



June 20, 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SUMMIT54 SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED ITS 10TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR
OF FREE SUMMER LEARNING TODAY FOR 650 ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Summit54 and its partners, Roaring Fork School District and Ross Montessori School, welcomed 650 elementary students today for five weeks of free academic and life enrichment programming, M-F from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Students from all 13 elementary schools in the Lower Valley were invited to attend the District sponsored program at Basalt Elementary School, Crystal River School and Glenwood Springs Elementary School.

New this year, Ross Montessori School is hosting a program for 100 Montessori rising first through seventh grade students. “We are thrilled to be able to offer an opportunity for children to keep learning this summer with Summit54’s sponsorship of the Summer Advantage program. These young scholars thrive when they have exposure to new ideas and lessons,” said Erin Beaudette, Director of Student Services at Ross Montessori.

Enthusiasm for the program continues to grow throughout the Valley. “We’ve had far more interest this year from families who want their children to attend the program, which is super exciting,” said Kyle-Leigh Berry, Program Manager for Crystal River Elementary School. “It is truly rewarding to be a part of this program because in the Fall, I can always tell which students attended Summer Advantage. They’re ready to move forward with new material without needing to review the prior year’s material.”

“Summer Advantage is different from the school year because alongside their in-class learning, scholars also experience learning outside of the school building, in their community during weekly field trips,” said Molly Peterson, Program Leader for Glenwood Springs Elementary School. “I think the program is successful because the teachers have fun and the students have fun while they learn through the summer.”

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“One of the things that I like most about the program is the enrichment classes we have in the afternoons,” said Danielle Bailey, Program Leader for Glenwood Springs Elementary School. “Teachers teach classes they are passionate about and share their excitement with the scholars in the program. Who knows, the enrichment classes the scholars take today could spark an interest they pursue in the future.”

The award-winning Summer Advantage program has historically generated an average 2+ month gain in math and reading during the five-week program. Without access to a high-quality summer academic program, students typically regress up to three months during the long break. (White, 1906; Heyns, 1978; Cooper et al, 1996; Downey et al, 2004; Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2007). COVID-19-related learning loss combined with the usual summer slide is expected to have ripple effects for years to come, which makes this summer’s program more important than ever.

The RFS District and Ross Montessori both provide facilities, utilities, janitorial service, computers, internet access, IT support, food service, bus transportation, and parent and teacher outreach; and both contribute approximately 10-15% of the total fee paid to Summer Advantage USA for implementing its award-winning summer academic and life enrichment program at their school sites. Summit54 raises the balance of the annual program cost from local governmental bodies, foundations, businesses and generous full-time and part-time residents.

Historically, 84% of the District scholars enrolled are Latino; 76% are English Language Learners and 74% receive free and reduced lunch during the school year. “Our mission is to help bolster academic abilities among all elementary aged children in the Lower Roaring Fork Valley,” said Terri Caine, Founder and Executive Director of Summit54. “This program is successful because kids enjoy the program and think it is fun. The morning begins with breakfast in the classroom where educators strive to develop personal connections with their students, after breakfast, all classes use Focused Kids@ for a few minutes of engaging brain exercises to let go of stress and prepare the brain to learn, then we have two hours of literacy and one hour of math. We work hard to make learning fun with interactive games and small group interactions. With two educators per classroom of no more than 22 students, we provide a great deal of personal attention to every scholar. We also have a Spanish speaking educator in every classroom. The rest of the day includes a hot healthy lunch, outdoor recess, and two afternoon enrichment programs such as art, music, drama, dance, karate, and yoga M-Th. By ending the day with enriching and entertaining activities, the children go home remembering all the fun they had. We also promote the Friday field trips all week, building excitement for the conclusion of the week and leaving scholars with fond memories to savor through the weekend.”

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Although this is Summit54's 10th consecutive year of providing FREE summer academic and life enrichment programming in the Roaring Fork Valley, it is the ninth year of Summer Advantage. During the summer of 2020, when schools were closed due to Covid, Summit54 provided programming for students in 23 unique locations using regional parks and other outdoor locations. The 501c3 also began free after-school programming in 2020/21 school year to help children who had fallen behind due to Covid-related school closures and the move to on-line learning. Summit54 will continue its free after-school small group tutoring program during the 2022/23 school year.

For additional information about the Summit54 sponsored Summer Advantage program with the Roaring Fork School District and Ross Montessori School, please visit

www.Summit54.org

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