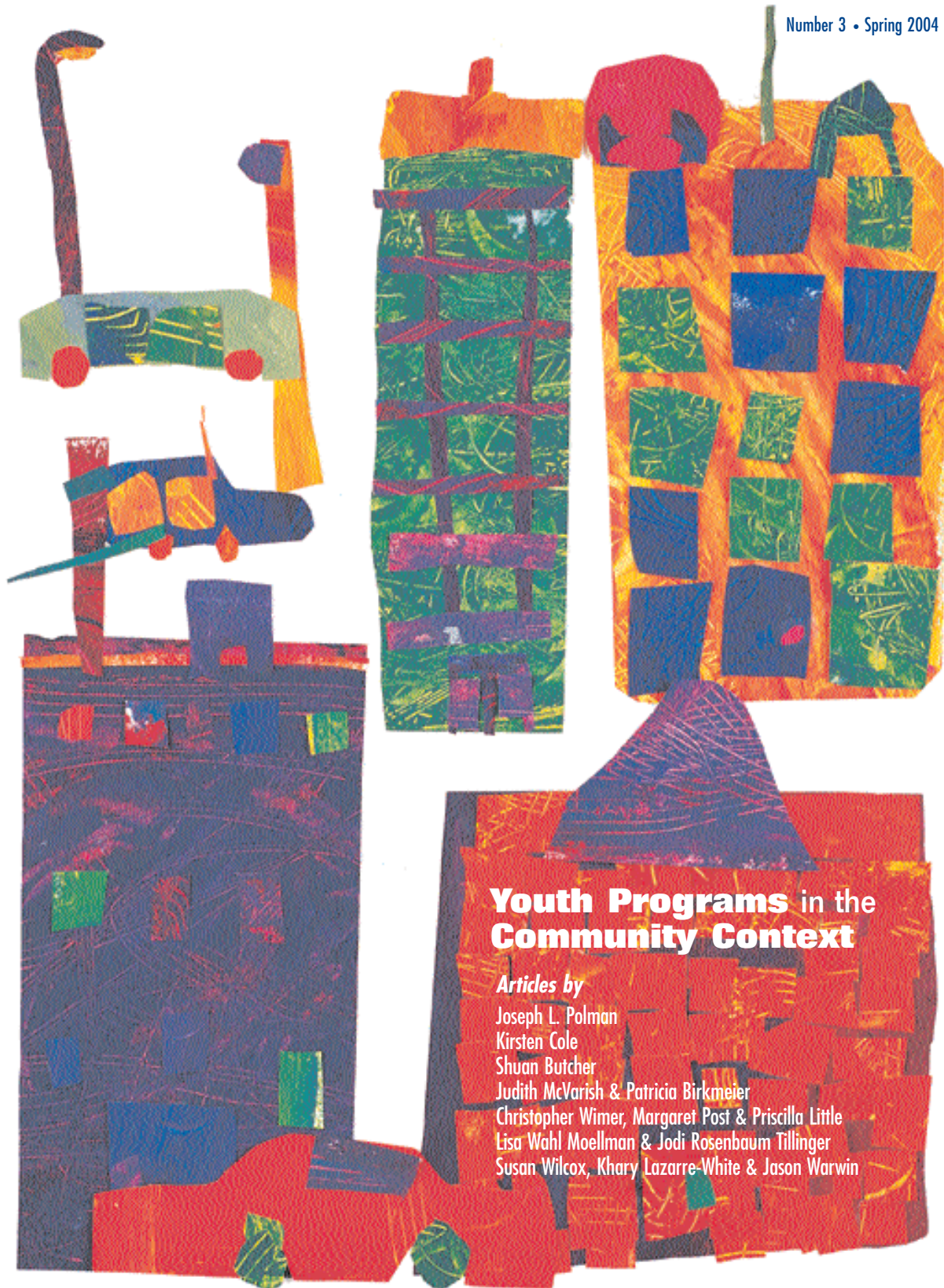


Afterschool Matters

Number 3 • Spring 2004



Youth Programs in the Community Context

Articles by

Joseph L. Polman

Kirsten Cole

Shuan Butcher

Judith McVarish & Patricia Birkmeier

Christopher Wimer, Margaret Post & Priscilla Little

Lisa Wahl Moellman & Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger

Susan Wilcox, Khary Lazarre-White & Jason Warwin

The Robert Bowne Foundation

The Robert Bowne Foundation Staff

Lena O. Townsend
Executive Director

Anne Lawrence
Program Officer

Sara Hill, Ed.D.
Research Officer

Afterschool Matters National Advisory Board

Heidi Goodrich Andrade, Ed.D.
State University of New York at Albany

An-Me Chung, Ph.D.
C. S. Mott Foundation, Flint, MI

Paula Gavin
YMCA of Greater New York

Greg McCaslin
Center for Arts Education, New York City

Jeanne Mullgrav
*New York City Department of Youth
and Community Development*

Eric Schaps, Ph.D.
Developmental Studies Center, Oakland, CA

Katherine Schultz, Ph.D.
*Graduate School of Education,
University of Pennsylvania*

Joyce Shortt
*National Institute on Out of School Time,
(NIOS), Wellesley, MA*

Carmen Vega-Rivera
East Harlem Tutorial Program, New York City

The Robert Bowne Foundation Board of Trustees

Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., *Chair*
Jennifer Stanley, *President*
Suzanne C. Carothers, *First Vice President*
Dianne Kangisser, *Second Vice President*
Susan W. Cumiskey, *Treasurer*
Robert M. Johnson, J.D.
Ernest Tollerson
Franz von Ziegesar

Afterschool Matters Publications Advisory Committee

Rodney Fuller
Fresh Youth Initiatives

Eric Gurowitz
Development without Limits

Sara Hill
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Susan Ingalls
Foundation for Children and the Classics

Anne Lawrence
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Pamela Little
Literacy Consultant

Eileen Lyons
Interfaith Neighbors

Tanya Ortiz
Fresh Youth Initiatives

Diana Torres
Partnership for After School Education

Lena Townsend
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Claudia Ullman
Family Literacy Forum

On the cover: *Collage of Painted Buildings*, Group Project, Grade 2, P.S. 150, Queens, NY. Courtesy of STUDIO IN A SCHOOL. The Robert Bowne Foundation would like to thank STUDIO IN A SCHOOL for the use of art from its programs throughout this issue of *Afterschool Matters*. For information on STUDIO IN A SCHOOL, see p. 60.

Contents

Number 3 • Spring 2004

3 Perils and Promise: Afterschool Programs on School Territory

by Joseph L. Polman

Situating community-based afterschool programs on school grounds has its risks, but there can be significant rewards as well.



13 Leveraging Resources to Promote Positive School-CBO Relationships

by Christopher Wimer, Margaret Post, and Priscilla Little

Analysis of the Harvard Family Research Project's database of program evaluations suggests ways community-based afterschool programs can negotiate with schools to share financial, physical, social, and intellectual resources.

22 Acts of Invention: The Afterschool Program as a Site for Building Community

by Kirsten Cole

An afterschool program struggles to foster kindness and civility among youngsters whose environment too often fails to promote such values.

28 Civic Spaces: Retooling Public Libraries to Attract and Engage Teens after School

by Lisa Wahl Moellman and Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger

Public libraries are uniquely poised to provide meaningful opportunities for teens to learn and grow outside of school—if they listen to what teens want and need.

37 Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Powerful Force for Community Change

by Shuan Butcher

A nationwide initiative involves youth and adults as equal partners in projects that improve community life.

44 In Addition Afterschool Mathematics Program: Principles, Practice, and Pitfalls

by Judith McVarish and Patricia Birkmeier

Afterschool math learning goes beyond worksheets and drills to engage young people in exploring the math principles that surround them in their communities.



52 Rites of Passage: Preparing Youth for Social Change

by Susan Wilcox, Khary Lazarre-White, and Jason Warwin

A unique program empowers urban teenagers to define themselves as leaders who are committed to their community.



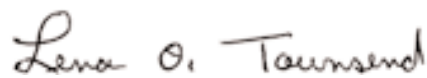
Dear Colleagues,

I am proud to present the Spring 2004 issue of *Afterschool Matters* on behalf of the Robert Bowne Foundation. The theme of this issue is Youth Programs in the Community Context. The power of community was brought home to me this fall as we were preparing this issue. When my mother fell ill, I was away from the city and couldn't get to her until the next day. Fortunately, I grew up in a community where friends support each other even when they haven't been able to maintain consistent contact. Even though we don't all still live in the physical community, we are still a part of a very powerful social community of people who support each other. I also have the great fortune to work with a community of people who, over the past 15 years, have become my friends and supporters professionally and personally. I can't imagine what I would do without these and other communities of supportive people.

One of the many important purposes that community-based out-of-school youth programs serve is to develop caring relationships that support young people as they express their ideas and concerns, building communities that will sustain them throughout their lives. But these communities don't happen in a vacuum. They grow as young people explore and develop their interests. These communities might develop in the process of enhancing mathematics education, as Judith McVarish and Patricia Birkmeier describe in their article. They might come out of public library programs, like the one Lisa Moellman and Jodi Tillinger portray, where people of all ages congregate. They may develop as youth and adults work together for community and social change, as Shuan Butcher and the directors of the Brotherhood/Sister Sol describe in their articles.

Community building can happen in school buildings as well as community centers; in this issue, articles by Joseph Polman and by researchers from the Harvard Family Research Project explore the advantages and disadvantages of situating afterschool programs on school grounds. But it is important that young people have opportunities to experience communities outside of school. As Kirsten Cole writes, "Perhaps as intermediary spaces, as spaces that bridge home and school and community, as spaces that make room for dialogue and uncertainty, afterschool programs are in a unique position to nurture . . . community." Afterschool programs help ensure that young people will experience the kind of community that has been so important in my life, and I hope in yours as well—a community that supports and nurtures us as our identities evolve throughout our lives.

