

LEF *report*

EDUCATE | ENRICH | EMPOWER

SIGN UP NOW!

★ YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR SHOW

Grades 4-12, Online with Kedbloom

★ ART, RACE & EMPATHY

Grades 7-12, Online with Art Room Atelier

★ HIDDEN WOMEN: AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN IN HISTORY

Grades 4-6, Online with OWL Library

MENTORS NEEDED

LEF seeks to connect students with experienced community members in all disciplines who are willing to share their expertise. Whether you are a business owner, retired professional or technical expert, there are many opportunities to mentor an individual student or lead a team of students.

To learn more, reach out to LEFforStudents@gmail.com.



Educate + Enrich = Empower



Winter Is Coming...

Here's how to deal with the impending stress

An excerpt from Parade Magazine, August 2020. Winter can be an intense time for parents in any year, due to the need to be cooped up indoors more, an increased risk of illness, and holiday celebrations. But it's especially "daunting" this year, thanks to COVID-19, says Monifa Seawell, M.D., a board-certified psychiatrist in Atlanta, Georgia.

Many parents are also aware that, given that the pandemic took hold in the U.S. in March, "we haven't really experienced what it's going to be like to be stuck indoors for the entire winter," Gallagher says. But it's coming.

Before you panic about what's ahead, know this: There are some things you can do to regain control. Thinking back to how you handled things last winter and having a discussion with your partner, (cont. pg. 5)

LEF-Funded Programs

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR SHOW

Online with Kebloom

The Young Entrepreneurs Show (YES) is a fantastic introduction to the world of entrepreneurship, invention, and management. Due to the pandemic, the YES! 2021 will be moving online! In this online-only program, students will learn how to start and promote their own small business and build their own business website. Interested students from all area public, independent and home schools, should sign-up to receive updates and additional information. Classes begin in December! Sign Up at www.LEFforStudents.org. Open to all area students, Grades 4-12. \$25 participation fee, financial aid available.

ART, RACE & EMPATHY

Online in partnership with Art Room Atelier

This program is at the intersection of Art, Race and Empathy utilizing visual thinking strategies (VTS), creative engagement, and compassionate dialogue to think through the identity of difference, deepening our understanding of the individual life experiences of others. Students will focus on individual portraiture projects created in a two-part process. Students will first research a chosen individual, finding imagery and text to collage layered histories. Students will then render a portrait over the surface of their collage exploring mixing skin tones and portraiture techniques. Email jj@artroomatelier.com for more information. LEF has provided 100% of program costs. Open to all area students, Grades 7-12.

HIDDEN WOMEN: AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN IN HISTORY

Online in partnership with OWL Library

This unique program explores the extraordinary lives of two African-American women who are often overlooked in American history—Elizabeth “Mumbet” Freeman and Bessie Coleman. Each session will include a reading component, virtual dramatic performance, a Q&A period for students to speak directly with the performer and writer, and a wrap-up project that focuses on biography as dramatic monologue. Students will also learn about biography as dramatic monologue and writing picture book biographies for young learners. The dynamic nature of this program will have a lasting impact on students' understanding of history and the arts. Email pmoore@owlibrary.org for information. LEF has provided 100% of program costs. Open to all area students, Grades 4-6.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Online in partnership with World Affairs Council of CT

In a world that continues to globalize, it is essential for Connecticut students to understand all of the issues which impact the world in which they live. With a push at the state level to increase global competency, our Model UN helps provide students with an international perspective and a global education. Just this last year, 1000 students from over 30 High Schools across Connecticut developed global competencies through our CTWAC Model UN. Email nstruth@ctwac.org for information. LEF has provided 100% of program costs. Open to all area HS students.

BRAVE THE PAGE

Online in partnership with OWL Library

November is National Novel Writing Month! A fun, empowering approach to creative writing. The challenge: draft an entire novel in just one month. For 30 wild, exciting, surprising days, you get to lock away your inner editor, let your imagination take over, and just create! Participants will work independently throughout the month and meet together virtually on Monday afternoons to check-in, do some "word sprints," and get those word counts up! *Registration for this program is closed. LEF has provided 100% of program costs. Open to all area students.*

CODERZ AMAZON ROBOTICS CHALLENGE

Online led by Carole Lunt, LPS Parent

Coders in grades 7-12 compete against others internationally to program virtual robots using Blockly and Python coding languages. Students practice coding while developing computational thinking and creative problem-solving skills and are encouraged to work collaboratively with their peers in a fun and instructive environment that challenges and expands on their understanding of coding. Strong foundations in coding help support highly demanded STEM careers such as computer systems analysis, Web and software development, and computer hardware engineering. *Registration for this program is closed. LEF has provided 100% of program costs.*

