



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **SAIL (Summer Adventures in Learning) Will Celebrate the Importance of Summer Learning in Birmingham and the Black Belt Region**

***Event Marking National Summer Learning Day on July 14, 2016 Will Be One of Hundreds Across the Nation Aimed at Keeping Kids Learning, Healthy and Safe this Summer***

**Birmingham, AL: On July 14, 2016** SAIL (Summer Adventures in Learning) in association with SAIL partner Better Basics, volunteers from the Junior League of Birmingham will deliver books to students in summer programs so that they can build their home libraries and continue their reading when camp is over.

**In addition, several sites will be available for tours.**

**Camp Tour at 9:00 am: Summer Advantage USA** is a nationwide summer education program, offered locally at **Henry J. Oliver Elementary** ([map](#)) in the Crestwood neighborhood of Birmingham. Summer Advantage USA partners with schools and school districts to provide scientifically proven, cost efficient summer learning programs that have been recognized for excellence by TIME Magazine and the White House. The programs contain the following core elements:

- Maximizing Learning Time: Program typically operates 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 5 weeks, with programs varying in length across communities.
- Outstanding Instruction and Mentoring: Classes led by highly qualified certified teachers and college students as teacher's assistants (2 staff-to-24 scholars in each class).
- Parental Involvement: Parent/teacher meetings, workshops, and involvement in field trips and other activities.
- Skill-based Curricula: Research based, culturally sensitive curricula aligned with state and national learning standards.
- Fun Activities: Enrichment activities including art, music, drama, gym, field trips, and service projects.
- Rigorous Evaluation: Standardized pre- and post-tests.

**Camp Tour at 11:00 am: SOLE Program at Tarrant Elementary School** Location: 1261 Etna Street, Tarrant ([map](#)) The SOLE (Self Organized Learning Environment) Summer Program is a six-week session offered to seventh-to-ninth graders in the Tarrant City Schools system. Through a partnership with Creative Exchanges Initiative (CEI),

program combines "self-organized learning environments" (SOLE), with "hands-on STEM opportunities" (Science Technology Engineering Math). The program is housed in a building behind Tarrant Elementary and 25 students are currently taking part. The Tarrant SOLE Program is:

- Inspired by Sugatra Mitra's Hole in the Wall experiments and his fourteen years of research which shows that children with access to the Internet can learn many things by themselves, and collaboratively.
- Informed by the reality that many of our students today are disengaged. On their own, they often do not use resources even when available. Education leader Sir Ken Robinson, says, "All students are unique individuals with their own hopes, talents, anxieties, fears, passions, and aspirations. Engaging them as individuals is the heart of raising achievement."
- Based on the belief that in order to re-engage students, we need to ignite their sense of wonder and curiosity, awaken them to their own potential, open students to a sense of personal empowerment

through the telling of their own stories and the realization that they can change their own stories (and their world).

- Grounded in the understanding that when people feel their voice counts, and that they have personal agency over their lives, they are more likely to engage.
- Includes cultural exchanges and opportunity to hear and share stories with people from other parts of the world, including Haiti.
- Uses online learning games and various other technologies to engage students.

The event is part of [National Summer Learning Day](#), an advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe, and healthy every summer. SAIL's events highlight the importance of summer learning opportunities at programs funded by the collaborative. This summer, [the SAIL Collaborative](#) provided grants totaling more than \$862,000 to 36 schools and non-profits in Alabama, with an aim of maintaining and reinforcing some of the state's most effective summer education programs. "Many kinds of high-quality learning opportunities during the summer can make a difference in keeping young people on track for success," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of the National Summer Learning Association, "these opportunities can be found in schools and community organizations, including local libraries and museums, and in businesses, colleges and community colleges. Families play a critical role in nurturing a joy of learning at home with their kids." National Summer Learning Day events in Alabama will coincide with over 300 events across the country.

Attachment: Infographic on Summer Learning, Black Belt Community Foundation press release

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**About The National Summer Learning Association** (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org).

**The SAIL partners** for 2016 grant cycle are: Alabama Power Foundation, The Belk Foundation, The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Daniel Foundation of Alabama, Independent Presbyterian Church Foundation, Joseph S. Bruno Charitable Foundation, The Junior League of Birmingham, Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation, Regions Bank and the United Way of Central Alabama.

**About Birmingham Education Foundation:** The Birmingham Education Foundation (Ed) is dedicated to increasing the number of students in the Birmingham City Schools that are on the path to college, career, and life readiness. We believe that this is only possible by cultivating a diverse network of people who demand excellence for our students and inspire others to do the same. In 2010, The Birmingham Education Foundation originated as an organization in response to a series of community conversations led by the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham's Yes We Can! Birmingham Initiative. In 2016, ED began serving as the administrative backbone organization for SAIL, a project based on collective impact principles. Visit [www.edbirmingham.org](http://www.edbirmingham.org).