



**east bay community action program**  
THE BRIDGE to SELF-RELIANCE

## **No “Summer Slide” for Kids in Newport and Middletown**

*Story by Christine Arouth, Director, Newport Family and Child Opportunity Zone*

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### **Newport**

The Summer Learning Academy is part of the Reading Reaps Rewards (R3) initiative in Newport, a partnership between East Bay Community Action Program’s (EBCAP) Newport Partnership for Families, Newport Public Schools, the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, and the Boys and Girls Club of Newport County. The R3 Initiative began over 19 years ago in order to support reading throughout the summer months. It focuses primarily on Newport youth enrolled in grades K-3. The primary objective of the initiative is to reduce reading regression or “summer slide” by assisting participants to maintain their literacy skills, thus allowing youth to begin the academic year ready to learn with equivalent or improved literacy skills.

Due to COVID-19, the NFCOZ is utilizing a virtual model to deliver the Summer Learning Academy this year. The six-week program currently has 54 students actively enrolled and participating. Students are receiving weekly home deliveries of school supplies and lesson materials, arts and craft supplies, leveled books offered in English and Spanish for students to keep, seed kits, and weekly food boxes. We have six virtual classrooms including two that are specifically for low proficient English Language Learners. Students in each classroom receive daily face-to-face virtual interaction with grade level teachers and peers including read-alouds and lesson delivery. Teachers are providing work packets with skill-specific focus and are conducting project based thematic learning including gardening and rocket making. Students have daily access to online learning platforms/programs that allow them to track their progress. Students may access virtual field trips weekly and are encouraged to participate in suggested Family Fun Activities on Fridays or on the weekends at their home or in the community. Students are participating in personalized goal setting with daily reflection. They are choosing an academic goal, a thinking/working goal, and a friendship goal each week to work on and are monitoring their progress toward achieving their goals. Service learning projects have included letter writing, poster making, kindness rocks/shells, and baking activities. For our Spanish speaking families, we have bi-lingual staff providing in-session support and outreach to families. We are providing hotspots to families with internet access challenges.

R3 is funded by the United Way Summer Learning Initiative with partners Hasbro and Women United, vanBeuren Charitable Foundation, RI Foundation, Newport County Fund, Stride Memorial Foundation, John Clarke Trust, BankNewport, Newport Fed Foundation, Title I, Champlin Foundation, Bazarsky Family Foundation, and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Initiative through the U.S. Department of Education.

**Middletown**

Students in Middletown have the opportunity this summer to access educational intervention and enrichment programs under the umbrella of the Beyond the Bell Initiative. Beyond the Bell was designed to engage students in academic and enrichment opportunities that foster self-confidence and boost academic achievement and is a collaboration of Middletown Public Schools, the Middletown Child Opportunity Zone (MCOZ), and other community partners. The MCOZ offered a menu to virtual enrichment programs this summer for students including book clubs, story time, and STEM activities. Additionally, the MCOZ is hosting a four week in-person summer camp program at the Aquidneck Elementary School for students entering grades 1-5 this fall. Each week has a theme and includes arts and crafts, tech time, physical activity, and literacy activities developed and managed by a certified teacher.

Summer Enrichment Activities offered by the MCOZ are funded by van Beuren Charitable Foundation, Middletown Civic Appropriation Fund, and Supplemental Funding through the RI Department of Education and family registration fees.

EBCAP's Child Opportunity Zones (COZ) are members of a network of ten COZ sites across the state of Rhode Island. COZs follow the national community schools model, creating partnerships among families, schools, and the community to coordinate comprehensive academic, social and health/wellness services for students and their families, resulting in improved educational outcomes for children. Opportunities for families to get involved increase family participation in their child's school and education. Supportive services are provided to families on site at the school, and extended learning opportunities allow students to try new activities, learn new skills, develop social and emotional competencies, and meet new friends.

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