

# CeNTERupdate

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CENTER FOR STRATEGIC URBAN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

## LEAP Academy Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



*LEAP Academy senior and junior students meeting at the school library*

1997 marks the 10th Anniversary of the LEAP Academy. The efforts to develop the Academy began in 1993 with a \$1.5 million planning grant from the Delaware River Port Authority. With this grant, a Working Group of university faculty, public school teachers and principals, parents, and community leaders engaged in a strategic planning process to develop the school. Through the planning process, a charter application was developed and filed with the New Jersey Department of Education and in January 1997, a charter was granted to operate the school. The school opened its doors in September 1997, with an enrollment of 324 students in grades K-5. A grade was added each year and in the Fall 2007 the school reached full enrollment at 870 students.

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*The mission of the LEAP Academy University Charter School is to enhance opportunities for the children and families of the City of Camden through the collaborative design, implementation, and integration of education, health, and human services and through community development.*

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During the early planning stages, efforts concentrated in ensuring that the LEAP Academy could become an independent entity, while capitalizing on the partnerships that converged in its development. In 1997, LEAP Academy became an independent legal entity and has continued to operate as an autonomous public school with its own Board of Trustees and organizational infrastructure. A Governance structure that provides for university and parent representation was developed through the school's by-laws. On October 11, 1996 and again on February 1, 2002, the Rutgers Board of Governors adopted resolutions to further define the ongoing collaboration between LEAP Academy and the University.

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See LEAP 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY on page 8

# Message from the Director

*Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, Ph.D, Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor,  
Department of Public Policy & Administration, Rutgers-Camden*



This year we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the LEAP Academy—a decade of growth and success. This historical milestone is significant at several levels. First, LEAP Academy became one of the first thirteen charter schools that were inaugurated in September 1997 in New Jersey. The establishment of charter schools opened the door for a new breed of public schools with a focus on innovation and accountability and with a new governance structure independent from local school districts. Charter schools were designed as vehicles for change and improvement and in ten years, LEAP Academy has proven that schools can be different and that they can serve as transformational engines for children, families and communities.

Second, with its affiliation with Rutgers University, the LEAP Academy has become a true example of the kind of university-school partnership that is needed to tackle not only the underachievement of many children of color, but also the need for exposing our university students at the undergraduate and graduate levels to real-life field experiences that can enhance their academic training. LEAP has also proven to be fertile ground for engaging faculty in applied research and teaching, as well as in service.

Universities are the right partners for engaging in the education of children and for contributing to the advancement of communities that have been left behind like Camden City. Derek Bok, President Emeritus of Harvard University said it best—“Serving society is only one of higher education’s functions, but is surely among the most important. At a time when the nation has its full share of difficulties...the question is not whether universities need to concern themselves with society’s problems but whether they are discharging this responsibility as well as they should.”

Our experience with LEAP Academy demonstrates how the traditional insularity of universities can be superseded by the solidarity of school and community. Our Centers of Excellence are designed to support LEAP Academy’s mission and are a true example of the kind of reciprocity that needs to be present when engaging in these kind of partnerships. Through these Centers, we have been able to provide health services to families and children; training for parents to prepare them to be advocates for their children and for their community; quality preschool education for the youngest children; a professional learning community model for teachers to ensure that they are part of a new culture for learning; and quality pre-college programs to ensure that our students are ready to tackle the challenges of a college education. LEAP Academy serves as a student pipeline program from High School to College and into Graduate School.

Third, at a time when schools in urban cities like Camden, NJ continue to lag behind, LEAP Academy embodies what the Annie Casey Foundation characterizes as a “sign of hope”. *Hope for providing children with a quality education....hope for a school that can be catalyst for transforming the City....hope for families who are striving to provide their children with a real opportunity to succeed...hope for a city with so much potential for reinventing itself.....hope for a brighter future for Camden’s youth.*

Over the last ten years, we have encountered an amalgam of obstacles—lack of adequate and equitable funding; lack of support for facilities and lack of a real understanding about what charter schools are and its potential for triggering real change in education. In spite of the obstacles and many challenges, LEAP remains strong, beacon of hope for the city and beyond. Our vision is reaffirmed each day when our students come in to the school and remain committed to excellence. Our promise is validated every year when we graduate our seniors and see them enroll in college. Our commitment is renewed when we see their parents prosper and listen to their dreams for their children and for themselves.

