

A group of four children are huddled together in a group hug on a green soccer field. They are wearing various soccer uniforms, including pink, blue, and red shirts. In the background, a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent clock tower is visible under a clear sky. The scene is captured in warm, golden-hour light.

GREATER LAWRENCE SUMMER FUND 2024 IMPACT REPORT



POWERING SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



The Greater Lawrence Summer Fund (GLSF) focuses on closing the opportunity and achievement gaps for thousands of youth in Greater Lawrence by increasing access to enrichment and academic opportunities during the summer months. For more than 30 years, GLSF has supported hands-on, engaging summer programs that achieve key outcomes:



ENHANCE social, emotional and academic abilities



ADVANCE skills development and reduce summer learning loss



PROMOTE safety and physical and mental health



GLSF INVESTS IN OUR GREATEST ASSET— OUR YOUTH

Summertime provides an opportunity for many young people to take part in new, enriching experiences and to build and strengthen skills and relationships. However, structured summer learning opportunities are not evenly and equitably distributed across communities. GLSF acknowledges these inequities and invests in creating greater access to opportunities that can reduce many of the life outcome disparities created by poverty.

Statistics tell us that Lawrence youth face many challenges. For example, twenty four percent of Lawrence youth live in poverty. Yet these challenges do not define them. Our partner schools and nonprofits offer a range of summer programs designed to cultivate our youth's innate potential and develop skills that will serve them well in school, work and life.





GLSF 2024 THE BIG PICTURE

46

PROGRAMS SUPPORTED

\$351,750

GRANTED

4-24

AGE RANGE SERVED

4,360

YOUTH ENGAGED



2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS





CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

This summer, youth aged 11-15 were offered opportunities to explore their personal interests in learning sessions such as Introduction to Landscape Painting, Building and Coding with Robotics, Creative Writing, Digital Photography Explorations and Kinetic Creations — Building Analog Devices & Problem-Solving Through Coding. Through hands-on projects and technology integration, instructors encouraged students to think critically and creatively in a collaborative learning environment, fostering a more personalized learning experience.

UTOPIA DANCE COMPANY

Youth aged 5-17 developed notable growth in self-esteem and leadership skills through leadership activities, group projects, and opportunities to take on responsibilities within camp. Students developed personal confidence, problem-solving skills, and the abilities to lead and collaborate effectively. Another highlight was the exploration of a new focus area added to the curriculum, Latino Food and Culinary Traditions. Each week, youth explored a new food that is representative of Latino culture, allowing them to discover new culinary dishes, including healthier meal alternatives typical of Latino cultural roots.

SUEÑOS BASKETBALL

Over the course of this summer, youth developed discipline for various featured sports, learned the importance of working in a team, and gained personal confidence on and off the court. One of the elements that contributed to the positive impact was breaking the larger group into smaller groups based on age. Another aspect that helped the program thrive was having multiple locations with different sports and activities, so every participant felt part of a team and had the opportunity to try out a variety of sports.

TOP NOTCH SCHOLARS

Youth aged 13-18 organized and managed various events within the community and participated in business panels, learning essential business and public speaking skills. These events included an annual expo, the Puerto Rican Festival, Italian Festival, and the Essex Art Block Party “Fiesta en la Calle.” They also had the opportunity to design social media marketing campaigns. These experiences supported the growth of students, giving them the chance to take initiative and execute meaningful projects.



As I grew up in the program and got older, I started to notice that Beyond Soccer was like a second home. I always had a smile on my face every single time I got on a field or court with them. I made new friends, and many of those friends coached with me this summer. I have always wanted to work with Beyond Soccer and leave the same impression on young kids that my coaches left on me. When I turned old enough to work, I applied for a job. I got the job to be a summer coach mentor and lead the kids in the evenings and to this day, I try to leave the same impression that my coaches left on me when I was a kid. I also get to benefit from playing many nights. It's been the best summer.

Osvin Merida

Summer Coach Mentor & Former Participant, Beyond Soccer | Central Catholic Sophomore



PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

OUR GRANT PROCESS

Essex County Community Foundation, working with an all-volunteer committee, raises funds annually and distributes those funds to organizations that best meet the Fund's program priorities.

On behalf of GLSF, ECCF accepts grant proposals from qualified 501(c)(3) organizations that provide summer programs to Greater Lawrence youth. GLSF applications were due in March and grants were awarded in May.