SUMMER READING PARTNERSHIP

In partnership with LPS AND Region 6 PTOs

Back in June, LEF partnered with Litchfield and Morris PTO's to provide summer reading books to children grade K-6. Books were chosen by teachers per grade level and families were encouraged to pick up their summer reading books in a socially distanced manner. It was a great way to celebrate and encourage summer reading, especially after engaging in virtual learning for the last 3 months of the school year! *LEF subsidized the program costs.*

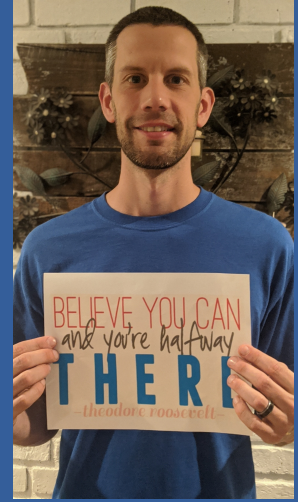
LETTERS ARE CHARACTERS

Online in partnership with School On The Green

School on the Green, a non-profit parent cooperative preschool partners with Caroline Wilcox-Ugurlu and her Letters are Characters literacy curriculum to bring a "play based, reading program for emerging readers." The Letters are Characters book and other program materials, weekly "letters from the author" and pre-recorded mini lessons are being offered to area preschoolers through a virtual program this school year. Letters are Characters program includes a curriculum for parents which includes information about the science of reading. The intention of the program is to protect as many children as possible from reading failure by building awareness and increasing understanding about reading acquisition. *LEF has provided 100% of program costs.*

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: ADAM PIECHOWSKI, LIS

By Malin Adams with Sam Quigley, Grade 8. Mr. Piechowski was my sixth grade homeroom teacher as well as my math teacher at the Litchfield Intermediate School. During that time, when I was 11 and 12 years old, I learned many valuable lessons, but when the action subsided, I was, most notably, surprised to find that my level of math had increased significantly. It took me a while to realize this after the school year had ended, but I finally came to a conclusion: Mr. P, as kids at school affectionately refer to him, made math fun. During the daily lesson, his technique of hooking the class with a little side note about the impending work or maybe an insight on a prior class, maybe reminding us to study for an upcoming test, was critical and getting our attention and focus, and it worked. Then, it was on to the teaching, where his tone was upbeat and encouraging--captivating, one might say. This approachable manner made it easier to ask questions on an assignment, and the independence he granted us on a day-to-day basis just made the math lesson and, frankly, the overall school experience, just much more enjoyable, while at the same time getting us ready for the standards of math in middle school. As for the rest of his lesson, his teachings were then put to use, as Mr. P gave us a fair amount of time to complete the guided practice so that we could make some headway on homework. The work we were given was difficult at times and definitely challenged us, but it being presented in a welcoming format certainly helped.



LEF SEEKS MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS

"Multicultural" is defined as relating to or made up of several cultural or ethnic groups within a society. "Diverse" means to show a great deal of variety. Being poised to embrace that variety, various cultures, different beliefs and attitudes is a sign of a truly "inclusive" community. Studies show that diversity is not only a very positive influence in young lives but also will be commonplace in higher education and the workplace of the future because it increases creativity and improves businesses' bottom line.

According to Kids Matter Mental Health Institute, talking about diversity and integrating it to everyday life makes a child accepting and proud of who they are, and enables them to embrace not only their own diversity but also the diversity of all those around them.

Two years ago, LEF identified Multiculturalism as a *Priority Pathway*, defined as a current deficit for area students which needs additional programming. LEF is seeking partnerships to design, execute and evaluate hi-impact opportunities for students in these areas.

LEF has partnered with **Artroom Artelier** and **OWL Library** to bring two new and thoughtful multicultural programs to our community. *Art, Race & Empathy* and *Hidden Women: African-American Women in History* will work to deepen students' understanding of the individual life experiences of others and its importance in our everyday lives. If you would like to work with LEF to deliver more relevant youth opportunities, reach out today at www.LEFforStudents.org!

Winter Is Coming...(cont.)

(Cont. from page 1) if you have one, about what worked and what didn't work. From there, you can form a plan. For starters, focus on a general structure of meals, school, and activities for your child. "Not to the point where it's overwhelming, but so that it helps you feel like it's not endless time," she says.

Structure is also good for kids, Seawell says. "Children thrive with a routine and predictability," she explains, noting that it can also be good to have some type of structure on the weekends. "Now is also a good time to begin coming up with a plan for what fun activities your children would enjoy being involved in outside of school hours."

Seawell also recommends searching for activities your child might like doing indoors during the colder months. You can cruise Pinterest, or check out our ideas to avoid cabin fever, crafts for kids, and list of best indoor activities. Of course, your child's age is a factor here. What is fun and exciting to a toddler may not work for an older child. Whether an intense work deadline comes out nowhere and you need extra time, or you know you'll just need a break, knowing in advance what kind of activity you'll break out for your child when you're in serious need. Write these ideas down for the just in case.

