

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

2021 Summer Successes: NPEA Member Programs in Action

This summer, we asked members located across the country to share about some of their summer successes and how they were continuing to navigate the unique challenges of programming during the pandemic. Our sincere thanks to all those who submitted updates.

Please see several NPEA member program features below, and be sure to click "view entire message" to see the full email in your browser.

Buffalo Prep

Grades Served: K-5 and 6-8

[Buffalo Prep launched its newest program this summer](#), Prep Scholars Academy (PSA), a community-based summer enrichment program offered to students seeking to succeed in high school and pursue a college education, giving preference to Hispanic/Latino students. [Prep Scholars Academy](#) broadens Buffalo Prep's reach to communities with barriers to accessing college preparatory and educational equity programs and is designed to set more economically disadvantaged underrepresented students on the path to higher education by strengthening their academic skills while they are in their crucial middle school years through high school graduation. Due to transportation and cultural barriers, the Hispanic/Latino demographic has historically been only nine percent of Buffalo Prep's student population.



Buffalo Prep
It's all in the prep

The inaugural site of Prep Scholars Academy was housed at The Belle Center on the west side of Buffalo, NY, welcoming a cohort of post-5th and 6th grade students and featuring bilingual (English/Spanish) programming. Admission into Prep Scholars Academy was selective and limited to a small group of eleven hard-working, motivated students who enjoy being challenged and would benefit from an intensive academic program to attain

their goals for high school graduation and beyond. This small class cohort also eased the process of adjusting and adhering to COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Prep Scholars Academy students attended the summer program in-person Monday-Friday and studied culturally relevant curriculum in math, science, history, and literacy in a bilingual and multi-cultural setting. Students were daily engaged in student-centered and challenging activities that celebrated Latinx culture. PSA students will continue to receive academic preparation and comprehensive social-emotional support during the academic year-round programming.

[Learn more about Buffalo Prep](#). Questions? Contact [Marcus Deveso](#).

CA Next at Collegiate Academies
Winner of the NPEA/Cooke 2021 Award for Excellence



Grades Served: 9-12, college students & graduates, alumni

[CA Next](#) summer programming included one-on-one and small group meetings with Collegiate Academies alumni, focused on college readiness topics and enrollment/matriculation steps. CA Next continues to have conversations about a “strong start” to school prior to the fall semester, discussing topics such as: securing textbooks and materials; understanding course syllabi; navigating class schedules; and balancing courses with any outside responsibilities (such as a job), among other topics unique to each individual student. They also helped alumni understand COVID-related changes in policies, expectations, admissions, and more at regional colleges and universities, as well as those most attended by our students. These summer initiatives were supported by older alumni interns, who act as near peer mentors to younger graduates. [Read more](#) in a blog post by recent alumnus, Devin Lewis.



CA Next maintains ongoing advising with older alumni of high schools that focuses on priority areas of demonstrated need, such as mindset and skill-building sessions, wellness topics, book clubs, building and applying study habits, overcoming financial barriers, and more. They also spent this summer conducting outreach cycles with older alumni who are interested in enrolling or re-enrolling in college and working with them to identify what they want to pursue in the year ahead. For many, this outreach includes supporting with applications, admissions, seeking and securing financial aid, completing the FAFSA, and more. Read this [spotlight of CA Next](#) for more on some of these strong pipelines initiatives.

Finally, this year was the first time CA Next team members hosted a dedicated orientation in conjunction with Delgado Community College. Alumni enrolling in Delgado for the first time had the opportunity to engage in personalized sessions alongside CA and Delgado staff and their peers to prepare for a successful first semester. The orientation included sessions such as understanding and accessing student support services, participating in a campus tour, navigating financial aid (e.g., resolving holds or other obstacles, meeting with the school's representatives directly), being introduced to and participating in tutoring services on campus, and more. While each of these sessions in and of themselves are designed to be beneficial to incoming freshmen, CA Next also sees this event as an important milestone in strengthening their collaboration with Delgado.

[Learn more about CA Next at Collegiate Academies](#) and [read about their recent grant award to combat the effects of COVID-19](#). Questions? Contact [Frederick J. Johnson IV](#).

