



Media Advisory

Contact: Angie Cannon
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Why Children Need Learning Opportunities During the Summer *Summer slide affects all children, but summer programs offer a solution*

What: Interview availability with Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, about the problem of summer learning loss and tips for parents

Baltimore – As the school year ends, parents should provide high-quality learning opportunities for children during the summer months.

All students fall almost 2.6 months behind in math skills over the summer, studies show. And for low-income children, the slide in reading is particularly harmful: They fall behind an average of two months in reading while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. By fifth grade, low-income children can be as much as 2 ½ years behind in reading.

A recent study of Baltimore students by Johns Hopkins University researchers showed that 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent children can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during the elementary school years.

“Summer should be fun, but parents shouldn’t let it be a break from learning,” says Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Summer Learning. “High-quality summer learning opportunities keep children healthy, safe and on track in school.”

Fairchild is available for interviews about the problem of summer slide and tips for parents, including what they should look for in a well-designed, high-quality summer program.

Founded in 1992, the Center for Summer Learning develops, evaluates and promotes summer learning programs that improve student achievement and support healthy youth development. Over the past 15 years, the center has grown from operating a local program serving 50 children to becoming the only national organization focused exclusively on summer learning. Last year, the center helped generate more than \$12 million in public investment in summer learning programs that reached more than 25,000

children and youth. The center also trained more than 2,000 summer program providers in 20 states, serving a total of more than one million youth.

In addition to academic losses, children also may gain unhealthy weight over the summer. According to a recent Ohio State University study, minority children and children who already are overweight gain body mass index twice as fast when they are out of school during the summer. Engaging summer programs not only offer a chance to practice and learn new skills but also can provide nutritious meals and help keep kids active.

Summer programs can also have a positive impact on juvenile crime, support working families, teach skills needed for the workforce, keep kids safe, and provide much needed child care. Well-designed summer programs balance opportunities for learning, enrichment and recreation.

While research shows that remedial summer school often has little impact on student achievement, studies of high-quality summer programs that combine academics with enrichment demonstrate that these programs can have a powerful and lasting effect. Despite this research, an increasing number of schools continue to operate traditional summer school programs that typically offer very little enrichment. Nearly 5 million children – 10 percent of all public school students – attend summer school, typically remedial classes. The number of schools using federal funds for summer school increased from 15 to 41 percent from 1991 to 1998.

In addition, more than 11 million children attend summer camp, and the number of day camps has increased 90 percent over the last 20 years, according to the American Camp Association. While some camps offer learning opportunities, many don't address summer learning loss as a priority.

What should parents know? Children need comprehensive, holistic summer programs with both academic and non-academic enrichment activities. Well-designed summer programs:

- Increase academic achievement
- Help keep children safe and healthy
- Increase connections to the workforce and community service
- Ensure kids have meaningful relationships with caring adults
- Increase motivation for and engagement in learning
- Develop and nurture new skills and talents

Fewer low-income children attend well-designed summer programs. “Wealthier children have greater access to programs that help them grow academically and developmentally over the summer,” Fairchild said. “Low-income children don't have the same opportunities and often struggle to receive the educational services, healthy meals and adult supervision that they got during the school year. In summer, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.”

Yet even simple things make a difference. A study last year showed that low-income students given eight books to read over the summer made measurable gains in reading. Black and Latino students made the greatest improvement.

What's needed, Fairchild notes, is increased public and private investment in summer learning opportunities to address the educational and social challenges facing children in high-poverty neighborhoods. The Center for Summer Learning is leading a national campaign to generate \$50 million in public investment for summer learning programs. The pending America COMPETES Act includes a program proposed by Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., and Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., that would provide funding for summer scholarships. It would entitle students in grades K-3 a month of full-day summer instruction from high-quality summer program providers.

On July 12, the center is sponsoring Summer Learning Day so communities across the nation can celebrate the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of children and their families. Communities will host events that day to showcase programs and raise awareness about how summer programs send young people back to school ready to learn, support working families and keep children safe and healthy.