Thanks to all who have in many ways contributed to LEAP and its students. ■

*Gloria B. Santiago*

# Partnership with UMDNJ and Cooper Health Supports Outreach Clinic for the uninsured

The organizational design for the LEAP Academy University Charter School is based on the concept of schools becoming “hubs” for community development and service. For this reason, through the partnership with Rutgers University, Centers of Excellence were developed to address an array of needs, such as healthcare, parent training and development, legal services, pre-college education, and early learning.

The LEAP Health and Human Services Center of Excellence, which operates on the lower level of the Elementary School, has been at the forefront of working with families and students on addressing their medical needs. The Health Center operates in partnership with Rutgers, LEAP Academy, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of NJ and Cooper Family Medicine. Today, the Health Center is organized as a family practice and accepts HMO’s and Medicaid to cover costs for care through reimbursements.

LEAP’s partnership with two institutions of higher education—Rutgers and UMDNJ—provides the setting for engaging students in experiences that enhance their medical training. The Robert Wood Johnson Medical School has developed a student-run clinic using LEAP’s facilities after their normal office hours are finished. On any given Wednesday evening, 10-15 medical students are busy conducting their own clinic that provides full primary care for uninsured patients from Camden. Attending physicians from the medical school volunteer their time as consultants to help ensure high quality care.



*UMDNJ Student doctors (from left to right: John Beelitz, Priya Perumalsamy, Jenny Melli, Rachel Cambell and Student Director Nathan Samras)*

On Thursdays, the clinic offers specialized women and pediatric care.

A unique feature of the clinic is its emphasis on treating patients as individuals, not cases. Medical students are paired with those seeking treatment so that there is a one-on-one relationship between the ‘doctor’ and their patient for the entire school year (July-June). This relationship is so strong that personal cell phone numbers are often given to the patients for ongoing access to their health provider. When a patient is referred to a specialist outside of the clinic, their personal ‘student-doctor’ accompanies them to ensure personal care and continuity. Individuals do not need to navigate the complex process of medical care by themselves and the student-doctors learn what their patients have to endure to get access to care. As third year medical student Kathy Fox sums up her experience with the clinic,

*“It’s just a beautiful thing to be able to provide quality health care to those that would not ordinarily receive it and returning the humanity to a process that for many, over the years has been burdensome and neglectful.” ■*

## Quick Facts about the HOP Clinic:

**Number of Medical Students Involved: 70**

**Number of Physicians Involved: 35**

**Number of Patients Receiving Services: 110**

**Top Healthcare Needs of the Patients:**  
Diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, high cholesterol, acid reflux, gynecologic exams, routine health testing

**Hours of Service:**

**Adult patients: Wednesday 5:30-8:30pm**

**Pediatric patients: Thursdays (twice a month)**

**5:30-8:30pm**

**Women’s clinic: Thursdays (once a month)**

**5:30-8:30**

# ELRA Research Consortium Convenes For Working Session

The ELRA Research Consortium convened for its first Working session in August 2007. The Consortium serves as an advisory body to the Early Learning Research Academy on areas of research and evaluation, while providing mechanisms to engage faculty and practitioners from multiple disciplines and various institutions in collaborative research and dissemination activities. In articulating the vision for this important component of the ELRA, Dr. Bonilla-Santiago stated that *“the Consortium will serve as a platform for researchers and practitioners with a record of outstanding achievements in the field to exchange knowledge, establish research partnerships, implement research projects, and pilot test new tools and approaches in the area of early child education and development.”*

The initial meeting and individual discussions that have followed are providing a great context to define the research focus of the ELRA. Given the interest on parental engagement, health and other comprehensive services for families, ELRA is well positioned to investigate factors such as: interdependence among families and its effect on early childhood development, and the impact of quality care on community and family growth.

In addition, members of the Research Consortium discussed various educational features that have not been researched in depth and that could potentially bring new perspectives to the field, such as dual language instruction and Math and Science instruction for the early learner.

Longitudinal research is an area of focus in the development strategy for ELRA. The Consortium concurred that the first step is to have a clear baseline, establish outcomes and measures (measures need to be appropriate for the various age/developmental levels of the sample as children grow over time, while keeping constructs consistent) and begin implementing over time.

The fact that these children will potentially progress to the LEAP Academy and remain in the system through grade 12 is an advantage. The support staff is now exploring various approaches for longitudinal research, such as: randomized comparison studies; cohort studies, where ELRA will follow various cohorts of children over time; and mixed method designs.