LENA O. TOWNSEND



Executive Director
Robert Bowne Foundation

Afterschool Matters

SARA HILL, ED.D.
Project Manager

JAN GALLAGHER
Editor

AMY MENASCHÉ
Designer

Afterschool Matters is a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness in the field of afterschool education. Published annually by the Robert Bowne Foundation, the journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school hours, in addition to those engaged in research and shaping policy.

For information on *Afterschool Matters* and the Afterschool Matters Initiative, contact

Sara Hill, Ed.D.
Program Officer
The Robert Bowne Foundation
345 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014
sara.hill@bowne.com.

For editorial queries and submission guidelines, contact

Jan Gallagher
Editor
The Robert Bowne Foundation
345 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014
jgallagher@
robertbownefoundation.org.

perils & promise

Afterschool Programs on School Territory

by Joseph L. Polman

“Jeff” was an energetic, engaged eighth grader at an afterschool club held in the library of a middle school. In this club, the young people, who were predominantly African American, learned about the history of resistance to slavery in their local geographic region bordering the dividing line between North and South. Using information from field trips, the Internet, and print sources, the youths designed and created a set of multimedia web pages. I initiated and led the club, involving local university students as facilitators as part of their course requirement. While searching for Underground Railroad information and resources on the Internet, Jeff encountered a website with information about an abolitionist newspaper editor in a nearby town. Seeing a promising direction, I suggested Jeff pursue it. He continued his energetic and enthusiastic search for information, printing web pages and sharing ideas with us, much to the adults’ delight.

Later, we encountered the possibility of school labels negatively influencing us. At the end of one session, an administrator casually asked who was in our



Studio in a School

club. At the mention of Jeff, she said, “It’s really nice you’re trying to help him. . . . He’s one of our problem kids. . . . He’s got dyslexia.” Suddenly we knew that some of the same behaviors we had interpreted as Jeff’s “star quality” were interpreted as a problem by the school. As we neared the deadline for the project that Jeff was not finalizing as smoothly as we had hoped, how would we interpret Jeff’s behavior? Would we, as school staff and many others in the helping professions all too often do, focus on Jeff’s deficits, inadvertently contributing to the negative self-image of youth we are trying to help? Or would we build on the assets that Jeff brought to the club’s work, using the principles of positive youth development?

The undergraduate students and I struggled with this issue. We would like to think that we held true to our principles and that Jeff and the entire group benefited. But would this even have been an issue had we not situated our afterschool club in territory that is

Polman, J. L. (2003). The Perils and Promise of Afterschool Programs on School Territory. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 3–12.

often unhelpful and—despite good intentions—sometimes even hostile to youth like Jeff?

In a recent article in this journal, Susan Ingalls insisted that “kids need environments other than school buildings in which to play, and grow, and transform” (2003, p. 31). Her argument, along with numerous other studies (e.g., Ball & Heath, 1993; Garner, Zhao, & Gillingham, 2002; McLaughlin, 1993, 2000), is that community-based organizations (CBOs) outside of school provide unique youth development environments that should be supported by citizens, policymakers, funders, and educators who care for the future of youth. I fully support these authors’ goals of maintaining and expanding afterschool opportunities for youth in CBOs, but I wish to look more closely at the reality and potential of afterschool activities that take place physically in school facilities. I agree with these authors that the location of learning environments is not trivial, and I will argue that situating such learning environments on school territory presents substantial opportunities as well as important risks in the daily conduct and outcomes of afterschool programs. Just as a growing body of research helps to delineate what distinguishes *effective* afterschool programs in CBOs from ineffective ones (again, see McLaughlin, 2000, for a summary), I wish to contribute to a better understanding of what distinguishes effective and ineffective afterschool programs in schools.

Where Do You Hold Your Afterschool Technology Club?

Over the past six years, I have been involved in designing and directing several technology-rich afterschool clubs that explored the possibilities of inquiry-based models and supports for youth development and for learning connected to communities. Prior to these experiences, I conducted research on project-based learning of science *within* the school day (Polman, 2000). I was attracted to out-of-school learning because of a long-standing interest in community-based organizations and development, as

well as personal experiences of volunteering at Boys and Girls Clubs and the Computer Clubhouse in Boston (Resnick & Rusk, 1996). In addition, like many researchers on literacy (Hull & Schultz, 2002), I knew that exploring open-ended and non-traditional models of inquiry-based science and history learning would be easier in non-school settings, in part because they are not constrained by strict curriculum requirements.

The projects in which I have been involved include the one mentioned above, in which 10- through 14-year-olds constructed web pages about the local history of resistance to slavery (Polman, 2001, 2002b), another in which middle schoolers conducted archaeological inquiry (gravestone data collection, not digging!) in a historically significant cemetery undergoing cleanup by a community group (Polman, 2002a; Simmons, Ruffin, Polman, Kirkendall, & Baumann, 2003), and a third in which high schoolers conducted oral histories about their neighborhood and used digital videos of those interviews as well as historical documents to compose multimedia web pages. All these afterschool clubs¹ have had four major goals:

- To strengthen youth connections with and commitment to their local community, its history, and its heritage by conducting projects that matter to the community
- To help youth develop positive attitudes and identity trajectories (Wenger, 1998), as well as knowledge of how to use technology and to approach inquiries with historical and scientific perspectives
- To involve future and practicing teachers in inquiry-oriented models of teaching with technology that they might not have the freedom or facilities to carry out in school
- To build on and advance our understanding of how such activities can be understood and designed to foster individual and group development

¹ I use the term *afterschool club* rather than *program* in part because the initiatives on which my efforts were modeled—the Computer Clubhouse and the Fifth Dimension—use that term. In addition, *club* connotes the sense of group membership and solidarity we strive to develop in these communities of learners, whereas *programs* may be either individualistic or group-oriented. My choice of terms conveys no message about whether the afterschool activity is sponsored by the school or by an external organization. To my knowledge, the youth participating in our clubs perceived the clubs to be jointly sponsored by their school and an external organization (a university group or, in one case, a historic preservation group).

The first of these goals has been demonstrated to be important in research conducted by McLaughlin (1993) and Ball & Heath (1993), and the remaining goals are a variation on those of the Fifth Dimension clubs implemented by Mike Cole and colleagues at the University of California, San Diego, and a host of other institutions (Blanton, Moorman, Hayes, & Warner, 1997; Cole, 1996).

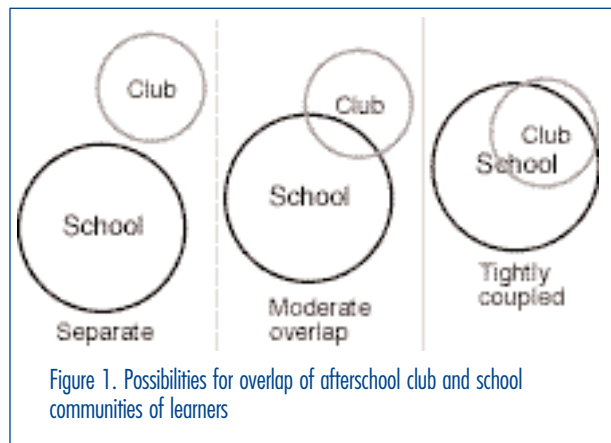
There are several reasons that we should expect the borders between some afterschool programs and schools to have some proximity and permeability; there are also reasons to desire such permeability.

Conversations with colleagues involved in the Fifth Dimension and my reading of some of the literature on afterschool learning made me aware that situating afterschool clubs *within* schools might not be ideal. For instance, Ball & Heath (1993) point out that school has been an environment of frustration and failure for many youth, so associations with school can lead to unproductive experiences. In addition, school bureaucratic structures as well as norms may “invade” afterschool clubs they host, undermining otherwise positive possibilities. So I began by intending to hold the first clubs at a CBO.

However, a variety of circumstances, most of which were pragmatic, pushed me into school buildings for these projects. In all three cases, the kind of work in which we hoped to involve the youth required significant computing resources and a connection to the Internet that is present less often in CBOs than in schools. In all three cases, individuals and organizations committed to the development of their communities hoped to involve youth from local schools, and school personnel were eager to offer exciting afterschool enrichment opportunities for their students. In addition to recruiting participants, in two of the three cases, the schools helped coordinate and fund transportation. The schools ended up co-sponsoring the clubs with my university and with CBOs that did not have their own computer labs. For these reasons, two of the three clubs have met within the schools during afterschool hours, and the third, in which the partner school did not have appropriate facilities, met in a university lab.

Conceptually, there is a range of choices for how afterschool communities of learners can overlap or intersect with school contexts—and their practices, community, and grounds (see Figure 1). The situation of complete separation is at far left in Figure 1; the researchers mentioned above have shown many of the benefits of such a situation. The situation of “tight coupling” in terms of physical location and conducting traditionally “school-like” activities, which makes for indistinguishable school and afterschool programming, has been shown to be problematic (Garner, Zhao, & Gillingham, 2002; Ball & Heath, 1993).

But there are several reasons that we should expect the borders between some afterschool programs and schools to have some proximity and permeability; there are also reasons to desire such permeability. The reasons to expect proximity or overlap, like those I describe from my own experience, relate pragmatically to the fact that schools have valuable, well-outfitted facilities, as well as professionals committed to the education of youth. The reason some overlap, as shown in the middle of Figure 1, could be desirable has to do with the nature of the opportunity for change. A minimal level of



overlap between these communities brings the possibility that *club participation* can influence the *school identity* of youth as perceived by themselves and by school personnel, and that *club activity* can influence the *kinds of activities* that school personnel see as productive for learning and therefore carry out during the school day (see, for example, Zhao & Gillingham, 2002). I have been exploring such afterschool clubs that have moderate overlap with school.

What Makes a Context?

Psychological research has shown us that the meaning people make of their experience is what leads to their learning and development. In addition, the location of human activity has an impact on its meaning. But physical location is not the only component of the *context* in which after school activities take place. Kenneth Burke (1969; see also Wertsch, 1998) uses the metaphor of a scene in a theatrical play to describe the elements of context. Contexts, like scenes in plays, are made up in part by the material environment or the set. In our afterschool clubs, the material environment includes buildings, rooms, furniture, and equipment such as computers.

