

## Summer Learning Program Keeps Students Engaged

For many of the students we serve in our after-school and summer programs, our on-site Learning Centers are a second home. Maryam and Ali Alattabi, Iraqi refugees who moved to Sierra Vista with their parents a year ago, said they love coming to their Learning Center. "I come in and smile," said Maryam, who is 12 and headed to 6th grade next year.

Neither Maryam nor her 10-year-old brother Ali could speak English very well when they arrived in the United States almost two years ago, but now they are practically fluent, thanks to the individualized support they receive year-round from us.

"I got help with math problems," Maryam said. "The teachers at the Learning Center made me understand more."

Even though school is out for the summer, learning continues for the more than 700 kids enrolled in our free 6-week summer learning program. At all ten of our Learning Centers, students are staying academically engaged through reading, science, technology, engineering, and math activities that reinforce the skills they gained during the school year.



There is also plenty of time for fun, like swimming and volleyball, exciting field trips and interesting guest speakers from the community.

Summer learning is critical for our students because it helps narrow the achievement gap and prevent "summer slide." Research shows that

low-income students tend to fall behind during the summer months because of limited access to year-round academic support.

Our unique summer learning program provides kids in kindergarten through 5th grade the consistent academic support they need to succeed right where they live and at no cost to their parents.

Maryam and Ali's mother said her family feels happy, comfortable and safe since moving to Sierra Vista. As part of our Children's Home Initiative program for at-risk or formerly

homeless families, they receive additional support services from our staff.

We expect that Maryam and Ali and the rest of the students in our summer learning program will wow their new teachers this fall!

## BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE

Donate backpacks, school supplies, or funds July 21-25

Help us make sure the 700+ kids who attend our after-school program are ready to succeed this fall during our Back to School Drive the week of July 21-25!



We will be collecting:

- Backpacks, male & female, ages 5-11
- Crayons and markers
- Glue, white liquid, 8 oz.
- Scissors, round point & regular
- Supply boxes (cigar type)
- Wire-bound notebooks
- Pencils, No. 2
- Erasers

Donations can be dropped off at the Community Financial Center, 2600 West Stassney, Austin, TX 78745 on Friday, July 25 between 9am-5pm.

Email [Jackie.Blair@foundcom.org](mailto:Jackie.Blair@foundcom.org) to schedule a different drop-off time or visit [FoundCom.org](http://FoundCom.org) to give online.

## Learning Center Makeover

Our Trails at the Park Learning Center in Southwest Austin just got a new look! A fresh coat of low-VOC paint (which improves air quality and helps reduce emissions), new furniture and an art installation by local artist Virginia Fleck are brightening up the main classroom.



Fleck's custom piece was created from recycled plastic bags. Our Green Initiatives team is also providing a new recycling station and a reusable cup shelf to promote environmentally-friendly habits in the Learning Center. The kids love their beautiful new space!



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Foundation Communities provides first class, affordable homes and free onsite support services for thousands of working families with kids, as well as veterans, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. We offer an innovative, proven model that empowers our residents and neighbors to achieve educational success, financial stability, and healthier lifestyles. We own and operate 17 properties in Austin and North Texas.

### Capital Studios On-Track for Fall Opening

Last month we welcomed key funding partners UnitedHealthcare and Enterprise Community Investment, Inc., along with State Representative Elliott Naishtat and local media, for a tour of our construction site in the heart of downtown Austin. Visitors heard from local musician and current Foundation Communities resident Evan Johns and got to see first-hand the progress we've made at Capital Studios. We're excited to open our doors to 135 new residents this fall!



## Foundation Communities Updates

### Congrats Free Minds Class of 2014!

We've got another group of graduates to congratulate! In May, the Free Minds Class of 2014 joined family and friends on the UT campus to celebrate the completion of a rigorous two-semester humanities course. At the ceremony, amid cheers, graduate Michael Thibodeaux summed up the feelings in the room:

*"I leave Free Minds with a heavy heart. I don't imagine I will get an opportunity to learn in an environment as conducive as Free Minds again, but I feel our dream has been demystified, and we are able to achieve the formal education we desire."*

As our graduates go on to pursue degrees in education, accounting and criminal justice, write poetry, and more, we wish each and every one the very best!



### Our ESL Classes are a Hit!

Our English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults have grown tremendously. We're happy to report that our program, powered by volunteers, now serves nearly 240 students at three different locations across Austin. The classes are open to Foundation Communities' residents and neighbors who want to communicate better with their kids' teachers, explore job opportunities, and navigate daily life with more ease. Students include parents with kids in our after-school and summer learning programs and refugees hearing English for the first time, among many others.

