



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **April 18, 2016**

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SAIL PARTNERSHIP SURPASSES \$2 MILLION IN GIVING IN FOUR YEARS TO SUPPORT ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

Birmingham, Ala.— Since 2012, the SAIL Collaborative, a partnership of funders, has quietly invested more than \$2,800,000 to prevent summer learning loss in Birmingham's most vulnerable children. The success of SAIL (Summer Adventures in Learning) has led to the hiring of Suzy Harris as SAIL's first staff member as well as an expansion into Alabama's Black Belt. This summer, through SAIL's eleven funders, 38 grants totaling more than \$862,000 were awarded to programs that provide high quality summer learning opportunities for children. The nonprofit organizations receiving grants this year include foundations, schools, learning centers, camps and churches. The grants are used to support programs that enhance or add rigorous academic components that help prevent learning loss, offer chances to explore new interests and skills, and close the achievement gap for low-income children.

New Staff Member

Ms. Harris joined SAIL in January 2016 after more than 24 years as an educator, administrator and curator at the Birmingham Museum of Art. She was responsible for developing programming for teachers and schools as well as public programming and outreach to community groups and other cultural institutions. In 2015, she was awarded the EdCom (Education Committee) Award for Excellence in Practice by the American Alliance of Museums. In addition, she was awarded 2004 Southeastern Art Museum Educator of the Year by the National Art Education Association. She received her undergraduate degree in art history from the University of the South and her Master's degree in art history from Vanderbilt University.

Ms. Harris believes strongly in community service and currently serves on the Advocacy Task force of the Alabama Alliance for Arts Education, the CTE Advisory Committee for the Carver High School Animation Program and as Treasurer for the Alabama Art Education Association. She was a founding board member of Heart Gallery of Alabama and has served on the boards of the Jefferson County Children's Policy Cooperative, the Nia Institute and the Junior Board of Gateway. In addition, she served as Board President for VSA arts Alabama, a statewide nonprofit group that serves people with chronic illnesses and disabilities through the arts. She is an alumnus of Leadership Birmingham.

SAIL Programs

SAIL programs follow a "school within a camp" model which aims to benefit the whole child, providing academic programming (with a high teacher/student ratio), physical activity, healthful meals, enrichment programming, and an emphasis on character development. Programs use standardized pre- and post-assessments to measure academic progress for all students. Mature programs typically record gains of 2-3 months in reading and 2-3 months in math over the summer (4-6 week sessions), as compared to the 2-3 month losses expected for children who do not participate.

The assessments are but one component of the SAIL quality assurance framework, designed to instill a commitment to excellence in all SAIL programs. The components are:

- **Group Education:** SAIL hosts three forums each spring, addressing a variety of topics chosen to strengthen the programs.
- **Communication and Informal Education:** SAIL maintains a group e-mail distribution list and communicates regularly with the summer learning community. Peer-to-peer learning is encouraged in several ways: panel discussions at forums, informal communication between meetings and small-group meetings.

- **Resource Development:** SAIL works to see that programs have access to resources needed to conduct quality programs, including educational services providers (e.g., Better Basics and Summer Advantage) and enrichment providers (e.g., Cahaba River Society and Birmingham Zoo). SAIL also maintains a staffing webpage and facilitates the enrollment of summer programs in feeding programs which supply meals at no cost.
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** SAIL requires grantees to use Renaissance Learning's STAR Assessment for reading and math. The SAIL funders provide STAR at no cost, train the programs on proper use of STAR to create individualized learning plans, transport the programs to a testing site if needed, and administer the tests. The programs (and the funders) use summary data from STAR to evaluate overall program effectiveness.
- **Standardized Reporting:** Grantees are required to submit program results in a standard format (attached). The elements of the report are chosen to reinforce best practices.
- **Continuous Improvement:** All reports are compiled and sent to each grantee, after which all grantees participate in a post-program review in which successes are celebrated and areas for future improvement are identified.

History of SAIL

SAIL developed in response to a survey of 37 Birmingham-area summer programs, conducted by the National Summer Learning Association in 2011. Through this important partnership, funders committed to use a joint application process for nonprofit organizations wishing to receive grant support to enhance or add consistent academic components to summer youth programs.