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The mission of the Center for Summer Learning is to create high quality summer learning opportunities for all young people. The Center is committed to expanding summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth as a strategy for closing the achievement gap. Based at The Johns Hopkins University, the Center works to improve program availability and quality, build public support and influence public policy and funding. For more information, visit <http://www.summerlearning.org/index.html>



Media Advisory

**Contact: Angie Cannon
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Summer Learning Tips to Fight "Summer Slide"

What: Simple tips for parents to keep kids' minds sharp during the summer break; Interview availability with Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, about ways to combat the problem of summer learning loss, also known as "summer slide."

Baltimore – School is out for the summer, but with parents' help, informal summer learning can be "in" with kids. Simple, low-cost steps like turning off the TV and visiting the local public library or nature center can introduce children to new ideas and interests that will keep their minds active and engaged when they away from the classroom.

According to the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, teachers spend four to six weeks in the fall re-teaching material lost over the summer. Students fall an average of almost 2.6 months behind in math skills, but for low-income children, the slide in reading is particularly harmful: They fall behind an average of two months in reading while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. By fifth grade, low-income children can be as much as 2.5 years behind in reading. And a recent study of Baltimore students by Johns Hopkins researchers showed that 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent children can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during the elementary school years.

Fairchild encourages parents to make the most of children's summer vacation with the following suggestions:

- There are high-quality summer camps and programs in almost every price range. Camps offered by schools, recreation centers, universities, and community-based organizations often have an educational or enrichment focus.
- Visit your local public library. Find out what interests your child and select books on that subject. Participate in free library summer programs and make time to read every day.
- Find out what your child will be learning during the next school year by talking with teachers at that grade level. Preview concepts and materials over the summer.
- Take educational trips, which can be low-cost visits to parks, museums, zoos and nature centers. When planning vacations, consider those with educational themes.
- Practice math every day. A trip to the grocery store is an opportunity to review math skills. Cooking is a chance to learn fractions. Measure items around the house or yard, track daily temperatures. Everyday experiences can be fun and interesting, while giving kids opportunities to learn the skills they need.
- Get outside and play. Intense physical activity programs have positive effects on academic achievement, including increased concentration; improved mathematics, reading, and writing test scores; and reduced disruptive behavior.
- Do good deeds. Students learn better and “act out” less when they engage in activities that aid in their social-emotional development, such as community service.

- Keep a schedule over the summer and help kids stay in daily routines.
- Limit time with TV and video games, just as you do during the school year. It always makes sense to provide structure and limits. The key is providing a balance and keeping kids engaged.

Fairchild is available for interviews about the problem of summer slide and tips for parents, including what they should look for in a well-designed, high-quality summer program.

About the Center for Summer Learning:

Founded in 1992, the Center for Summer Learning develops, evaluates and promotes summer learning programs that improve student achievement and support healthy youth development. Over the past 15 years, the center has grown from operating a local program serving 50 children to becoming the only national organization focused exclusively on summer learning. Last year, the center helped generate more than \$12 million in public investment in summer learning programs that reached more than 25,000 children and youth. The center also trained more than 2,000 summer program providers in 20 states, serving a total of more than one million youth.

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For Immediate Release

**Contact: Rich Berlin
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East Harlem Youth Defy Summer Learning Loss at Harlem RBI
Award-Winning Program Boosts Student Reading Skills with Fun

Editors' note: Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, is available for phone interviews about the problems of summer learning loss and the success of programs like Harlem RBI. To interview Fairchild, call Debra Carroll at 443-340-4641.

New York – As the school year draws to a close, many students are preparing to take a break from learning – but not at Harlem RBI. Beginning **Monday, July 9**, hundreds of East Harlem girls and boys in the third to sixth grades will participate in a unique summer program that combines academics with recreation and propels students toward success. For six weeks, 270 students will play baseball, read and write about fun books and take educational field trips as part of Harlem RBI’s REAL Kids Program.

