



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

The Mayor's Learn and Serve Summer Youth Program Wrap-up

New Bedford, Massachusetts – On Friday, August 23, 2013, the revamped Mayor's Learn and Serve Summer Youth Program came to a close, but not after making its mark on the City of New Bedford and its youths. Over its six-week long duration, the Learn and Serve Program proved to be a fun, educational, community-based program that positively impacted the participants and the city.

Forty-two New Bedford youths, ages 14 and 15, enrolled in the Learn and Serve Program this summer. For 12 hours every week, the participants engaged in project-based learning initiatives and community service throughout the city and beyond. The youths were divided up into five teams, each with its own area of focus. The five sections included Mass in Motion Teens – Healthy Living, Mass in Motion Teens - Healthy Community, Kids Love NB, the Mural Project, and the Fishing City Project.

The Healthy Living and Healthy Community sections worked closely with New Bedford Mass in Motion, who educated the youths on healthy living strategies that could benefit them as well as the city. Healthy Living created a healthy eating guide for children in New Bedford's Play in the Park Program. The Healthy Community group evaluated the city's infrastructure to determine how conducive it is to healthy lifestyles. The Kids Love NB group learned about the City's tourism industry from New Bedford's Tourism and Marketing Director, Dagny Ashley. The group created a New Bedford brochure that includes a walking map and scavenger hunt for children. The brochure will be featured on the Destination New Bedford website for all to enjoy. Art was the area of focus for the Mural Project team. Led by ArtWorks!, this group designed and created a unique mural that is showcased at the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center located at 874 Purchase Street. The Fishing City Project group dove into marine biology and the ins and outs of the fishing industry on their way to creating a large ceramic marine habitat mural that will be displayed on the exterior of the New Bedford Ferry Terminal on State Pier for the public to enjoy.

In addition to teaching youths about healthy lifestyles, art, and biology, the Learn and Serve Program also gave the students the opportunity to develop valuable skills that will help them grow into mature, career oriented adults. Learn and Serve promoted skills such as responsibility, collaboration, task management, and leadership, all building blocks for a successful career. Isaac Manso shared that the program taught him how to speak to and interact with others professionally, while Kristen Vezina stated that Learn and Serve has encouraged her to be less shy and “a little bit more brave about talking to people.”

The Mayor’s Learn and Serve Program also encouraged participating youths to appreciate and take pride in all that the city has to offer. Each student gained important knowledge about New Bedford’s history, they were introduced to aspects of the city that some had never encountered before, and they were able to give back to their community through community service projects.

Ultimately, Mayor Mitchell’s Learn and Serve Summer Youth Program will have positive long-lasting effects on the City of New Bedford and its resident as participating youths grow into productive citizens.

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Issue No. 003