PROGRAMS BY FIELD OF FUNDING*

39 OPPORTUNITY GAP

Programs that provide exposure to new experiences, e.g. camps, cultural experiences, field trips, nature education.

30 ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Programs that prevent or reduce summer learning loss, the loss of academic skills and knowledge over the course of the summer.

16 OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Programs that reconnect youth ages 16-24 who are not in school or working toward education and/or employment pathways.





PROGRAMS BY IMPACT AREA*

ARTS **39**

COLLEGE READINESS | TRANSITIONS **15**

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS | NATURE EDUCATION **21**

FIELD TRIPS **33**

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES **33**

JOB & CAREER READINESS **19**

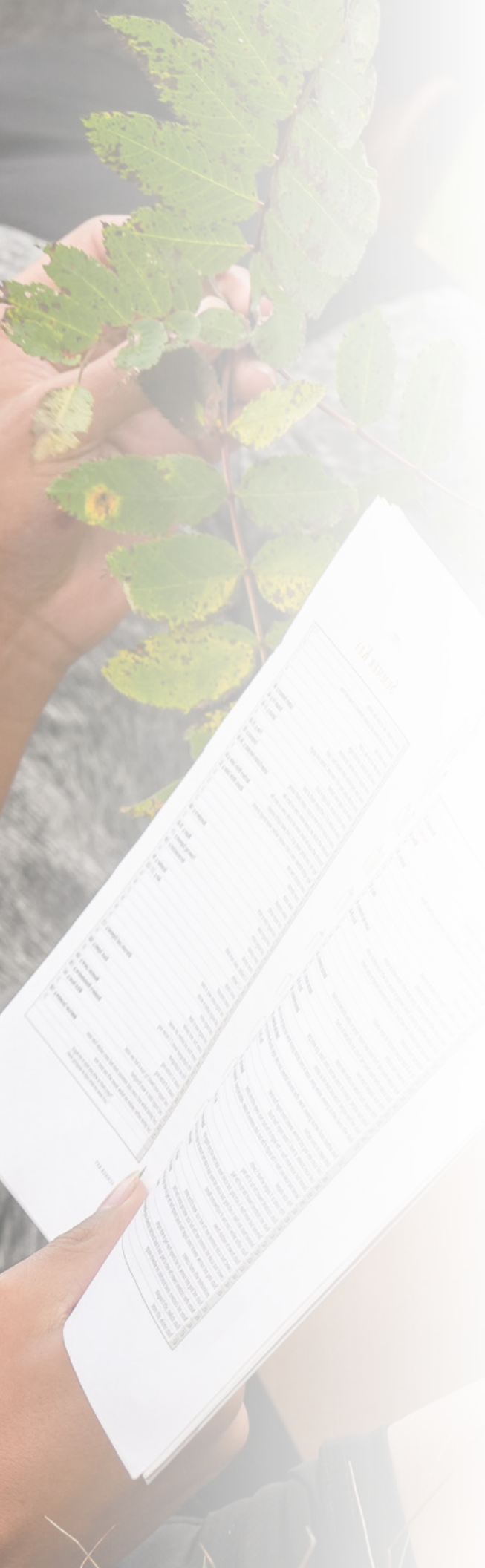
LANGUAGE ARTS | LITERACY **20**

OUTDOOR RECREATION **28**

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) **23**

*Grantee programs may operate in multiple fields and/or impact areas.





INVESTING IN SUMMER MEANS...

GIVING ALL YOUTH AN OPPORTUNITY

There are very real inequities in the educational and economic opportunities available to youth in Greater Lawrence compared to the majority of peers across Essex County. Summer programs offer greater access to resources like the internet or transportation beyond the city, providing engaging experiences that can advance young peoples' life outcomes.

REDUCING THE SUMMER LEARNING GAP

Lack of educational experiences over the summer months contributes significantly to learning loss and the growing achievement gap between children disadvantaged by poverty and their more affluent peers. Leveraging additional education and enrichment hours through summer programs goes a long way towards closing that gap, stemming – and in some cases reversing – learning loss.

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The Lawrence Public Schools, like many others, have outdated or inadequate physical education facilities to accommodate the ever-growing student population. Youth development programs that leverage activities such as sports and dance, counter these structural challenges by engaging Lawrence youth in ways that promote healthy living while simultaneously building confidence and leadership skills.

MANY THANKS TO OUR 2024 FUNDERS

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WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

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Youth Development Organization
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