

# 2014 Program Report



*Developing good neighbors skills and values in children through programs that nourish, educate and support them while providing life-changing experiences for college students through leadership development internships.*

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## Our Supporters

SML Good Neighbors receives generous financial support from dozens of loyal donors. And over 200 individuals volunteer their time and experience to support the programs for the Good Neighbors children. In addition to the support of individuals, many organizations, churches, foundations and trusts provide funding that is critical in sustaining the Good Neighbors programs.

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## Preface

### *Plowing & Planting—Seven years of Sowing the Seeds for Success*

Over the past seven years, SML Good Neighbors has responded to the needs of young children (rising 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders)—most from families with limited resources—by providing summer enrichment experiences for children in rural Bedford and Franklin Counties, Virginia. The children receive academic mentoring in reading, writing, math, communication skills and special enrichments in music, art, non-violent conflict resolution, nature education and global education. Plus—they get a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack every day. Each Friday they go home with a backpack filled with food and a book for the weekend. Children attend the four-week summer program at absolutely no cost to families. In 2014, 84% of the children qualified for the free/reduced school meals program and 60% were from households with annual incomes of \$25,000 or less.

Growth of the summer enrichment program since it began in 2008 has been remarkable. In 2008, 65 children attended; in 2009 we served 75, 105 in 2010 and 161 in 2011—a huge increase. That number is our current maximum as determined by physical, financial and volunteer resources.

And, because we are committed to helping meet summer nutrition needs for children, since 2007 we have been providing weekend backpacks with food for the weekend for children attending **summer school** and lunches for summer school children in three Bedford County schools. Family surveys and principals confirm the importance of this summer nutrition assistance.

Finally, we continue a small in-school mentoring program during the school year at six of our schools. Good Neighbors refers volunteers to the schools where they are assigned to individual or groups of students to provide mentoring and to be a reliable, consistent presence for the children.

**Is this making a difference? As described in this report, the simple answer is... YES!** —pre and post testing consistently shows that *almost 90% of our Good Neighbors children maintain or improve their reading level over the summer*. Compare this to the more than 50% of our nation’s children that have no summer enrichment who lose several weeks from their end-of-year reading levels. Teachers and principals are excited about this result! And, not surprisingly, surveys of families are filled with praise about the changes they see in their kids.

***Our mission statement*** also states that part of what we do is to—“**provide life-changing experiences for college students through leadership development experiences.**” We have now provided these experiences for 35 college interns since

2008. Interns are the primary teachers, mentors, counselors and role models for our Good Neighbors children. The career paths they follow after Good Neighbors are exciting and inspiring. Some have gone to AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps and Teach for America; one is a math teacher at Franklin County High School, another, a teacher at Bedford Elementary School. One is a speech pathologist with a school system, another an epidemiologist with the U.S. government, and one is a communication associate with a nonprofit advocacy group in D.C.; it goes on and on. They keep in touch with us; several have interned additional summers and others return as volunteers. Our interns are a remarkable part of the Good Neighbors family. **By any measurement we apply, we are fulfilling our mission to provide leadership development.**

We are grateful to the volunteers—almost 200—who work with us to make this possible. We also appreciate the professional work of Shearer Rumsey, Camp Director, and Lisa Lietz, Program Director. Finally, the passionate support and unselfish giving of time by our Board of Directors truly allows us to sustain and grow these programs. The names of the 2014 Board of Directors is listed below.

***Lisa Lietz and Russell Baskett, 2014***

*The Board of Directors – 2014*

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## Introduction

The largest program of SML Good Neighbors is the *Summer Enrichment Day Camp* program.

This program requires significant planning, funding, volunteers and management time. As in past years, this program provides four weeks of academic mentoring and many additional enrichments designed to challenge and enlarge the worldviews of the children in both Bedford and Franklin County. The changes and additions to this program in 2014 are addressed later in the report. As a refresher, the schedule below describes how every child spends every day at camp.

### Every Morning:

- Breakfast/morning games and time with interns (8 - 9)
- Song time (9 – 9:15)
- Morning meetings in small groups (9:15-9:30)
- Writers’ Workshop – children work in small groups, telling and writing their stories, guided by their interns (9:30 – 10)
- Between 10 and 12 noon, every child has:
  1. 30 minutes with their Reading Buddy
  2. 30 minutes of arts & crafts (daily theme)
  3. 30 minutes of planned games/recreation (daily themes)
  4. 30 minutes FAB (Flexible Activity Block). These activities are planned to include a new activity or enlarge an activity begun earlier with a focus on math and science. Generally, this time is also keyed to support the daily theme.
- At 12 noon lunch is served

### Every Afternoon:

- Supervised play time (12:30 – 1)
- Afternoon Enrichment (1 to 2:15)
  1. Week 1 – Peace Education
  2. Week 2 – Nature/Environment
  3. Week 3 – Cultural Diversity/Global Education
  4. Week 4 – Roanoke Children’s Theatre- the kids will be part of a play – The theme of the play will fit our objectives. NOTE: Staff from the Roanoke Children’s Theatre also uses the enrichment time every Friday. This is part of our goal to enhance communication skills through *reading, writing and speaking*.
- Story Time with the interns (2:15 – 2:45) - Interns select stories to read to the kids in their small groups. Topics generally support the weekly themes. Children are engaged in discussions about the story. This also serves to end the day with a quieter activity,

- (2:45 – 3) - Snacks (once a week this time also serves as nutrition education) and closing time with friends, interns and volunteers

The remainder of this report describes all current programs provided by SML Good Neighbors and the changes or additions for 2014.