See **RESEARCH CONSORTIUM** on next page

Consortium members participating in working sessions

# Dual Language Program to be developed for Infants, Toddlers and Pre-schoolers



One of the instructional priorities for ELRA is the development of learning settings that can adequately address the needs of the English Language Learners. Factors such as changing immigration patterns, and increasing numbers of children being raised in households where limited or no English is spoken are important elements for early childhood instruction. The U.S. Department of Education's Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) data set confirms that the achievement gap between ELL children and their English speaking peers may begin as early as 24 months of age (<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/meetings/2007/050807.cfm>).

The implications of this trend are enormous. When compared to English speakers, children who are English Language Learners (ELL) and from disadvantaged economic backgrounds are more likely to have lower levels of achievement throughout their academic career, including lower high school completion rates and lower rates of college attendance.

See **DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM** on page 11

## ELRA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM CONVENES from page 4

A diverse, experienced and dynamic group of researchers and practitioners have agreed to collaborate on this effort. These individuals include:

Team from the nationally recognized Frank Potter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- **Dr. Virginia Buysse**, Senior Scientist
- **Dr. Dina Castro**, Scientist
- **Dr. Margaret Burchinal**, Senior Scientist

- **Dr. Barbara Alexander Pan**, Research Associate at Harvard's Graduate School of Education
- **Dr. Rebecca Silverman**, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, University of Maryland
- **James T. McBee, Jr.**, Director, Office of Abbot Services, New Jersey Department of Education;

Team from the National Institute for Early Education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick Campus

- **Dr. W. Steven Barnett**, Director
- **Dr. Debra J. Ackerman**, Assistant Research Professor

Team from the Rutgers-Camden Center for Childhood Studies, Rutgers-Camden Campus

- **Dr. Dan Hart**, Director/Professor of Psychology
- **Dr. Sean Duffy**, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- **Dr. Robert Akerman**, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- **Dr. Sheila C. Cosminsky**, Associate Professor of Sociology
- **Cecilia Zalkind**, Executive Director, Association for Children of NJ
- **Ana I. Berdecia**, Senior Fellow/Director/Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State College
- **Ritamaria Giosa**, Child Care Health Consultant Coordinator, Camden County Division for Children
- **Wilbert Mitchell**, Executive Director, Respond, Inc.
- **Maricarmen Macrina**, Supervisor, Early Childhood Program/ Camden Board of Education
- **Theresa Caputo**, Project Impact Director, Kean University
- **Gloria Hancock**, Chief School Administrator LEAP Academy

Team from the Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership Rutgers Camden—Campus

- **Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago**, Director/Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor
- **Wanda Garcia**, Associate Director
- **Karen Gersten-Rothenberg**, Director/ Family nurse practitioner Rutgers/LEAP Health Center
- **Barbara Alley**, Senior Project Administrator, Early Childhood Initiative
- **Jovita Veguilla**, Sr. Program Administrator, ELRA

# Parent Educator Certificate Institute



*Parent Educator Certificate Institute Graduation Ceremony attendees, (left to right: Terraine Jones, David Silver, Bonnie Hazzard)*

The CSUCL's Parent Educator Certificate Institute is designed to prepare parent leaders and others who work closely with parents to become Parenting Educators. The underlying philosophy for this program is based on building a strong relationship between school and community and striving for total family involvement. Specifically, the training program focuses on:

- **Providing** parents with new information and ideas about child development and child rearing to make parenting more rewarding and help them better nurture and support their children.
- **Creating** new environments that help reduce the isolation many parents feel by bringing them into contact with other parents in similar situations and providing them with access and resources available in the community at large.
- **Empowering** parents to learn to have the authority, responsibility and resources to enhance their skills and knowledge in order to become self-sufficient.

*"The Parent Educators Course has inspired me to not only change the way I deal with children, but as a registered home child care provider, it has inspired me to deal with my parents in a different way and offer them new and improved ways of parenting. It has expanded my heart, opened my eyes and encouraged me to help others". —Veronica Benson-Parker  
Registered Home Child Care Provider  
Parent Educator*

*"The workshops at the Parent Educator program not only helped me to understand my kids and the process of their childhood but to understand my parents and my own childhood". — Brenda Ortiz*

*"What I did not know at the time was that the Parent Educator program is also developed to make me a more rounded and open minded individual. The program helped me with my parenting skills, and to be a better wife, daughter, friend and co-worker." — Maya Worlds*

- **Engaging** parents to become partners, problem solvers, and leaders in working with schools.