Finally, know that it's OK for your child to make their own fun sometimes. That's true even with small children, provided you're there to supervise. You can leave out a bunch of toys or even pots and pans for younger ones to play with while you tackle a task or just take a moment to relax. With older children, it's important for them to create their own fun. They need to learn boundaries and separation in terms of personal space, and need to respect that maybe mom and dad need to do something that doesn't include them. They don't have to be dependent on you at all times.

Tips to Keep Kids Moving As Weather Cools

Excerpt from the Washington Post, October 2020. Although the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children get at least 60 minutes of activity a day, when recess is canceled and PE is online, that may not be feasible for many families. Doctors say physical activity gives kids energy, reduces body fat, decreases a child's chances of developing diabetes, and builds muscle, bone, and joint strength, among other benefits. And parents may find that getting their children to move around improves family dynamics. Providing opportunities for movement doesn't have to involve expensive exercise equipment or yet more screen time.

- ✓ Rubber resistance bands are inexpensive, occupy almost no space and let kids do strength-training moves indoors.
- ✓ Attach a retractable net to your dining room table, and presto: table tennis! (Watch out for chandeliers.)
- ✓ Replace your kid's fidget spinner with a one-pound weight or even a can of beans.
- ✓ For yoga, families recommend the Cosmic Kids YouTube channel and app.
- ✓ An app called Sworkit lets you build your own workout, based on duration and type of exercise; it offers kid-specific options.
- ✓ If your child is an extrovert, invite them to make their own fitness video to share with friends.
- ✓ Send your kids on a scavenger hunt to find specific types of items in your house. Then, make them race to put it all back.
- ✓ Write down exercises on small pieces of paper. Put them in a jar, and let family members choose from the jar. Everyone (yes, everyone) has to do the selected activity.

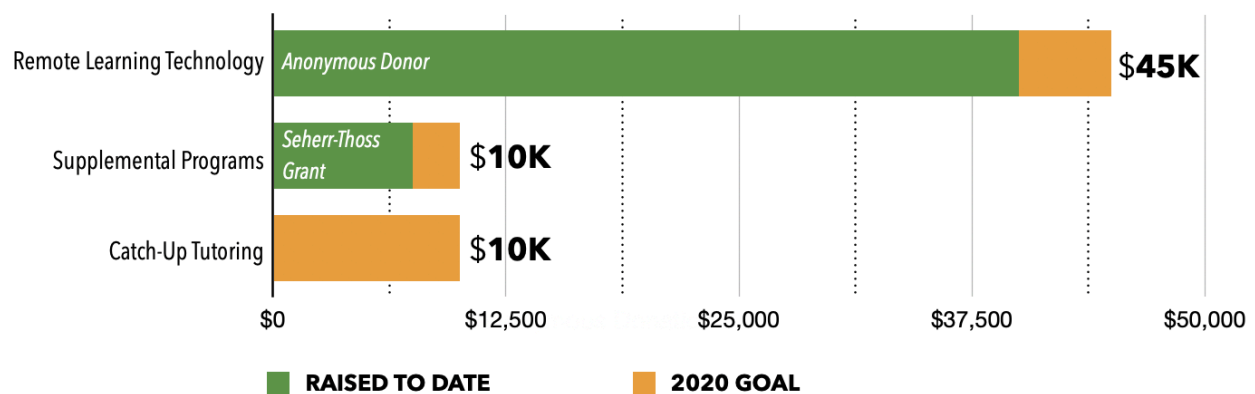
Help Us Get Kids Back on Track

It will not be news to you that this is a particularly difficult time for the children of our community. Kids are experiencing social isolation and continued fear of illness and loss. Despite our success rallying together, young learners need us now more than ever.

LEF has reached out to parents, administrators, and community partners to understand how to support students in this unprecedented time. LEF is stepping in to help with:

- Remote learning technology & outdoor classroom needs
- Supplemental programming in languages, arts, civics & STEM
- Individual & group tutoring provided by professionals and a multigenerational program.

Our fundraising goals and funds raised to date are below. Like many organizations, LEF lost the funds we had hoped to raise in 2020 from fundraising events. In light of this blow, we are now asking if you would be willing to contribute to our cause. We assure you our board is dedicated to efficiently utilizing your donation in areas with the greatest impact during this disorienting time. This work is crucial and will have emotional and mental health benefits beyond academic gains. To contribute go to www.LEFforStudents.org. Thank you.



ABOUT LEF

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WHAT WE NEED

- ✓ **Donations:** Funds are needed to support distance learning, supplemental programming like world languages and catch-up tutoring. Please donate now at www.LEFforstudents.org.
- ✓ **Connections:** Do you have an opportunity for students, know a good partner or want to share an idea with LEF? Drop us a line at LEFforstudents@gmail.com and we will be in touch!
- ✓ **Volunteers:** LEF is a small but mighty group of committed volunteers that want to create opportunities for young people. We are seeking members at the board, committee and project level to join our team. Find out more at www.LEFforstudents.org.