



# The Roger Lehecka Double Discovery Center

Getting community youth to, through, and beyond college

The Double Discovery Center



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## **Congratulations to DDC's Class of 2020!**

This year, our seniors collectively have received over 282 letters of acceptance from the best colleges and universities in the country. In addition, they have been awarded more than \$3,726,000 in scholarships.

In the fall, they will attend Baruch College, Boston University, Columbia University, Fordham University, Manhattan College, New York University, Princeton University, St. John's University, Vassar College ... and many other institutions of higher education!

To achieve this milestone in their college-going dreams, DDC seniors worked hard with their DDC counselors to research different schools, build their lists of "best-fit" colleges, complete the required application materials including financial aid documents, and maintain their academic standing in high school. With the assistance and support of their DDC counselors as well as their College Success Mentors, they assessed the different offers of admission and corresponding financial aid packages to make their final selections.

DDC is honored to have partnered with each member of the Class of 2020 and their families in their college journey. We applaud their hard work, dedication, and perseverance. We celebrate their successes which are even more impressive given today's extraordinary challenges.

Congratulations to DDC's Class of 2020 and their Families – We Wish You the Best!

You are Forever Part of the DDC Family. Stay in Touch!

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### **DDC's Summer Programs Address Summer Learning Melt**

New York City students likely will start the school year this fall with achievement levels lower than they were in February, before the stay-at-home orders. The traditional “summer loss of learning” – typically a drop in achievement scores of an estimated one month of school-year learning during the summer break – will be compounded by the educational upheaval due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This expanded loss of learning will have a significant negative impact on low-income students who lack access to well-resourced schools and educational enrichment programs that their wealthier peers regularly enjoy.

This year, DDC is augmenting its usual summer programming to mitigate this loss of learning for its students. It will be a remote program with two components: *Summer Academy for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders* AND *Summer Institute for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and college-enrolled alumni*.

Out of the seven program instructors, three are Columbia doctoral candidates and one is a Fulbright scholar. The teaching assistants are undergraduate students who will support student learning in and out of the virtual classrooms and lead workshops to cultivate students' sense of community and social-emotional well-being.

### **DDC SUMMER ACADEMY**

The Summer Academy, themed *New York State of Mind*, starts on July 6<sup>th</sup> and continues through August 7<sup>th</sup>. It is open to students who are enrolled in DDC or who attend one of DDC's current partner public schools. Summer Academy will immerse students in rigorous and engaging courses that reinforce and build their academic skills; and expose them to content they generally do not have access to in their schools. Below is a list of the DDC's Summer Academy classes:

- ***Race and Immigration: Let's Talk*** – Students will explore identity politics and learn the terminology and frameworks of race and immigration.
- ***Applied Algebra*** – Students will learn to critically think about the problems presented and go beyond mechanized and memorized problem-solving strategies.
- ***Fundamentals of Filmmaking*** – Students will explore the fundamentals of filmmaking and a variety of digital media using project-based learning.
- ***Exploring the Art of Debate*** – Students will learn to map arguments, refute claims, and present evidence as they design and participate in debate competitions.
- ***Cookology 101*** – The course integrates a combination of science, math, and nutrition, all the elements involved in cooking.
- ***Urban Planning*** – The class exploits the rich “urban planning lab” that is NYC. Students will learn what urban planners do and how their work impacts residents.

In addition to their courses, Summer Academy students also will participate in the following extracurricular activities:

- **Community Hour** – With guidance from DDC’s Counselors and Healthy Minds & Bodies team, teaching assistants will facilitate workshops to build students’ skills around time management, stress management, self-confidence, and effective study habits.
- **New York City Hour** – This workshop will expand students’ knowledge about the city in which they live to increase their civic knowledge and engagement in local issues.
- **Healthy Minds & Bodies Hour** – The HMB team will help students explore all areas of personal wellness, including exercise, nutrition, art, and mindfulness.
- **Advisory** – Students will engage in a service-learning project focused on a prevalent local issue that they will identify. It is designed to help them learn essential skills such as communication, professionalism, and problem-solving.

