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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY JOIN THE NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION TO ANNOUNCE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY AS THE FIRST EVER WINNER OF THE FOUNDER'S AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF THE SUMMER LEARNING CHALLENGE**

*University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Research Shows CPL's Redesigned Program Not Only Reduces the 'Summer Slide', But Linked with Higher Academic Performance in Math and Reading*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon, National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) CEO Sarah Pitcock today to announce that Chicago Public Library is the first ever winner of NSLA's Founder's Award in recognition of its Summer Learning Challenge – aimed at eliminating the summer slide. In addition to being the inaugural winner of the Founder's Award, Chicago Public Library is the only public library ever to win an award from the National Summer Learning Association.

"I could not be prouder that Chicago Public Library has received the prestigious Founder's Award and I want to thank the Summer Learning Association for this great recognition," said Mayor Emanuel. "This honor is a tremendous testament to the leadership and continued commitment of the Chicago Public Library and its staff – to give our children the skills and tools they need so they can keep learning, discovering, and succeeding in school and in life."

The National Summer Learning Association's annual awards recognize outstanding summer programs or models that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for young people between pre-kindergarten and twelfth grade. Programs are measured against NSLA's Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs (CASP) based on a history, mission, goals, operations, management, staff development, partnerships, results, and sustainability.

"Our 2015 award winners and finalists exemplify the best in summer learning and the impact that high-quality summer learning opportunities can have on student success," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of the National Summer Learning Association. "We are especially energized by the way Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge is leveraging community partnerships, volunteers and strong family engagement to deliver such high-quality summer learning opportunities on a citywide scale."

In 2015, NSLA offered their first award application for non-enrollment based programs called the Founder's Award. CPL will officially receive this honor during the New York Life Excellence in

Summer Learning Awards Luncheon at the National Summer Learning Association's [Summer Changes Everything™ National Conference](#) in Baltimore, Md., October 13, 2015.

“Congratulations to the Chicago Public Library on receiving the NSLA's first Founder's Award for their Summer Learning Challenge program. This program proves that summer is indeed a season for learning. It is a priority of ours to support organizations and programs that build stronger academic foundations for students in middle school during the critical after-school hours and summer break,” said Marlyn Torres, senior program officer, New York Life Foundation. “The Summer Learning Challenge was recognized because it has provided enriched summer experiences for 83,000 young people throughout the city and has become a national model for broadening traditional summer library programs.”

In 2013, as part of Mayor Emanuel's vision to enhance access for children to quality educational and developmental opportunities, Chicago Public Library with Civic Consulting Alliance dramatically expanded their offerings to provide a program for all children in Chicago. The Library broadened the traditional summer reading program to align with key 21st Century learning priorities as set out by the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS). Through a strategic partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry, STEM learning has been embedded as a vital track of learning in the summer months, promoting reading, discovery and creation. During the evaluation process this summer, NSLA staff visited CPL summer programs and were able to see the deep partnership with the Museum of Science and Industry which has led to this sustained STEM effort.

“Our summer program is intentionally designed to invite ALL Chicago's kids to engage in science, technology, engineering, arts and math challenges that get them excited about learning,” said Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. “This leads to stronger academic outcomes and, at the same time, increases the number of kids who might someday pursue related education and career paths.”

New research conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago provides evidence suggesting a positive link between academic performance and youth involvement in Rahm's Readers. The research indicates that youth who participated in the 2013 program, especially for the youngest children and those students with the highest levels of involvement, on average performed better on standardized academic assessments relative to peers with equivalent prior academic backgrounds, and personal and neighborhood circumstances. Chapin Hall used a combination of rigorous data analysis and shared expertise of the partner organizations. The analysis focused on youth from neighborhoods across the city, a wide range of ages, and involvements in many different Summer Learning Challenge offerings. Chapin Hall's sizeable findings suggest that youth that participate consistently in Summer Learning Challenge programs through their elementary years could catch up to or move ahead of their peers by as much as a full year's worth of math and reading proficiency.

“Summer learning loss—or ‘summer slide’—is an issue that disproportionately impacts children already at risk for school failure. Our research suggests that Chicago Public Library's Summer Learning Challenge offers families and students a meaningful and accessible way to narrow that gap and improve academic outcomes,” said Bryan Samuels, Executive Director of Chapin Hall.

Rahm's Readers Summer Learning Challenge, as well as CPL's membership in the Chapin Hall Collaborative, are funded by private donations through the Chicago Public Library Foundation

(CPLF). The Library's ability to introduce leading-edge programs and innovative ideas is made possible by private-funding support from CPLF and other corporate and nonprofit partners. The Chicago Public Library Foundation was founded in 1986 as a true public/private partnership with the City of Chicago to ensure the margin of excellence for Chicago's outstanding Library. Through the support of many civic-minded individuals, corporations and foundations, the Foundation provides on-going funding for collections and a variety of other community-responsive programs, including the Summer Learning Challenge, Teacher in the Library, CyberNavigators, YOUmedia and One Book, One Chicago. In the past 29 years, the Foundation has provided \$65 million in support to the Chicago Public Library. For more information, visit [www.cplfoundation.org](http://www.cplfoundation.org) or call (312) 201-9830.

Since 1873, the Chicago Public Library has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; won a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, please call (312) 747-4050 or visit [www.chipublic.org](http://www.chipublic.org).

Chapin Hall Center at the University of Chicago is an independent policy research center that creates and builds knowledge to design solutions for some of the most challenging problems confronting vulnerable children, families and their communities. Chapin Hall is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization. For additional information about Chapin Hall Collaborative and the research project with Chicago Public Library contact Nick Mader at [nmader@chapinhall.org](mailto:nmader@chapinhall.org) and visit [www.chapinhall.org](http://www.chapinhall.org).

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) 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](http://www.summerlearning.org).

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