

Boys & Girls Clubs of America Launches Summer Brain Gain Program in 1,000 Boys & Girls Clubs Across the Country

Summer Learning Loss Prevention Program Designed to Help Kids Stay on Track for the Coming School Year

ATLANTA, May 29, 2014 – Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) today announced the launch of its Summer Brain Gain program in 1,000 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide. Designed to prevent summer learning loss and foster critical creative-thinking skills, Summer Brain Gain has been developed specifically for Boys & Girls Clubs. In addition to the participating Clubs that will receive program training and project-based learning strategies, Summer Brain Gain curriculum will also be available for free to all Clubs across the country.



Each summer, an estimated 43 million children in the U.S. miss out on expanded learning opportunities that could prevent them from falling behind before the next school year begins. During summer, most youth lose about two months' worth of math skills. Low-income youth also lose more than two months' worth of reading skills, while their middle-class peers make slight gains.

"Summer learning losses can stack up from year to year, causing many low-income children to fall further and further behind, ultimately endangering their chances of high school graduation," said [Jim Clark, president and CEO of BGCA](#). "BGCA is committed to ensuring that America's youth, especially those who need us most, graduate from high school on time with a plan for the future. That's why we launched the Summer Brain Gain program to fight the detrimental effect of summer learning loss."

Summer Brain Gain is comprised of one-week modules with fun, themed activities for elementary school, middle school and high school students. Supported by Disney, each module takes a project-based learning approach to develop critical problem-solving and creative-thinking skills; youth engage in a process of learning through discovery, imaginative expression, group work and a final project or production. With modules topics such as "Green Team," "Wacky Watch" and "Connect the Dots," participants can make sculptures out of found objects, create weather in a bottle, or even learn how they are connected to the President of the United States of America.

BGCA pilot tested Summer Brain Gain in more than 200 Clubs in 2013. While the average U.S. student lost at least two months of learning last summer, the average Summer Brain Gain participant did not. “Overall, we saw no significant change in reading or math scores among the program participants, and some Clubs experienced gains—especially in vital 21st century skills like collaboration and critical thinking,” said Dr. Erica S. Stevens, senior director, academic success of BGCA.

One of the first Clubs to successfully pilot Summer Brain Gain was Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley. Following the pilot last summer, middle school participants showed a greater interest in science, exhibited stronger teamwork and community building skills, and fostered a love for reading. According to Elizabeth W., a Club participant, “I liked the thought that I would not be as far behind when I went back to school because I participated in this program.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of Columbus was another Club to successfully pilot Summer Brain Gain last summer. Following the pilot, evaluation studies found that 48 percent of Summer Brain Gain participants made academic gains over the summer, and another 38 percent did not experience any learning loss.

In addition, with support from Staples, BGCA will pilot test Summer Brain Gain: Read!, a literacy program that complements the larger Summer Brain Gain curriculum. To improve the reading skills of America’s youth, Summer Brain Gain: Read! is a 12-week summer reading program with a new book presented each week per age group, along with supporting activities. In addition to two 30-minute reading sessions each week, members complete fun activities that bring the book to life.