



launch

newsletter

Third Quarter 2020

COVID-19 Response

Like other essential services, Launch has worked hard to rise to the moment by shifting our core programs to meet community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. In late March we were able to open 5 of our sites to provide emergency care to children of frontline families **free** through June. In close partnership with Seattle-King County Public Health, we implemented measures to ensure the health and safety of our staff and children.

Because of the sanitation and social

distancing practices we've had in place for months, Launch was able to smoothly transition to 8 weeks of summer camp at five locations! Camp may have looked different than in years past, with lower child-teacher ratios and virtual field trips, but campers still had a blast!

This summer, students spent a couple hours each day in "Academy Time", where they explored academic content designed to minimize COVID learning loss.

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Launch



A Note From the Executive Director

As I look back on my first 90 days as Launch’s Executive Director, I’m grateful to be a part of an organization that is so committed to serving children and families. I’ve been impressed by the way Launch staff have stepped up in challenging circumstances to ensure children and families have access to safe, high quality learning and care. And I’m also grateful for the way our families and community have come together to support us.



Back-to-school has always been one of my favorite times of year. As a child, I enjoyed shopping for new folders, pencils, backpacks and clothes. As a parent, I’ve endured the first days of preschool, kindergarten, middle school, high school, and college drop-offs. And as a former Federal Way school board director, I would drive around the district welcoming children and families to their school buildings.

This school year, I’ve found myself in meetings advocating for students to have access to equitable learning experiences through technology resources, adequate space in schools to allow for social distancing, and the coordination of classroom schedules with child care providers so children can participate in remote learning while at Launch.

While this is not the elementary school experience that students, families, or I expected this fall, Launch is here to ensure that regardless of the circumstances, students will learn, have fun, and someday reflect back on how being part of the Launch family was pivotal to their positive 2020 back-to-school experience. Thank you to our community for helping us provide this vital support!

Angela Griffin
Executive Director

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Launch stands with members of the Black community and all those who fight for racial justice. The pursuit of racial equity is critical to Launch’s work. Our mission is to eliminate the opportunity gaps caused by historical and ongoing racism.

We know we have more work to do fighting anti-Black racism in our organization and our community. We pledge to educate ourselves, listen more, do better, speak up in the face of injustice, and foster a space where everyone is seen, heard, and valued. Deepening our racial equity work will continue to be a major focus of Launch, and we invite you to join us in this work. We look forward to sharing more about our racial equity work and engaging with our community over the coming months.

COVID-19 Response, continued

They did math board games and puzzles, virtual workshops, and had lots of time to read and journal.

Because Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is fully remote this fall, Launch is providing full day care at ten of our locations! To promote educational equity and prevent the widening of the opportunity gap, we’ve

prioritized enrolling students on state and city subsidies, as well as the families of essential workers. We’ve coordinated with SPS so that kids in our programs have access to laptops and tablets, and are ensuring students participate in their remote elementary classroom while they’re at Launch. In addition to distance

learning, children also get to do fun enrichment activities like art, science, music, sports, and games.

Although none of this is ideal, we’re proud to be part of a community that steps up to help each other in a crisis. None of this would be possible without the support of our donors and families. Thank you!

Stories From Launch Summer Camp

Beacon Hill campers learned a lot about history during their Adventure Through Time Week! Activities included (re)building the Colosseum and hieroglyphic writing. The camp also had some budding journalists, who wrote their own newsletter! It included site news, a review of the lunches that Seattle Public Schools provided and a meme captioning contest. The journalists described themselves as “activists for the truth.” Campers in the Little Dinosaurs for Black Lives Matter group (each student group chose their own name!) made unicorns, solved a robot maze, and did alien crafts. The Lightning Pack group created their own superheroes, and learned about tessellations and pattern-making using geometric shapes. The Titans group created paintings of mythical creatures, fairy houses, and wrote their own fairytale stories.

