

From Agile Learning Center: New York 2017-2018 Annual Report



In this year of both reaching and rooting, our ALC-NYC community focused on connection and relationship-nurturing.

We embraced our role as flagship of an international network, embracing and supporting partner projects across continents and languages. This involved some discerning what gifts we have to offer, what the limits on our current capacity are, and what we can do over the next few years to increase our impact.

Closer to home, parents and students stepped powerfully into community-building roles. They offered evening events, planned fundraisers, created a yearbook, took more of a role in facilitating meetings, and generally practiced working together to tap into the potential of our leader-full community.

Our facilitators ended the year celebrating the ways we saw the parent community step up to support each other. Meanwhile, the kids showed increasing skill at gracefully tending to their individual selves while also caring for each other. This freed up our energy for deeper offerings, more field trips, fostering InterALC connection, and representing ALC at international gatherings.

At the close of our 5th year, we're marking how we've grown, grateful for our collaborators, and excited for what's next.

Landmarks/Milestones:

- History, Chess Club, Project Time, Writing Time, Wall Ball and Boulderling were especially popular offerings
- Fall Culture-Building retreat to Pennsylvania for corn maze, bonfire, and Philly exploring was a hit
- We welcomed visiting students from Colombia and from Virginia
- On top of our regular offerings in Spanish, German, and Japanese, students also regularly practiced Hebrew, Hungarian, Russian, French, and Mandarin in the space
- Processes for scheduling visits of people and pets were updated
- Successful trip to Charlotte, NC with Chuck and Ryan over spring break to visit ALC Mosaic at their new site
- Teens organized a workshop with the NY NeoFuturists theater group
- Volunteer Yoni Kallai and a teen organized a Day of Play for families
- Teens and parents collaborated to create our first ever yearbook
- Abby represented us at the LEGO Conference in Denmark
- Mel and Abby hosted over 45 hours of facilitator coaching calls
- Parent Community and Fundraising working groups produced several successful events



Where are we? The lobby. The deli. The makerspace. The game-room. The office. The library.



The gym. The park. The craft store. The museum. The subway. School's everywhere!



Among the Students...

This year was full of inquiry and adventures!

Field trips included regular trips to parks, bouldering gyms, and museums. There were also trips to the premier of Black Panther, the Brooklyn Museum's David Bowie exhibit, a comic book festival, a glass-blowing demonstration, and the zine library at Barnard. Our archived schedules describe over 70 trips this year!

Some offerings--like Maths, History, Philosophy, Fandom debates, Japanese--continued to be popular for a fifth year in a row. Others were new! This year, a role-playing game called Pathfinders, Writing Time, Chess Club, Wall Ball, and Spanish all debuted and became regular offerings.

Among the more sharable projects students tackled this year were soap-making from scratch, orchestrating a debate, giving and gathering interviews, hosting a day for parents, and creating a yearbook.

We're now sharing some of our adventures at [instagram.com/agilelearningcenternyc/](https://www.instagram.com/agilelearningcenternyc/)

Among the Community...

The end of the 2016-2017 school year brought clear signs that the parent community was getting coordinated and ready to engage on a new level. Individual parents had started offering check-ins, events, and support for others, and these efforts received a lot of positive feedback.

That set us up to start 2017-2018 cohering those individual efforts into official 'work groups,' teams of individuals focused on tending the parent community, fundraising, improving our space, and setting goals for the future. The original design of the school intended such groups to exist, but this year brought the critical mass and foundational relationships needed for those groups to emerge and thrive.

Thrive they did. Thanks to collaborations between parents, teens, volunteers, and staff, we went from a goal of hosting monthly community events to regularly offering multiple events each month. We wrote, held fundraisers, cleaned, sang, shared meals, celebrated, mourned, and generally brought our practice of community to a new level.

Among the Network of ALCs

With one of our founding parents, our former director, and one of our current directors all serving on the board of the ALC Network nonprofit, our community decided this year that being flagship of a global network means we have both an opportunity and a responsibility. After our first community meeting of the year, we began discussing ways to share our learning more broadly. Moved by enthusiasm to meet new friends and by may-it-be-of-service generosity, we laid plans for calls, livestreams, info sessions, coaching, and exchanges.

