



**EMBARGOED
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United Way of RI and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Release Data on Summer Learning Loss and the Achievement Gap, Highlight Need for Summer Learning Programs

By fifth grade, low-income children can be up to 3 years behind their middle-income peers when they lack access to summer learning opportunities

Providence, R.I. (August 5, 2015): While thousands of Rhode Island students would benefit from participating in summer learning programs, only 21% of Rhode Island parents report having a child enrolled in a summer learning program. With strong results on the advantages of summer learning, local leaders shared a call for the expansion of summer learning opportunities at an August 5 press tour hosted by [United Way of Rhode Island \(UWRI\)](http://www.uwri.org) and [Rhode Island KIDS COUNT](http://www.rikidscount.org) at the Pawtucket Boys and Girls Club, which runs one of 18 model programs located statewide.

Without access to such programs, more than 100 years of research confirms that students not engaged in summer learning lose an average of two months of math skills each summer, and lower-income children may also lose up to two months of reading skills. According to Stephanie Geller, Policy Analyst at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, “Summer learning loss adds up, making achievement gaps worse and hurting some children’s chances for success. By the end of 5th grade, all those summers of losing two months of reading skills can add up to the equivalent of 3 years of reading loss.”

A local program with proven results is the [Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative \(HSLI\)](http://www.hslri.org), a partnership between UWRI, Hasbro, Inc., and the State of Rhode Island to help students avoid summer learning loss. Children at 18 programs statewide this summer will be better prepared to learn new curriculum when school reconvenes this fall. For students who participated in the HSLI in 2014—benefitting from 6-weeks and 210 hours of hands-on, experiential learning—summer learning loss was not only curtailed, gains were made. On average, students achieved 35 percent gains in literacy skills and 47 percent gains in math across the entire initiative.

Now in its fourth year, the HSLI serves more than 1,600 students in 13 communities. Still, there is a sizable gap in the number of children the program reaches and the 50,000 Rhode Island students who could benefit.

MORE

“We need to expand summer learning programs in Rhode Island and the Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative is a model proven to work,” said Anthony Maione, president and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island. “This is an investment we need to make as a community; we can make a tremendous difference in the future academic and career success of Rhode Island’s children and have a long-term impact on our economy.”

The press tour was held at the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket, one of this year’s 18 HSLI program sites. After releasing its data, UWRI and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT took attendees, including representatives from Hasbro, Inc. and other local leaders, on a tour of the program. Guests were able to see, first-hand, more than 50 students engaged in yoga, gardening, and a claymation project, highlighting HSLI’s strong focus on service learning that promote children’s social and emotional growth as they hone their academic skills.

“The Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative is unique in that it sits at the intersection of summer school and summer camp; learning doesn’t take a vacation,” said Karen Davis, senior vice president of global philanthropy for Hasbro, Inc. “When you consider the funding spent on summer school, this is an opportunity to begin a dialogue on how those dollars are currently spent and how they could be spent to better serve our state’s children—there is a huge demand for this type of programming.”

The event included the formal release of: (attached)

- A new Early Learning Fact Sheet with a Focus on Summer Learning from Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
- New data on program outcomes from United Way of Rhode Island, showing average gains by students from pre-test to post-test in the 2014 Hasbro Summer Learning program.

SPEAKING PROGRAM (10:00-10:30)

- **James Hoyt**, CEO of Pawtucket B&G Club
- **Tony Maione**, UWRI
- **Stephanie Geller**, RI KIDS COUNT
- **Superintendent Patricia DiCenso**, Pawtucket School Department

About United Way of Rhode Island

United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) is changing lives and strengthening our communities by investing in proven programs that work over the short-term, and are scalable over the long-term. For more information, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.

About Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety, and development of Rhode Island’s children and youth. It is one of fifty state-level organizations that work in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the social condition of children at the state and local level across the country. For more information, visit www.rikidscount.org.