



# REDEEMER COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

South Los Angeles, CA | Summer 2020 Update



## ADVENTURES AHEAD summer is here!

### VOLUNTEER! BECOME AN ONLINE READING BUDDY

As Adventures Ahead goes virtual this summer, so can you! Volunteer to be an online Reading Buddy and read with a student for 1 hour, 2 days a week for the month of July.

For more information contact  
Lauren at [lauren@redeemercp.org](mailto:lauren@redeemercp.org)



Devastating headlines gave voice to our deepest dread. On June 5 the New York Times reported, *Research Shows Students Falling Months Behind During Virus Disruptions*. The article went on to report that, "When all of the impacts are taken into account, the average student could fall seven months behind academically, while black and Hispanic students could experience even greater learning losses, equivalent to 10 months for Black children and nine months for Latinos."

The proverbial writing was on the wall by late February. As COVID-19 spread, we needed to prepare to take the Adventures Ahead after school tutoring program online. When schools closed on March 13, we checked Chromebooks out to each family, reorganized classes by household instead of grade level, worked with parents and grandparents to teach them how to use Zoom, trained our staff, held our breath and jumped.

Eight weeks into online instruction we tested our students to take stock of the toll. Imagine our joy and relief when we found that instead of falling behind, our students had continued to make progress. Last week, the program ended with our students making 1.4 years of literacy progress over the course of the year. While this is just short of our 1.5 year goal, under the circumstances we were delighted.

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# Please Pray!

The transition to online learning and sudden departure from normal activities and routines has been difficult for all of us. But it has been especially hard on some of our youngest students. Please pray for them and for us as we try to engage them in meaningful ways this summer, be supportive of their learning styles, and help them grow in their journey to becoming independent readers.



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When our neighborhood schools closed on March 13 they sent students home with a stapled packet of worksheets. Most parents did not hear from the schools for the next month while consistent online instruction took nearly two months to launch. Parents' sense of frustration and abandonment was profound, but so too was their gratefulness for Adventures Ahead and our staff. They were surprised and relieved that we would journey with them through this dark valley.

Over the next two weeks we will race to prepare for taking our summer program online. Research has shown that the vast majority of the achievement gap between low-income and high-income students can be attributed to what does or does not happen over the summer. Lower-income students tend to see their learning stagnate or regress. Wealthier students tend to see their learning expand as their families invest in enrichment activities.

Would you consider sponsoring a child this summer? \$500 will cover the cost of the program for one student. Any amount you give, taken together with the

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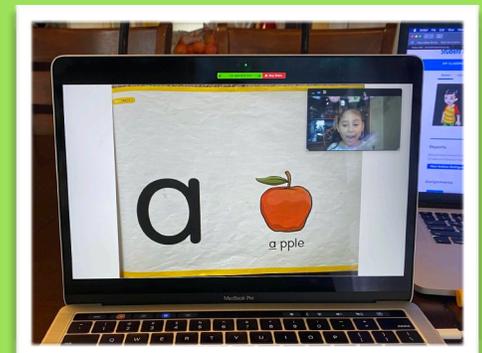
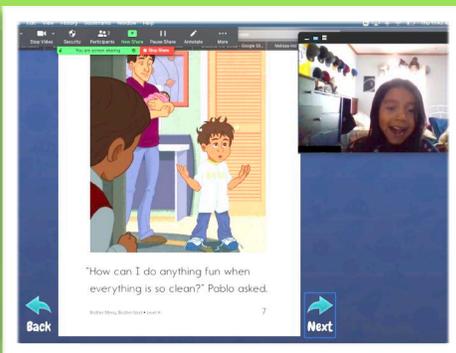
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gifts of others, will help ensure that the Adventures Ahead students continue to realize their God-given potential. If you have the heart and means to give more, we need to make a substantial investment in Chromebooks as those that we have checked out to families have been well used in this time. Finally, since Adventures Ahead will be online this summer, anyone can now volunteer from anywhere in the world! Please let our program director, Lauren Tigrett ([lauren@redeemercp.org](mailto:lauren@redeemercp.org)), know if you would like to serve as a Reading Buddy.

Grateful for your partnership,

Richard

## Online learning in action!



# A Time to Lament

I have been grateful to those of you who have reached out to see how our family, our staff, and our community are faring in these difficult times. Over the last several months, we have worked under the heavy weight of grief and dismay at the devastating consequences of COVID-19 and the rapid fire succession of racist murders across our country.

As COVID-19 tears through our community, it has preyed on the vulnerable and exacerbated inequities. We know of multiple families where parents and grandparents have died. We have friends whose entire families have been hit with the virus as they shelter at home together.

The resulting economic paralysis has hit our community hard. Many friends and neighbors have lost work. Many more have been forced by economic necessity or government decree to go to work without essential protection, a living wage, or even the assurance that their children's education will be protected and provided for. The schools in our community went dark on March 13. Weeks of instruction time were lost while schools connected families with devices, WiFi, and technical support. Some classrooms never re-established live instruction.

Meanwhile, toxic polluters have exploited the crisis by seeking "regulatory relief" to increase pollution and roll back safety measures. One neighborhood drill site has accelerated work to increase oil production while halting work to permanently close idle wells that legally must be sealed to protect residents. Another drill site that we

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forced on to a path of closure has stopped abandoning wells due to the coronavirus, but continues to extract oil and gas. It seems COVID-19 is just an excuse for whatever the oil industry wants to do.

Our local church, which grew out of Redeemer Community Partnership's work 20 years ago, has given \$73,000 over the last 11 weeks to help families in our community with food, rent, utilities and medical care. We are committed to weathering this storm together.

On this backdrop the brutal murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have compounded the weight of grief and indignation. Appalling videos of Amy Cooper and other white people weaponizing privilege and wielding falsehoods against Black Americans has invoked profound dismay and righteous anger.

However, nothing has been more hurtful than watching the police calmly murder Mr. Floyd. The deep, palpable pain of our Black brothers and sisters has deeply grieved us. The depths of our collective failure to live into the soaring rhetoric of the Constitution, is neither American nor Christian.

I pray that this is the moment when we resolve to match our actions to our faith and even the high ideals of our

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Constitution. We must change systems that perpetuate the sins of racism, white supremacy, militarism, ecological devastation, and poverty. For the sake of our children and the country they will soon lead, I hope that our ideals, articulated but never lived out, can now be made real.

Before his assassination, Rev. Martin Luther King, had turned his focus to the Poor People's Campaign. Following his death, thousands of protesters built tents and shelters on the Washington, D.C. Mall. Braving rain, mud and heat they stayed for a month demanding jobs, unemployment insurance, fair minimum wage, and improved education for poor children. I have found encouragement in the new Poor People's Campaign co- led by Rev. William Barber. The call to break the chain of poverty, racism, militarism, and environmental degradation offers a compelling policy path to justice by centering care for the poor.

In our work of bridging children from broken education systems to their full God-given potential, of closing toxic oil drilling sites, of overturning racist policies that value corporate wealth over public health, of seeking mobility justice for neighbors in wheelchairs and those who must walk and bike out of economic necessity, we seek to build and become the beloved community. The community where our deep love for one another overcomes society's dividing walls of hostility. Where light shines in the darkness. Where the glory of him who calls us heavenward, is illuminated, magnified, and hallowed.

Lord, may your will be done in the neighborhood and in our country, even as it is in heaven.