Wanda Garcia, Associate Director of the CSUCL explains that *"the strategic framework used for this effort includes several components: first, parents are encouraged to be introspective about their strengths and areas of improvement in terms of good parenting; second, they are encouraged to consider what roles they can play to improve the school and the community; third, they are trained to think about future possibilities and expectations, for both their children and themselves; and, fourth, they are trained to provide leadership for change that is beneficial to the school and the community"*.

# Rutgers/LEAP Office of Pre-College Initiatives works to maintain 100% college placement

In building a college-bound community, the Rutgers/LEAP Office of Pre-College Initiatives works closely with several universities, corporations, and community organizations in establishing opportunities for students. This summer, many LEAP elementary and high school students received scholarships and grants to attend a variety of leadership programs and camps which included: Alice Paul Leadership Camp, Appel Farms Music and Arts Program, Camden County Prosecutor's Office Internship, Cornell Institute for Medical Research Internship, National Hispanic Institute, Villanova University, University of Rochester, Perkins Center for the Arts, and the Georgetown University Summer College Program.

LEAP also graduated its third class this spring, with students going to schools throughout the country. Some of the schools include Rutgers University, Drexel University, Widener University, Clark-Atlanta University, Bethune Cookman College in Florida, and several local universities as well.

The start of the 2007-2008 school year also brought some exciting programming for LEAP students. The Pre-College office sponsored a Hispanic Career Panel to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Prominent community leaders from the Hispanic community, including federal Judge Joseph Rodriguez, Rutgers Professor Dr. Luis Garcia, and Dr. Nilsa Burgos from the University of Puerto Rico spoke to students as part of a roundtable discussion. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions about careers for Hispanics and gained valuable insight from the speakers.

On October 19th, former Governor and Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency Christine Todd-Whitman toured LEAP Academy and gave a talk to seniors on global climate change. The discussion was part of the Pre-College Initiative Lecture Series, an ongoing series of lectures about various topics surrounding issues in our world today. ■



*Christine Todd-Whitman, Former Governor and Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency meets with LEAP Academy Seniors*

## **MY SUMMER IN WASHINGTON by Vernard Lindsay, LEAP Academy Student**

*"During the summer of 2007, I had the opportunity to participate in the Georgetown High School Scholars program at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. The program, which brought students from across the country to our nation's capital, allowed us to take college level classes at one of the nation's most prestigious universities. In addition, to taking classes, I had the opportunity to intern for Congressman Michael Michaud of Maine.*

*Overall, the experience allowed me to strengthen my academic skills. The courses were rigorous, and the impressions that the college classes left on me only strengthened my resolve to gain admission in the fall of 2008. What is more important however is that I know this opportunity would not have been possible if I had not been a student at LEAP Academy". ■*



## LEAP Academy Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Through this process, the following Rutgers LEAP Centers of Excellence were created to channel university support for the school: **Health and Human Services Center**, offering primary health and social work services to families and children; **Early Childhood Program** offering pre-school services; **Professional Development Institute** providing training and coaching to teachers and staff; **Parents Academy** providing programs to strengthen the skills of families; **Pre-College/Advanced Placement Office** working on college preparedness; **Law Clinic** offering free legal services; and **Technology Center** providing Internet access and long-distance learning.

### CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

An important element in the development of the LEAP Academy has been its contribution to Rutgers-Camden's vision for a University District along Cooper Street. After housing its school in temporary modular units for two years, in 1999, LEAP relocated to its permanent facility on 7th and Cooper Street--a three-story historic building that was originally built as an Elks Club and housed St. Mary's Parochial School. With financial support from the Delaware River Port Authority,

the building underwent a \$7.5 million renovation to transform it into a state-of-the-art school facility.

In January of 2005, a second building was completed to house the high school. This new facility was financed by a unique partnership between the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) and Rutgers University. The DRPA awarded a \$2 million grant and issued tax-exempt bonds in the amount of \$8 million to finance the high school construction. A new facility that will house the Early Learning Research Academy is presently in the planning stages.

The construction of these facilities is timely and consistent with Rutgers-Camden's strategic plan for expansion. It also contributes to the research synergies that are emerging from the work to establish the doctoral programs in Childhood Studies and Community Development and in building the masters level track in Education Leadership and Policy. The combination of LEAP and Rutgers buildings makes it possible for a child to be educated from infancy through graduate school on Cooper Street.



## EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Over the last ten years, the joint efforts of Rutgers and the LEAP Academy have generated over \$75 million in operational support for the school; close to \$20 million in external support for special programs and \$18 million in capital funding.

