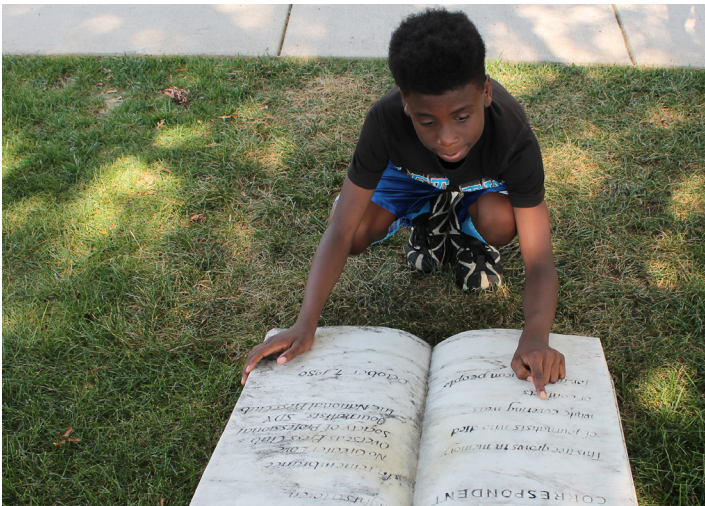


Auberle Helps Heal Through Education and Adventure



BEST SUMMER SCHOOL EVER

Teachers, students and everyone involved with the 2015 summer school program at Auberle are calling it the best ever, thanks to dedicated staff, enthusiastic support, innovative curricula and the exceptional efforts of Summer School Lead Teacher Chelsea Stockhausen.

UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Capturing and keeping the attention of Auberle students can be a unique challenge:

- All of the students are working through difficult issues in their lives.
- Auberle serves children and young adults at a variety of ages and learning levels.
- Turnover is always likely, so teachers must adapt to changes while also maintaining the sense of classroom community that helps students feel safe and be productive.
- Strict curricula guidelines exist in some subjects to continue to qualify for Title 1 funding, which provides education support for low-income children.

Teachers, Auberle staff and Auberle leadership all work together to plan courses and activities and adapt to changes and special needs as they arise.

Sixty students participated in the 2015 summer school program.

FROM READING TO ROBOTICS

Auberle teachers adopted the STEAM philosophy, which adds Art to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) approach. Both STEM and STEAM are holistic, real-world approaches to education that blend school subjects instead of teaching them in isolation.

STEAM is a relatively new approach devised to help students think creatively as well as critically, an ability that has been identified in innovative thinkers in real-world business settings.

In addition to these traditional school subjects, students also practiced life skills and had opportunities to be outdoors or play sports on Auberle's main campus. Therapeutic appointments for individual students were also woven into their school day.

Stockhausen also researched and introduced STEMfinity kits, hands-on building and engineering kits that teach through problem solving, discovery and teamwork. The kits, such as a Roller Coaster Physics Camp and an Elementary Robotics Camp, include multiple projects, and each project takes about a week to complete. The students became so engaged and interested that the teachers coordinated lesson plans to make more time for these projects.

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FANTASTIC FIELD TRIPS

Stockhausen, teachers and Auberle staff also organized weekly field trips, including:

- Just Ducky Tours of Pittsburgh,
- A tour and ride on the Duquesne Incline,
- The Carnegie Science Center and Highmark SportsWorks,
- Kennywood Amusement Park,
- National Aviary,
- Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium.

Most people in the Pittsburgh area know these places well, but, for most of the students at Auberle, aged 8-20, these trips were first-time experiences.

Each outing incorporated learning opportunities that the teachers also tied into classroom work. Even at Kennywood students were able to gain insights about their STEMfinity roller coasters by seeing and experiencing the real thing. After each trip, students created collages to review and share what they had learned.

The grand finale of the field trips was a visit to Washington, D.C. Students went on a walking tour that included the Washington Monument, the White House, The Jefferson Memorial, World War II Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Pool and a picnic on the Mall. Students also visited the Air and Space Museum at The Smithsonian and toured Arlington Cemetery.

All of the activities were paid for using donations, Title 1 funding and the Homeless Children's Education Fund. Tickets for Kids also helped make the field trips possible by paying admission fees.

John P. Lydon, Auberle CEO, says, "Poverty studies and our experience tell us that at-risk youth rarely leave their community or neighborhood. This significantly limits their vision and their goals in life. For Auberle students, such trips are so much more than a fun outing; they can be powerful experiences, with positive, lifelong effects far beyond the school."

THE AUBERLE APPROACH

The driving force behind this success was teacher Chelsea Stockhausen, who brought a variety of new ideas to the curricula to engage students, enhance educational performance and make summer school fun.

According to Stockhausen, working at Auberle didn't feel like work. "We had fun every day," she says. "It was so fulfilling, as an educator, to see the students' excitement and watch their progress. You really do feel like you are making a difference."

Stockhausen was also quick to point out the always present support from Auberle leadership. "You always know that it is okay to make a suggestion or try new things," says Stockhausen. "Everyone at Auberle shares a sincere vision to do the things that will have the maximum positive impact on the children."

PROVEN SUCCESS

Auberle implemented the STAR Program to improve reading and math aptitude. From 2014 to 2015, students improved 69% in reading and 76% in math over the previous school year. That exceeds the national average of 50% improvement using the STAR curriculum.

Also, Auberle implemented its own assessment and improvement program for referred students who have been labeled *habitually truant*, as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education School Code.

Each student in this program receives an individualized incentive plan to reward attendance, and he or she has a weekly meeting with an Auberle tutor to provide encouragement and check progress.

The program doesn't end when a child is discharged. Auberle works hand-in-hand with community-based programs, to monitor progress and help ensure that attendance and progress continue. In the past year all students achieved or exceeded the program goal of 85% attendance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions about the summer school program or are interested in teaching or volunteering at Auberle,
contact Lauren Brown at laurenb@aubarle.org or (412) 673-5856, ext. 1257.

If you are interested in supporting successful programs like this with a donation,
visit aubarle.org/donate or contact Lauren Brown at laurenb@aubarle.org or (412) 673-5856, ext. 1257.