop out of school. A greater investment in summer learning for our younger children is critical to future school success.

## *More Funding from community and governments is needed*

Despite significant federal funding available for public schools to support academic remediation at the middle and high school levels, non-profit, community-based providers report little to no government support of their summer programs. More than 83% receive no government funding. Instead, the majority of funding comes from program fees, community donations and charitable grants.

## *Providers challenged to meet the hours of programming needed to fight the "summer slide"*

Did you know students lose 2-3 months of academic skills, called the "summer slide," if they aren't connected to quality learning opportunities over the summer? It takes 150 hours of quality summer learning experiences - including both academics and culturally-enriching activities (sports, arts, dance, swimming, etc.) - to prevent students from losing ground over the summer. The majority of public school summer programs offer only a half-day, 4-6 week academic-only program. This provides less than half of the required number of program hours proven to beat the "summer slide."

However, close to three-quarters of our community-based providers offer 7-8 weeks of half- and full-day activities, providing 120-240 hours of quality summer programming. Increased funding and support for our community-based programs is key to fighting the "summer slide" and promoting a successful and healthy start to the next school year.

With questions, please contact [Beth Tomlinson](#) at 610.807.5745 or [Nyasia Manning](#) at 610.807.5741.

## McKinley Elementary School

McKinley Elementary School, a United Way Community School, ran its summer program, the Allentown Community Leadership Academy (ACLA), out of the neighboring Christ Lutheran Church. This summer program was a 4-6 week, full day opportunity for McKinley students. The programs activities, run by teachers, consisted of academic support in the morning, and afternoons filled with fun project-based learning in theater, arts and science.

The program, with an above average attendance rate of 96%, successfully decreased the "summer slide" effect in 90% of participating students. One third of students who participated in this program maintained or grew their reading levels and another third maintained pre-summer levels.

Unique to McKinley's summer program, **64% of parents volunteered!** Every day students were made breakfast and lunch, prepared by McKinley parents and community volunteers through generous donations from community partners.

This successful summer program would not have been possible without the generous support of Christ Lutheran Church, Junior League of the Lehigh Valley and Rodale.

"As a parent of four children who participated in the ACLA program this summer I could not be happier. My children loved the variety of programs and the opportunity to become leaders themselves...I also had the opportunity to coordinate with several moms to help out in the kitchen which really let them feel closer to their child's success." - Raquel R. Parent Coordinator at McKinley Elementary



---

## Summerbridge Program

Summerbridge offers low-income middle school students free academic enrichment and support over the critical summer months, and continues to provide academic support throughout the school year during after school hours and on Saturdays. Summerbridge makes a two year commitment to each of their students, beginning the summer before 7th grade lasting through the 8th grade school year. Results show that Summerbridge students achieve higher academic performance, graduate from high school on time, and go on to graduate college. This past summer, three of the teachers and five volunteers were graduates of the Summerbridge program.

This program is generously supported by Moravian Academy, including use of their facilities and support from their faculty and parents. All Summerbridge students receive free meals and free transportation to the program. Participating students come from Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton - the three areas of greatest economic need - and greatly benefit from rigorous academic instruction, engaging project-based learning, caring staff and college-focused field trips. The cost per student is \$1,000, most of which comes from donations and private grants. The Summerbridge program could serve an additional 30 students if additional funds were made available.



"Summerbridge has made a huge impact on my life. Not only did Summerbridge help me to stay on top of my school work...it also taught me to use my resources and never be afraid to stand out." - Dan W., Summerbridge student

## Read more LIVE UNITED stories or submit your own!

**SHARE YOUR STORY.** The results show in our measurements and our statistics, but they really shine when you hear personal stories of how our collective work impacts lives.

**Follow the link for an easy form to share.** Don't forget to include a photograph of yourself - a picture says a thousand words.

**Read more LIVE UNITED education stories.**

---

## How you can help:

<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY MEMBERS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Join the LVSLC and help fight for more quality summer opportunities to reach more low income kids across the valley</li><li>• Consider adding reading and literacy concepts into your summer programs to help fight the "summer slide"</li><li>• Talk to your local school districts about ways to better target students in need of summer learning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Join LVSLC to add your voice in the fight against the "summer slide" for low-income youth</li><li>• Donate to a local summer provider to provide scholarships to low-income youth</li><li>• Run a children's book or supply drive for a local summer provider</li><li>• Speak to your friends and neighbors about the importance of summer learning</li></ul>

**Download print version of this newsletter to share!**

---

## About the Lehigh Valley Summer Learning Coalition (LVSLC)

The mission of the Lehigh Valley Summer Learning Coalition is to promote expanded, equitable access to quality summer learning opportunities so that all children have the chance to learn and succeed.

The LVSLC will achieve this by:

- Increasing access to summer learning opportunities for low-income youth through

fundraising and targeted capacity building with program providers and school districts;

- Increasing quality of current programs so summer opportunities can best prevent academic losses occurring over the summer months, known as the "summer slide";
- Increasing parent and caregiver awareness about the importance of summer learning and providing parents with information on available summer learning opportunities;
- Partnering with United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley's Campaign for Grade Level Reading.



**How Summer Learning Affects Our Students**



Join us on our website - [Visit our Summer Learning page.](#)



Engage with us on Twitter



Join the conversation on Facebook



Connect on LinkedIn

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley | 1110 American Parkway NE | Suite F -120 | Allentown | PA | 18109

P: 610.758.8010

© United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, All Rights Reserved