Contexts, like scenes in plays, also consist of the *temporal*, *social*, and *cultural* aspects of the environment. The *temporal* aspect is simply how what comes before and after relates to the present activity. The temporal situation of afterschool activities is, obviously, after school. Specifically, like most afterschool initiatives, ours have taken place immediately after the end of the school day for the participating youth. The *social* aspect consists of who the actors are, including their roles, titles, relationships, and normal ways of interacting with each other as established in previous scenes together. Our afterschool clubs have included youth who know each other from school, a university faculty member or two (including myself), university

Some perils may be more difficult to avoid, and some of the promise easier to take advantage of, in afterschool clubs on school territory.

students who are participating in a class that includes discussion of these very clubs, occasional guests to be interviewed or lead a session, and in some cases a teacher from the school. Finally, the *cultural* aspect consists of the ways in which language and tools such as computers are used and understood in the groups to which participants belong.

Context is thus a multifaceted and complex notion, and, as some of my examples below illustrate, it can be changed by what takes place in the space. My point in exploring afterschool clubs having moderate overlap with school contexts (see Figure 1) is not that the processes and outcomes discussed here could

only occur in clubs on school territory, but that some perils may be more difficult to avoid, and some of the promise easier to take advantage of, in afterschool clubs on school territory. In the following two sections, I explore some of the perils and promise as they grow out of the material, social, and cultural realities of these clubs on school territory.

The Perils of School Territory

Any afterschool program faces a variety of challenges to fulfilling its mission of developing youth, from lack of resources to personnel issues to competition from other activities that are attractive to youth. For afterschool programs held on school grounds, we have found the following to be particular issues of concern:

- Combating deficit orientations
- Establishing separate behavior norms
- Facing differences in institutional priorities
- Building productively on youths' non-school identities

Combating Deficit Orientations

Sometimes negative labels and low expectations follow youth—or are brought by the youth themselves—from the school context to the afterschool context. For youth who struggle in school, such as Jeff, this carry-over can set up social dynamics that negatively affect opportunities for growth and transformation in the afterschool club. In addition, sometimes the pre-service teachers (future teachers pursuing their teaching certification and degree) who participate in our programs bring with them the assumption that “disadvantaged” youth may be essentially less capable than youth from more affluent areas. We have less trouble getting the future teachers to see all youth as kids with promise when we transport the youth to the university campus and emphasize that we know they are capable of one day attending a college like the one hosting their program.

Nonetheless, all these negative assumptions that youth and adults can make about the potential of participants can be addressed in afterschool programs held on school territory. For one thing, educators in general are increasingly emphasizing the potential of *all* children, so that the schools and our afterschool programs can form a partnership emphasizing the same positive goals. While some youth will continue

to struggle in school, they are likely to find the afterschool program more conducive to success. For instance, one youth asked, in our first session on building web pages about resistance to slavery, “Are we getting a grade in this class?” He was reassured by the simple notion that there were no grades because this was not a class. In addition, we have found that, when the afterschool program fosters individual relationships between youth and preservice teachers in the context of activities that allow the youth to do creative inquiry, those adults see each individual as having strong potential. For instance, in the afterschool clubs focused on neighborhood oral histories, some participating preservice teachers mentioned, in their initial written reflections, both neighborhood decay and concerns about the youths’ prospects. By the time they wrote their final reflections, most mentioned explicitly the talents and assets of the particular young person with whom they had worked.

Establishing Separate Behavior Norms

Holding meetings on school territory may require setting up separate behavior norms from those most commonly experienced at that location. For instance, our HistoryWeb clubs were both held in school libraries, where the norm during the day was relative quiet. The afterschool club expected considerable movement and talk. At the elementary school, the presence of the school librarian, who was often there at the beginning of our sessions, induced the children to more hushed tones than they used after her departure. In this case, the mere presence of an authority figure, who at certain times enforced the reasonable norms of a library, undermined the equally reasonable, yet different, norms of the afterschool club—whose activities she herself advocated. The librarian found it easier to make the distinction between appropriate behaviors at different times than did the youth.

In other cases, school staff have actively reinforced norms of behavior that we in the afterschool club had decided not to enforce. In one case, when several teachers were holding a meeting at the other end of the middle school library where we were meeting, one of the teachers made a special trip to our end of the room to censure a young woman for sitting on a table. The club facilitator was aware that the young woman was

trying to compose a digital photo and therefore had reason to briefly modify the normal use of the furniture, but the teacher did not ask why the club participant was on the table. Instead, she demanded that the young person comply with the rules.

We have addressed these potential difficulties for the most part in a two-way compromise with school administrators and staff such as librarians and teachers. We work to understand which norms of their facility we can follow without adverse impact on our goals, for instance, complying with the rule about not eating snacks in the classroom by eating in the cafeteria. Meanwhile, we also explain the sort of activities in which they should expect our participants to engage and why those activities may

require different norms, such as allowing students to use the facilities in ways not usually allowed during school hours.

New behavior norms can apply to leaders as well as to club participants. Working at a school site means that any “traditional” teaching and learning practices undertaken in the afterschool club may reinforce the notion that the club will be “just more school.” For instance, interactions following a pattern known as “Initiation-Reply-Evaluation” (IRE) are common in schools (Cazden, 2001). In IRE interaction, the teacher *initiates* the sequence with a question about some concept the class is learning or has learned, selects a student to *reply* with an answer, and *evaluates* the adequacy of the student’s answer, if necessary seeking other bids for more correct or enlightening responses. This kind of interaction has been used for so long in schools that every teacher and student recognizes it instinctively, and, despite the fact that educators increasingly emphasize other patterns of interaction, it remains the most common form of discussion between teachers and students. In the first session of our oral history club one semester, we failed to live up to our advertisement that the afterschool club was different from school: The guest leader of an activity lectured a good deal, and, when she did interact with youth, followed the IRE pattern almost exclusively. For instance, when introducing the notion that “race” is a social phenomenon rather than one based



Students met a descendant of Peter Hudlin (pictured above with his daughter), a member of the Underground Railroad, and created web pages about his life.

Just as some connections between afterschool practices and “normal” school practices imperil positive trajectories, so strengthening some connections between afterschool programs and some elements of popular culture not often found in school may provide benefits.

on biological science, the following exchange took place:

Leader [to the group]: What is it that causes differences in skin color?

Youth: Our ancestors

Leader: OK, so where our ancestors came from. But what is it in our skin, though?

The “conversation” continued in that way, with the leader drawing out answers she was looking for. The following week, more than half the high school youth at that session did not return. We surmise that they were not eager to spend their time after school in such stilted “conversation” and quiet listening. When schoolteachers spend the majority of their time using lecture and IRE, they take the chance that their students will mentally disengage; in the free-choice environment of the afterschool club, the further risk is that participants will simply not return. In that particular case, we had to work over the next several sessions to convince the participating youth that they would be given more opportunity to express themselves in our club, but our attendance never returned to the level of that first session.

Facing Institutional Priorities

At a more material level, working in the context of a large institution such as a school district has inevitable impact on the ability of that institution to support the facilities needs of one afterschool club. In most CBOs, afterschool clubs represent a large portion of their programs. In contrast, our oral history afterschool program was one relatively small effort taking place in a large urban school district. Since it manages so many computers, the district has an IT department that manages their computer classrooms. When our club needed a particular piece of software to enable participants to read digital historic documents, that request was lost for some time among the numerous needs in the district. Our participants’ use of some of the materials we had prepared was delayed for several weeks, directly affecting the program.

In a smaller CBO—and in the schools we have worked with that have less centralized IT support—getting the facilities set up to support our program has been easier. The smallest school we worked with—the elementary school—let me change the setup of the computers in the library myself because the school had no technology staff and no one else was using the computers. A larger middle school was part of a large district, but it was a magnet school with its own technology staff, a separate network, and a desire to showcase its technology use. That school’s IT person invited me to assist her in setting up the software we needed, which she then managed. In the largest school, with computers standardized over the whole district, we had the delays mentioned above, and later the software we needed was deleted again.

Building on Youths’ Non-school Identities

Just as some connections between afterschool practices and “normal” school practices imperil positive trajectories, so strengthening some connections between afterschool programs and some elements of popular culture not often found in school may provide benefits. For instance, one eighth grade African-American youth, “Richard,” began an inquiry into the reasons for the struggle for freedom by African Americans both at the time of the Underground Railroad and today by comparing songs about freedom from the two time periods. Richard was a fan of rap music outside school, a good student inside school—and seldom had the two cultures met in his experience. The rap music Richard listened to tended toward the sort of violent themes not often popular among educators or youth development workers. Richard’s middle school, a magnet school that had recently overcome problems with gangs, was particularly hostile to rap music. Despite the initial support of the white preservice teacher working with him, Richard and his mentor had difficulty negotiating their cultural differences. The preservice teacher, unfamiliar with rap music, was unable to help Richard see how to separate the social commentary about struggles for freedom in, for instance, Tupac Shakur’s song “Only God Can Judge Me,” from the “inappropriate” language.

Some of the lyrics of that song might have helped Richard’s examination of the struggle for freedom in the past and today:

Everybody’s dyin’. Tell me, what’s the use of tryin’?
I’ve been trapped since birth.

Cautious, ’cause I’m cursed and fantasies of my family in a hearse. And they say it’s the white man I should fear, but it’s my own kind doin’ all the killin’.
(Shakur, 1996)

However, instead of using a snippet like this, Richard eventually suggested leaving out all references to rap music because everything he liked contained “inappropriate language”; instead he wrote a standard narrative about how the past and present have “hard times and captivity[;] the only difference is it’s not as bad [now] as it was for slaves.” The particular school location, and the cultural assumptions of both mentor and student, thus contributed to our failure to reap the potential benefit of interpreting popular rap lyrics.



In another project, one student researched William Wells Brown, a freed slave and historian, and included this plate on the web page about Brown’s life.