With 100% college placement for the first three graduating classes, LEAP Academy is becoming a model educational program that serves students from birth through 12th grade and an important resource for the cultivation of a cadre of Camden youth for admission into higher education.

In 2003, LEAP Academy University Charter School received an inaugural New Jersey Public Charter School Exemplary School Award and a 2002-2003 Pioneer Award from the New Jersey Department of Education. The Annie E. Casey Foundation cited the LEAP Academy as a "*sign of hope*" in Camden City.

Success is measured by various accomplishments—engaging others in the work, meeting the established benchmarks for success, sustaining program long-term and receiving the external recognition for the quality of practice.

## LEAP ACADEMY---A MODEL FOR K-16 UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

The work embedded in the Rutgers/LEAP partnership is reflective of the concept of "Scholarship of Engagement", with the university working in collaboration with community in a reciprocal relationship that brings added value to both entities. The LEAP Academy effort builds on the concept of the university as an engine for service, research and replication through active partnership with the community. For the University, the LEAP Academy and its various programmatic outgrowths provide the setting for engaging faculty, students and practitioners in generating new knowledge and developing innovative education practices, thus bringing together theory, research and practice in disciplines focusing on the development of children and families.

Over the last ten years, LEAP has evolved as an important resource for research by providing a mechanism for inter-disciplinary collaborations resulting in new academic programs at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. The new Educational Leadership and Policy concentration under the MPA Program is a direct result of these efforts. Already this program has prepared 25 students with the credentials to engage in school leadership positions.

# Early Childhood & Family Literacy Initiative continues to work with Abbott Pre-schools

With funding from the Knight and William Penn Foundations, the Rutgers Early Childhood Literacy Initiative continues its collaboration with the Camden City Board of Education.

The school year began with new teachers and Master Teachers receiving training from the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) focusing on Message Time. Message Time is a model writing and shared reading instructional program that addresses the many educational goals in a compact process which students enjoy. During message time, students have the opportunity to respond to print at their own developmental level; increase their knowledge of print and of concepts about print; and learn how and why

to think before they write.

Instructional Assistants received training from CLI on how to use Reading Aloud to Support Instruction. The National Commission of Reading stresses that *"the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."* Since Instructional Assistants spend so much time with children in the classroom, this training focuses on equipping them with skills for reaching the early learner. They learn how to encourage positive participation for especially restless children by having them hold the book, turn the page, and answer questions about the story.

In October, teacher and instructional assistants participated in a Phonological Awareness Seminar facilitated by Bank Street College of Education. Teams discussed informal and formal definitions of phonemic awareness. Teams were able to brainstorm around when, where and how phonological awareness is taught during the preschool day and how to best observe and record for assessment purposes. Teams also shared favorite activities that highlight phonological awareness skills. ■

## PARENT EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE INSTITUTE from page 6

Stephanie Rogers, who coordinates the program, ensures that every session provides a combination of direct instruction and active learning, so that parents can actually engage in lively discussions and practice their facilitation skills. She adds that *"parents leave the program equipped with the skills, concepts, approaches and principles that are necessary to become effective parent educators, including: information on how to become a parent educator leader; how to interact productively with parents; understanding group processes; information and practical experience in preparing and executing presentations for parents; and, information and practical experiences in leading group discussions with parents."*

**PARENT EDUCATORS TRAINED: 101**

**PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN TRAINING: 2500**

### SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE PAST:

Bonsall  
Cramer  
Cream  
Veterans  
LEAP Academy

Cooper's Poynt  
Child Care Ctr.  
Molina  
Due Season Charter

### CURRENT PRESCHOOLS PARTICIPATING:

BLV Day Care Ctr.  
Respond, Inc.  
YMCA  
Little Folk Learning Ctr.  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
St. Joseph's Child Care Ctr.  
BPUM

Neighborhood Ctr.  
Broadway Family Ctr.  
Hispanic Family Ctr.  
LEAP Academy  
Mi Casita Day Care  
Head Start

## LEAP 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY from page 9

The university involvement with LEAP has generated opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students through internships, fellowships and directed study. It has also begun to attract faculty interested in collaborating on research agendas and projects. LEAP has become an ideal site for engaging in research by providing a laboratory of human resources to engage in the development, evaluation and refinement of educational innovation. It provides a real setting to expose our college students with clinical teaching experiences where they can observe and participate in quality educational practice. Courses in the Psychology Department (Psychology of Urban Reading and the Student Internships), Urban Studies Department (Urban Practicum), Graduate Department of Public Administration (Educational Leadership Internship), Teacher Preparation Program (Teaching Practicum and Student Teaching), Honors College (Student Practicum) are among the many academic opportunities available to our Rutgers students through the LEAP partnership.

