



MAKING SUMMER COUNT

ADVENTURES AHEAD SUMMER PROGRAM

JULY 2017

Summer is here, with all its possibilities. Kids have big plans for video games, beach trips, late nights and lazy mornings, the local pool, backyard fires, a new Minions movie, and lining the pockets of ice cream truck operators. Parents are scrambling to keep kids safe and active during the hours normally occupied by school. Some families have the resources to provide stimulating, enriching experiences. Others have to settle for much less. Each summer, RCP steps into this gap with a full-day academic summer camp.

From July 5th-28th our tutoring center will host 35-40 grade-schoolers for literacy and math practice, arts and crafts, daily sports, hands-on physical science activities and a week of environmental activism. They will read, build catapults and learn what it means to be change-makers. We aim for them to come home with sore muscles, library books, pride in their achievements and curiosity about the natural world.

Five college interns (USC, UCLA and UCI) will lead small classes. They will partner with a local team of middle school, high school and college students who attended Adventures Ahead during their own grade-school years. The personal attention our students receive from this group is one of the most transformative aspects of camp. The stature and confidence our teenage staff members gain is another highlight.

But what do you suppose the long-term impact of summer camp can be?

In the fall of 1982, three sociologists at Johns Hopkins University (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson) embarked on a remarkable research project. They began collecting interviews and academic data for 790 Baltimore students attending kindergarten or first grade. Twenty-five years later these subjects reached their early thirties, and the team had compiled a mountain of information comparing the journeys of low-income students to those of their middle-class peers.

As expected, the middle-income students achieved much higher levels of academic and vocational success. But the year-by-year data revealed something new about how this gap developed. It turns out these students all made similar progress during the 180-day school year. Their big differences in growth seemed to occur in the summer. Each year, middle income children finished their summers with small losses in math skills, and small gains in reading. Low income children fell significantly behind in both. By

high school, the achievement gap between these two groups measured in years rather than months. And two thirds of this difference was traceable to SUMMER.

The power of research is that it points the way to change. The leaders of the Baltimore study led a successful campaign to increase summer educational programs in low income neighborhoods. RCP is making that same investment, with reason to hope for a big return.

Would you partner with us to make this summer count? Our students' families pay just \$40 for four weeks of camp. The cost of staffing, facility, curriculum and materials is much more than that. Would you consider spending part of your own summer budget to keep our community's kids from falling behind? Or would you consider spending a day volunteering with us? You might contribute by preparing a healthy lunch, raising funds for an extra field trip, doing some filming or photography, or leading a lesson in your area of expertise. Please reach out to us if you have an idea.

For the Baltimore students, a gap in school achievement led to a predictable gap in life opportunities. From the middle-income group, 97% completed high school and 60% attended four year colleges. Half of them completed bachelor's degrees and were employed in well-paid managerial, professional or technical positions by age 28. From the low-income group, just 66% earned high school diplomas, 12% attended a four-year college and 4% earned a bachelor's degree by age 28. A smaller portion of this group advanced in a career, and a larger number faced struggles like incarceration, long-term unemployment and single parenthood.

We intend to see very different outcomes for our own students: 100% high school graduation, many of them completing bachelor's degrees and all of them making meaningful contributions to the workplace. Summer is a big part of where that starts. And you can play a big part of making it possible!

In joyful expectation,

Anna and Richard Parks
Board Members, RCP

Their findings are published in an award-winning book called [The Long Shadow: Family Background, Disadvantaged Urban Youth, and the Transition to Adulthood](#) (2015.)