The school location was not the only factor in this difficulty, which might not have been encountered in all school locations. Nor would it have been avoided in all CBOs—but some CBOs may have more experience in building on elements of youth culture while negotiating their negative aspects than do most schools. For instance, Educational Video Center (EVC) in New York City is skilled in involving youth in creating video-based critical social commentary using popular culture and is educating schools about its techniques (Goodman, 2003). Wherever the skills are developed, youth will benefit from learning to criticize and interpret messages they encounter both in and out of school.

The Promise of School Territory

Despite dangers that may be more prevalent in school locations than elsewhere, we have found rewards in situating our afterschool clubs in schools and involving school personnel. As mentioned above, one asset of school sites is computing facilities that are often difficult to find in CBOs—but the potential benefits don’t end there. We have found that overlap between school and afterschool programs can help in:

- Enhancing youths’ school performance and attitude as they transfer their identities and practices from the afterschool realm to the school context
- Changing school personnel’s perceptions of the youths’ ability
- Encouraging teachers to try using inquiry-based instruction, which they might otherwise feel they could not risk

Enhancing Youths’ School Identity and Attitude

The case of a youth named “Bobby” who participated in the HistoryWeb club during the second half of his fourth grade year and his entire fifth grade year illustrates how youth identity development in the afterschool club can feed positively back into school identity and performance. When Bobby entered the club, his principal reported that he had been having some behavior problems in school. He was not particularly interested in social studies.

In some ways, Bobby’s transformation was related to an aspect of his identity that the school did not encourage, but the afterschool club did—his interest in computer gaming. In 1998–99, Bobby’s school had only six computers in the library, one with a dialup Internet connection. These computers were restricted to “serious use”—no gaming, and no accessing websites related to gaming. At home, however, Bobby enjoyed playing games on his family’s old desktop. In the afterschool club, Bobby was able to build on his interest by contributing to a computer-based historical re-enactment game the youth designed and developed. When Bobby came to the club, he joined his peers in playing a game in which players play the role of travelers on the Oregon Trail. Bobby played a key role when we gave club members the opportunity to design their own game, each making web pages with branching hypermedia choices for someone traveling on the Underground Railroad. With the scaffolding (targeted assistance and guidance, Wood, Bruner, &

Ross, 1976) of a preservice teacher, Bobby quickly designed a series of choices for figuring out how to cross rivers, based in part on historic documents we had provided for the youths' reference. The set of web pages Bobby made provided a model that helped others see how the game could be designed.

By the end of his second year in the program, Bobby had become more interested and engaged in history than he had been before, and he felt that social studies in school was "a breeze." Bobby had learned some things about the importance of historical context to understanding historical events, but even more importantly, he had changed the way he saw himself as a history learner (Polman, 2001). His positive experiences in the afterschool club, and his resulting expectation that history was something he could understand, affected his subsequent school experiences. Similarly, a cohort from a school participating in our university-based graveyard studies program showed improved school performance, as measured by grades, while the youth were participating in the club (Simmons, Ruffin, Polman, Kirkendall, & Baumann, 2003).

Changing School Personnel's View of Students

Not only do youth sometimes change the way they see *themselves* through afterschool programs; school personnel sometimes recognize previously overlooked potential and ability in youth. In Bobby's case, the school recognized him with his photo in the school library and a story in the local paper. In fact, all the schools with which we have worked have been eager to publicize and recognize the unique accomplishments of their students. The middle school where we conducted the HistoryWeb club had a "walk of fame" that included some of our participants. The middle school that participated in the graveyard study was in the local news, and many school personnel attended the participants' final presentations of their work on campus.

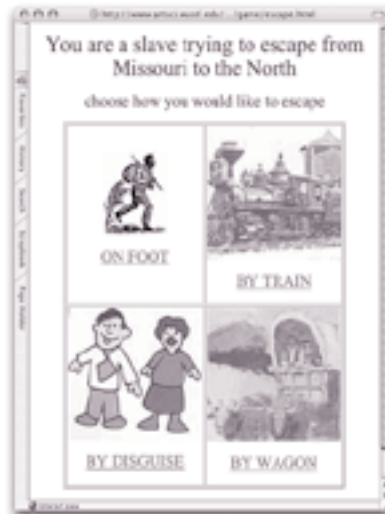
The latter case again demonstrates that some benefits of this sort are possible even if afterschool meetings aren't held on school grounds. We met at the university, but a schoolteacher acted as chaperone at

each meeting and served as a liaison back to school, for instance, by making sure that other school personnel were invited to the youth presentations. Those school staff members then made sure the youth repeated their presentations for the school board. Maintaining some official connections with school—through sponsorship, personnel, location, or some combination of the three—can foster this benefit.

Encouraging Teachers to Try Inquiry-based Learning

Finally, afterschool clubs such as those described here can transform practicing and future teachers' views of whether they can successfully carry out inquiry-based teaching while still meeting curriculum requirements and managing their classroom. Future teachers especially benefit from the opportunity to "try out" inquiry in a context in

which curriculum requirements are not as severe. This benefit of afterschool programs can definitely be realized in CBO-based clubs involving higher education classes (e.g., Cole, 1996). But to the extent that practicing teachers who are *not* in a class can become involved in a project, such as the oral history project at the high school, the location may make such changes easier. The implementation of such practices during the school day is sometimes undermined by today's environment of accountability through test-



At the beginning of a student-designed game about the Underground Railroad, players may choose their mode of escape.

All the schools with which we have worked have been eager to publicize and recognize the unique accomplishments of their students.

ing, but our graveyard study project was successfully implemented by an elementary school teacher during her regular curriculum (Ruffin, 2003).

Negotiating the Perils and Promise

Through the examples above, I have tried to clarify some of the ways the school "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) can interact positively as well as negatively with afterschool clubs that take student

Instead of just providing youth with a change from bad scenery to good scenery when the school bell rings, let's build programs that have possibilities for transformative work for individuals, as well as for transformative practices for schools as institutions serving all children.

interest and voice seriously. In her criticism of afterschool clubs held in schools, Ingalls (2003) says that children need a change of scenery in the afterschool hours from their schools, which are largely built on an outdated “factory” model. As an educator committed to afterschool *and* school learning, I want to emphasize that many in K-12 education are actively fighting against the factory model, toward a more productive model with greater student engagement and active learning (e.g., Cazden, 2001). Schools and afterschool opportunities should perhaps always remain distinct: Just as afterschool programs should not be conducted as “just more school,” so school programs need to be more concerned with the curricular demands our society places on them. No matter what we do, however, individual young people will be members of multiple communities, each with an associated identity. We should look for ways in which youths’ school identities, club identities, and other identities—each of which has associated skills and practices—can work together, not against one another. Maintaining a strong separation from school may help prevent afterschool programs from being “poisoned” in cases where school environments are ineffective, but it also contributes to a situation in which even the youth with positive afterschool experiences must return during the school day to a negative identity. Knowing the risks of working on school territory allows us to manage them.

Instead of just providing youth with a change from bad scenery to good scenery when the school bell rings, let's build programs that have possibilities for transformative work for individuals (Townsend, 2003), as well as for transformative practices for schools as institutions serving all children. By keeping in mind that the locations of school and afterschool programs are turned into lived scenes, defined by the human activity that goes on within them, we can all work to improve the prospects for positive youth development on the school *and* afterschool stage.

References

- Ball, A., & Heath, S. B. (1993). Dances of identity: Finding an ethnic self in the arts. In S. B. Heath & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Identity and inner-city youth* (pp. 69–93). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Blanton, W. E., Moorman, G. B., Hayes, B. A., & Warner, M. L. (1997). Effects of participation in the Fifth Dimension on far transfer. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 16(4), 371–396.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Garner, R., Zhao, Y., & Gillingham, M. (2002). An alternative to self-care in a small Midwestern town. In R. Garner (Ed.), *Hanging out: Community-based after-school programs for children* (pp. 1–17). Westport: Bergin & Garvey.
- Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production, and social change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hull, G., & Schultz, K. (2002). Connecting schools with out-of-school worlds: Insights from recent research on literacy in non-school settings. In G. Hull & K. Schultz (Eds.), *School's out! Bridging out-of-school literacies with classroom practice* (pp. 32–57). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ingalls, S. (2003). You don't need a weatherman . . . : The need for afterschool programs outside of school. *Afterschool Matters: Dialogues in Philosophy, Practice, and Evaluation*, 2, 23–31.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1993). Embedded identities: Enabling balance in urban contexts. In S. B. Heath & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Identity and inner-city youth* (pp. 36–68). New York: Teachers College Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (2000). Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.
- Polman, J. L. (2000). *Designing project-based science: Connecting learners through guided inquiry*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Polman, J. L. (2001). Historical learning and identity development on the borders of school. In S. Mosborg (Chair), *History, identity, and construction of the self*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA, April 2001.
- Polman, J. L. (2002a). Inquiry into local heritage as a means to foster multiple aspects of development. In J. L.

- Polman (Chair), *Connecting the transformation of communities and individuals through after school technology programs*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April, 2002.
- Polman, J. L. (2002b). Re-creating the past: Building historical simulations with hypermedia to learn history. In J. L. Polman (Chair), *Text, context, and perspective in learning history*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April, 2002.
- Resnick, M., & Rusk, N. (1996). The Computer Clubhouse: Helping youth develop fluency with new media. In D. C. Edelson & E.A. Domeshek (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Learning Science* (pp. 285–291). Evanston, IL: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Ruffin, M. (2003). The acquisition of inquiry skills and computer skills by 8th grade urban middle school students in a technology-supported environment. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Missouri–St. Louis: ISBN 0-493-87182-9.
- Shakur, T. (1996). *Only God can judge me*. Death Row & Interscope Records.
- Simmons, P., Ruffin, M., Polman, J., Kirkendall, C., & Baumann, T. (2003). If stones could talk. *The Science Teacher*, 70 (5), pp. 52–54.
- Townsend, L. A. (2003). Transformative work in programs for children and youth. *Afterschool Matters: Dialogues in Philosophy, Practice, and Evaluation*, 2, 3–12.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem-solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17, 89–100.
- Zhao, Y., & Gillingham, M. (2002). Commentary: Ingredients of successful after-school programs—The experience of KLICK. In R. Garner (Ed.), *Hanging out: Community-based after-school programs for children* (pp. 149–152). Westport: Bergin & Garvey.