## DDC SUMMER INSTITUTE

This year, DDC is launching its *Summer Institute* to meet the academic and college persistence needs of its 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders and alumni in college. The Institute has three core elements:

- **Writing Intensive** (July 27 – August 7): The course is designed for 12<sup>th</sup> graders, recent high school graduates, and alumni in college. It will strengthen participants’ capacity to produce a strong thesis and structure in their written work as they engage in college-level, skill-focused activities such as brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, revising & editing, and proofreading.
- **SAT Prep Class** (August 3 – August 24): This class targets 11<sup>th</sup> graders. While many colleges are adopting test-optional admissions policies for the upcoming year, not all have done so. We want to ensure that our students have access to the resources that will enable them to compete in all environments. Students will be immersed in SAT content for math, reading, and writing; and will develop techniques and strategies for successfully taking the test. Student progress will be routinely monitored through mock exams.
- **College Access and Persistence** (July 27 – August 24): DDC Counselors will provide students will small group and individual activities designed to help them refine their goals and action plans so that they remain academically on-track, complete important administrative tasks to facilitate their progress through college, and leverage the DDC community as a system of social-emotional support to persevere through the challenges.

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### DDC 7th grader learns science at Columbia University’s Zuckerman Institute - Joseph Dunker Jr., DDC’2024, and his mother, Mrs. Keisha Barnes

*I heard about DDC’s STEM programs at Joseph’s school, Frederick Douglass Academy II, and I was very excited to enroll him, says his mother, Mrs. Keisha Barnes. Joseph always liked science. In Kindergarten, he was already experimenting with dirt. By age 6, he joined the Boy Scouts at the Broadway location across from Columbia and would ask students how to enroll in college! I am so grateful that my son has access to the learning opportunities that DDC provides, she adds, the programs are interesting and the classes are small so students can get individualized support for their learning.*

And Joseph explains, *when you are at DDC, you feel like you are respected. There are no distractions. You are careful to not make a lot of noise so you can really focus on your school projects.*

*Last year Joseph did the “Discover Science” class, says Mrs. Barnes. Discover Science is a five-week after school course that DDC offers in partnership with Columbia’s Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute to introduce middle school students to science. I was so impressed, she adds, Columbia neuroscientists worked with the students and the lead instructor was a Ph.D. in Genetics from Harvard Medical School! They showed students how to design and carry out science experiments in a real Columbia research laboratory, she stresses. This is where Joseph learned how to use lab equipment, set up a project and strategize to complete it, and interpret scientific data.*

*On his first day of class he called me to say how exciting it was! Science at his school is mainly on paper, but with DDC, it is hands-on in a Columbia University state-of-the-art lab! Also, the scientists really welcomed the students. They had snacks all prepared and made the students feel comfortable, she says. They were very patient with the kids and very considerate of the parents. They called me to find out how he was going to commute between home and Columbia and as a parent, I really appreciated the concern, she says.*

And Joseph adds, *I loved going to the lab and doing all this research, we dissected a sheep brain, it was so interesting. I want to study neuroscience!*

*He has always loved to explore and now he is more focused! This was his first time in a real professional science lab and it expanded his horizon so much, Mrs. Barnes says. He went in wanting to be an engineer but now he wants to go into biology and be a researcher. He has new ideas about what is possible thanks to DDC.*

*This class made a big difference for Joseph, says Mrs. Barnes. It also was a great opportunity for some mother and son bonding, she adds. I love science too so when Joseph would come back from class and talk about his project, we would Google the subject and discuss it. We both really enjoyed this class and connecting with each other over it!*

*For this summer, says Mrs. Barnes, DDC helped me apply to another science program with a DDC scholarship that would cover the costs for Joseph to attend. It's called Steam Up with Hypothekids. This is a three-week program in July and August for middle school students that explores biology, chemistry and environment. We are both so looking forward to it!*

*I would love to spend summer back at the lab! says Joseph.*

*I learned that DDC has several opportunities for after school STEM programs, not only for middle school students but also for high school students, says Mrs. Barnes, including New York Bioforce that offers paid internships in the biotech field. We are both looking forward to that, as soon as he gets into 9<sup>th</sup> grade!*

*DDC programs have such a positive impact on students stresses Mrs. Barnes. I am a School Leadership Team member at Joseph’s school and I advocate for DDC at every opportunity. I want to spread the word and get other parents involved so that every child has a chance to benefit from these wonderful DDC learning experiences.*

**Partner with us to offer the gift of education! To help fund our programs and expand our outreach, click here: [“Change a Life”](#)**

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We want to hear from you!**

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