Coalition for College

Grades Served: 9-12

This summer, [Coalition for College](#) hosted a Summer Application Workshop Series, featuring five sessions on completing parts of the application, including Activities & Awards, the College Essay, Letters of Recommendation, Reporting Your Coursework and Grades, and All About Testing. Admissions counselors from Coalition schools and members of our Counselor Advisory Committee participated in each session to answer student questions and provide insight on how each part of the application factors into the admissions process.



Coalition adapted the panel discussions into a series-based approach, allowing students to register for one or all five sessions on parts of the college application. These workshops were designed to encourage students to get a head start on their applications over the summer. Concurrent to the series, we also provided a chance to win a scholarship for completing parts of the Coalition application by July 30. The recordings of the sessions are now available on our website, with captions in English and Spanish.

Recordings of Coalition's Summer Application Workshop Series are available [here](#).

[Learn more about Coalition for College.](#) Questions? Contact [Amanda Waite](#).

College Connect, DePaul University

Grades Served: 9-12



[College Connect](#) is a FREE annual summer enrichment program for Chicago area high school students. Designed for high school juniors (rising seniors in the summer), the program introduces students to college-level coursework in diverse fields of study, while also providing college readiness and financial literacy workshops, academic major and career exploration opportunities, and diverse cultural experiences. Students from some 50 high schools from all over the city (and a few suburbs) participate in the program every summer.

In summer 2021, College Connect utilized [Gather.Town](#) to add fun elements for student engagement. Examples of some of the courses offered this year included: *Fire, Fire, Gentrifier!* *Neighborhood Segregation in Chicago* and *Breaking News! Introduction to Multimedia Journalism*.

[Learn more about College Connect.](#) Questions? Contact [Kate Agarwal](#).

Evanston Scholars

Grades Served: College students and graduates

The [Evanston Scholars Summer Success Series](#) focused on enhancing the college experience and beyond of the program's current



June 7th: Identity and Finding Your Voice

June 28th: Campus Resources

July 12th: Engagement and Building Social Capital

July 26th: Financial Literacy

August 9th: Community Building

college students and recent graduates.

Sessions took place virtually via zoom on select Monday evenings from June through August. At the start of every session, they included a self-care check, varying from polls, mood ratings, games, and meditations. They also utilized virtual tools such as breakout rooms,

presentations, and guest panels. Their favorite moments were those in which the various panelists shared with scholars their experiences during and post college. It was great to connect students with other first generation professionals that could relate to them. Highlights included welcoming alumni, student affairs professionals, and a group of Pinterest professionals.

Questions about the Summer Success Series? Contact [Alicia DeLaRosa-Velazquez](#).

The **Fresh Start** program was created and launched this year for rising first year students. Evanston Scholars hosted three virtual sessions over the summer. Students received additional guidance, resources, and tools to help make their transition to college successful. Students learned about campus resources and services, career paths, and access opportunities. The main goal was to ensure that students experience holistic success during their undergraduate career.

The Fresh Start program utilized Google Sheets, Canva, guests, panelists, and other online tools such as Poll Everywhere to provide students with all the information they needed to be knowledgeable about topics such as financial aid, work study, purchasing books, waiving insurance, move-in, and more.

Questions about Fresh Start? Contact [Nancy Cardenas](#).



EvanstonScholars

College Freshmen, are you ready to RISE?

Join Evanston Scholars' Relevant Internships for Successful Employment (RISE) Program for College Sophomores

Why did we create RISE?

- Students with two or more internships are more likely to find a career-track job or career goal school within 6 months of graduation
- So you can build a strong career readiness portfolio
- So you learn about career paths and access opportunities
- ES Career Partners want to hire talented students just like you!

Begins October 2021



What will you get?

- Monthly workshops to build career readiness tools & skills
- 1:1 coaching before and during your internship
- Exposure to opportunities & career paths
- Guidance from professional speakers
- Priority access to jobs and internships offered by ES career partners
- A supportive peer cohort

The RISE Program stands for Relevant Internships for Successful Employment.

