**Young people take a break for summer, but not from learning**

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Ah, summer! For young people, a welcome break from class recitations, homework assignments, and repeated tests and exams. After months focused on their educational efforts, children and youth deserve a break from the hectic work schedule of academia. But while it may be time for a break from school, it is NOT a time to take a break from LEARNING.

Research from the National Summer Learning Association shows that during the summer break from school, every young person loses some academic progress. Unfortunately, children from lower income households tend to lose more---up to three months gone. In fact, one study suggests summer learning loss is responsible for as many as 30% of youth who eventually drop out of high school. Who would have thought that a summer break from school could possibly make or break a child’s chance for success?

Indianapolis is fortunate to have a group of funders and a large group of community based summer youth programs committed to making summer into a time of learning and personal growth for almost 35,000 children and youth over the next seven weeks. This summer, the Summer Youth Program Fund partners are investing more than $2.3 million in over 180 programs that are providing children with opportunities to read, do math problems, explore science and engineering, learn to swim, build their leadership skills, experience art, music, and drama, play soccer, basketball, and foursquare. Plus they get fed nutritious meals and snacks and interact daily with positive adult role models. If that is not a recipe for developing well-rounded youth, then I don’t know what is. The great thing is---the children are having fun at the same time they are expanding their knowledge and building the personal skills that will better equip them for success in school, work, and life.

Parents, with over 150 programs to choose from, there is a summer learning program near where you live that will welcome your child/children---and offer them a memorable, enjoyable, and brain expanding summer. To find summer programs in our community, you can download MCCOY’s free mobile phone app to your smartphone: <http://mccoyouth.org/youth-activity-directory.html> or call MCCOY’s office at 317-921-1266 to get a printed copy mailed to your home. If you are a community member who wants to support these great learning places for youth, the directory can help you locate one where you can volunteer your time or share your resources.

For our children, learning never stops---even when the school year ends. Thanks to the Summer Youth Program Fund and the agencies it supports, it doesn’t have to.