Making Memories, One Summer Day at a Time

While most children long for the start of summer vacation, for others this time of year can mean boredom, frustration and the risk of falling prey to destructive behaviors.

Since its launch in 2009, in direct response to budget cuts that eliminated summer school programs, the Summer Youth Fund at the California Community Foundation has provided opportunities for thousands of our city’s most vulnerable youth to enjoy safe, fun and enriching summer experiences.

Through the generosity of individual CCF donors together with CCF, a total of $193,750 was contributed to the Summer Youth Fund, which was equally divided between two well-established and effective organizations: the City of Los Angeles’ Summer Night Lights program and the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles. The funds enabled youth, and their families, to participate in a wide variety of recreational, educational, artistic and athletic programs that they otherwise could not afford.

In this impact report you will learn about all of the ways your giving helped individuals and families create positive summertime experiences in 2012. Thank you again for your gift. And, with the summer of 2013 right around the corner, we hope you will continue your support this year.

Help Create Lasting Summer Memories in 2013

We invite you to support the 2013 Summer Youth Fund by making a contribution to enable our city’s most vulnerable youth to experience a positive and safe summer. For more information or to schedule a site visit this summer, please contact Tammy Johnson at tjjohnson@calfund.org or (213) 413-4130. Please visit the Summer Youth Fund web page at www.calfund.org/syf.
YMCA OF METROPOLITAN L.A.

Connecting Children and Families to Summer Fun and Learning

For working families who need to make tough financial choices, summer fun is not usually at the top of the list.

The YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles, with $96,875 in support from California Community Foundation's Summer Youth Fund, was able to provide safe and nurturing summer experiences to more than 1,442 youth this past summer.

Support was focused on three YMCAs where the need was greatest: Southeast Rio-Vista Family YMCA in Huntington Park, the Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA in Boyle Heights and the Weingart YMCA Wellness and Aquatic Center in South Los Angeles.

Through the Summer Youth Fund, the YMCA has been able to offer week-long programs in day and resident summer camps as well as year-long family membership opportunities. These programs provided summertime enrichment including youth leadership and teen mentoring, educational and specialty fitness camps, and whole family wellness, nutrition and community experiences in some of L.A.'s most vulnerable communities.

While budget cuts at LAUSD closed summer school, after-school programs, health and wellness education instruction and many early-learning programs, the YMCA has continued to offer family-centric activities that enrich and engage children and their families.

In the Swim

For many families, swimming in the summer is a given, but for many low-income urban families, a trip to the local pool is a luxury. Tragically, children who do not learn water safety are at risk. Fatal drowning is the second-leading cause of accidental death in children ages one to 14 years old. A new swimming camp in South Los Angeles meant that 228 youth were able to participate in swim and water safety lessons, and the participants came away fit and water-safe by camp's end.

Day Camp

Week-long day camps offered by urban Los Angeles YMCAs provide just the sort of learning and enrichment that every child imagines summer to be filled with: art-making, field trips to museums, culinary and nutrition education, dance, team sports and glee club. In addition, a new citizenship camp in Huntington Camp explored how to plant a garden and about providing for a community.

Learning Independence

Weingart Camp director Amos Williams often hears from children and their families just how rewarding camp has been for them, but a note from Shannon's mom was especially touching.

Shannon is a 12 year-old with special needs who has been attending camp for the past four summers. In the beginning, he relied on younger campers and staff to help him, but this past summer, he was Amos' official assistant, helping the younger kids with their first camp experience and helping lead the nightly campfire program.

“Camp has helped Shannon learn independence. When he returns home he tackles daily chores and responsibilities, and at camp he makes new friends and rekindles old ones. He's happy which makes me overjoyed,” his mom said.
The 2012 Summer Night Lights (SNL) program marked the fifth consecutive year of extended programming, job opportunities, and a safer summer in the communities most impacted by gang-related activity.

Created in 2008, the goal of SNL is to reduce incidences of violence during summer evening hours when crime traditionally spikes at 32 sites throughout Los Angeles. The grant from CCF supported programming in one of the three SNL sites in the community of Watts – the Nickerson Gardens Housing Department.

With a rich slate of activities designed to engage the whole family, the program achieves its success by providing programs between the hours of 7 p.m. until midnight, Wednesday through Saturday, from July 4 through Labor Day.

California Community Foundation’s Summer Youth Fund contributed $96,875 to the program. SNL reported approximately 20,083 visits from youth, their family members, and local community members, as well as 156 youth participants in the SNL basketball and softball sports leagues.

Summer Night Lights: Creating Community

Something magical happens when families come together in a positive environment. “There is a strong sense of community during Summer Night Lights. Parks are being used for what they were made for,” said an anonymous SNL participant.

Creating Job Opportunities for Youth

In addition to reductions in gang-related violence, SNL also promotes community stabilization by offering employment opportunities during the summer months.

In 2012, the program made over 1,700 jobs available across all sites with 38 jobs offered at Nickerson Gardens to local youth and community members.

These jobs included 11 Youth Squad members who were responsible for tasks related to program delivery.

Comprised of youth ages 17-22, they are members of the community who are at-risk for gang involvement or gang violence.

Participant Perspective

“SNL gave me a different view of what direction to take for my career with options like working with gang prevention, or providing workshops and activities for the community.”

– 19-year-old female Youth Squad Member
Play Ball!

This year marked the first community softball game held between members of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Community Service Project and residents of Nickerson Gardens.

The good will generated by the LAPD’s softball team of officers, who are assigned to work in Nickerson Gardens year round, was not diminished by their win over the community team. In fact, the LAPD’s participation in SNL programming only exemplified the improving relations between the groups and the resulting positive community response.

The California Community Foundation (CCF) is a public, charitable organization serving Los Angeles County since 1915, and playing several roles in the community today. It manages more than 1,600 funds created by individuals, families, companies and organizations, and serves as a steward of their funds and legacies. It makes grants to nonprofits working with low-income and underserved L.A. communities, and actively engages in community problem solving with business, civic, government and other organizations.

For more information, visit calfund.org.

Summer Youth Fund: Putting Fun Back into Families

Summer Night Lights and the programs offered through the YMCA are not just reaching youth, but they are lifting entire communities up through engaging, safe and free activities. The YMCA estimates that for every family membership, on average four or more people are positively impacted. The fund resources that assisted 174 families in memberships therefore impacted 696 individuals.

At the Y, Gus would walk on the treadmill while his children were safely engaged in dance and swim lessons. One day, a family nutrition program caught his eye and he decided to sign up his family. He soon learned how his eating habits were impacting his four children. “It has actually been fun learning about eating healthy together. It’s been the key, doing this with my kids,” said Gus.

The SNL program also noted an increase in participation from some of the older, long-standing residents of the Nickerson Housing Development in 2012. Through activities like weekly ping pong tournaments and a chili cook-off, parents of the participants as well as new families came to join in the safe and free fun.

Summer is a time for fun and learning with friends and family, and thanks to the Summer Youth Fund, thousands of young Angelenos enjoyed safe and fun activities in their own communities.

“I really love Summer Night Lights because it gives my family something free and fun to do!”

– Anonymous male, 8 years old

“This was my first time at the Y day camp. My mom had to work this summer. I made friends really fast, and had fun on our field trips. People saw us walking around town and smiled. I got to try new food like yogurt. I just wanted to have fun and make art, but it was even better than that.”

– Jason P., age 11