The work with the LEAP Academy has also spearheaded a new agenda for the Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership—that of building new leadership and capacity for schools through the training, coaching and development of teachers and school leaders. This effort has been channeled through the Teacher Development and Performance Institute, which works with teams of teachers from schools in Camden and the larger region; and the School Leaders Academy, which works with school principals and administrators. These programmatic efforts have reached over 300 educators in various school districts in the Southern New Jersey region. ■



*Students of psychology, Rachel Nurlund and Michael Borowiec analyzing and collecting data to assess early childhood students on Woodcock Johnson and PPVT-III test.*



*Teacher Development and Performance Institute participants*

## VOICES FROM THE LEAP ALUMNI . . .

***"LEAP was not just my high school; it was truly a second home. It was a place where both your friends and teachers became your family. I will never forget LEAP or the wonderful people I met there. The Class of 2007 will always be in my heart!"*** Alyson Georginna LEAP graduate Class of 2007

***"What LEAP means to me is the start of a new beginning. Leadership, education and partnership (LEAP) are important aspects of a good education. It provides a better learning for city students who need better opportunities. Leap is the future of an urban city in need of development. LEAP opened my eyes and gave me goals with options. Change in the community starts a LEAP".*** Jonathan Money LEAP graduate Class of 2007

## Meet the 2007-2008 CSUCL/Education Fellows—MPA Program

**Jessica Norton** grew up in California and is in her second year of the MPA program. She has experience teaching in Los Angeles and San Diego County School Districts as well as in eastern Africa. Her Peace Corps service was in Mozambique where she instructed teachers and also helped start an income generating group for women. Jessica is currently interning at the LEAP Academy Elementary school working with the Assistant Principal and learning about administrative procedures. She is also interested in Accelerated Programs and is working on a project she is passionate about: LEAP's gifted and talented program.

**Marcus Woods** is a native Trentonian and a first semester M.P.A. student. His Peace Corps service in Thailand reinforced his already passionate feelings for empowering urban youth and promoting social change. He is a firm believer that with the right tools and a fair and decent educational system, people can prosper. He strongly believes that we have a responsibility to help out our urban cities instead of just leaving them. He is currently interning with the Office of Pre-

College Programs at LEAP Academy where he is engaged in tutoring programs, program planning and coordination and one-on-one work with individual students. He loves to read and write, play guitar, enjoys the collected works of Jimmy Hendrix.

**William Price** returns to Rutgers after completing his BA on the New Brunswick campus in 2000. He has spent the past eight years in the US and Africa. After completing his BA, he earned a MPH in International Health & Development at Tulane University as part of the Masters International/Peace Corps program. During his service in Malawi he was based at a rural Health Center assisting the local community in multiple development schemes. After his PC service he worked with the Zambian Ministry of Education's distance learning program and United Nations on an orphan well-being project. In his development work he has realized that education is the key to long term sustainable change in people's lives. He is excited about the opportunity to translate his international experience in development



*CSUCL Fellows Paul Smith and Marcus Woods working with students in LEAP Academy pre-college office*

back to America. He is currently placed at the Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership and is overseeing the Rutgers-YES Institute, a Supplemental Educational Service (SES) program working with students that are experiencing academic difficulties in Math and Language Arts. He is also assisting with the coordination of writing and publishing the CSUCL's Bulletin. ■

## Young Educated Scholars Institute (YES) earns approval as SES provider

The Young Educated Scholars (YES) Institute is a new initiative of the Rutgers CSUCL. The program was approved as a supplemental education service provider by the New Jersey Department of Education.

The YES Institute program is running from October and March, and consists of 13 weekly Saturday sessions. Each session is three hours with 1 ½ hours devoted to math and 1 ½ hours devoted to language arts/literacy. The curriculum is focused on problem-based learning activities. Four tutors work with approximately eight students each, thirty four in all, and are responsible for delivering both the language arts/literacy and math curriculum. Tutors are also working with the program directors to provide periodic updates to parents on the progress of their students. This is done with the use of an interactive website that students, parents and the tutors can access and exchange information and questions.