For many of its youth, REAL Kids – which stands for Reading and Enrichment Academy for Learning – provides a rare chance to be part of a fun and enriching summer program that comprehensively addresses academics, personal growth and recreation. The program is free to all participants and is offered to all students on a first-come, first-serve basis. Among last year’s participants:

- 62 percent came from families of four, earning less than \$45,000 a year
- 50.9 percent lived in single-parent families – or families without any parents
- 72.5 percent received free or reduced-price lunch

“Most of our students are behind their grade levels in reading and are at risk of backsliding during the summer,” says Richard Berlin, executive director of Harlem RBI. “Over time, that backsliding accumulates and impacts a child’s chances of completing or even entering high school and ultimately getting into college. REAL Kids combats summer learning loss and helps youth achieve success – and kids love it”

Low-income youth are particularly vulnerable to the effects of summer learning loss, studies show. They fall behind an average of two months in reading while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. By fifth grade, low-income children can be as much as two-and-a-half years behind in reading. And a recent study by Johns Hopkins University researchers showed that 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent ninth-graders can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during their elementary school years.

“The REAL Kids summer program challenges these statistics and boosts youth from low-income families to achieve their fullest potential,” says Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University.

In REAL Kids, students are grouped into teams and reading groups based on both their baseball and reading skills. Students spend two hours every morning in teacher-led reading workshops and book clubs, improving literacy skills while reading titles such as “The Day My Butt Went Psycho.” Students also engage in daily team-building activities, playing games that encourage cooperation, discussing experiences from the field and completing exercises around REAL Kids’ three core values: respect, teamwork and effort.

In addition to classroom time, students spend afternoons in baseball and softball practice and games, and on Fridays take enriching field trips to places such as the New York Hall of Science and the American Museum of Natural History. A one-week sleep-away camp caps off the REAL Kids program for 11- and 12-year-olds who successfully complete six weeks with fewer than three absences. Younger children are rewarded with a celebratory picnic.

Students who have participated in REAL Kids have shown tremendous gains in school and at home. An evaluation of REAL Kids’ 240 students in 2006 showed:

- 86 percent improved or maintained their reading scores
- 95 percent reported that the program helped increase enjoyment in reading
- 96 percent of parents reported that their children try harder in school as a result of REAL Kids
- 97 percent of parents reported that their children were more excited and better prepared to start school in September after a summer in REAL Kids

Spurred by the success of its summer program, Harlem RBI last year expanded REAL Kids to include a new, year-round, after-school program that strengthens baseball and literacy skills. Students meet for three hours a day after school, four days a week. Many summer students in REAL Kids participate in the after-school program, receiving continuous support throughout the year.

Beyond short-term gains in reading skills, students in Harlem RBI's programs, including REAL Kids, demonstrate that high-quality summer programs have longer-term effects. In 2005 and 2006, 94 percent of Harlem RBI seniors graduated from high school and went on to college.

"Harlem RBI's REAL Kids program is a prime example of how high-quality summer learning greatly impacts children's lives," Fairchild says. "Instead of backsliding in academics, students make measurable gains in reading and writing. At the same time, they are gaining valuable friends and mentors, having fun, eating healthy food, exercising and developing a love of learning."

In 2006, REAL Kids won the Excellence in Summer Learning Award from the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, receiving national recognition for its model program.

On **Thursday, July 12**, communities across the nation will celebrate Summer Learning Day, a national event organized by the Center for Summer Learning to build awareness about the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of young people and their families. At Harlem RBI, students in REAL Kids will be presented with their baseball uniforms for the summer and will meet with sponsors in an energetic ceremony.

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The mission of the Center for Summer Learning is to create high quality summer learning opportunities for all young people. The Center is committed to expanding summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth as a strategy for closing the achievement gap. Based at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, the Center works to improve program availability and quality, build public support and influence public policy and funding. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.

Harlem RBI is a community based non-profit organization in East Harlem, New York that serves over 650 boys and girls with year-round academic, enrichment and sports programming. Harlem RBI's mission is to use baseball, softball and the power of teams to provide inner city youth with opportunities to Play, to learn and to Grow, inspiring them

to recognize their potential and realize their dreams. For more information, visit www.harlemrbi.org.



