



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lancaster Family YMCA partners with Lampeter-Strasburg School District and School District of Lancaster to stop “Summer Slide” with two new programs

Programs are part of a national YMCA of the USA initiative to improve the academic success of children in low-income environments.

Lancaster, PA (June 21, 2017) – During the summer months, children who lack quality learning experiences tend to lose academic skills over the school break. Such losses – which can equate to two months of a grade level each summer - accumulate year after year. This phenomenon, known as the Summer Slide, is of particular concern for children from lower-income families lacking the resources for summer learning opportunities. Studies have shown that by the end of eighth grade, summer learning loss can account for 66 percent of the academic achievement gap that exists between lower and high-income students.

As part of the Lancaster Family YMCA’s mission priority to close the Academic Achievement Gap, the Y will be partnering with the Lampeter-Strasburg School District and the School District of Lancaster to launch two new summer learning programs designed to support children at the most risk of summer learning loss.

Summer Learning Loss Prevention Program

About 16 percent of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers.¹

To help address this issue on a local level, the Lancaster Family YMCA is partnering with the Lampeter-Strasburg School District to launch the YMCA of the USA’s Summer Learning Loss Prevention Program to 1st and 2nd grade students in the district. Teachers in the district will recommend students to participate in the program based on the criteria that the child is in need (eligible for the school’s free and reduced lunch program) and at risk of non-proficiency in state standardized tests in reading.

The five-week Summer Learning Loss Prevention program – which will be called Camp Exploration – is made possible by funding from the Lampeter-Strasburg School District Title 1 Funds, a YMCA of the USA grant and community donors. The program will

¹ [Source: Donald Hernandez, DOUBLE JEOPARDY]

launch at the Lampeter-Strasburg YMCA on July 10 and will serve 32 students. The average literacy gains over the course of the program are 1.5 months.

Power Scholars Academy™

Power Scholars Academy™ is a partnership between the YMCA of the USA and the national nonprofit BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life). This six-week summer program is designed to tackle summer learning loss for low-income children living in urban communities and thereby enhance overall youth development, academic performance and graduation rates. The program provides support in literacy, math, enrichment activities in STEM and the arts, along with a health curriculum.

Built on BELL's evidence-based model, Power Scholars Academy™ blends rigorous small-group academic instruction with high-quality, camp-like enrichment and community engagement activities. Y staff and teachers are trained and supported by BELL to deliver the program to students who are struggling academically and who lack the resources to access to summer learning opportunities in their community. At the start and end of the summer, students complete computer-adaptive STAR Reading and Math Assessments, which measure their academic progress against Common Core State Standards.

In 2015, studies showed that students attending YMCA Power Scholars Academy™ programs throughout the country gained an average of 2 months in reading skills and 3 months in math skills, or 20 and 30 percent, respectively, of a regular school year.

On June 26, the Lancaster Family YMCA will partner with the School District of Lancaster to launch the Power Scholars Academy™ program at King Elementary School, serving up to 120 students in 1st-5th grades from King, Carter and MacRae and Washington Elementary Schools. Funding for this new program comes from a YMCA of the USA grant and community donors.

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As a nonprofit, charitable organization, the Lancaster Family YMCA's mission is to nurture the community through the pursuit of life-long growth in spirit, mind, and body by offering programs focused on Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.

In addition to the launch of its new summer learning programs, the Lancaster Family YMCA's focus on Closing the Academic Achievement Gap includes ensuring that children have access to summer enrichment through day and overnight YMCA camp programs by providing financial scholarships towards camp fees. The Y also partners with the School District of Lancaster and the United Way of Lancaster County to provide subsidized Pre-K/Early Learning opportunities for children ages 3-5 at the Lancaster Family YMCA Early Learning Academy.