



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTER FRESNO

Category: Summer Learning

The City of Fresno, a mid-sized city in California's San Joaquin Valley, has made a significant effort to combat summer learning loss and foster grade-level reading. Led by the Fresno Regional Foundation, the city has worked to promote strong community relationships and best practices in an effort to close the achievement gap between low-income children and their classmates.

The Fresno campaign has focused on the Lowell, Jefferson and Webster neighborhoods in Central Fresno, which are among some of the most distressed neighborhoods in the nation. Fresno stakeholders, including residents, government, nonprofit partners and philanthropists, have come together to address the educational, health and economic barriers to success for residents.

In 2010, 350 fifth- through eighth-grade students attended Fresno's Central Enrichment Summer Adventures program free of charge. The five-week program was designed to provide innovative opportunities for youth to learn and grow in the areas of reading enjoyment, connection to the outdoors, physical activity and nutrition and personal development during the summer months. A pre- and post-program survey reported significant improvements in how the participants felt about reading at summer camp, with their families and on their own.

In 2011, 90 K-3 students from Lowell and 63 K-3 students from Jefferson who tested below basic in English Language Arts (ELA) attended 16 four-hour days of summer intervention. Seventy third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade Lowell students who tested below basic in ELA attended a five-week, full-day summer intervention program at California State University, Fresno. The program is run by the California Teaching Fellows Foundation and served a total of 650 students in the Fresno area. Meals and bus transportation to and from the university were provided free of charge.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County also operate within the target zone. The clubs provide a variety of activities for children ranging from education to recreation, including a summer reading program. The program encourages children to read as many books as possible, and the students who read the most win bicycles at the end of the summer. The Boys and Girls Clubs invest nearly \$90,000 annually in service to children living in the Lowell, Jefferson and Webster neighborhoods.

The Fresno Campaign plans to build on these existing efforts and successes as well as its strong partnerships with First 5 Fresno County, the Fresno Unified School District, the Fresno County Office of Education, Reading and Beyond, the Parent Institute for Quality Education, the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation, the Fresno Housing Authority and The California Endowment.

STRATEGIES

- Provided summer intervention programs for 153 students from targeted neighborhoods in 2011
- Offered Central Enrichment Summer Adventures program to 350 fifth- through eighth-grade students free of charge in 2010
- The Boys and Girls Clubs rewarded top summer readers with bicycles