For Immediate Release

**Contact: Kevin Brezler
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Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University Names Summerbridge Pittsburgh One of Nation's Best Summer Programs

Editors' note: Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, is available for phone interviews about why Summerbridge Pittsburgh is one of the nation's best summer programs. To interview Fairchild, reporters should call Debra Carroll at 443-340-4641.

Pittsburgh – The Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University has named Summerbridge Pittsburgh one of the nation's best summer programs, selecting it from more than 1,000 applicants.

The 2007 Excellence in Summer Learning Award recognizes summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting positive development for young people.

What makes Summerbridge Pittsburgh such a success? The two-summer, tuition-free program helps at-risk middle school students in Allegheny and Beaver counties increase academic performance while building confidence and life skills. It inspires many to pursue careers in education. **Summerbridge Pittsburgh starts Monday, June 25.**

"Summerbridge Pittsburgh stands out as an exemplary summer learning program," says Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning. "The teachers and administrators bring passion and dedication to their students. This high-energy program dramatically changes young lives."

Since 1994, Summerbridge has served more than 1,000 children and has a high success rate: More than 90 percent of its participants attend college. Every June, about 150 middle school students spend six weeks taking classes in math, reading, writing,

public speaking and wellness on the campus of Sewickley Academy. Students are recruited from underperforming schools. About 95 percent are African American; 53 percent are girls. High school and college students teach the small classes with an average teacher-student ratio of one-to-eight. Even after the summer is over, Summerbridge Pittsburgh offers support through high school, such as tutoring, financial aid workshops, and career development opportunities.

Summerbridge students learn study- and time-management skills. Math lessons include budgeting. Students learn to read a lease. In public speaking classes, students learn to communicate in different settings such as with potential employers. Students also learn about nutrition, exercise, and conflict resolution. Students also attend cultural enrichment activities, such as Pittsburgh Opera's production of *Pagliacci*, silk screening at the Andy Warhol Museum, and the study of immigration in Pittsburgh at the Heinz History Center.

"We are proud to be recognized by the Center for Summer Learning," says Kevin Brezler, executive director of Summerbridge Pittsburgh. "All too often high-risk students lose ground academically in the summer. Our program helps them continue learning."

On Thursday, **July 12**, communities across the nation will celebrate Summer Learning Day, a national event organized by the Center for Summer Learning to build awareness about the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of young people and their families. Among the planned activities:

- Summerbridge Pittsburgh will have "summer learning celebration stations" with activities for children, such as writing letters to government officials about the importance of summer learning.
- State Senator Jane Orie, R-40th District, is expected to speak at 11 a.m. at Summerbridge Pittsburgh.

Brezler will appear in a one-hour nationally televised show at **8 p.m., on Tuesday, June 19**, about the value of summer learning programs. The program, produced by the U.S. Department of Education, is called *Education News Parents Can Use*, and will air on local PBS affiliates, The Learning Channel and other cable channels. Brezler will be joined by Fairchild of the Center for Summer Learning, and other officials. For more information, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv/index.html>

Summerbridge has changed the lives of many students, such as Liz Byars, 19, and her three siblings. Byars still reads the letter one of her Summerbridge teachers wrote to her to motivate her in math when she was in eighth grade. A Slippery Rock University student today, Byars went on to become a Summerbridge teacher, working there since 2000. Her older brother and younger sister also have completed the program, and her youngest brother will participate this summer. "A lot of my drive and confidence came from Summerbridge," she says.

Summerbridge Pittsburgh is a member of The Breakthrough Collaborative, a national nonprofit whose two-pronged mission is to launch low-income, high-potential students on the road to college and to inspire their young teachers to pursue careers in education. Summerbridge Pittsburgh also has benefited from the support of its educational partner, Sewickley Academy, a pre-k through high school independent school that inspires students to reach their full potential.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Baltimore Schools Offer New Outstanding Summer Learning Opportunities

Editors' note: Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, is available for interviews about Baltimore's progress on summer learning. For information about the Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL) program, contact Carole Prest of BELL's Baltimore office at 410-235-7062 or Everene Johnson-Turner at the Baltimore City Public School System, 410-396-8672. For information about award-winning SuperKids Camp, contact Jennifer Bedon at Parks & People Foundation, 410-448-5663.

