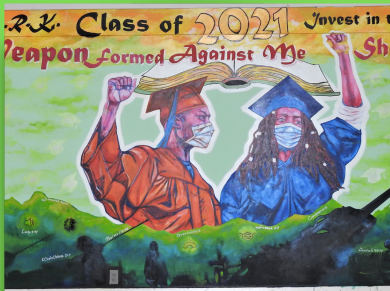




Homework time



Class of 2021 Mural



Arkansas State University visit



Summer study group



Rec Time Hangout



Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids

FEBRUARY 2022

A Summer To Remember

TAMRA CALAMESE, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

If we had to choose one word to encompass the 2021 calendar year for the program, it would be ENDURANCE. The doors of P.A.R.K. stayed open to both our in-person and virtual students for the entirety of 2021!

In addition to the school-year happenings, P.A.R.K. offered an all-day summer program to all our students this past summer. Our 8th - 10th-grade students were able to strengthen their foundational academic skills in English - concentrating on reading analysis. Mathematics was also a focus building their basic math skills in multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and algebraic equations. Our 11th - 12th graders participated in an accelerated course that included A.C.T. Prep, Scholarship Essay Writing Skills, College Prep, and Career Readiness curriculum.

Our original six-week summer program was reduced to five weeks due to circumstances beyond our control. We were not able to post-test our students, but the gains - including the areas of analysis and study skills as well as attention span - were undeniable. Our students thrived in returning to the socialization and life-skill opportunities offered every summer at P.A.R.K. as well.

Even though the summer program ended earlier than expected, we could not break our promise of the end-of-summer incentives for our students. A trip to Dave & Busters with free range of the restaurant and game area was taken. However, before loading the charter bus, all students and staff had to test negative for Covid-19. Thanks to our volunteer pharmacist, Kim McDonough, who oversaw and administered the over-the-counter Covid-19 tests purchased by P.A.R.K. After lunch catered by Dave & Busters, we returned to P.A.R.K., where students could use the points they earned for completing academics to participate in our end-of-summer auction.

Although our summer turned out different than we planned, it was a wonderful ending to reward the hard work of our students! P.A.R.K., along with the rest of the world, was unsure how the beginning of the 2021-22 school year would look for our students. However, P.A.R.K. not only followed our regular schedule to open to our students in September, but we have even taken on the challenge of figuring out how to return to our daily rec incentives along with the academic offerings this school year.

6915 Geyer Springs Road Little Rock, AR 72209
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Coming Home to P.A.R.K.

ERICA GUY, STUDENT LIFE MANAGER

Oh, how it feels to be back home! The time to give back to the program that started it all for me has finally come. I'm back where I always felt like I belonged.

As a student, P.A.R.K. was like a second home that housed a whole neighborhood. There, I made my friends who turned into family, built mentor/mentee relationships with older siblings (staff). In this place, I started to develop my self-confidence and self-esteem and set the foundation for me to mature into the woman I am today.

It is an honor to come back as a graduate of the P.A.R.K. program and now a staff member to work on the team that set the foundation for me. As the newest Student Life Manager, I look at my employment as an opportunity to give back to this fantastic program. While having a wonderful group of kids, I look towards the many ways I can help prepare them for the better and brighter futures they have ahead of themselves.

As most of our students, as an incoming 8th-grader, I sat in the very same periwinkle green chairs for the first time. I had no plans, let alone goals, for my future. At that time, the P.A.R.K. staff saw the potential that I didn't see in myself. Now that I am a part of the staff, I see that same potential in our students, and it is now my chance to give our students the same love, wisdom, and support that I received while I was a student.

I get a great feeling inside with every round of Uno, laugh from a joke told, Bible study, volleyball match, hellos, and see you later; the relationships I can build with our students. The fact that I can plant the seeds of encouragement, motivation, love, and wisdom into our students is just the thing that keeps me excited to wake up every morning and come to work. I am blessed to see how far these planted seeds will take our students as they move through their lives.

2021 Corporation & Foundation Project Grants



Balance What You
Eat Drink and Do Initiative



Neighborhood
Champions & Summer
Enrichment Program



Dealing with Dollar\$

THE BROWN
FOUNDATION, INC.

Summer Enrichment Program



So Fresh So Clean - Oral Health Project



Summer Enrichment



General & Summer
Enrichment Program



Guiding to Greatness Project



Rebuild and Transform &
Black Home Ownership Initiative



Closing the Gap Project

Moving on - Class of 2021

MELANIE JACKSON, COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The graduation celebration for P.A.R.K.'s Class of 2021 mirrored that of 2020. Graduations of past normally boasted a crowd of 300 or more attendees, but due to COVID - 19 and crowd guidelines, we limited the number of celebrants to the twenty graduates and four of their immediate family members.

However, the grads received the same honors as all of the other grads. They walked into the gymnasium to Pomp and Circumstance with their robes and mortarboards on in their individual school's color, and proceeded to their seats.

After receiving encouraging words, each graduate's profile was read by a staff member as they stood individually with all eyes on them. Their accomplishments at school and P.A.R.K. were noted including plans, whether to attend college, trade school, military, or go straight into the workforce. This day was all about P.A.R.K.'s Class of 2021.

P.A.R.K. is grateful the graduates chose to grow with us. We wish them much success in their future!



Leading By Example

TAMRA CALAMESE, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Y-LEAD program was formed to provide an increased level of motivation and education for our "Young Leaders Engaged, Accomplished, and Driven." Students in grades 10th-12th are nominated for the program based on their academic performance, engagement in the goals stated within P.A.R.K.'s mission statement and demonstration of self-drive shown towards their future aspirations.

Students meet once a month on Saturdays to participate in workshops geared around leadership characteristics, financial sustainability practices and community impact activities - including a large service project each year. Funding for the various activities and incentives for this select group of students is provided by a grant awarded to P.A.R.K. from U.S. Bank. October kicked off our second year of the program.

We are off to a great start with our 18 P.A.R.K. student Y-LEADers for the 2021-22 school year!



They can & They will

LILLIAN RUSSELL, CURRICULUM COORDINATOR



P.A.R.K. saw more students attending regularly and wanting extra tutoring in 2021, even during recreation time. We pinpointed deficiencies in any student's academics from being mostly virtual during the pandemic and helped them get caught up and forge ahead.

There were 55 students with a 3.0+ G.P.A. this first nine weeks, of which 9 were seniors.

Our extended learning program, Skill Builder, decreased for students with failing grades. Students in 8th - 11th grades with any F's or more than 1 D are required to have an extra 45 minutes of academics so they can soar through the remainder of the school year in their classes. These students are now determined to do better after being isolated during the Covid pandemic. They want to be at P.A.R.K., even when school is not in session.

Our new 7th and 8th-grade student candidates want to do better than they are doing right now, which shows their passion for success. They are looking forward to being part of the P.A.R.K. family.



**6915 Geyer Springs Road
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