



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTER ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Category: Summer Learning

Just south of Lake Ontario in New York, Rochester is home to a diverse array of high-quality summer programs created through innovative public-private partnerships, making it a leader in the field of combatting summer learning loss.

The Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association is a newly formed consortium of six educational institutions that are combining resources to close the achievement gap for low-income students by providing tuition-free, evidence-based summer learning programs. The city already has a number of summer learning programs, including a 17-year relationship with Horizons National. They are currently approaching all 19 Rochester-area colleges and universities to start summer learning programs, with a goal of building summer learning pathways at each institution and improving the high school and college graduation rate of low-income Rochester area students. There are currently six of these programs. Four serve K-8 children with six-week summer educational enrichment, one reaches out to children in foster care and another provides a two-week residential college experience for older students.

Rochester's original Horizons partner, The Harley School, serves 135 K-12 students a year. The program has been so successful that two years ago Harley made a commitment to broaden the local program. Harley has raised \$400,000 to fund the startup of affiliate programs and has forged a relationship with the Rochester City School District. So far, five additional Rochester campuses — the University of Rochester, the Norman Howard School, Nazareth College, Monroe Community College and SUNY Geneseo — have joined the association, providing 345 students with programs that involve an average of 182 hours of instruction each summer.

All of the association's summer programs balance academics, physical activity and enrichment to prevent summer learning loss, build academic confidence and encourage a lifelong interest in learning. Horizons at Harley has achieved strong results, including students demonstrating a two- to three-month gain in reading and math skills each summer as opposed to the average two- to three-month loss seen among low-income students without summer learning. Students return to the program summer after summer — 98 percent of 2010 students returned in 2011 — and 95 percent of students who attend for three or more years graduate from high school on time, with 90 percent going on to post-secondary education.

STRATEGIES

- Six educational institutions worked together to close the achievement gap for low-income students by providing tuition-free, evidence-based summer learning programs
- A 17-year partnership between Horizons National and The Harley School served 345 students across six campuses with an average of 182 hours of instruction each summer