



PRESS RELEASE

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150 low-income Stamford children attending Domus summer camp thanks to the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation

Stamford, CT / A full-day camp for over 150 children which was in jeopardy of not operating this year will be able to open this summer thanks to a \$100,000 gift by the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation to Domus, a Stamford nonprofit serving nearly 1,000 vulnerable youth. The camp offers morning academics and afternoon enrichment activities where kids can learn new skills while enabling their parents to work full-time jobs without the worry of their children being unsupervised. There is no fee to families of children attending the five-week camp, which targets very low-income families.

"We are delighted to be able to make a difference in the lives of the children of Stamford," said Alex Cohen, President of the Foundation. "The camp allows them a safe and nurturing environment to learn and grow. The academic achievements they acquire here will serve as a great foundation for their futures."

Mike Duggan, Domus' executive director, said, "This camp means more than 150 children living in poverty—those most susceptible to losing academic skills over the summer—can now look forward to a summer full of new friendships, new skills, and academic enrichment. We're incredibly grateful to the Cohens for seeing this urgent community need and reacting. Local donors to charitable causes are still recovering from the recession, but poor kids can't wait: Every day during the summer they don't get academic stimulation means they fall further and further behind their peers. This camp it would not be happening this summer without the Cohens' investment in these kids and in their academic futures."

Approximately 4,300 Stamford youth in elementary and middle school qualify for free and reduced lunch, indicating they live in low-income families. Domus and Person-to-Person, a nonprofit helping families meet basic needs, operated the camp last year for the first time ever, thanks to some unexpected camp donations. Except for the Domus/Person-to-Person camp last year, there has been no East Side camp for elementary school children in many years, and the 2013 camp was poised to operate for a very small number of children without the Cohen's gift.

Person-to-Person, a Darien nonprofit that helps families meet basic needs and provides low-income youth with camperships, approached Domus last year to operate a camp for students who lacked a place to attend camp. P2P executive director Ceci Maher said, "Last year's summer camp made a big impact on the quality of the children's summer and, thanks to its strong academic focus, increased the children's readiness to learn when school recommenced. We are excited that, thanks to the Cohen Foundation, Domus and Person-to-Person will again offer a strong and engaging summer experience for children from under-resourced families."

While 150 children were able to attend last year's camp with funding secured by Person-to-Person, the 2013 camp was in jeopardy due to a lack of continued funding.

Research from the RAND Corporation has demonstrated that high-quality, engaging, low- or no-cost summer learning programs can prevent summer learning loss and even boost student achievement (McCombs, Augustine, Schwartz, Bodilly, McInnis, Lichter, & Cross 2011).

Most children, regardless of socioeconomic status, lose two months of grade-level equivalency in math computational skills each summer; low-income children lose more than two months in reading achievement (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996). This learning gap widens over time, research from Johns Hopkins University shows, so that by ninth grade, summer learning accounts for two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading between low-income students and their middle-income peers. The same students most affected by summer learning loss were also more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to attend college (Alexander, Entwistle, & Olson, 2007).

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About Domus:

Since 1972, Domus has helped thousands of our region's most vulnerable youth and their families experience success. The love, structure, and support we provide at our charter schools, residential programs, and community programs enable our kids and families to reach their full potential. Children are learning independent living and job skills, improving their academic performance, and developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Our ability to build relationships helps kids and families who may be struggling in school or in life focus on their strengths and make good choices. The result? Happier, healthier human beings who can fully contribute their talents to the communities in which they live and work. ***Our vision: No child shall be denied hope, love, or a fair chance in life.***

About the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation:

The Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation is committed to achieving lasting and meaningful change in our community through four main areas of focus: education, children's health, veterans, and the arts. The Foundation places an emphasis on improving the lives of children through education reform and healthcare initiatives, providing help to our returning heroes with mental health and employment programs for veterans, and supporting the arts that inspire us all.

Notes:

Alexander, K. L., Entwistle D. R., & Olson L. S. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167–180.

Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227–268.

McCombs, J.S., Augustine, C.H., Schwartz, H. L., Bodilly, S. J., McInnis, B., Lichter, D.S., and Cross, A. B. (2011). *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning.*

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120>