The program is intended to assist second year college students by hosting presentations that included specifically taught modules throughout the academic school year and summer. The goal of the program was to ensure that students learned career readiness tools to better prepare themselves for their desired career fields. The summer sessions focused on scholars and their ability to build community and discuss their current internships.

The program was able to secure internships for each student to ensure that they were able to utilize the tools they learned in actual practice.

Questions about RISE? Contact [Serena Robertson](#).

[Learn more about Evanston Scholars.](#)

Gateway Public Schools/University of San Francisco Summer Program

Grades Served: 6-8



Thanks to a new partnership with the University of San Francisco's School of Education, [Gateway Public Schools](#) was able to operate its first official summer program this year, allowing students to re-acclimate to in-person learning and while developing the next generation of educational leaders.

"We've wanted to offer summer programming for some time, but staffing and funding have been consistent barriers," said Gateway's Director of Schools and Partnerships Aaron Watson. "Partnering with USF means a lot of new things are possible."

The program served 45 rising 7th, 8th, and 9th graders who explored fun hands-on and project-based learning activities over four weeks while enjoying the peer socialization they missed out on over the past year. Each class was led by two USF student teachers receiving support from seasoned Gateway educators, making the program a win-win both for the students who participate in the program and the teachers-in-training who receive valuable classroom experience and mentorship. The program was designed to emphasize peer connection, collaboration, and excitement about going to school in-person again, with lots of opportunities to practice the social and emotional skills that are crucial as students transition back to a conventional school day.

Based on the program's success, Gateway staff are excited to continue deepening the partnership with USF through hosting the School of Education's students and teachers-in-training in GHS and GMS classrooms, and having Gateway staff present and teach in classes in the USF education and counseling programs. Plans for next year's summer program, which could engage additional students or include students from additional grade levels, are developing as the USF partnership continues to evolve.

[Learn more about Gateway Public Schools](#). Questions? Contact [Sharon Olken](#).

Green Halo Scholars

Grades Served: 9-12



In summer 2021, [Green Halo Scholars](#) implemented summer workshops to help scholars gear up for the college admissions process.

Prior to this year, the organization had never hosted workshops for our students. Given the virtual world in which we're living, they recognized it gave them an opportunity to put their students face-to-face (or screen-to-screen) with more colleges than ever before. They decided to host summer workshops on a variety of

different topics - essay writing, selective college admissions, college visits, general admissions support - with admissions officers from various partner schools. They went so well that they're hosting virtual college visits this fall, too! They miss seeing their students in real life, but these virtual events allow students to fit the programming into their busy lives.

[Learn more about Green Halo Scholars](#). Questions? Contact [Sara Miller](#).

High Jump

Grades Served: 6-8



at their neighborhood schools. Student commitment is six weeks of intensive daily instruction in the summer and two Saturdays each month during the school year.

This summer, High Jump welcomed 208 students to Cohort 33 and offered in-person and virtual campuses between June 28th and July 30th. Daily interactive activities promoted relationship building and social-emotional learning. Schedules included three hours of synchronous learning and some required asynchronous activities, with weekly enrichment days focused on art, theatre, movement, and science. Lessons taught virtually were done so in real-time with corresponding individualized self-guided learning modules. High Jump provided computers and internet access to all students that need technological resources.

Additionally, [High Jump launched a pilot program, “Community Scholars.”](#) in two neighborhood schools. This program brings their curriculum directly to students in areas not otherwise reached by the program. It will help the organization to increase their reach exponentially over the years.

[Learn more about High Jump](#). Questions? Contact [Tamm Longsjo](#).

Institute for Educational Advancement

Grades Served: 6-8 and 9-12

[Yunasa Summer Camps for Gifted Youth](#) is a week-long summer residential camp for gifted children. Yunasa focuses on the nurturance of the whole self. Workshops and activities are centered on balance and the holistic growth of the person, that is, the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual self.



**INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATIONAL
ADVANCEMENT**

Running a residential summer camp during a pandemic year sounds nearly impossible. Thanks to the safe and comprehensive re-opening guidelines from the American Camp Association, as well as county, state, and federal government, the [Institute for Educational Advancement \(IEA\)](#) was able to outline the path for a safe and fun summer camp season! Leading up to camp, IEA and the camp hosts – YMCA Camp Shady Brook in Colorado and YMCA Camp Copneconic in Michigan – thoroughly studied the federal, state, and local health guidelines and made modifications for their residential summer camps. They implemented thoughtful changes to comply to the “cohorting” guidelines while creating safe opportunities for all campers and staff to connect throughout the week.

Throughout the planning process, IEA kept close and frequent communications with all parents. Ultimately, they had a fun, safe, and extraordinary summer for all campers and

staff. They served 98 campers, had 30 dedicated staff on site, and their camps had the highest satisfaction feedback from both campers and parents. It was well-worth the effort, and a much-needed reunion after two long years!

[Learn more about Yunasa](#) and [IEA](#). Questions? Contact [Qiao Li](#).

Let's Get Ready - National Programs

Grades Served: 9-12 and college students

In summer 2021, 40 of [Let's Get Ready](#)'s near-peer Coaches were busy supporting both juniors and seniors. 700 Juniors, across 7 states worked to improve their SAT scores in the midst of uncertainty about the role of the exam, and relied on their near-peer mentors for advice and guidance to prepare for their senior year. Near-peer mentors also provided individualized follow up to help our seniors make the leap over summer melt and matriculate into college. Through text-based mentoring and weekly SAT classes, Let's Get Ready students are heading into this fall prepared and with the continued support of our new class of near peer mentors.



With so many students from the Class of 2020 still trying to make their way back to college, Let's Get Ready was proud to roll out near-peer mentoring support for students who had delayed their enrollment in college. Our summer intern worked tirelessly to make sure they knew they were not alone in feeling behind and to work toward their goals.

[Learn more about Let's Get Ready](#). Questions? Contact [Jordan Wesley](#).

PALS Program, Phillips Academy

Grades Served: 7-9 (rising)



This July, [PALS Summer](#) engaged 25 rising 7th, 8th, and 9th graders from the Lawrence (MA) Public Schools in a virtual version of its hallmark four-week program. Over 12 half-days on Zoom, all participants took courses in Reading & Writing and Mathematics along with two grade-level electives (Digital Music-making, Creative Writing, Public Speaking, and/or High School Options). PALS offered weekly community building sessions along with an introduction to the high school application process presented by area admission counselors. In small groups, led by two high-school or college-aged advisors, participants met weekly to have fun, develop relationships, and find support.



In 2020, given how quickly things changed, PALS opted for a completely asynchronous summer program. This past summer, they were able to plan for a synchronous remote program from the start. They opted for three half-days over four weeks (instead of the four weeks of full-day programming when they are in-person). Three hours on Zoom seemed like the right amount. By Wednesday (the last day of our week), students seemed ready for the four-day weekend, but by Monday they were rested, ready to reengage, and looking forward to our work together.

Participants reported feeling welcome and included; they appreciated the creativity of the assignments and the mix of fun and academics to prepare them for the academic year ahead.

[Learn more about the PALS Program](#). Questions? Contact [Nicole Shadeed](#).

To The Good

Population Served: NPEA Member Programs & Schools



NPEA members' response to the introduction of [To the Good](#)'s complimentary consulting services was robust and encouraging. Numerous organizations and individuals reached out for strategic planning conversations about their financial viability from startup to maturity. Topics covered included how to launch a startup, how to integrate a smaller, existing entity into a larger, more established organization, and general strategic planning and fundraising counsel.

Based on this continued interest from our members this summer and throughout our many related workshops and panels over the years, NPEA is exploring the possibility of routinely offering reliable advising services to our members as a benefit to being a part of the NPEA network. Stay tuned!

[Learn more about To The Good](#). Questions? Contact [Steve Filosa](#).

NPEA connects the people, practices, and innovations essential for eliminating barriers to educational access and college and career success for underserved students.

NPEA is an initiative of The Steppingstone Foundation.

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