This was another big year for SML Good Neighbors. We introduced a new arts program called S.E.A. (Student Enrichment in the Arts), added fresh ideas to programs, and found a property for the SML Good Neighbor's home. As we continue to grow, we are learning how to provide programming for increasing numbers of children, identify additional needs, and manage the workload that comes with these challenges.

The next section describes our programs and changes made to sustain or improve the programs.

## **In School Mentoring**

SML Good Neighbors has continued to partner with Dudley, Burnt Chimney and Windy Gap Elementary Schools in Franklin County and Moneta, Huddleston and Body Camp Elementary Schools in Bedford County. Good Neighbors role has been in identifying and referring volunteers to the schools. Volunteers mentor children across many disciplines based on the needs identified by the principals and teachers. We will continue to grow this program and secure volunteers to help meet the needs of the children.

## **Summer School Lunch and Weekend Backpack Program**

This program was started in 2007 and remains an integral part of the SML Good Neighbors Summer mission. Due to summer school changes this spring for Franklin County we were unable to provide weekend backpacks to summer school students in Franklin County this year.

We provided hot meals to three (3) summer schools in Bedford County. These meals were prepared by Rocky Mount Elementary School staff and administrated by Franklin County Schools using a USDA grant. Good Neighbors provided drivers to pick up the hot meals in Rocky Mount each day and deliver them to the schools in Bedford County.

Children that attended summer school at Moneta, Body Camp and Huddleston Elementary in Bedford County all received *Weekend Backpacks*. These backpacks were filled with food for the weekend. This program supported about 90 summer school children.



The nutrition programs require significant volunteer commitment and support. Each week approximately 20 volunteers worked with Colleen McNulty and Lisa Lietz to pick up and deliver lunches or pack backpacks. Not only did we provide nutritional support for the summer schools described above, but these volunteers also supported the breakfast, lunch, snack, and backpack programs for the two, four-week summer enrichment camps for 160 children. The amount of food that is handled is enormous and the logistics to make sure it gets to the right places at the right time are quite challenging.

## **Summer Enrichment Day Camps – The Four-Week Programs**

### ***Changes and Revisions for 2014***

#### **Junior Counselors Program**

We did not provide the Junior Counselors Program this year. The program planning committee felt that without a dedicated person to facilitate the program we would not be able to properly accommodate our junior counselors this summer. Although we did not have this program operating this year, we still enjoyed several youth volunteering at camp.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Graders Spend Half a Day at their Respective Middle Schools**

One of our objectives for the older children is to help prepare them for their continued education. So in addition to spending a day at a college campus, this summer, the Franklin County campers traveled to Benjamin Franklin Middle School and the Bedford County campers traveled to Staunton River Middle School. They had the opportunity to tour the school, learn about class schedules, middle school academics, and student life as well as locker tutorials.

#### **Morning Meetings**

This was the first year that we instituted morning meetings. After morning songs, groups would gather in their classrooms to have their morning meetings. Morning meetings are a time to discuss the schedule for the day, get to know each other and learn. For example, one of the morning meeting activities was learning how to say “good morning” in different languages. It is a great way to get everyone ready for the day and we will continue this in 2015.

#### **Intern Selection Process**

Intern selection followed the same format as in past years. We focused on recruiting through Bonner Scholar and Bonner Leader programs at several small liberal arts colleges and the Honors program at Virginia Tech. Additionally, we selected interns from Virginia Commonwealth University for the third time. We recruited nine (9) interns for 2014. Five of these interns were returning from the 2013 program. The colleges represented in 2014 were: Ferrum College, Guilford College, Earlham College, The University of Richmond, Virginia Tech University and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Our selection process focuses on young adults who have a commitment to service. The 2014 interns exemplified this commitment. They were mature, professional, hard-working and exceptional role models for the children. Several plan to return in 2015. It is worth mentioning that our intern alumni continue to enter careers of service. Several are now teachers; others are working with nonprofits and still others have entered the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps.

### **Student Enrichments in the Arts (S.E.A.) –**

We saw a need to extend our programs throughout the school year and further our reach in the community. In January, 2014, Good Neighbors kicked off its first session of the Student Enrichment in the Arts (S.E.A.) programs. Good Neighbors has always incorporated the arts into its summer programs because of the academic benefits; it's a fun way to learn! Our S.E.A. programs, just like our summer programs, are at no cost to families.

Our first session was held on Saturdays; an 8 week theatre session, instructed by the Roanoke Children's Theatre, at Trinity Ecumenical Parish for interested campers.

