Big Learning ◊ Newsletter

Big Learning, Inc, (301) 560-1633   www.biglearning.org   Dr. Karen Cole, Executive Director

Big Learning, Inc. is a non-profit dedicated to promoting school and life success through hands-on, real-world learning experiences for children and families.

"I could barely drag my daughter out [of Big Learning classes], because she so loved and enjoyed the activities that she never wanted to leave. She always came home bubbling with enthusiasm." – parent of a Big Learning student

Triumphant Toymakers at Highland

Thanks to generous contributions of over 50 supporters, Big Learning was able to fully fund both Toymaking and Building Big and Small at the Linkages to Learning program at Highland Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland. 12 students in grades 2-4 participated in Toymaking this spring, and the class was a huge success!

Parents were thrilled with their children's experience in the class. The children were so proud of the toys they made. One parent reported that her daughter kept all her toys on her nightstand. Another student designed and built several additional toys at home, and brought them to share on the last day of the class.

All of the children in the class showed tremendous growth in 21st-century skills including persistence, communication, and collaboration.

A beautiful crank-powered flier

Drilling holes to make car wheels

Shedding the need for adult help by the third or fourth session, the students went above and beyond the basic designs that are part of the class. On their own, they incorporated the toys they made into original games and dramatic performances.

Everyone is looking forward to participating in *Building Big and Small* next fall.

Realtor® Jeremy Lichtenstein helps kick off Big Learning Sponsorship Program

Realtor Jeremy Lichtenstein, a veteran of many building projects, helped students at Garrett Park Elementary School build structures of their own. Jeremy sponsored this spring's "Building Big and Small" after-school class there. The sponsorship program invites local business to sponsor classes at nearby schools, making the classes more affordable, and enabling us to offer scholarships.

Garrett Park students with their backrest chairs

In return, Big Learning acknowledges our sponsors on take-home sheets for parents, on our web site, and in a press release.

"We are very excited about this program, says Executive Director, Dr. Karen Cole. "It allows us to involve business leaders in educating their neighborhood children, while bringing us closer to our goal of offering highly-enriched classes to everyone without regard for ability to pay."

Big Learning Welcomes Newaygo County Community Services

Newaygo County Community Services offers afterschool and summer enrichment to children at 5 sites in rural Michigan. This fall, they will be offering Toymaking and Building Big and Small to about 300 children. We are very happy to have them on board!

Meet the new members of our board of directors and advisory board

Big Learning is grateful to have so many talented and accomplished people helping to manage and advise us. We have recently formed an advisory board filled with distinguished leaders in the education community. They will meet periodically with us to contribute their expertise so we can best fulfill our mission. Our advisory board members are:

Lawrence Agulnick, **Executive Vice President of TBED21**, a nonprofit that seeks to empower economically disadvantaged communities through education and technology-based industry.

Dr. Neal Brown, **Head of School at Green Acres School** in Rockville, MD and a respected leader in innovative education strategies.

Jennifer Knudsen, **Senior Mathematics Educator at SRI International Center for Technology in Learning** and a founding member of Big Learning's board of directors.

Dr. Karl Reid, Senior Vice President of Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives United Negro College Fund, and a national leader in minority math and science education.

We are also thrilled to welcome the following people to our **board of directors**, which oversees the management and strategic direction of Big Learning, Inc.

Karin Green, an attorney, legal writer, and parent. Karin has been contributing her intellectual property expertise and is helping us organize our Standards for Excellence certification effort.

Jessica Tierney is a program director at the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County. Prior to that she was site director at Highland Elementary School's Linkages to Learning program. She brings to Big Learning extensive knowledge about educational programs for disadvantaged youth.

Don Vogel teaches at Garrett Park Elementary School. Don also recently served on the board of directors of the Garrett Park Elementary School Education Foundation. He will help us make better connections between afterschool and school-day programs and contribute fundraising expertise.

"Knowledge Builder" is now "Big Learning KID"

Our afterschool curriculum has a new name: **Big Learning KID™**. *KID* stands *for Knowledge-Infused Design*. That means that in every lesson, students experience a creative design project that is infused with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in school and in life. In addition to our two existing KID modules (Toymaking and Building Big and Small), look for new modules to be announced soon!

How You Can Help Big Learning

Big Learning, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to promoting school and life success through hands-on, real-world learning.

You can help Big Learning achieve its goals by:

- Spreading the word about Big Learning
- Volunteering to help Big Learning develop and teach its unique hands-on programs
- Making a tax-deductible contribution

Questions can be emailed to info@biglearning.org, or contact us at (301)560-1633.

Our tax ID is 45-0558119. **Contributions can be mailed to:**

Big Learning, Inc.
P.O. Box 27
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Yes, I'd like to support Big Learning's mission with a tax-deductible contribution:

[ ] $25   [ ] $50   [ ] $100   [ ] $150   [ ] Other amount

Name_____

Street _____

City, State, Zip_____

e-mail_____