By the end of the year Mel and Abby had co-hosted over 45 hours of Monday night calls for facilitators across the network. In the spring Ryan hosted a call for ALFs who run trainings, then he and Chuck took families from our community to visit ALC Mosaic. Our teens video-called into part of an ALC Heartwood school day, part of an ALC Educambiando training day, and part of the LEGO conference in Denmark. Next, we'll have staff, teens, and parents contributing at trainings on both US coasts in July and August of 2018.

<i>People</i> <i>Staff</i> Melody Compo, facilitator & librarian Charles Savoy, facilitator & maker Ryan Shollenberger, co-director & facilitator Abby Oulton, co-director & facilitator-admin <i>Regular Guest Teachers</i> Nancy Hooper, offering cooking Yoni Kallai, offering acro-balance Yasushi Tamaki, offering Japanese language	<i>Mission</i> New York City's first Agile Learning Center is an independent school for self-directed learners. Students at Agile Learning Center individualize their learning within the context of a supportive community. We have adapted simple tools for self-organization and intentional culture creation to better support young people in engaging with their passions and curiosities while shaping the environment of the school.
<i>Non-discrimination Statement</i> The Agile Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, or ethnic origin in administration, admission, or any associated activities.	<i>Address</i> 115 East 106 Street Second Floor New York, NY 10029 nycagile.org

<i>Financial Information</i> The school continued to offer sliding scale tuition, ranging from \$22,500 to \$4500 annually based on reported family income. At the start of the school year, staff opted to receive health care instead of raises, and the school was projected to end the year having brought in \$274,260 from tuition. By June, tuition revenue had amounted to \$265,550. Of the 33 families enrolled for some or all of the 2017-2018 school year, 90% were receiving financial aid in the form of adjusted tuition. We spent more time community-building than fundraising, but between our Chipotle fundraiser, Amazon Smile, and a TeeSpring campaign we managed to raise about \$300. Part of this decrease in fundraising has been due to a shift in where our energy was focused. As a result of this shift, we saw visitors contribute over \$1,000 to the space this year, and our summer training is projected to raise an additional \$4,000. We are grateful for a number of generous donations of materials and services this year. We'd particularly like to thank Nancy Hooper, Diane Tinsley, Melissa Savoy, the Shaykhouns, the NY Neofuturists, and The Muse.



"I felt supported and challenged to be my best self without the stress of a typical school environment." -reflection from 13yo former student



"I was a little apprehensive. What a tremendous experience! The students I met and the ones I had the pleasure to teach are amazing young people..." -reflection from 1st time volunteer



Network

One of the distinctions that sets our Agile Learning Center apart from other public and private schools is that we are in active collaboration with other ALC communities around the world. Our facilitators are a part of a community of Agile Learning Facilitators or (ALFs) who work together to share best practices, support each other, and evolve our ALC model.

From the start, we have arranged trips and exchanges with other ALCs. We also organize, host, and co-facilitate trainings for facilitators. We've worked with communities in NYC, California, Georgia, and Pennsylvania, as well as Mexico and Australia.

Abby accepting a position as vice president of the ALC Network's board in August of 2017 sparked conversations among the ALC-NYC community about what documentation, events, and exchanges we're excited to offer the broader ALC Network over the next few years.

Summer Program



For the 3rd summer, our staff will host a workshop and a facilitator training in East Harlem over the summer. We're expecting 21 participants.

Additionally, Abby is organizing a training in California that Mel will co-facilitate with Anthony Galloway of Heartwood ALC. Nahla, one of the ALC-NYC teens, attended last year and will support facilitate this year! On the East Coast, Ryan and Chuck will be working with David O'Connor to run a workshop for the staff of the launching ALC Philly around the same time.

Gratitude

In the past 5 years, a community of 19--including 6 kids--budgeting month-to-month has grown into a community of 80 discussing when to close enrollment and how to afford a bigger space. We've gone from being an experiment to being the flagship of a 200+ member network. That's remarkable growth in a fairly short time, and we're grateful to have the chance to both witness and be part of this growing movement. *Abby and Ryan*