This was the first year that Staunton River Middle School included Good Neighbors in their 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant. Good Neighbors was a co-applicant on that grant. Through this grant, we were able to facilitate our second SEA program; a 4-class visual arts program for Staunton River Middle School students. These classes were instructed by local artist, Russell Voelker.

As a co-applicant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant at Moneta Elementary School, Good Neighbors held its third SEA program; a 4-week visual art session at Moneta Elementary School. Volunteers from the community educated families

### ***Additional Observations Regarding 2014***

#### **Intern Housing**

Intern housing for six women and three men was provided through a rent agreement with Betty Mills. The house, located in Rocky Mount, provided very good intern housing. We were fortunate to find a home to rent for nine college students for two months. In 2015, interns will be able to enjoy Good Neighbors' new home as their housing for the duration of their internships with Good Neighbors.

## **Transportation**

Thanks to the generosity of SML Rotary as well as the cooperation of both Franklin and Bedford Counties' Public Transportation offices, we were able to provide busses at both camps. The result was that children who otherwise would not have had transportation to attend camp were able to benefit from our summer enrichments. We also continued our gas card and ride co-op programs which continue to be successful programs to get children to and from camp.

## **2014 Data**

### ***Output Data - the number of children served in 2014***

The number of children who were served by our programs continues to increase each summer we hold Enrichment Day Camps. Below is information about the children who were served this summer.

### **The 2014 Numbers**

- 180 = Children registered for Summer Enrichment Day Camp
- 120 = Children in Bedford County Summer Schools received hot lunches for two weeks
- 120 = Children in Bedford County Summer Schools received weekend backpacks filled with Food for six meals each week of summer school

### ***Through these programs:***

- 4960 Lunches were served
- 4,000 Breakfasts were served
- 5,600 Snacks were served
- 300 Children received backpacks
- 5,760 Meals were provided in weekend backpacks
- 720 books were provided in camper weekend backpacks

### ***Descriptive Data about the Children & Their Households***

Our children are primarily from families with limited resources. This is confirmed by the data. Families of 171 of the children responded to our request for information. Approximately 80% have annual incomes of \$35,000 or less. This is consistent with the data showing that 86% of the children receive free or reduced-cost meals at their schools. It is striking that 61% of the households have annual incomes of \$25,000 or less.

<b>Annual Household Income</b>	<b>Number of Families</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Less than \$25,000</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>\$25,000 to \$30,000</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>\$31,000 to \$35,000</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>\$36,000 to \$40,000</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>\$41,000 to \$45,000</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>More than \$45,000</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12%</b>

It should also be noted that at least 20 of our campers (12%) live with their grandparents.

### ***Outcomes Data – Reading Levels – “Summer Learning Loss”***

Based on camper data available from school assessments (before and after camp), it was found that 79% of campers either maintained or improved their reading skills over the summer. It should be noted, however, that a large portion of data for our campers was not available.

### **Discussion of Reading Outcomes Data:**

National data has shown for decades that children who have no summer enrichments consistently experience a decrease in their reading skills. This is often referred to as the “summer slide.” It is also well known that children from low-income families are at a greater risk of experiencing this summer learning loss. Communities that provide opportunities for summer learning such as summer school or other enrichment activities prevent much of the “summer slide.”

<b>Highest Education of Household Adults</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No High School Diploma</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>GED</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>High School Diploma</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Some College</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Associate Degree</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Masters Degree</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>

The Good Neighbors Summer Enrichment program provides numerous activities that address the *summer reading loss* issue.

1. Every child spends 30 minutes every morning reading to, and with, a volunteer—one-on-one. This opportunity is offered every

day for four weeks. As reported in previous annual reports, a large percentage of our children either maintain or improve their reading levels over the summer. The 2014 results are very encouraging. As displayed in the charts on the previous page, *79% of the children whose SRI scores and assessments are provided, pre and post, either maintained or improved their reading levels.*

**Other components of the summer program that contribute to the reading data results:**

2. Every morning the children have a 30-minute period titled “writers’ workshop.” This activity, led by their interns, focuses on writing activities appropriate for their age. Obviously, writing activities are closely linked to reading.
3. At the end of each day, the interns read and share stories with their children. Although the interns do the reading, the children interact in ways that help them with listening, interpreting and comprehending the written word.
4. Finally, the children also spend time each week under the guidance of staff from the *Roanoke Children’s Theatre*. There is considerable data in the literature that confirms the positive effects on reading competence through participation in theater activities.

We believe that all of the integrated activities described above contribute to the positive reading results we are seeing in our Good Neighbors children.

**Concluding Comments:**

As we reflect on the 2014 SML Good Neighbors programs we conclude that it was a very successful year. This is supported by output data, outcomes data, family surveys, stories from volunteers, statements from school principals and the images of happy, engaged children.

Each year we learn from our experiences and this guides planning for the next year. Additionally, we discover additional needs that can be addressed by SML Good Neighbors. Planning for 2015 has begun. In addition to the summer programs, we are continuing our SEA programs throughout 2015 and are always looking for ways that we can better serve the children in our community.

*We have many children to serve and many opportunities to be Good Neighbors. We have only just begun.*