About the Author

Joseph L. Polman is an assistant professor of educational technology at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, where he also serves as associate director of the College of Education's E. Desmond Lee Technology and Learning Center. He is interested in how people learn history and science through inquiry and with the support of technology, both in schools and in community-based settings. He has published a book, *Designing Project-Based Science: Connecting Learners through Guided Inquiry*, as well as research papers and curriculum materials based on his work related to these interests.

Author's Note

I wish to thank the James S. McDonnell Foundation and the United States Department of Education for supporting this research. The statements made and the views expressed are solely my responsibility. I am grateful as well for the guidance of James V. Wertsch; the collaboration of Monya Ruffin, Patricia Simmons, and Laura Westhoff; and the support of my other colleagues at Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Thanks as well to the many youth and adults in these programs for their support, participation, and inspiration. Reports of this research were presented at AERA 2001 and 2002 and at the Third Conference for Sociocultural Research in São Paulo, Brazil.

Leveraging resources to Promote Positive School-CBO Relationships

by Christopher
Wimer, Margaret
Post, and
Priscilla Little



courtesy Cedar Ridge Fun, Fun, Fun, and More Fun 4-H Club, Gainesville, FL

Many afterschool programs operated by neighborhood or community-based organizations (CBOs) take place in students' school buildings. Navigating relationships between afterschool programs and their host public schools can be challenging for both parties. At times, tension in such relationships can throw unnecessary roadblocks on the path to achieving successful and enriching youth programming. Connecting, coordinating, and leveraging the resources of both schools and CBOs, however, can enable both institutions to develop and implement effective afterschool programs (Blank & Langford, 2000).

Ferguson and Dickens (1999) delineate four primary forms of resources or assets necessary for any

community development organization to accomplish its goals and achieve its outcomes:

- **Physical resources:** concrete assets such as buildings, tools, or materials
- **Financial resources:** money and funding streams
- **Social resources:** the norms, shared understandings, and trust inherent in strong relationships among various actors
- **Intellectual resources:** the skills, knowledge, and competence of main stakeholders such as teachers and program staff

This review article uses the Ferguson and Dickens resource framework to examine how CBOs and schools have leveraged their resources to achieve their common goal: the increased learning and positive development of youth in their care. Our review draws on rich evaluation data harvested from the Harvard

Wimer, C., Post, M., & Little, P. (2003). Leveraging Resources to Promote Positive School-CBO Relationships. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 13–21.

Family Research Project's (HFRP's) Out-of-School Time Program Evaluation Database to provide examples of afterschool programs that have successfully navigated the challenges of sharing resources with schools.

Our Methodology

The HFRP's Out-of-School Time Program Evaluation Database provides information about evaluations of out-of-school time (OST) programs and initiatives. Its purpose is to support the development of high-quality OST evaluations and programs. Evaluations in the database meet the following three criteria:

- The evaluated program or initiative operates during out-of-school time.
- The evaluation (or evaluations) aims to answer a specific evaluation question or set of questions about a specific program or initiative.
- The evaluated program or initiative serves children between the ages of 5 and 19.

Each profile contains detailed information about the evaluations, as well as an overview of the OST program or initiative itself. The settings of the programs profiled in the database differ quite a bit, ranging from school-based, school-operated programs to school-based, CBO-operated programs to community- or university-based programs. Programs profiled include not only afterschool programs, but also summer, special weekend, before-school, and weekend programs, as well as comprehensive initiatives with multiple OST components.

The programs in this review represent a subset of the database: afterschool programs that take place in public schools but are managed or operated by CBOs. Of this subset, we examined the evaluation reports to find those that included an evaluation of the program's implementation.

Of those, we selected those whose implementation findings dealt with school-CBO relationships. This process resulted in a final set of 15 programs, from which the issues and examples highlighted in the rest of this article are drawn (see box). While these programs are not statistically representative of all such programs, we hope that the situations culled from these evaluations will provide helpful "food for thought" to practitioners and program planners who need to navigate school-CBO relationships.

Physical Resources

When CBOs and schools do not adequately plan the division and use of physical resources, issues may arise that create unnecessary tension and may even disrupt the groups' shared mission. By physical resources, we mean all the tangible prerequisites for program operation: adequate space and facilities; such infrastructural necessities as maintenance, lighting, and storage; and materials such as supplies, books, games, and computers. Many physical-resource issues are context-specific; that is, they are unique to the individual school-CBO relationship. However, some concrete examples from the HFRP's Program Evaluation Database can help program leaders think through potential physical resource issues and illustrate real-life strategies for their successful negotiation. Based on our review, two primary physical resource issues emerged

Evaluation Reports Included in This Review

This review article draws on information from the evaluation reports of the 15 programs listed below. For more information about the programs and their evaluations, visit the Harvard Family Research Project's Out-of-School Time Program Evaluation Database at: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html>

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers National Program
- Cap City Kids
- Child First Authority
- Extended-Service Schools Initiative
- Fifth Dimension/UC Links Expedition Program
- Fort Worth After-School Program
- Georgia Reading Challenge Program
- Hawaii A+ After School Program
- LINC of Greater Kansas City
- Making the Most of Out-of-School Time (MOST)
- New York City Beacons
- North Carolina Support Our Students
- Polk Bros. Foundation's Full Service Schools Initiative
- Owensboro 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- San Francisco Beacons Initiative

from the field: equal access to physical resources for school and afterschool programs, and the adequacy of the physical space for shared programming.

Equal Access to Shared Space

For most afterschool programming, CBOs must negotiate with schools over access to adequate space for their program activities. For instance, The After-School Corporation (TASC), which operates a system of nonprofit-run school-based afterschool programs in New York City, found that, while 57 percent of its sites had access to all types of necessary spaces in the school, some sites reported lack of access to certain facilities: libraries, computer labs, storage space, and office space. Another frequently raised issue was access to classrooms; teachers sometimes hesitated to let program staff use their space for fear that supplies would be taken and classrooms would not be cleaned at the end of the day. TASC staff engaged in a number of strategies to overcome these obstacles. For example, to gain access to computer labs and technology centers, some TASC sites consciously involved the schools' technology teachers in their afterschool programs and nurtured relationships with teachers who had computers in their classrooms. Program staff won the trust and cooperation of classroom teachers by using checklists posted outside the classrooms to help all parties monitor classrooms' conditions; by hosting breakfasts and other special events in order to foster teachers' support of the afterschool program; and by offering resources and materials, such as books and art supplies, to classroom teachers in appreciation for their cooperation. (For more information on the TASC program and its evaluation, see Reisner, White, Birmingham, & Welsh, 2001.)

Access to physical resources was also an issue for the Fort Worth After-School Program, which provides academic enrichment and positive developmental opportunities at 52 elementary and middle school sites in Fort Worth, TX. In a number of cases, the program's evaluation found that programs were restricted to using cafeterias and outdoor play areas. This restriction frustrated program staff, who wanted to use the classrooms, computer areas, and libraries in order to provide academically enriching experiences. In the second year of the program, the evaluation found that many sites had experienced increased access to these spaces,

due in large part to a strategy used by many afterschool programs: employing school personnel as afterschool staff. School personnel, who already had access to many of the physical spaces, were able to bring this access to the afterschool setting. (For more information on the Fort Worth After-School Program and its evaluation, see Witt, King, & Lee, 2002.)

Another strategy, used by San Francisco Beacons Initiative, is to develop formal memoranda of under-

While 57 percent of its sites had access to all types of necessary spaces in the school, some sites reported lack of access to certain facilities: libraries, computer labs, storage space, and office space.

standing (MOUs), which can help to define explicitly the acceptable domains of access to physical resources.

Adequacy of Physical Space for Shared Programming

A further challenge for the CBO-school relationship involves the adequacy of the physical space that the CBO hopes to use for afterschool programming. The Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative provided small program improvement grants to individual sites for use in ensuring that their school-based facilities matched their program needs. The schools also benefited from this infusion of MOST-funded resources. (For more information on MOST and its evaluation, see Halpern, Spielberg, & Robb, 2000.) Unfortunately, not every school and CBO has access to specialized grants for program or facilities improvement. In these cases, CBOs can look for smaller-scale methods of accomplishing similar ends.

The San Francisco Beacons Initiative (SFBI) provides an example of a program that has dealt with space issues on a smaller-scale. SFBI aimed to transform local schools in disadvantaged communities into "youth and family centers that would become a beacon of activity uniting the community" (Walker & Arbretton, 2001, p. 1). While an independent evaluation found that SFBI was off to an extraordinary start, many Beacons sites encountered hurdles involving schools' lighting systems. Many of the school buildings, having been designed for use solely during the school day, had inadequate lighting for use during evening hours. The issue of lighting turned out to be critical, since one of the key components of the

Beacons initiative is to provide safe places for youth during the evening. One way in which SFBI remedied the situation was by purchasing portable spotlights to illuminate portions of the school during Beacons' hours of operation. This example illustrates the many small ways in which CBOs can contribute to their host schools while simultaneously meeting their physical resource needs. (For more information on SFBI and its evaluation, see Walker & Arbreton, 2001.)

Financial Resources

When CBOs step into public schools to run afterschool programs, financial resource issues can either enhance or detract from their mission. Financial resource issues have to do not only with who will pay for what services, supplies, and labor, but also with the practical consequences of the parties' decisions on use of funds. While matters of the wallet can negatively affect school-CBO relationships, some programs have developed creative solutions to financial resource issues—solutions that ultimately strengthen relationships and improve programs. Our review reveals three possible solutions for schools and CBOs to consider: dedicated, collaborative, and innovative funding.

Dedicated Funding

Baltimore's Child First Authority (CFA) provides an example of a program that developed a dedicated stream of funding for citywide afterschool programming, thus eliminating competition among providers. The CFA is a formal legal partnership created by a local grassroots organization called BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development), Baltimore City, and the Baltimore City legislature. The CFA was granted bonding authority through this partnership; it is also empowered to receive and deploy a dedicated funding stream for afterschool programming in Baltimore. (For more information on Baltimore's Child First Authority and its evaluation, see Fashola, 1999.)