Baltimore – As summer learning programs begin across the city on Monday, **June 25**, there are major, new advances: The Baltimore City Public School System is spending nearly \$1.5 million to bring Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL), a comprehensive, high-quality national summer learning program, to 12 low-performing elementary schools. And the Center for Summer Learning at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education has named SuperKids Camp, offered by the Baltimore-based Parks & People Foundation, one of the nation's best summer programs, selecting it from more than 1,000 applicants. Both BELL and SuperKids Camp begin June 25.

“Baltimore has made huge strides in embracing summer learning programs,” said Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning. “In the last three years, the school district has made steady increases in funding and has enrolled more and more children. It's paying off: Children in these programs are making academic gains during the summer instead of falling behind.”

The school district has hired BELL to bring its full-day, five-day-a-week program to more than 1,900 students in grades K to 8 who need academic improvement. The program will run for six weeks at these elementary schools: Eutaw Marshburn, General Wolfe, Commodore John Rogers, Fort Worthington, Walter P. Carter, Harriet Tubman, Arundel, Guilford, Westport Academy, Holabird, Beechfield, and William Paca.

“This is the first time the district has partnered with a nonprofit to provide a comprehensive summer learning program on such a large scale,” Fairchild said. “Many national experts are watching this partnership because it has the potential to produce real gains for children that could be replicated by other school districts elsewhere.”

BELL teachers and instructional assistants will provide an hour and a half of reading and writing and an hour of math instruction. After an hour for lunch and recess, specialty instructors will lead structured enrichment activities, such as music, art, drama, dance, physical education, and hands-on science learning that will help students develop diverse skills and interests. Fridays are reserved for guest speakers, field trips, and community service projects that develop leadership skills and civic engagement.

“The BELL program is a major step toward our long-term goal of providing all students with access to a high-quality, cost-effective summer learning program that prepares them to begin each new school year ready to learn,” said Everene Johnson-Turner of the Baltimore City Public School System. “At the same time, we are proud to be supporting SuperKids Camp, one of the Center for Summer Learning’s 2007 national award-winning summer programs.”

Headquartered in Boston, BELL was founded in 1992 by a group of black and Latino students at Harvard Law School. Led by Earl Martin Phalen and Andrew L. Carter, the Harvard Law students began a small tutoring program in a local school, where most children could not read, write or do math operations at grade-level proficiency. Since that time, every member of BELL's first class of scholars has enrolled in or graduated from college, compared to only 30 percent of their peers.

Today, BELL educates more than 8,000 scholars in after-school and summer programs in 40 public school sites throughout Baltimore, Boston, and New York City. In each of the past five years, every child entering BELL at the “failing” level in reading and math advanced to a higher academic level. In 1997, President Bill Clinton awarded it the President’s Service Award. In 2006, the Center for Summer Learning honored BELL with its Excellence in Summer Learning Awards.

In 2006, BELL provided a summer learning program to almost 100 scholars at Dickey Hill Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore, resulting in students’ significant gains in reading and mathematics skills. In six weeks, students gained:

- An average of two months’ reading skills and an average of five months’ of math skills
- 11 percent of scholars showed reading gains of a full year or more
- 16 percent of scholars showed math gains of a full year or more
- All scholars who had been failing in reading and math advanced to higher levels

In addition, the Center for Summer Learning has named **SuperKids Camp** one of the nation’s best summer programs, selecting it from more than 1,000 applicants. The 2007 Excellence in Summer Learning Award recognizes summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting positive development for young people.

“SuperKids Camp stands out as an exemplary summer learning program,” says Fairchild. “The teachers and administrators bring passion and dedication to their students. This high-energy program dramatically changes young lives.”

