



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Lisa Elias (414) 748-4387
lisa.elias3@gmail.com

SHARP LITERACY, INC. EXPANDS 2017 SUMMER LEARNING GAIN INITIATIVE

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (July 5, 2017) – SHARP Literacy’s Summer Learning Gain Initiative, the organization’s eight-week summer educational program, has expanded in an effort to reach more students in Milwaukee’s urban neighborhoods. The program will be offered at seven community learning centers including Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center (SSNC), Our Next Generation, COA-Riverwest, Journey House, Milwaukee Christian Center, and NeuLife at Gwen T. Jackson, as well as Kluge Elementary School. The program runs June 19 – August 11 and will include the participation of approximately 250 students.

The Summer Learning Gain Initiative is part of SHARP Literacy’s year-round learning continuum that includes classroom and after-school instruction, and educational tours in partnership with area museums and learning sites. The theme of the summer program is “The Art of Storytelling” and will include curriculum based on SHARP Literacy’s latest *We Love to Learn* books, *Explore MKE: Your Neighborhood*, *Our City*, and *There Grows the Neighborhood: Agriculture in the City*. Lessons from *Explore MKE* will focus on understanding and appreciating Milwaukee’s diversity and embracing cultural differences, while *There Grows the Neighborhood* instruction will address topics such as the urban agriculture movement and the benefits of urban gardening. In tandem with both books, outside-of-the-classroom study will include walking tours of students’ neighborhoods. In addition, storytelling lessons provide students the opportunity to create puppets, write scripts, and stage puppet shows, as they make connections between the educational concepts in lessons and the idea of storytelling.

New hands-on art projects included in the summer program give students the opportunity to explore and imagine as they create permanent, public works of art. Students at Neighborhood House of Milwaukee will be working with Milwaukee artist Sally Duback to conceptualize and design totems for Neighborhood House Garden Park. The concrete totems, ranging in size from three to five feet, will be fashioned by students with a myriad of colorful tiles and ceramic shapes with an overall theme of cultural diversity. SHARP Literacy has partnered with Ovation Communities on another art project, an intergenerational program pairing students from SSNC Browning Elementary Community Learning Center with seniors from Ovation Chai Point. Sally Duback will lead students and seniors in the creation of a door-sized mosaic mural, which will be on display at Ovation Communities.

- more -

SHARP Literacy, Inc. Expands Summer Educational Program / *Add One*

“Hands-on learning is a vital component of our program,” said SHARP Literacy President and CEO Lynda Kohler. “With these imaginative learning experiences, we provide students with opportunities to explore and create as they build confidence and self-esteem. The intergenerational program combines art and education in a unique project that brings students and seniors together for a meaningful, outside-the-classroom learning experience.” Students truly benefit from an integrated literacy program, according to James Wilbern, manager of SSNC Browning Elementary Community Learning Center. “The SHARP program integrates literacy and writing into a visual, touchable curriculum for my students. The combination not only builds upon the literacy skills of students, it also helps to unlock the creative corridors within their minds.”

SHARP Literacy, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Milwaukee nonprofit educational program whose mission is to enhance future life success by energizing urban children, motivating them to identify themselves as confident, capable scholars and lifelong learners by inspiring engagement in reading, writing and research through hands-on interaction and visual arts. The primary goal of SHARP Literacy is to provide elementary school students with an imaginative learning experience that builds confidence, self-esteem, and a greater awareness of the world. This year SHARP Literacy, Inc. will impart foundational literacy skills to nearly 8,000 elementary school students in 36 of Milwaukee and Waukesha County’s most at-risk schools. For more information, visit www.sharpliteracy.org.

###