The YES Institute presents a unique way to support underachieving students and to improve the lives of children not only in Camden but throughout the region. ■

# LEAP Serves as Service Learning Site for Rutgers Students



CSUCL Fellows Jessica Norton with students in LEAP Academy



LEAP Academy provides an extraordinary site for engaging Rutgers students at the graduate and undergraduate levels in quality applied learning opportunities. This Fall 2007, twelve students from the Teaching Preparation Program were placed in classrooms at the LEAP Elementary School to fulfill their Education Practicum: *Laura King, Scott Hogan, Laura Archer, Janice Hughes, Maria Foster, Kori Dremow, Kasey McHale, Christie Henning, Raymond Hill, Sarah Grabowski, Anne Owens and Barbara Vieira*. These students were placed in a classroom under the supervision of a collaborating teacher. They were able to assist with classroom set-up, tutor individual students, teach small groups of students, plan and teach two lessons and grade papers.

Five students from the Psychology Department enrolled in the course—"Administering Early Childhood/Child and

*Rutgers Student Rachel Nurlund working with LEAP Academy Pre-K students*

Classroom Assessments."

Students in the class are able to learn about assessment tools for children at the preschool level, and have been administering these assessments under the supervision of instructor Jovita Veguilla. The students have also completed classroom observations based on a checklist developed for the course.

At the graduate level, the following *MPA Educational Policy and Leadership Track* students were placed at LEAP: *Jessica Norton, Paul Smith, William Price, and Marcus Woods*. They have been working on a variety of projects ranging from coordinating a tutoring program at the high school to overseeing the Gifted and Talented Programs at the Elementary School. ■

## DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM from page 5

The findings of the 2005 Head Start Impact Study indicate that Head Start participation increases the school readiness skills of children who attend the program. However, subgroup analyses revealed that when a child's primary home language was Spanish, there was no impact on any of the measures of cognitive or social-emotional development. These findings are supported by other national studies, such as the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) and the Head Start National Reporting System (NRS). Based on the fact that approximately 27% of the children enrolled in Head Start programs are ELL, it is clear that existing programmatic approaches are not benefiting those who are at the highest risk for later school failure. Although comparable data are not available for infants and toddlers, it is likely that they face a similar dilemma. The consequences of neglecting this growing population can result in ELL children failing to master fundamental school readiness skills prior to entering kindergarten.

Faculty and staff in the ELRA project are targeting this issue as an instructional priority. Ms. Jovita Veguilla, a full-time practitioner with experience in dual language instruction, was hired to continue to work in developing the curriculum for infants and toddlers. Given ELRA's relationship with the LEAP Academy, the plan is to create a dual language curriculum (English/Spanish) that can be followed into pre-K, K and 1-2 grades. ■

# Rutgers/LEAP Alfredo Santiago Endowment Scholarship Fundraising Gala

Help us raise funds for LEAP graduates---December 8, 2007

The seventh annual Alfredo Santiago Scholarship Fundraising Gala will take place on Saturday, December 8th, 2007 at the Mansion on Main Street in Voorhees, NJ. Please join us for an evening of entertainment and inspiration.

The Alfredo Santiago Endowed Scholarship at Rutgers was established in loving memory of Alfredo Santiago. The Santiago Endowed Scholarship provides financial assistance to full-time first-year undergraduate students who graduate from the LEAP Charter High School in Camden and enroll at Rutgers.

The scholarship is based on academic merit and financial need. To increase diversity at Rutgers, preference is given to Latino and African-American students majoring in nontraditional areas of study such as math, science, engineering, and medicine. Scholarships may be renewed for up to three years (or four years if the student is enrolled in a five-year program), if recipients remain in good academic standing.

The Rutgers University community, current LEAP students, alumni and families, as well as various corporate sponsors of the Alfredo Santiago Endowment attend this event. The evening is a celebration of the accomplishments of Gala honorees as well as LEAP Alumni.

Guests will partake of a wonderful dinner and enjoy the sounds of Rocco DePersia, our entertainment for the evening. In addition to the dinner, dancing, and honoree ceremony, guests will have an opportunity to bid on a wide range of spectacular items during our silent auction. ■

## 2007 RECIPIENTS OF THE RUTGERS/LEAP ALFREDO SANTIAGO SCHOLARSHIP FUND

- Jonathan Money
- Alyson Georgianna
- Sofia Bermudez
- Angel Roman
- Maretha Stewart
- Israel Castro