SuperKids Camp begins June 25, and this is the 11th summer that Parks & People Foundation has offered the six-week, intensive program that builds reading skills for more than 1,100 children annually. Rising second- and third-graders are instructed in a phonics-based curriculum and are given enrichment activities, such as sailing in the Inner Harbor or visiting a theater, museum or zoo. Students also spend about 40 minutes reading every afternoon. They also receive breakfast and lunch. They pay only \$40 for the entire program. Past evaluations have shown that nearly all students maintained or showed growth in reading.

On Thursday, July 12, the Center for Summer Learning is sponsoring Summer Learning Day so communities across the nation can celebrate the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of children and their families. Communities will host events that day to showcase programs and raise awareness about how summer programs send young people back to school ready to learn, support working families and keep children safe and healthy.

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For Immediate Release

**Contact: Dawn Ewing
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**Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University
Names Morry's Camp One of Nation's Best Summer Programs**

Editors' note: Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University, is available for phone interviews about why Morry's Camp is one of the nation's best summer programs. Reporters, call Debra Carroll at 443-340-4641.

White Plains – The Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University School of Education has named Morry's Camp one of the nation's best summer programs, selecting it from more than 1,000 applicants. Morry's Camp, based in White Plains, is a highly successful tuition-free summer sleepaway camp and year-round program focused on academic enrichment, recreation and youth development for children from disadvantaged communities.

The 2007 Excellence in Summer Learning Award recognizes summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting positive development for young people.

Every summer, 300 youth ages 9 to 18 leave their New York City homes and spend four to eight weeks in the forested hills along the upper Delaware River at Morry's Camp. **This year, camp begins Friday, June 29.** For many students from low-income families, Morry's Camp offers a rare chance to explore the natural world, live independently and experience an enriching summer program.

Morry's Camp's summer program attracts students with fun camp activities including games, singing, pitching tents and swimming in a lake. While students engage in the fun, however, they also learn math, reading and writing to combat summer learning loss. In the Music Ascension Program, for example, students compose and perform their own music and then record their works on CD, gaining literacy skills and boosting their confidence along the way. And as students reach the end of high school, Morry's Camp connects mentors to work with them for two years on SAT preparation, college searching, job hunting and other post-graduation goals.

"Morry's Camp exemplifies the benefits of high-quality summer learning," says Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning. "While students sleep in tents, write and record music, swim, canoe and create arts and crafts, they gain more than fun memories. Morry's Camp stays with students long after the camp is over."

Morry's Camp accepts students who are referred from community partner organizations by teachers, guidance counselors, social workers and after-school staffers. The program starts with fifth-graders and works with them through the end of high school with monthly meetings during the school year and year-round mentoring and coaching in addition to its summer program. New students are only accepted in fifth- and sixth-grade.

The programs' success is striking: Since its inception in 1996, all of the camp's graduates have completed high school, 80 percent enroll in institutions of higher education, and 100 percent of the students who enrolled in college have remained in college.

"The kids we work with can't control where they live or how much their parents make, but they are in control of the opportunities they take, such as arriving to school on time, handing in homework and doing the best they can," says Dawn Ewing, executive director of Morry's Camp. "The key is believing in the kids and showing them all the opportunities they do have so they can achieve success."

After the summer is over, campers meet together in mandatory monthly meetings close to their homes and schools. Students play educational games and develop a sense of

community and accountability among themselves. To stay in the program and return to Morry's Camp each summer, students must pass their grade level every school year.

"Our students know that good work habits and consistency during the school year will be rewarded with the fun of summer camp," Ewing says. "Eventually, however, it becomes about more than getting back to camp. They do well in school, become identified as leaders and see the benefits of making positive decisions."

Morry's Camp's summer program combines recreation with education as an effective means of combating "summer slide." Studies show that students fall almost 2.6 months behind in math skills over the summer. For low-income children, the slide in reading is particularly harmful: They fall behind an average of two months in reading while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. By fifth grade, low-income children can be as much as two-and-a-half years behind in reading.

A recent study of Baltimore students by Johns Hopkins researchers showed that 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent children can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during the elementary school years.

