****

**What IS Evanston Cradle to Career?**

You may have heard reference to it in a school board meeting, or seen it on Facebook or in the newspaper, but what’s it all about? Evanston Cradle to Career (EC2C) is a collaborative effort of 40 partner organizations created to address inequity in our community by pulling together our community’s resources to ensure that each of our children has the opportunity to achieve their potential. Partners include the City of Evanston, Districts 65 and 202, McGaw YMCA, the YWCA, the Evanston Community Foundation, Northwestern University, Evanston Hospital and many others.

***That all sounds good, but what does it really mean?*** EC2C is focused on maximizing the impact of our community resources by agreeing on a problem we need to tackle, and supporting each other to broaden and deepen our collective reach. It’s not about creating programs, it’s about helping the programs and systems we have in place work more effectively to address inequity.

EC2C Action Teams are focusing on a wide range of issues, given our initial focus on Community Literacy. These include supporting the critical role of parents in early childhood, improving the transition from preschool to kindergarten, helping youth prepare for college and/or career, and improving the effectiveness of our community’s service system. **Our ultimate goal is to fundamentally change how our community addresses the multiple needs of ALL of our families to achieve more equitable outcomes.**

***One Example of Our Work: Reducing Summer Learning Loss***
Decades of research finds children who are not involved in enriching activities over the summer lose two months or more of reading skills. The cumulative impact of this loss can add as much as 2 to 3 years to the achievement gap by 6th grade.

EC2C partners have come together with a commitment to reversing this long-standing trend for too many Evanston children. At EC2C’s retreat in January, we challenged our partners to make a commitment to literacy in our community. They rose to the challenge in a variety of critical ways:

**Increased Free Summer Literacy Programming for Evanston Children and Youth by Over 130%.**

* D65 and D202 committed increased funds to literacy programming, allowing the YMCA to expand its Y Readers Program by 60 children to 270; adding Theater and STEM Programs at Family Focus to serve 55 children; and expanding the Youth Job Center and Evanston Public Library ABC Boosters program by 57 children.
* Y.O.U., in partnership with the Dajae Coleman Foundation, is building reading and writing workshops with authors’ visits into all of its summer programming, reaching 300 children.
* Targeted parks are receiving expanded Evanston Public Library Reading Programming, with regular visits from libraries and a special collection of culturally relevant books reaching over 600.
* Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary has partnered with Evanston Own It to create Evanston’s first Freedom School. Through EC2C it has identified resources to fund the program, partnered with the Park District to provide breakfast and lunch for their children, and is finding other resources to supplement programming for 50 children.
* ETHS has created a summer literacy program for incoming freshman to serve 140 readers who are not at grade level.

**Embedded Daily Reading Time in Summer Camps, Impacting Up to 5,000 Children and Youth.** Evanston and Ridgeville Park Districts and the McGaw YMCA have agreed to incorporate reading time into summer camps and daily programming. The Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program will also provide time to read for youth employed by the City.

**Increased Access to Culturally Relevant Books throughout the Community.**

* EC2C Partners conducted a book drive to secure books that reflect the diversity of our community. These books will be used in the Park District Programs, as well as other sites.
* ETHS students built Free Little Libraries in their Geometry in Construction class to be placed in public parks and stocked by the Evanston Public Library.
* ETHS committed to purchasing the book, *March*, a biography of John Lewis, for all incoming freshman and their teachers to have a shared summer reading experience.

**Raising Awareness about Summer Learning Loss.**

* In partnership with a Parents Advisory Council, EC2C’s Community Engagement Team is exploring ways to increase awareness and to give parents the tools they need to help ensure their children are gaining, rather than losing, ground academically during the summer months.

**Summer Learning Loss is just one example** of how EC2C is bringing community partners together to tackle inequity in our community. As mentioned above, o**ur ultimate goal is to fundamentally change how our community addresses the multiple needs of ALL of our families to achieve more equitable outcomes.**

***How can you help?***

* + Donate books to our Everybody Reads Book Drive. The link to our list is [here](http://epl.org/pdfs/EverbodyReadsList.pdf).
	+ Volunteer in one of EC2C’s Partners’ programs reading with children
	+ Share a skill with EC2C or one of our Partner programs—graphic design, arts education, legal assistance, communications
	+ Join an EC2C Action Team—The focus of our initial teams is identifying strategies for addressing literacy in our community
	+ Donate funds, supplies or resources to a partner organization
	+ Join an advisory board on a specific initiative
	+ Spread the word about EC2C to your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors

Visit [www.evanstonc2c.org](http://www.evanstonc2c.org) for more information and to get involved.