Highland Park campers enjoyed making slime (*pictured at right*) and learning about the science behind it - did you know slime is both a liquid *and* a solid? During Superheroes week, they designed their very own superheroes. A highlight of the summer was the end of summer art “walk.” Since families couldn't

come inside due to social distancing requirements, teachers hung campers' art outside, and families drove by and saw what their children created from their cars!

Kimball campers attended weekly remote workshops for circuitry and basketball. They enjoyed practicing magic with Louie the Magician and learned about space travel with a virtual guest from the Pacific Science Center. During Sci-Fi and Fantasy Week, the kids made dragons eggs out of papier-mache (*pictured above*), and wrote comic books and tales of mythical creatures.

Madrona Students in our Leap Ahead summer kindergarten readiness program for children who will start kindergarten in the fall were treated to storytime every week with help from the Seattle Public Library. All ages got their wiggles out through KidFit, a high-energy dance fitness class taught over Zoom by a local fitness instructor. The campers were incredibly creative, from creating many-limbed, many-eyed paper plate monsters to theatrical puppet productions. One camper constructed a tiny Starbucks store out of Legos, complete with tiny cups, lids, and even a janitorial

closet! One of the coolest aspects of working with kids is encouraging them to start thinking outside the box — and that's just what our school-agers got the chance to do. Campers were challenged to build self-supporting structures using pipe cleaners and popsicle sticks, which took some figuring out but ultimately resulted in feats of engineering prowess—both unique and structurally sound!

Miller Community Center Annex preschoolers had weekly dance parties over Zoom with our Highland Park preschoolers. It was a great way to build community and friendships across sites while still maintaining social distancing! Campers also got to enjoy a virtual field trip with Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium in Florida. Preschoolers had a sea animal themed storytime and learned about sea otters. School-aged campers learned about the wide variety of sharks in our ocean. The best part was how interactive the experience was — campers had the opportunity to ask questions of a scientist during their remote visit to the aquarium!



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COVID-19 & Remote Learning Resources

The pandemic has had a big impact on everyone so we gathered a list of resources to help. At the link below, you can find tips for families for remote learning, online learning activities, suggestions for talking with children about racial equity, and links to pandemic financial assistance and support.

[launchlearning.org/back-to-school-resources](https://www.launchlearning.org/back-to-school-resources)

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Hear From an Launch Emergency Care Family:

“To say Launch has been a blessing to our family is an understatement. Our daughters were well cared for by the staff, made friends quickly and were challenged by school work. They came home everyday with a different arts and crafts activity or some new fact that they learned. I also appreciated that staff spoke about social injustice in the midst of the deaths of George Floyd and others. We were also impressed by the cleanliness of the facility and the vigilance of the staff for screening for COVID-19 signs/symptoms. Our daughters have been healthy throughout their time at Launch. We will forever be grateful to Launch for helping our family in these uncertain times.”

Meet Wylie, a Launch 2nd Grader!

Wylie has been coming to Launch at Maple since he was a kindergartner. He’s always stood out as a student for his open mind, unbridled enthusiasm for learning, and easygoing friendship. He attended summer camp at our Kimball location this year, where we chatted about books, Legos, and lots more!

Launch: So Wylie, how has summer at Launch been going?

Wylie: Good! I like it.

L: How has it been different than regular Launch, or even last summer?

W: It’s different. [We didn’t used] to do as much work.

L: And how is the work?

W: Good! Yeah, I can do it.

L: Do you miss school?

W: Um, yeah. Kinda.

L: What do you miss about it?

W: The teachers. They’re nice. I miss my friends. I see [my

friend] on FaceTime. He’s gotten a lot of big Lego sets. He got a pirate ship, and a giant rocket, what’s it called - oh, he got Apollo 11!

L: Did you watch any good movies or TV shows in quarantine?

W: I’ve watched all the Star Wars movies.

L: Wow, and you’re almost eight. That’s quite an accomplishment!

W: And I’m on the third Percy Jackson book, then I’m going to read the Spiderwick Chronicles, then the Chronicles of Narnia, then Lord of the Rings and all that stuff. I heard there’s a whole chapter about how tall the trees are. Really descriptive.