While this situation is obviously a unique solution to the question of harnessing financial resources, other unitary funding streams, such as the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CLCC) pro-

gram, can serve a similar purpose. In 21st CCLC, a funding stream is dedicated solely to afterschool programming, provided that the program falls within the federal guidelines. Using or creating a steady, unitary source of afterschool financing can head off some of the tensions involved in negotiating the use of financial resources between schools and CBOs.

Collaborative Funding

Use of funding from a larger variety of sources is often unavoidable. Furthermore, CBOs may not have enough of their own funding to operate completely autonomous afterschool programs. In these cases, programs can find opportunities to turn such situations to their advantage—at the same time tightening their relationships with schools—by devising collaborative funding solutions.

While matters of the wallet can negatively affect school-CBO relationships, some programs have developed creative solutions to financial resource issues—solutions that ultimately strengthen relationships and improve programs.

For example, the North Carolina Support Our Students (SOS) program is funded by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice through grants made directly to nonprofits that run afterschool programs. By collaborating with public school systems, many SOS sites pay only a fraction of their staff directly with SOS state funds. The Orange County Public School System, for example, supports 24 of 30 SOS staff members on school sites, many of whom are regular schoolteachers paid to stay on after school. CBOs can collaborate with schools in such ways to finance afterschool staffing, thereby preserving scarce resources for richer afterschool services, while, at the same time, building relationships with school personnel and providing opportunities for collaboration that can strengthen children's learning both in and out of school. (For more information about SOS and its evaluation, see Johnson, 2002.)

In another major afterschool initiative, the Extended-Service Schools Initiative, evaluators found that schools and school districts provided more than 20 percent of program costs across its nationwide program sites. A major portion of support came in the form of in-kind contributions, such as transportation,

snacks, custodial assistance, and rent-free use of the school building. Partnering with the schools financially also opened access to other unexpected financial resources, such as federal and state funding streams. This example highlights the fact that financial resource issues in the school-CBO relationship extend beyond the tangible matters of who pays for what and out of which budget. In-kind resources and access to supplemental funding sources are also important financial matters for both parties to consider when negotiating financial resources. (For more information on the Extended-Service Schools Initiative and its evaluation, see Grossman, et al., 2002.)

Innovative Funding

Schools and CBOs have also worked together to develop innovative ways to balance and expand financial resources. For example, a North Carolina SOS program held a silent auction, at which it auctioned furniture that had been repainted by students as well as work donated by local artists and galleries. Five percent of the proceeds were donated to a student-chosen organization in the surrounding town, with the remainder benefiting the SOS program. The SOS site thus generated additional financial resources while both providing enriching experiences for its youth and complementing the academic and social mission of its host school.

Another common but innovative funding strategy is to decrease costs rather than increase revenues. For example, in both the MOST initiative and the Georgia Reading Challenge Initiative, CBOs used volunteers to complement their regular staff. One city in the MOST initiative was found to be particularly adept at linking individual program sites with larger organizations that provide volunteers, such as AmeriCorps, colleges and universities, local museums, and networks of artists. Georgia Reading Challenge recruited elderly community members to serve as mentors for youth, a practice that has been shown to be effective in realizing positive outcomes for youth (LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, & Taylor, 1996). While harnessing volunteers can save programs money that might otherwise be used to hire specialists, consultants, and staff, engaging volunteers can also involve trade-offs. While some volunteers bring a wealth of expertise and knowledge to the program, some also come with limited experience of content, youth work, or both. Volunteers' schedules and levels of commitment may limit

participation. Additionally, using special volunteers such as museum staff and artists may serve programs' short-term purposes, but, as was found in the MOST evaluation, these volunteers typically do not stay beyond their initial commitment. If such volunteers spark youth's interest in their areas of expertise during their involvement with the program, they leave a void when they depart. (For more information on the Georgia Reading Challenge and its evaluation, see Office of Student Learning and Achievement, Georgia Department of Education, 1999.)

Negotiations over financial resources can be fraught with tension. None of the three financial strategies—dedicated, collaborative, or innovative—is a panacea, and any one of them is likely to involve trade-offs. Moreover, financial resource issues are likely to be the most context- and situation-specific challenges for the involved parties, as most afterschool programs have unique financial situations that require context-specific solutions. Nevertheless, schools and CBOs need to come together to find ways to leverage and negotiate financial resource issues, so that both parties can continue to serve the youth in their joint care effectively.

Social Resources

Another key aspect of the relationship between schools and CBOs is development of social resources. Social resources consist of the trust, networks, and interactions among school and program staff, the participating children and youth, their parents and families, and other community stakeholders.

Achieving “presence” in a school is an important factor in successful afterschool program delivery.

Our review reveals some promising mechanisms by which these relationships can be navigated to coordinate afterschool programs, including ways of developing relationships and of sharing information and knowledge.

Developing Relationships

Achieving “presence” in a school is an important factor in successful afterschool program delivery. Program staff in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) in Owensboro, Kentucky, learned

that the key to achieving presence in the school was developing good relationships with its staff. The Owensboro 21st CCLC is an afterschool program consisting of five Community Learning Centers that offer academic and social programs for students in Owensboro public schools. Early in the program, lack of engagement on the part of students and limited awareness of available activities on the part of school staff became somewhat problematic. Program staff responded to these challenges by purposefully building their program presence through collaboration with and outreach to school personnel at schools' existing Family Resource and Youth Service Centers. One mechanism for collaboration was the staff position of the project director, who acted as a liaison between the Owensboro Public Schools and 21st CCLC Advisory Council. Creating such a formal staff position responsible for building and maintaining connections between school and afterschool personnel helped the programs to establish their presence in the eyes of school personnel while simultaneously building important relationships for successful program implementation. 21st CCLC program staff also helped to solidify the program's presence in the eyes of existing school personnel by assisting with booths at back-to-school "Ready Fests." This presence helped achieve buy-in from school principals, teachers, and other school staff, which in turn strengthened the program's implementation. The resulting collaboration helped to increase both adults' awareness of and students' interest in the 21st CCLC programs. (For more information about the Owensboro 21st CCLC program and its evaluation, see Illback & Birkby, 2001.)

Sharing Information and Knowledge

The sharing of information and knowledge among all parties in the school-CBO relationship is an additional social resource for afterschool programs. Many programs struggle to make students aware of the opportunities and activities they offer. Since young people rely on adults to share information about what programs are available and might be interesting or helpful to them, solid relationships between CBO and school staff can be essential to ensuring strong attendance in afterschool programs. When schools and CBOs make concerted efforts to make parents feel welcome, even

more opportunities become available to increase student participation. For example, in the Polk Bros. Foundation's Full Service Schools Initiative (FSSI) in Chicago, the evaluation found that one of the strongest predictors of students' participation in FSSI programming was the degree to which students felt that their parents were frequent and welcome visitors at the school. FSSI sites engaged parents by building relationships and sharing information among families, schools, and programs through events such as annual spring picnics, for which transportation and food were

Solid relationships between CBO and school staff can be essential to ensuring strong attendance in afterschool programs.

provided to parents and students. FSSI also established oversight committees made up of representatives from the school, the CBO, and the parents. The evaluation found that when the oversight committees were developed with formal bylaws, providing clear guidelines for membership and for stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, strong relationships formed among these parties. As these examples illustrate, the careful consideration and development of social relationships between schools and CBOs, as well as with students and parents, is critical to successful afterschool programming. (For more information about FSSI and its evaluation, see Whalen, 2002.)

Intellectual Resources

Intellectual resources are the skills, knowledge, and competence of main stakeholders such as teachers and program staff. More and more afterschool programs are being charged with extending and enhancing the educational goals of the traditional school day and with providing academically enriching experiences for the youth in their care. This trend is reflected, for example, in the increased emphasis on academic enrichment in the 21st CCLC Program, as mandated through Title IV of the No Child Left Behind Act (see www.nochildleftbehind.gov). Furthermore, some children come to both schools and afterschool programs with a variety of social or emotional problems that can interfere with schools' and CBOs' missions. No matter how talented a CBO's staff, staff members' expertise may be limited in certain areas, and the program's

ability to enhance children's learning and development may be compromised. However, some CBOs have successfully overcome issues of intellectual resources by engaging outside expertise, sharing internal expertise, and investing in professional development.

Engaging Outside Expertise

As the New York City Beacons centers opened their doors to youth in many of New York's most distressed communities, a substantial number of families and children came into the programs with various social and emotional problems. Both the Beacons and the schools that hosted them wanted to help these families, but both parties lacked expertise in providing effective services to meet these needs. Harnessing outside expertise was one strategy that seemed to work for many sites. For instance, many afterschool sites included preventive service programs offered through the Administration for Children's Services, a New York City agency devoted to children's well-being. Bringing in outside help through the afterschool program served to complement both the schools' and the CBOs' missions. Furthermore, this strategy can help in convincing schools that CBO-led programming is an asset that enhances the effectiveness of the school. (For more information about the NYC Beacons Initiative and its evaluation, see Warren, Brown, & Freudenberg, 1999.)

Sharing Internal Expertise

Bringing such expertise into the school through afterschool programming need not occur only through the involvement of a third party. Many CBOs have internal intellectual resources—because of their unique histories in serving their communities in specific ways such as providing health services or running sports leagues—that they can offer to schools. Finding creative ways to share these intellectual resources with host schools, especially in ways that benefit schools beyond the boundaries of the afterschool program, can generate a great deal of goodwill and can enhance both organizations' missions. Such was the case with the Fifth Dimension/University-Community Links Expedition program. Expedition promotes archaeological learning in an afterschool program run by faculty, staff, and students from the University of California at Berkeley in an Oakland middle school. One of the challenges

faced by the program was the host school's lack of Internet access in its computer labs. By the time of its second-year evaluation, Expedition had arranged for UC-Berkeley's Information Systems and Technology staff to come into the school and complete work on the school's Internet network. The evaluators found that this gesture by Expedition personnel not only generated enormous goodwill from school personnel but also helped both parties achieve their educational goals. By finding such ways to offer something back to host schools, CBOs can improve their relationships with schools and simultaneously enhance educational opportunities. (For more information on the Fifth Dimension/UC Links Expedition program and its evaluation, see Sturak, 2001.)

