



Media Advisory

Contacts: [Laura Johnson](#)

ljohnson@summerlearning.org
410-300-6468

[Debra Carroll](#)

debra@thehatchergroup.com
410-962-5707

Baltimore Deputy Mayor, Community Leaders and Hundreds of Baltimore Children, Families, Educators, Advocates Kick Off National Summer Learning Day June 19 at Port Discovery

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) kicks off National Summer Learning Day Friday, June 19 at 8:30 a.m., in its hometown of Baltimore – the birthplace of the summer learning movement. Summer Learning Day will feature a morning panel of experts and evening family celebration. Morning program highlights include a videotaped message by First Lady Michelle Obama, remarks on Baltimore’s summer learning and job opportunities by Baltimore Deputy Mayor Dawn Kirstaetter, a spoken word performance by youth artist of Dew More Baltimore and an expert panel on why summers matter for our nation’s young people. Experts and topics include:

- **Karl L. Alexander, Ph.D.**, Research Professor of Sociology and Academy Professor, Johns Hopkins University. *The Latest Evidence on the Phenomenon of Summer Learning Loss*
- **Leslie Boissiere**, Chief Operating Officer, The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. *Starting Strong: The Critical Early Years in Supporting Third-Grade Reading Proficiency*
- **Christina Drushel**, Policy Analyst, Governor's Office for Children. *Increasing Access and Quality of Maryland Out- of-School Time Programs*
- **Erin Hodge-Williams**, Executive Director, Higher Achievement Baltimore. *The Treacherous Transition to Middle School and Summer Scholars Beating the Odds*
- **Audrey Rowe**, Administrator, U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Reducing Child Hunger during the Summer Months and Federal Funding Opportunities for Summer Program Providers.*

When: Friday, June 19, 2015

8:30 a.m.	Healthy Start Breakfast, sponsored by The Classic Catering People
9:00 a.m.	Expert Panel
10:00 a.m.	Working Session on the Way Forward for Baltimore Youth
4 - 8 p.m.	Summer Learning Day family celebration as part of Port Discovery’s Target Family Fun Night where general admission is just \$2 per person after 4 pm. In addition to exploring the Museum’s interactive exhibits, including its new

traveling exhibit LEGO® Castle Adventure, families will enjoy reading hero, Woofster of PBS' Super Why!, a Bike Safety demonstration with BIKE MD, tips and tricks for staying healthy this summer by Doc Broc of Kaiser Permanente, free books donated by Scholastic Inc. (as supplies last), family craft activities, and interactive math experiences by UMIGO – all to encourage keeping kids learning, safe and healthy this summer.

Where: Port Discovery, 35 Market Place, Baltimore, MD 21202

RSVP: **Space is limited for the morning session.** *Members of the media should RSVP to Laura Johnson by June 17 at ljohnson@summerlearning.org.*

BALTIMORE—As summer break officially begins, hundreds of students, families, educators and advocates are joining the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) June 19 in Baltimore to kick off National Summer Learning Day – a national advocacy day to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy each summer. Baltimore's celebration begins with an invitation-only morning panel featuring national and local leaders discussing critical issues facing young people during the summer. Then, in the evening, the Summer Learning Day Celebration continues with families who will participate in purposeful play and learning as part of the Target Family Fun Night at Port Discovery Children's Museum.

"Summer is a critical time when young people who need the most often receive the least – fewer public services, less access to quality programs and nutritious meals and less contact with caring program providers," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of NSLA. "We must keep the faucet of opportunities turned on for all youth, especially in Baltimore, so that they can stay safe, healthy and engaged in learning and building their futures."

Nonprofits, school districts, mayors and libraries have taken the pledge to keep kids learning through more than 300 events scheduled to date for Summer Learning Day nationwide. For information on Summer Learning Day events across the country, visit summerlearningdaymap.org.

"NSLA is working closely with Baltimore leaders year-round to assess the state of summer learning in the city and to leverage community resources that yield increased access to high quality programs, summer meals and youth job opportunities," said Pitcock. "This is our hometown and we're deeply committed to making Baltimore a beacon for the rest of the country in helping our young people here succeed in college, careers and in life."

Research shows that summer learning loss is a significant contributor to the achievement gap - a gap which remains constant during the school year but widens during summer break. Every summer, low-income youth lose two to three months in reading achievement while their higher-income peers make slight gains. And, most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills in the summer. Year after year, these losses accumulate, leaving low-income student as much as 2.5 to three years behind their peers.

"Summer Learning Day helps parents understand the importance of continuing their children's learning opportunities in informal settings and at home when school ends," said Parke Richeson, Executive Vice President of WTTW Chicago and Project Director for UMIGO, a free online resource that helps early elementary-age children discover the fundamentals of math through fun, curriculum-based activities. "UMIGO is pleased to have over 70 of its partner sites join NSLA and advocates everywhere to get kids excited and learning math all summer long so that they return to school ready to succeed."

Summer Learning Day is sponsored by UMIGO. Summer Learning Day's national partners include the Afterschool Alliance, The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Reading Is Fundamental, United Way and Urban Libraries Council.

###

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works in summer learning, develops and delivers capacity-building offerings and convenes and empowers key actors to embrace summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.