

SUMMERHAWKS

2019

END OF PROGRAM

REPORT

WHY?

SummerHawks was created to offer students at Hamilton School the opportunity to engage their minds for 5 weeks over summer vacation. Studies show that students who do not participate in educational activities over the summer experience significant learning loss. The results are cumulative which means that multiple summers of idleness can cause a significant reduction in their math and reading skills. The SummerHawks program was designed to keep students' minds active during these normally stagnant middle weeks of summer. A fundamentally active academic focus involving daily reading, writing and math was supplemented by a robust offering of extra curricular offerings throughout the course of the 5 week program and, as a result, we believe students not only averted the dreaded 'summer slump', but experienced important growth, both academic and personal, during the summer of 2019.

The strategy for success of Summerhawks '19 in large part was based on attracting talented, academically successful, growth oriented college students to act as leaders, mentors and inspiration for Hamilton's rising 4th through 8th graders. We could not have been more pleased with the 6 classroom leaders who chose to be associated with and challenged by our summerhawks program. These leaders embraced their roles and dedicated themselves to providing our campers with academic enrichment and opportunity for personal growth. Supported by a host of additional college staff and high school volunteers, campers were routinely offered one to one attention as they refreshed or developed academic skills.

Throughout the time at Summerhawks leaders, volunteers and campers were encouraged to embrace a Growth Mindset and Self Learning. We purposely encouraged learning something new whether a card trick, solving a Rubik's Cube, practicing mindfulness, learning to juggle, making origami, coding a Sphero robot or learning new material through Khan Academy or Ted Talks. Following are summaries of what your student hopefully embraced over the summer.

Math

As Math is critical to academic success and often something students struggle with, Math held the premier spot of first or second period every day.

The vision of the math program was to:

- Master and reinforce basic skills necessary for competency in mathematics starting with multiplication facts to 12, moving on to division and then fractions. Fractions included adding and subtracting with like and unlike denominators, multiplying and dividing. For the older kids we moved on towards manipulating numbers from fractions to decimals and percents and then decimals to fractions.
- Have a positive mindset towards Math
- Inspire the students through advanced math and puzzles with Zach Levine. (Mathletes coach)
- Challenge the students to learn something new by attempting to solve the Rubix cube.

This vision was embraced by the leaders and most of the students engaged in the work and were rewarded with an improved mindset towards math, stronger skills, and lots of points to shop at the SummerHawks store.

In addition for math we offered a class in PreAlgebra from 1-4pm for 3 weeks for those students matriculating to highschool as well as those students in 8th grade that will be taking algebra at Hamilton. This was taught by Ms. Kaila Budwell, an Algebra teacher at Novato High School and was very well received by the students. (More on that in a separate report)

Reading

Because literacy is the cornerstone of education and competency in comprehension, vocabulary, and writing stem from reading, we also made reading an every day class.

The vision of the reading program was simply to:

- Create readers
- Improve their reading skills and possibly move up their reading level
- Help the students learn to enjoy reading

This was done by having a reading period every day. The students had the chance to choose books at their level or around their level. We had many books for them to choose from. The students were given points for every page they read. Reading took place in their classroom, on the floor of the library, in the garden, on the playground, or outside on blankets in the shade. The youngest students

Had one on one reading almost every day with the teacher or the assistants in the class. During reading time we put 5-8 assistants in the younger classrooms.

Each of the assistants was asked to have the students read to them outloud. Reluctant readers were helped by the students trading off reading with the assistants.

The 7th and 8th graders often had double reading/writing blocks where they were able to watch significant films: Freedom writers, RUDY, Gifted Hands, etc. and then reflect on them through discussion and writing.

Writing

The vision of the writing program was simply to have the students practice writing. The students had two writing periods per week. However, they also used other times to write. On the first day of the course they were encouraged to write goals for the five weeks, many of the classes took time every day to write in their gratitude journal, there was also time to write during the KEYS to success class. In addition, many of the teachers gave their students prompts or encouraged their students to write about their own life, or the life of someone that inspires them.