Investing in Professional Development

In addition to using outside expertise, another way CBOs can enhance student learning is by investing in the professional development of program staff. The Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund's MOST Initiative found that one of the key challenges in fostering synergy between school-day and out-of-school programs was building MOST staff's knowledge of how to effectively develop youth's academic skills. Investing in staff development, however, turned out to be a significant hurdle. Given the low wages and limited career paths in afterschool settings, some staff saw little or no financial gain in taking courses to enhance their ability to serve youth. Time and energy for such additional coursework was scarce, as many program staff have

Many CBOs have internal intellectual resources—because of their unique histories in serving their communities in specific ways such as providing health services or running sports leagues—that they can offer to schools.

additional jobs and competing family commitments. Finally, many staff members' limited personal financial means kept them from being able to pay initial course tuitions and then wait for reimbursements. (For more information about the MOST initiative and its evaluation, see Halpern, Spielberger, & Robb, 2000.)

Despite these challenges, MOST responded with a number of strategies that seemed to be partially successful in overcoming these barriers. In the Seattle site, for example, a local community college helped bring

Resource Issues and Program Solutions

Physical Resources

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to adequate school space • Access to materials and supplies • Lighting and other physical plant needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building with regular day staff: using teachers as program staff, sponsoring special events, offering resources and supplies to teachers • Memorandums of understanding about use of classroom space; checklists to monitor classroom condition • Portable spotlights |
|--|--|

Financial Resources

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of available or adequate funds for afterschool programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated funding sources for afterschool programs • Collaborating with school districts to finance afterschool programming: school district funding, in-kind contributions, partnering to access outside funding • Innovative fundraising strategies that involve school and CBO staff, youth, parents, and community members • Garnering in-kind contributions |
|---|---|

Social Resources

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating in-school activities with afterschool activities • Buy-in from principal, teachers, and school staff • Communication among key stakeholders, including youth, teachers, program staff, parents, and community members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal liaison staff positions • Relationship-building special events (including families) • Formal committees that bring stakeholders together |
|---|---|

Intellectual Resources

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different philosophies for program/academic content • Local knowledge versus professional expertise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving expertise of outside groups • Offering relevant CBO expertise to assist schools and teachers • Investing in professional development opportunities; bringing opportunities close to staff; eliminating waiting periods for reimbursement of tuition fees |
|--|--|

afterschool workers into courses by initially offering neighborhood-based classes and then moving in stages to traditional community college coursework. To counter the financial barriers to staff participation, some agencies in the Chicago site paid for tuition directly and then collected the reimbursement later, eliminating reimbursement burdens encountered by their staff. These are, of course, only partial solutions to the complex problem of how to best provide professional development opportunities, but they do highlight ways in which schools and CBOs can find ways to provide such opportunities to enhance the programming they offer to youth.

CBOs cannot hope to succeed in helping students learn and grow both academically and socially unless they develop their intellectual resources. These examples of strategies undertaken by various afterschool programs and initiatives illustrate how CBOs can harness intellectual resources to build relationships with their host schools while, at the same time, enhancing their own and the schools' mission to educate children and enrich their lives.

Final Reflections

In the complex world of afterschool programming, navigating the school-CBO relationship can be a significant challenge for program and school personnel. These relationships are always bound to be specific to a particular context, group of stakeholders, and wider community. Thus, recognizing ways in which schools and CBOs can work together to connect, coordinate, and leverage their resources is a key aspect of developing quality

afterschool programming. Figure 1 shows the various domains of resources that schools and CBOs might examine as they negotiate relationships in providing afterschool programming. These resources exist at multiple levels of each institution and are both tangible, such as the physical space of the school, and intangible, such as the social relationships among the teachers, staff, and children. The examples discussed above are just a few of the many ways that afterschool programs around the country are effectively building and negotiating resources in the school-CBO relationship. Enhancing school-CBO relationships in such ways ultimately encourages the development of quality afterschool programming that provides positive educational and developmental opportunities for youth.

References

- Blank, M. J., & Langford, B. H. (2000). *Strengthening partnerships: Community school assessment checklist*. Washington, DC: The Coalition for Community Schools and the Finance Project.
- Fashola, O. S. (1999). *The Child First Authority After-School Program: A Descriptive Evaluation*. CRESPAR Report No. 38. Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.
- Ferguson, R. F., & Dickens, W. T. (1999). Introduction. In R. F. Ferguson & W. F. Dickens (Eds.), *Urban problems and community development* (pp. 1–32). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Grossman, J. B., Price, M. L., Fellerath, V., Jucovy, L. Z., Kotloff, L. J., Raley, R., & Walker, K. E. (2002). *Multiple choices after school: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Halpern, R., Spielberger, J., & Robb, S. (2000). *Evaluation of the MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) Initiative: Final report summary of findings*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.
- Illback, R. J., & Birkby, B. W. (2001). *Formative evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, year 1*. Louisville, KY: Reach of Louisville, Inc.
- Johnson, J. (2002). *North Carolina Support Our Students: 2001–2002 evaluation report*. Raleigh, NC: Edstar, Inc..
- LoSciuto, L., Rajala, A. K., Townsend, T. N., & Taylor, A. S. (1996). An outcome evaluation of Across Ages: An intergenerational mentoring approach to drug prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 11(1), 116–129.
- Office of Student Learning and Achievement, Georgia Department of Education. (1999). *Evaluation of the Reading Challenge Program: Year one report, 1998–1999 school year*. Atlanta: Author.
- Reisner, E. R., White, R. N., Birmingham, J., & Welsh, M. (2001). *Building quality and supporting expansion of after-school projects: Evaluation results from the TASC After-School Programs second year*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
- Sturak, T. L. (2001). *Expedition—computers and archaeology after school: Year-end report, 2000–2001*. Berkeley, CA: Interactive University Project, University of California at Berkeley.
- Walker, K. E., & Arbreton, A. J. A. (2001). *Working together to build Beacon Centers in San Francisco: Evaluation findings from 1998–2000*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Warren, C., Brown, P., & Freudenberg, N. (1999). *Evaluation of the New York City Beacons: Summary of phase I findings*. New York: Academy for Educational Development, Inc.
- Whalen, S. P. (2002). *Report of the evaluation of the Polk Bros. Foundation's Full Service Schools Initiative*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.
- Witt, P. A., King, T., & Lee, J. H. (2002). *Fort Worth After-School second year evaluation*. College Station, TX: Author.

About the Authors

Chris Wimer (wimer@fas.harvard.edu) and **Margaret Post** (mpost@brandeis.edu) are graduate research assistants for the HFRP's Out-of-School Time Learning and Development Project. Chris is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology and Social Policy at Harvard University, with a focus on inequality and youth development. Margaret is a Ph.D. student at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University. Her area of study is Children, Youth, and Families, with a focus on civic involvement in immigrant communities. **Priscilla Little** (priscilla_little@harvard.edu) is the project manager for HFRP's out-of-school time work. She received her master's degree in Child Study from Tufts University in 1990, where she continued with doctoral studies in the same department through 1992.

Authors' Note

This article is based on a review of the HFRP's Out-of-School Time Evaluation Profiles Database, which is supported by a grant from the C. S. Mott Foundation. The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Heather B. Weiss, Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education. We would also like to thank Suzanne Bouffard and Julia Coffman, HFRP consultants, for their thoughtful comments and suggestions.

acts of invention

The Afterschool Program as a Site for Building Community

by Kirsten Cole

Nadira¹ sits up straight and speaks firmly: “When somebody tells me to shut up, it makes me feel mad. It makes me feel like they don’t care about what I’m saying.”

Nodding in assent, Luke adds, “You feel disrespected.”

“Yeah, it makes me mad. It makes me feel like punching them,” says Stacey, leaning forward on the edge of her seat for emphasis.

Around the circle kids mutter and nod in agreement. On this night, as on many other nights, we are talking about how we want to be treated—or, more often, how we *don’t* want to be treated. Each night our community meeting revisits this conversation in some form, with the goal of arriving at some consensus about how we want the afterschool community to look and feel. Today, for some reason, “Shut up” was flung more than usual, so after dinner I decided to focus the meeting around a discussion of that phrase and its meaning.

“Okay,” I say, “So it makes us all feel really bad when people say ‘Shut up.’ But sometimes people say things that hurt our feelings, and we need to be able to ask them to stop talking in a way that hurts us. What are some other ways that you could let people know that what they’re saying is not okay?”

Cole, K. (2003). Acts of Invention: The Afterschool Program as a Site for Building Community. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 22–27.

¹ Names have been changed.



Drawing by FUN program participant, age 7

After a pause, Ginger ventures, “You could say, ‘Be quiet.’”

Pilar jumps in, animated: “You could tell them, ‘Mind your business!’”

“How ’bout that tone, though, Pilar?” my coworker Assata follows up. “When you use that voice, do you think you might make them feel the same way as when you say, ‘Shut up?’”

Some nights the community meeting feels amazingly redundant to me. When we asked at the opening of the meeting last night if anyone had anything they wanted to talk about, Ryan asked if we could talk about the problem of people talking about other people's mamas. The night before, Najwa wanted to talk about people not minding their business. The topics change, but the underlying themes are often the same: issues of respect and feelings of anger that come from feeling disrespected. Some nights when I go home, I can't believe we have had to hold *yet another* community meeting around the problem of making fun of people's clothes. If we all know how badly it makes us feel to be disrespected, why can't we just agree to stop doing it?

Back around the circle, we continue to work together to identify appropriate alternatives to "Shut up."

"You could use a nice voice."

"You could ignore them."

"You could say, 'You're hurting my feelings.'"

"You could tell a teacher."