SAIL began in 2012, when three funders informally worked with 12 programs. SAIL organized formally later that year, with six funders awarding 19 grants totaling \$500,000 to summer 2013 programs. For summer 2014, ten funders awarded \$675,000 in grants to 30 programs. For 2015, 11 funders participated in the partnership and awarded 32 grants totaling \$831,000. For the summer of 2016, \$862,000 has been awarded to 38 programs. Building upon the successes of the partnership in the Birmingham area, SAIL will expand into Alabama's Black Belt region this summer.

Why is SAIL Important?

National studies have shown that students typically return to school one to three months behind where they were at the end of the previous school year. But, according to the results of assessment testing coordinated by PARCA (Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama), participants in the 2015 Summer Adventures in Learning programs advanced more than a month on average. Some programs helped students jump three to four months ahead. Over 1,500 children participated in last year's programs funded by SAIL.

"We were definitely pleased to see that these summer learning programs are closing the learning gap for low-income children," said Jim Wooten, board chairman of the partnership. "SAIL is a unique collaboration of funders, program hosts, educational services providers and other organizations with an interest in education. The funders write checks, but we do much more, and all the SAIL partners collaborate to strengthen one another and to give our children the opportunity for a better life."

Data show that summer learning loss accounts for nearly two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading. They also show that the effects of participation in a summer learning program can benefit the child for at least two years afterwards. Local experience in Birmingham has shown that as programs gain experience, they can expect average gains of two to four months in reading and math during a five to six-week program, making a significant positive difference for these children.

The successes of the partnership in Birmingham will be expanding into Alabama's Black Belt region this summer. According to Carol Butler, vice president of the SAIL board and executive director of the Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation, "We began working two years ago with summer learning programs such as Sawyerville Day Camp and Higher Achievement Summer School. This year we are collaborating with the Black Belt Community Foundation to expand those opportunities by adding four new program hosts in Dallas, Monroe, and Wilcox counties."

SAIL Partners for Summer 2016

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.

Organizations receiving grants for 2016 summer programs are:

A.G. Gaston Boys & Girls Club
American Baseball Foundation, Inc. (in partnership with the Birmingham Board of Education)
Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
Better Basics Reading Program and SAIL Academy
Black Belt Community Foundation (BAMA Kids, Camden, AL, Theo Ratliff Activity Center, Demopolis, AL and McRae-Gaines Learning Center, Selma, AL)
Blount County Education Foundation
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama
Breakthrough Birmingham
Build a Better Community (Vredenburgh, AL)
Camp Fire USA Central Alabama Council
Cornerstone Schools of Alabama
Summer Advantage USA (in partnership with the Birmingham Board of Education)
Faith Aftercare Educational Enrichment Center
Fresh Start Family Solutions
Girls Incorporated of Central Alabama
Higher Achievement Summer School (HASS) (Livingston, AL)
Impact Alabama: A Student Service Initiative
IMPACT Family Counseling
Invent Now
IPC Children's Fresh Air Farm
Margaret Elementary School
Neighborhood Academy, Inc.
NorthStar Youth Ministries
New Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church Community Development Corporation
Norwood Resource Center
Restoration Academy
Tarrant City Schools SOLE and SPROUT Programs
Urban Hope Community Church
Urban Ministry
Yellowhammer Literacy Project (Sawyer ville, AL)
YWCA Alabaster
YWCA Shades Valley
YWCA Central Alabama
Zion Spring Baptist Church

Facts about Summer Learning Loss:

(Courtesy of the National Summer Learning Association)

- All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. Research spanning 100 years shows that students typically score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they do on the same tests at the beginning of the summer (White, 1906; Heyns, 1978; Entwisle & Alexander 1992; Cooper, 1996; Downey et al, 2004).

- Most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement, despite the fact that their middle-class peers make slight gains (Cooper, 1996).
- More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college (Alexander et al, 2007).
- Children lose more than academic knowledge over the summer. Most children—particularly children at high risk of obesity—gain weight more rapidly when they are out of school during summer break (Von Hippel et al, 2007).
- Parents consistently cite summer as the most difficult time to ensure that their children have productive things to do (Duffett et al, 2004).

About Birmingham Education Foundation: The mission of the Birmingham Education Foundation (ED) is to bring the voice of the community to Birmingham City Schools' leadership; to listen to and work alongside educators, students, and families; and to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities for all students in the Greater Birmingham Community. 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.

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