Athletics

All campers engaged in one hour of athletics every day of SummerHawks. We offered a rotating and varied menu of activities to include at various times soccer, basketball, field games, ultimate frisbee, juggling, hip hop, zumba, cheer, and cross fit. Students who did not choose to participate in an athletic offering were allowed to play chess or read in the library. Our goal with athletics was to activate students, practice teamwork, and encourage students to try new things!

Chess

Summerhawks chess was simply an extension of the popular Hamilton lunch-time chess club program offered for grades 3 thru 8. Regular club players were thrilled to be able to continue to improve skills and settled into the routine of playing chess quickly while others, first timers, faced the challenge of the learning curve of the game. By the end of our five weeks the chess room was frequently visited by veterans and rookies alike as they became hooked on the game. All players were excited to learn of our plans for this coming year to include a regular tournament schedule and a full time Grand Master Chess coach leading our new Hamilton Chess Team.

Environmental Science

The Environmental Science class strove to educate and inspire the students to make their community a more environmentally sustainable place. The fourth graders and some fifth and sixth graders learned about the prevalence of climate change today and the factors contributing to it, the benefits and consequences of recycling, composting, and littering and renewable versus non-renewable energy. At the end of the camp, this group also participated in a trash clean up around Hamilton, taking direct action to help the environment. The other fifth and sixth graders, along with the seventh and eighth graders, participated in a design thinking project. Each class brainstormed environmental problems at Hamilton that they would like to change, separated into those respective groups, and came up with solutions for their issues. Each group either focused on the trash problem, the food waste, the water quality, or the garden. The students were tasked in coming up with creative and realistic solutions that they could present to their principal, Steve Hospodar, and assistant principal, Stefanie Parnell at the end of the camp. The goal of the design thinking curriculum was for the students to leave the camp with a sense of agency that would stay with them not only when concerning the environment but in all aspects of their life.

Cooking

Students practiced everyday math, following directions, and working collaboratively as they whipped up pancakes, smoothies, Acai bowls, oatmeal, and avocado toast. It was our vision that they would learn to some healthy recipes that they could make at home. Along the way we hope they learned more than a little bit of nutrition as well!

Art

No Summer enrichment would be complete without an appreciation for creativity and the artist within all of us. Students developed their own creations including chalk drawings, rock painting, mirror frame design, and drawing. The highlight of the program was producing tie dye T- shirts, and working on a mural which will hang in the Hamilton Garden.

Sphero

Recognizing the importance of developing quantitative and logic skills, most academic enrichment camps will include robotics and coding. Accordingly, Summerhawks was excited to combine these disciplines with the inclusion of a programmable robotic sphere! Our talented techie, Cole, introduced the robots to the students, and led them through remote control exercises, obstacle course building, and eventually the programming of these super robotic toys. To add even more spice, Cole shared his Virtual Reality Goggles with the campers helping to inspire and lead them toward a career in robotics!

STEM Challenges

Stem challenges were a huge hit with the students. These challenges were based on either physics, chemistry, or engineering. Stem activities provide hands-on and minds-on lessons for the students. Making math and science both fun and interesting helps the student learn. This year the students made magnetic slime (which they were able to make move with a powerful magnet), ice cream in a bag with ice and salt, roller coasters out of foam noodles, buildings out of spaghetti and marshmallows, and bridges out of index cards and tape. Some were a bit of a mess, but fun was had by all.

Keys to Success

The ideas of academic achievement and personal growth we promote during the Summerhawks program are part of our bigger goal of supporting students as they strive to experience success in high school, college and beyond. So, beyond Math, Reading and Writing, we took time each week with all class groups to talk about critical elements for their success, including maintaining a growth mindset, collaboration, teamwork, developing a learning relationship with teachers and mentors, setting aside technology, eat well, sleeping well, and goal setting.

We spent a lot of time talking with students about the need to work hard, accept failure or difficult times, and to persevere while continuing to work toward goals.

Financial Literacy

For incoming eighth graders we spent an hour once each week talking about financial issues which they will soon be confronting as they take more responsibility for their future education, employment and goal setting. Topics we addressed were far ranging (this was a curious bunch!) but included the strength of earning power in a college education, the role lifelong learning will play in career choices and opportunity, delayed gratification, compound growth (the eighth wonder of the world), budgeting and net worth statements, and a fun study of financial scams and frauds...do not become a victim!