

Yes She Can!

See how Adventures Ahead students are overcoming their fears of failure to find out that YES they can! by Lisa Barlow

Fatima joined Adventures Ahead in January. Halfway through her kindergarten year, she could speak very little English and could only identify two letters: F and S. She called them "la F" and "la zzz." After reading with her for the first time, I came home, cried, and began seeking prayer and ideas from every source I could think of. Fatima's mom wanted to help but didn't know the sounds of the alphabet. Luckily Mom's phone had YouTube and she and Fatima began watching alphabet videos. Although Fatima wasn't ready for our normal interventions, someone donated an iPad and we were able to set her up with some individualized instruction.

In order for kids to succeed, they need to be motivated. We break this motivation down into two pieces: **I want** and **I can**. Most kids come to us with a desire to learn that's deeply buried by their belief - seemingly confirmed by their experiences - that they can't.

For most of spring semester, Fatima didn't want. She didn't really want any part of what was going on. She went to the bathroom more than was physically possible, she resisted following instructions, and she argued with other kids, often ripping things out of their hands. Her reading goal seemed like a distant dream, but our teachers kept teaching, our volunteers kept reading, and our prayer team prayed on.

On the next to last day of the program, Fatima was working on a one minute test of her letter sounds. Although the task was daunting, she was off to a good start when she confused G with H. Then she began to cry unexpectedly. For the first time ever she let us know that she wanted. Through her tears she admitted her deepest fear, "I can't do it." As the room silently prayed I walked her through all the work of the previous five months. I showed her where she started, and where she was now. We started the time test again. She read all the letters flawlessly to receive her very first "Great Leap."

The next day she had to finish our sight words challenge. Fatima used her new-found confidence to earn her ticket to the sight word party at my house. Then she said, in perfect English, "Now my mommy will be very happy I can go to your house." Although she met the growth goals that we set at the beginning of the semester, she's still not where she needs to be to start 1st grade. I'm really hopeful about how she will grow this summer. **Because of partners like you, Fatima can use her new motivation every day this summer to get ready for first grade.**

Want to sponsor a child like Fatima this summer? We will send you a letter from your child as well as a calendar to pray for them right away.

Summer is our most exciting time of year here in South LA! As the temperature rises there are lots of opportunities for transformation, growth, partnership, service, and prayer.

Our focus:

Summer splash

a week of VBS and neighborhood connections and Loren Miller Park. Volunteer and be a part of it!

Adventures Ahead Summer

5 weeks of full day summer camp with reading, science, engineering, math, swimming, games, lunch, Bible stories, art, field trips, and more. Sponsor one child this summer to have this life changing experience!

Neighborhood outreach

With large and small dance we try to meet new neighbors, build the connections between them, and deepen our connections with families in our programs. Stay up-to-date and pray with us by signing up to receive our prayer updates.

Contact Lisa at lisa@redeemercp.org



Kids celebrate their achievement at our Sight Words Party. And what makes for a great party? A giant blow-up water slide of course!

Why Summer?

Last July, Johann enrolled in Adventures Ahead's summer program for the first time. That fall he would be entering the 3rd grade at one of our local public elementary schools. Shockingly, our first assessment of Johann showed that he was reading only at a mid-Kindergarten level. His mom sought us out for help when his teacher said he needed to improve his reading, but didn't really understand how far behind her son really was. She was taken aback when she saw the books he was able to read next to a set of books he should be reading at his age.