## *Eighth Annual Rutgers/LEAP Fundraising Gala Honorees*



*Susquehanna Bank  
represented by President & CEO Mr. Joseph Lizza*



*Ms. Linda Rohrer  
William G. Rohrer Foundation*



*Ms. Deborah Rosado Shaw  
Dream B.I.G. Enterprises*

*If you'd like more information on how to participate in this year's Gala via donations,  
gifts and/or ticket purchase, please visit our website  
[http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/Camden/CFSUCL/Endowed\\_Scholarship.htm](http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/Camden/CFSUCL/Endowed_Scholarship.htm),  
or contact Mr. Randy Miller at [rrmiller@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:rrmiller@camden.rutgers.edu) or at 856-225-6348.*



Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago was honored by the National Hispanic Leadership Institute with its “Mujer Award” at a Ceremony in Denver, Colorado. Through its annual Mujer Award, the National Hispana Leadership Institute recognizes the *“sustained lifetime achievement of Hispanic women who are serving their community and act with justice, love, and the deepest of pride in their culture”*. Dr. Santiago was recognized for her tireless efforts on behalf of disenfranchised communities and her contributions to the advancement of the Hispanic community. Actress Rosario Dawson and Dr. DeFerreire, President and CEO of the International Multicultural Psychological Services, Inc. were also honored.

## MPA Educational Policy and Leadership Track Sponsors Education Symposia Series: Gary Howard on Teaching in Multicultural Schools



*Gary Howard giving a presentation on Teaching in Multicultural Schools to the LEAP Academy faculty, staff and administration*

The Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership offered a two-day seminar on the cultural competency of teachers on May 10th and May 11th. The facilitator was Gary Howard of the REACH Center in Seattle and the author of “We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know: White Teachers in Multicultural Schools”. Mr. Howard brought an easy and humorous presentation style to a serious conversation on the issue of social dominance in respect to multicultural education.

The first day was an open session for Pre-K through 12 teachers and school administrators and the second day was devoted to LEAP Academy students. Mr. Howard kept the LEAP students captivated with his sincere conversation regarding race relations in their school and in society.

He then took time to engage the students in appreciating who they were as individuals; where each student came from; and where each student was going. In his session with LEAP teachers he created a dialogue about social dominance and how that affects teacher instructional methods. All of the sessions were spirited, informative and reflective and challenged each participant to evaluate his/her instructional practices in the classroom, as well as their compassion for urban students.

As a facilitator Howard was inviting, humorous, honest and engaging in his effort to create a dialogue on issues of power, dominance, the disenfranchised, awareness and healing. That mission, teaching educators to be culturally competent instructors of multicultural students, is proof that although our nation has work to do in the area of racial diversity, the battlefield is not without able soldiers. ■

## Meet New Staff



**Jovita Veguilla** arrived at the Center in August to assist in the development of the Early Learning Research Academy (ELRA) project. She works full-time as the Sr. ELRA Program Administrator and she is responsible for curriculum development for the infant to pre-school population; development of dual language curriculum from early education through the primary grades; planning and implementation of training program for parents; and overall design and implementation of instructional components of the Early Learning Research Academy. In her spare time she is attending classes full time in the MPA program and teaching an undergraduate class at Rutgers.



**Norma Agron** joined the CSUCL staff as Coordinator for Case Management and Family Support Programs. In this new position, Norma will be working with our Health and Human Service Center in the areas of behavioral health and counseling. She will be working with the LEAP Student Support Team in establishing a case management mechanism for mental health services; coordinating the logistics for implementation of behavioral health programs for students; and outreaching families enrolled at LEAP Academy to increase utilization rates of the health center services. She was first hired during the planning phase for the school to recruit families and to develop and deliver programming to prepare these families for ongoing engagement with the LEAP Academy. Once the school opened in 1997, she became the founding Parent Coordinator for LEAP and is credited for developing the parental engagement programs at the school.



**William Price** joined the CSUCL as a Senior Fellow to oversee the Rutgers-YES Institute, a Supplemental Educational Service (SES) program working with students that are experiencing academic difficulties in Math and Language Arts. He is also assisting with the coordination of writing and publishing the CSUCL's Bulletin.

The mission of the CSUCL at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Camden Campus, is to foster understanding and acceptance of providing new organizational environments and strategies; and to build bridges and partnership among urban communities, academia, and organizations for dealing with race relations and urban development. Through social action research, leadership development, training, and community partnerships, the center provides a forum for the analysis, discussions, and assessment of policy issues, while developing new knowledge regarding strategic approaches to meet the changing needs of urban communities.

Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership  
321 Cooper Street Camden, NJ 08102  
Telephone: 856-225-6348 • Fax: 856-225-6500  
<http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/Camden/CFSUCL/>

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