

# 2015 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.*

**Russell Baskett, President and Executive Director**

**Lisa Lietz, Program Director**

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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.

All Seasons marine Service, Inc.	Epworth United Methodist Church	Prestige Limousine of Virginia, Inc.
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Amazon Smile Foundation	Franklin County SML YMCA	Roanoke Children's Theatre
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Bethlehem United Methodist	HAYWOOD'S WESTLAKE, LLC	SML Lions
Bethlehem United Methodist Men	Home Town Bank	SML Rotary Foundation
Capps Home Building Center	Homestead Creamery	Southern Roots
Carilion Clinic	Kenneth Heim, Trustee/Revocable Living Trust	The GE Foundation
Old Oak Café	Kroger Community	TNT Auto
CJ's Coffee and Sandwich Shop	La Trattoria Italian Restaurant	Trinity Ecumenical Parish
Chopsticks Restaurant	Modern Nails	Tuscan Tavern Pasta & Grill
Corporate Alternatives, Inc.	Moneta Farm & Home Center	Union Bank and Trust
County of Bedford	Moneta Lions Club Activities Club	United Way
Craft Collision Center & Auto Glass	Moneta Ruritan Club	VitaZen, Inc
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Dr. Luke Delpo, DVM		

## Preface

### *Plowing & Planting—Eight years of Sowing the Seeds of 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 2015, almost 80% of the children qualified for the free/reduced school meals program and 73% were from households with annual incomes of \$35,000 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 169 in 2015—a huge increase. We will see even more growth in the coming year as we prepare to launch our new Middle School Academy Program.

We continue to be 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 multiple schools. In 2015, Bedford County gained a new sponsor to provide lunches for the summer school students. SML Good Neighbors continued their support of providing 1,224 weekend meals for 102 summer school students during two weeks of summer school. Family surveys and principals confirm the importance of this summer nutrition assistance.

In 2015, we continued our Student Enrichment in the Arts (S.E.A.) programs to meet the needs of extending our programs throughout the school year and furthering our reach in the community. Our first session in 2014 had humble beginnings with 13 children registered and utilizing space at a local church, Trinity Ecumenical Parish. Since then, we have held four 8-week sessions on site at three different public elementary schools in Franklin County in partnership with the Roanoke Children's Theatre and funded by the Foundation for Roanoke Valley. These sessions are continuing in 2016 with an additional school. Registration of these programs has more than doubled. We have received an overwhelmingly positive response from principals, families and students.

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. In 2015, 98% of our Good Neighbors children maintained or improved their reading level over the summer.* Compare this to the more than 50% of our nation's children that have no summer enrichment that 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 41 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 Portland, Oregon 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—over 200—who work with us to make this possible. We also appreciate the professional work of Michele Koch, Administrative Assistant who joined the SML Good Neighbors family in 2015, 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 2015 Board of Directors are listed below.

***Lisa Lietz and Russell Baskett, 2015***

*The Board of Directors – 2015*

Russell Baskett – President & Executive Director  
Jim Bennett – Chair  
Chris Brinckerhoff  
Larry Broomall  
Tammy Brown  
Diane Burakow – Vice Chair  
Cindy Decker – Secretary  
Lynda Imirie  
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John Lietz  
Alma Mathis – Assistant Treasurer  
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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 2015 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 2015.

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 and Huddleston 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.

Children that attended summer school at Moneta and Huddleston Elementary in Bedford County all received *Weekend Bags*. These bags were filled with food for the weekend. This program supported about 60 summer school children. SML Good Neighbors did not need to support summer school with breakfasts and lunches this year; Bedford County schools became a sponsor to provide those meals through a USDA grant.

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 2015***

#### **Afternoon Reflections**

This was the first year that we instituted afternoon reflection sessions for our students. After afternoon enrichments, groups gather in their classrooms to have story time. At the end of story time teachers facilitated reflection sessions that encouraged children to consider the lessons of the day. This gives students the opportunity to discuss the activities they participated in and share their thoughts with peers.

#### **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. We recruited nine (9) interns for 2015. Three of these interns were returning from the 2014 program. The colleges represented in 2015 were: Ferrum College, Guilford College, The University of Richmond, and Lynchburg College.

Our selection process focuses on young adults who have a commitment to service. The 2015 interns exemplified this commitment. They were mature, professional, hard-working and exceptional role models for the children. Four of these interns will return in 2016. 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 witnessed huge growth in our S.E.A. programs in 2015. Through a grant from the Foundation for Roanoke Valley and in partnership with the Roanoke Children's Theatre, SML Good Neighbors was able to provide four eight-week sessions on-site at three different elementary schools in Franklin County. Registration and attendance for these programs has doubled. We have received continued support from both the Foundation for Roanoke Valley and the Roanoke Children's Theatre, allowing us to expand even further in 2016.

As a co-applicant on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant at Moneta Elementary School, Huddleston Elementary School and Staunton River Middle School, we have continued to provide after-school enrichment sessions concentrating on visual arts while also including the SML Good Neighbors themes that are weaved throughout all of the programs.



## **Additional Observations Regarding 2015**

### **Administrative Assistant**

The growth of SML Good Neighbors made it clear that it was necessary to hire an additional staff member. Michele Koch was hired in the fall of 2015 to serve as an administrative assistant for the organization 15 hours a week.

### **Intern Housing/Office**

In 2015, interns enjoyed SML Good Neighbors' new home located at 10664 Moneta Road, Moneta, VA 24121, as their housing for the duration of their internships with SML Good Neighbors. The property also houses our business office.

### **Transportation**

Thanks to the generosity of SML Rotary as well as the cooperation of Franklin County Public School and our partnership with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant at Moneta Elementary School, 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 program which continues to be successful programs to get children to and from camp.

## **2015 Data**

### ***Output Data - the number of children served in 2015***

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 2015 Numbers**

- 175 = Children registered for Summer Enrichment Day Camp
- 60 = Children in Bedford County Summer Schools received weekend backpacks filled with Food for six meals each week of summer school
  
- 3,500 Lunches were served
- 3,500 Breakfasts were served
- 3,500 Snacks were served
- 235 Children received backpacks
- 4,920 Meals were provided in weekend backpacks

- 700 books were provided in camper weekend backpacks

Annual Household Income	Number of Families	% of Total
Less than \$25,000	94	54%
\$25,000 to \$30,000	14	8%
\$31,000 to \$35,000	12	7%
\$36,000 to \$40,000	9	5%
More than \$41,000	35	20%

***Through these programs:***

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

Our children are primarily from families with limited resources. This is confirmed by the data. Families of 164 of the children responded to our request for information. Almost 70% have annual incomes of \$35,000 or less. This is consistent with the data showing that almost 80% of the children receive free or reduced-cost meals at their schools. It is striking that 54% of the households have annual incomes of \$25,000 or less.

It should also be noted that at least 16 of our campers (9%) live with their grandparents.

Highest Education of Household Adults	Number	Percent
No High School Diploma	6	3%
GED	9	5%
High School Diploma	42	24%
Some College	58	33%
Associate Degree	20	11%
Bachelors Degree	16	9%
Masters Degree	6	3%
Other	9	5%

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

Based on camper data available from pre and post assessments (at camp), it was found that 98% of

campers either maintained or improved their reading skills over the summer.

### **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.”

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 2015 results are very encouraging. As displayed in the charts on the previous page, *98% of the children who participated in pre and post assessments at camp, 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 2015 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 2016 has begun. In addition to the summer programs and are SEA programs, we are continuing our reach throughout 2016 by launching a new Middle School Academy program in order to 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.*