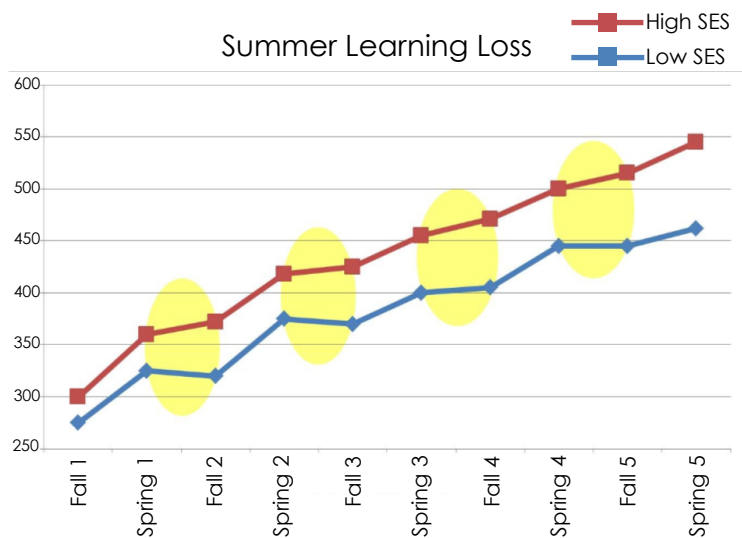
Through 3rd grade, children are learning to read, but starting in 4th grade, they are reading to learn. Johann would have only one year to make up this massive gap in his reading ability so that he would be ready for the huge increase in reading material and subject matter that would soon be coming. But while Johann has only been with us for year, he will have participated in two of Adventures Ahead's academically enriching summer programs before starting 4th grade. While one summer session is only 5 weeks long, it is an important part of Johann's plan to close his reading gap. He now reads at a mid-2nd grade level. Johann has made great progress, but he needs to work hard this summer.

In fact, what students do during the summer months is extremely critical to their academic success. Research has found that it is during these months between school years that much of the achievement gap between high income and low income kids occurs. In the chart pictured, kids from high income families (red line) and kids from low income families (blue line) start first grade in a similar place, and each year during the school year their growth is essentially the same. However, it is during the summer months that an alarming change happens. While kids from high income backgrounds actually improve in their academics, the test scores of kids

from lower income backgrounds stay the same or even decline. By the time kids graduate from 5th grade, high income kids test almost a hundred points higher in reading than low income kids.

Adventures Ahead is trying to close the achievement gap by stepping in where kids need it the most. By offering an all day summer program, kids like Johann can continue to make up ground in their reading and math, while also engaging in science, art, sports, field trips, and other enriching experiences. Out of all 52 weeks of the year, these 5 weeks in July may be the most important to our students' success.

Would you partner with us in this quest to close the achievement gap? By sponsoring a child, you can ensure that Johann and the rest of his classmates get a quality education this summer.



Miller, Beth M. 2007. "The Learning Sessions: The Untapped Power of Summer to Advance Student Achievement." Quincy: Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Connecting Families by Christal Green

Christal has been an Adventures Ahead teacher for the last 3 years. She is also the Children's ministry director of a local congregation and co-leads King's Kids Bible Club for Adventures Ahead and neighborhood students.

Henry began coming to Adventures Ahead when he was in 2nd grade. Now as a 7th grader, he often drops off his younger brothers for tutoring. Not only has it been a joy to have them in our tutoring program, it's also a joy to see them grow in faith and love for Jesus. Henry, particularly encourages his brothers to attend Bible Club because he enjoys the fellowship with other boys his age on Friday nights.

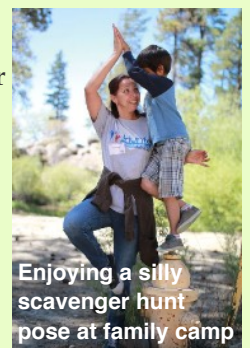
However one of those nights, Henry fell ill and was in tremendous pain. His appendix had burst and required emergency surgery. Thankfully, he had the surgery but the recovery

required several weeks of bed rest, preventing him from going to school and Bible Club.

During his time on bed rest, we were able to visit Henry and his family. It was good to see Henry recovering well, to spend time talking to his mother, Aracely, and to pray with them. We were also able to invite their family to Church of the Redeemer's family retreat, and they accepted the invitation to join us in Big Bear over Memorial Day weekend.

At camp, Henry gave a testimony of how God healed him from his appendicitis. His family enjoyed the

weekend, and when I picked the boys up from their home for Bible Club a week later, Henry's mother embraced me with a hug and said, "I love you." Aracely also told me (Henry translating) how much she enjoyed the church. She enjoyed how people spoke to her in Spanish and were very welcoming. We look forward to seeing how God will continue to do a work in Henry and his family.



Enjoying a silly scavenger hunt pose at family camp