



## Quarterly Newsletter from the City Neighbors Foundation September, 2017

### Welcome Back to School!

There was a sharp freshness in the air as our 850 students arrived at the three City Neighbors schools last week. Despite the cooler weather, all were greeted warmly at the door by our school leaders and teachers, a tradition now in its thirteenth year at our founding school, eighth year at City Neighbors Hamilton, and seventh year at City Neighbors High School. Time rolls by, and new traditions are born, and our hope with this newsletter is to acknowledge as many of these amazing moments as possible, and inform you about the wonderful people and projects that are underway to make this the best year ever. Welcome back, everyone!



## **Innovation at City Neighbors Hamilton**

Innovation is at the core of City Neighbors schools, and the commitment of our teachers to reinventing and reimagining their work has been nothing short of awe-inspiring! This past school year, when the teachers at CNH observed the incredibly wide range of abilities, skills and interests in their classes, they wondered, “Is there a better way to group our students to enhance the learning?” To find the answer, they got together over the summer, and created a design for integrated, mixed aged learning groups for grade bands K-2, 3-5, and 6-8, with blended learning experiences, including reading, writing, math, and humanities. Their work is part of a school-wide initiative to meet students’ needs by understanding where each student is, developmentally, and to help all students be ready to learn and to progress in meaningful ways. We are excited to launch these new groupings this year, and will share the results as we work to create thriving classrooms at CNH.

## **Thank You for Your Generous Donations!**

So many families and friends have donated their time, energy, thoughts, equipment, supplies, and funds for City Neighbors this past summer. At all three schools we had volunteers working on the buildings. Whether it was painting, moving furniture, doing repairs, creating new spaces, helping in the office, or being thought partners for the year ahead, we just want to say thank you!

Thank you to Barbara Shapiro for the generous donation of a piano to the Music Program at City Neighbors Hamilton. Our students have received so much love and support from Barbara over the years – and now, we’ve been blessed with the gift of music. Thank you to the Shapiro Family!

## **Impacting Public Education in Baltimore**

For the third year in a row, we are working with Calvin Rodwell Elementary School (CRES) in Baltimore, helping the school leadership and staff of the after-school program to implement project-based learning.

Last year, we began with a new cohort working on Room Design – a discipline that requires aligning the physical environment with a holistic view of children, and a commitment to child-centered teaching and learning. While school was in session last semester, the teachers of CRES came to visit City Neighbors and we began to review research and writings connecting the physical environment to practice. Over the summer, we set about designing new spaces for this school year. Soon we will have lots of interesting information to share about the impact of the room design on students, teachers, and school culture. Stay tuned!

## **City Neighbors Children Summer Program**

Wow! 2017 marked another wonderful year at City Neighbors Children's Summer Program, as the City Neighbors staff, campers and families shared a load of experiences—exploring, learning and having fun during the summer. The sultry summer cruised by, while campers stayed cool in sprinklers and pools, and were nourished with vegetables, fruits and healthy snacks prepared by their peers. Outing experiences to museums, farms, and nature hikes provided platforms for projects, questions and imagination, while independent and shared reading brought time for relaxation and the opportunity to daydream. Bike riding, scooters, games, and socializing filled the playground, while wonderful projects about sea creatures, recyclable/reusable materials, volcanoes, and clouds connected to the reading occurring in the classrooms. Visiting artists provided creative outlets in painting, dance, and music, as songs were sung and masterpieces were created. Overall, the summer was a blast: and as the learning and fun came to an end, students showcased their learning and experiences by way of a fashion show, a narrated "show and tell" display of created sea creatures, singing and a volcano explosion, not to mention a news broadcast about clouds and a trumpet lead parade. What a great summer at City Neighbors!



Also, a special thank you to the Abell Foundation and the Weinberg Foundation for their continued support of the Summer Program at City Neighbors.

### **The 9th Grade Experience at City Neighbors High School**

Thanks to a grant from the Family League, a team of our teachers met over the summer to develop practices and innovative ideas for helping our 9th graders step into the City Neighbors culture. We've found it sometimes takes a while to become adjusted to the City Neighbors

Way for many of our

9th graders who are coming from many different middle schools across the city. How do we make sure each student is Known, Loved, and Inspired? One way is through our advisory system, which we call a Pod. Each pod consists of a dedicated living room and space that is designed to build a feeling of belonging, comfort and support. One new aspect of Podlife was introduced this year in an



effort to instill a sense of ownership in the students: The Flea Market! On opening day, all of the 9th grade pods came to the gym to select the furniture for their living rooms.

### **Justin Eames featured on Future City**

The future looks bright! Our very own Justin Eames, Director of our Fab Lab/Maker Space and Technology at all three City Neighbors Schools, was featured as a guest on "Future City," Wes Moore's monthly radio show on NPR. Justin spoke for about 10 minutes on educational technology, and shared his views. The interview starts around the 34-minute mark, so check it out here: <http://wypr.org/post/rapid-evolution-tech-education>. Looking forward to great news from the Fab Lab/Maker Space this year, take a look [HERE if you want to follow on the facebook page!](#)

### **Malone Memorial Playground**

We have begun planning and fundraising for the Malone Memorial Playground on the lot adjacent to the City Neighbors Play Space, which was generously donated by JP Morgan Chase bank. Our vision for this lot is to have a beautiful play space for our students, and a lovely reflective design that will be an asset to the community. Concepts and preliminary designs will be completed this Fall. All are invited to participate in making this dream a reality. Please share your ideas by sending an email to [playground@cityneighbors.org](mailto:playground@cityneighbors.org).

### **Are You Interested in Partnering with City Neighbors in 2017-2018?**

City Neighbors is always looking for partners to collaborate with as we continue learning about arts-integrated, project-based learning, Regio Emilia, and more. If you are interested in partnering with City Neighbors for 2017-2018, please email Mike Chalupa, Academic Director, at [mchalupa@cityneighbors.org](mailto:mchalupa@cityneighbors.org)

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

#### **The 7th Annual Progressive Ed Summit – January 27th, 2018!**

We are looking forward to a wonderful Summit this year! Look for the RFP for workshop proposals coming soon. Come join in the learning, sharing, connecting, and reaching for the best of our shared ideals for the children of Baltimore and beyond. If you have any ideas, questions, or suggestions, please reach out to our Summit Coordinator, Gwendolyn Unoko at [gunoko@cityneighbors.org](mailto:gunoko@cityneighbors.org)