"We are proud to recognize Morry's Camp as a model program that challenge these dismal statistics and boosts youth from low-income families to achieve to their fullest potential," Fairchild says.

On **Thursday, July 12**, communities across the nation will celebrate Summer Learning Day, a national event organized by the Center for Summer Learning to build awareness about the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of young people and their families. That week, Morry's Camp will hold an Education Expo, where students will present group projects they have completed at camp, such as literary magazines, maps and radio shows.

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Morry's Camp is a year-round youth development organization that provides children from low-income communities a multi-year commitment anchored by a superb residential summer camp experience. For more information, visit www.morriscamp.org.



Media Advisory

**Contact: Angie Cannon
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**Disparity in Summer Learning Opportunities for Children
Widens Achievement Gap**

Center for Summer Learning Hosts Washington Policy Forum July 12

What: Policy forum on new research and policies on summer learning
Lunch will be served.

When: Thursday, July 12, National Summer Learning Day
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Where: PLEASE NOTE NEW LOCATION:
Room 902
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Baltimore – The Center for Summer Learning at The Johns Hopkins University will host lawmakers, education experts, youth and leaders of nationally award-winning summer programs at a policy forum on Thursday, **July 12**, to discuss powerful new research about summer learning and how public policies can better support such programs.

Speakers include:

- Ron Fairchild, executive director of the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins
- Karl Alexander, Johns Hopkins sociologist and lead author of a new study about how summer learning affects the achievement gap
- Kevin Brezler, executive director of Summerbridge Pittsburgh, who will be introduced by Rep. Jason Altmire, D-Pa.
- Monica Logan, director of youth programs, including SuperKids Camp, for the Parks & People Foundation in Baltimore

Studies show that all students fall almost 2.6 months behind in math skills over the summer. For low-income children, the slide in reading is particularly harmful: They fall behind an average of two months in reading while their middle-income peers tend to make slight gains. By fifth grade, low-income children can be as much as 2.5 years behind in reading.

A 2007 study of Baltimore students found that 65 percent of the achievement gap between poor and affluent children can be explained by unequal summer learning experiences during the elementary school years.

Although studies show that summer learning programs can play a major role in closing the achievement gap, education policy makers largely have ignored the summer months as a key strategy to improve student achievement. The Center for Summer Learning recommends that policymakers:

- Invest in policies and programs that explicitly target the summer months as a strategy to help close the achievement gap and promote healthy development.
- Develop approaches to summer school that focus on enrichment in addition to remediation.
- Expand partnerships with community-based organizations to deliver comprehensive full-day summer programs.
- Expand the federal Simplified Summer Food Program, which funds meal programs for children in 26 states to all states.
- Support programs that emphasize both summer employment and service learning.

Senators Barack Obama, D-Ill., and Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., reintroduced the Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance (STEP UP) Act this year, co-sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. It would provide grants for “summer opportunity scholarships” to local educational agencies, for-profit educational providers, nonprofit organizations, or summer enrichment camps. The scholarships for students in grades K-3 would entitle each student to a month of full-day summer instruction from high-quality providers.

In addition, the Summer of Service Act, introduced this year by Senators Chris Dodd, D-Conn., and Thad Cochran, R-Miss., and Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., would provide funding for structured community service programs for middle school students during the summer. Participating youth would have the opportunity to earn \$500 in educational awards after completing 100 hours of service.

For more information about policy recommendations, see the report “How Did You Spend Your Summer Vacation? What Public Policies Do (and Don’t Do) to Support Summer Learning Opportunities for All.” The report is available at www.summerlearning.org. The policy forum is being held on Summer Learning Day, a national celebration to recognize the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities in the lives of children and their families. Summer Learning Day is sponsored by the Center. This year, more than 100 summer programs across the country will hold events that draw attention to the benefits of summer learning.

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The mission of the Center for Summer Learning is to create high quality summer learning opportunities for all young people. The Center is committed to expanding summer learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth as a strategy for closing the achievement gap. Based at The Johns Hopkins University, the Center works to improve program availability and quality, build public support and influence public policy and funding. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org