As we talk the problem out together, participants' voices range from tentative and questioning to firm and assertive. Some speak with a gentle tone, while others are agitated or ebullient. I may be frustrated by the recurrence of common themes in our community meeting, but, if I listen closely, I can hear another layer to our nightly conversation. When I realize that in different ways each individual is trying to find his or her own voice in this forum, I can marvel at how we are working collectively to address issues that even most adults find challenging.

A Space for Building Community

The FUN (Family University) Afterschool Program is housed at the cozy Learning Center for Educators and Families (LCEF), part of the School of Education at Long Island University. At LCEF, the School of Education offers undergraduate and graduate education courses, tutoring programs for children from the surrounding neighborhood, and our afterschool program, which serves the children of low-income students at the university. Approximately 80 percent of the families we serve are African-American (many Caribbean-American), and 20 percent Latino/a (many Puerto Rican and Dominican). The children in the program are 6 to 12 years old; all of our activities engage children across this age range. Our operating

budget is a large grant through the federal Department of Education's CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools) Program. This funding allows us to offer the program free of charge to all participants. We serve a substantial healthy snack when the kids arrive

If we all know how badly it makes us feel to be disrespected, why can't we just agree to stop doing it?

and a nutritious dinner later in the evening. We have an ample budget for art supplies, books, games, and computers. When the staff faces a challenge with a particular child, from adding fractions to anger and alienation, we meet with education faculty who have expertise in that area to get assistance in developing strategies to address the issue.

Perhaps most importantly, we have a consistently low ratio of adults to children, usually no more than 1:4. I have worked with the program since its inception in January 2002, first as a teaching artist and now as director. Other program staff are Assata and Jamal, who work part time, 28 and 25 hours a week respectively. They are with the children for all activities throughout the program day and have time before children arrive each afternoon for planning and set-up. Assata, the education coordinator, oversees all academic aspects of the program and supervises the staff of 4–6 college work-study students who provide tutoring during two homework help sessions each day. Jamal, the teaching artist, oversees all the creative arts activities. I am a European-American woman, Assata is an African-American woman, and Jamal is a Caribbean-American man. Though we wear different hats in the program, we all identify ourselves as artists and work collaboratively in planning and executing all creative arts activities with the children. Each week we have an hour and a half allotted for our regular staff meeting, when we discuss questions we are having about specific children and address such larger issues as working toward an anti-bias curriculum or learning effective conflict resolution skills.

In addition to our regular staff meetings, we often chat informally at the beginning of each day while setting up art materials and snack, sharing anecdotes from the previous day or observations about a particular child. I am often struck by how well we know these kids. Each child feels strongly connected to at least

one, if not all, of the adults in the program. Program staff and college student tutors participate in all activities alongside the children, from painting to ball games, from journal writing to eating dinner. Throughout all these activities, we share stories, engage in active debates, and very often make each other laugh.

Each night after dinner, we all participate in a community meeting, which Assata, Jamal, or I facilitate. The format of the meeting is loosely scripted. The facilitator may open the meeting by pointing out something that has happened in the community during the day, posing a question about that issue, for example, "How does it make you feel when someone tells you to shut up?" Some days the issue for discussion is identified by the staff; other days the facilitator opens the floor to see if any of the children have a pressing issue that they would like to bring to the group. The facilitator then makes time for each child and adult in the circle to respond to the question. This initial go-round is followed by further discussion of the issue with the goal of arriving at consensus about how we want to address the issue in the future.

Fostering Civility in an Uncivil Society

With the suggestions of alternatives to "Shut up," we seem to be reaching a natural end to the nightly meeting. Then Hector raises his hand. "But I

As adults who are involved in their lives, we listen to the tales of injustice they've suffered and feel incredibly demoralized. But the fact that someone has listened and said to them, "The way you were treated was wrong," seems to empower and enliven them.

have a question," he begins. "What if you're in school and the teacher tells the kids to 'Shut up'? What are you supposed to do if it's a teacher that says it?"

I shake my head and say, "Wow, well, Hector, I'm really sorry that happened to you. I personally don't ever think it's okay for a teacher to say 'Shut up' to a student, because of all the reasons we just talked about, about how it makes you feel when anyone says 'Shut up.'" Knowing that Hector's mother is a vocal advocate for her children, I suggest, "If I were you I would make sure and tell your mom that the teacher is speaking to you that way. Then maybe she could talk to the principal about it."

Around me, kids are bursting to speak. "Yeah," volunteers Miguel "There was a teacher at my old school who told the kids to 'Shut the H-E-double-L up.' That was my teacher I woulda popped him."

"But, Miguel, that's not cool either. Do you know that if you hit a teacher you could get yourself in a lot of trouble?" Assata says in a voice that is simultaneously stern and gentle.

"Naw, naw, son. Nobody's gonna do me like that. My cousin's in the army. He could come to my school and. . . ." Miguel slams his right fist into his left palm.

"Okay, first of all, don't call me 'son.' But you know what, though, it's true. You and your cousin could get in a lot of trouble. We really need to talk about an appropriate response to that kind of situation," Assata emphasizes. "I want to follow up on Hector's question. Another thing you could do is wait, maybe until the next day, and then you could speak to your teacher in private, without a whole audience and when they've had a chance to cool down. You could let them know how it made you feel when they talked to you that way, that it makes you feel bad. Maybe you could make suggestions to your teacher about other ways they could ask the class to be quiet."

The kids are excited now. One after another they want to volunteer stories of teachers who yell and curse at their students, teachers who make the class do squats when they're "being bad," teachers who throw erasers in class, and a few who have hit students. I glance up at the clock and see that it's time to move on to homework and other activities, but, each time I try to wrap things up, three more hands shoot up. As we talk, I realize that some of the stories seem to be embellished

for the audience, especially those that begin, "My friend had this teacher. . . ." Yet, in many of the stories, the tellers still feel keenly the painful impact of the events.

I leave the meeting feeling depressed. Ironically, the children seem more affable than usual. Jamal observed, after we had a community teach-in to talk about the children's understandings and experiences of the "n-word," that, when we talk about difficult subjects, the kids seem to respond as if a weight has been lifted off their shoulders. As adults who are involved in their lives, we listen to the tales of injustice they've suffered and feel incredibly demoralized. But the fact that

For many of the kids we serve, the afterschool program may be the first place where they have been invited to participate in fostering a kinder society.



Drawing by FUN program participant, age 9

someone has listened and said to them, “The way you were treated was wrong,” seems to empower and enliven them. For the rest of the night there is a little bit more sharing, a little bit less teasing, and a lightness in the things we do together.

In his book *Making Play Work: The Promise of After-School Programs for Low Income Children*, researcher and educator Robert Halpern studies the historical development of afterschool program and compares a broad range of present-day incarnations, documenting the qualities of “programs that reflect ideals for the field” (Halpern, 2003, p. 125). Many of Halpern’s conclusions about the qualities of successful afterschool programs have to do with ways that program staff make space for children in their programming, from working with an emergent curriculum to allowing ample time for children’s voices to be heard. Halpern explains that in these programs,

Staff created settings in which children felt safe and valued and yet could also explore who they were and where they fit. The programs focused on relationships as well as tasks, making time for conversation about life as well as for talk about the work at hand. . . . Staff recognized the importance of affirming for children that they had something to contribute, to say, while also recognizing that some children were reluc-

tant to take risks associated with creativity and engagement itself. (Halpern, 2003, p. 131)

When I ask myself again, “Why does it seem that every day we have to revisit the conversation about the many ways we could be more respectful with each other?” I realize I know the answer: because every day kids are encountering forces that challenge the notion of community we are trying to foster. In moments of frustration, our discussions look to me like nothing more than cyclical rehashing of old issues. What these discussions really show, though, is the critical space we’re opening for children at the FUN Program—the space Halpern describes, where children are given room to find their voice and where they feel that adults support them in expressing their concerns and articulating the kind of world they want to build together.

In a film about anti-bias curricula, teacher-researcher Vivian Gussin Paley asserts, “The teacher, I think, is in the preeminent position, more so than the doctor, the lawyer or any other profession I can think of, to invent a kind society” (as cited in McGovern, 1997). Learning how to treat each other with care and respect should be one of the most important components of a child’s education. Unfortunately, for many of the kids we serve, the afterschool program may be the first place where they have been invited to participate in fostering a kinder society. When I chat with parents as they pick up their children at the end of the day, they often thank us for being the first place outside the home where their child was given room to talk about the racism he or she has encountered. As they marvel at their child’s advances in painting, they also mention, in the same breath, that the child is getting in fewer fights at school since coming to the afterschool program.

A Unique Role for Afterschool Programs

Most days, I go home all too aware of the fact that what we have had the opportunity to build at the FUN Program looks like a luxury. I recognize that, if I were a classroom teacher with 40 kids in my room

and no budget for books or pencils, I might well crack under the pressure too. In the FUN Program afterschool program, we have the opportunity to work with kids in a more holistic way, without the onus of having to raise test scores. Freed of that burden, we are left with time to make art, to tell stories, to play games, and to listen to each other. Afterschool education researchers Noam, Biancarosa, and Dechausay (2003) explain the multifaceted nature of afterschool programs and describe how they function as “intermediary spaces.” They write, “Afterschool connects to academic work without serving as a school, takes on aspects of family life (such as comfort, security and recreation) without becoming a family and instills community consciousness without becoming a civic group” (p. 5).

In the space between home and school and community where the FUN Program resides, we have the gifts of time and freedom. The program I direct is well enough supported that I can make in-depth staff development and planning a priority throughout the year. As a staff, our priority is to make space for children—space both to explore their imaginative worlds using a variety of arts materials and to find their voices in the context of our community. As a result, we have a program where children and adults feel supported and have the energy and commitment to participate in community building. Our arts-based focus gives children who might not be considered achievers in the classroom a chance to feel accomplished and valued. As a community of adults and children learning side-by-side, we participate in rousing board games, drumming workshops, and book-making projects. And each night we hold community meetings where we strive to hear each other better.

I am the first to admit that what we’re trying to do in the afterschool program often feels slow to take root. Kids still tease each other every day. Our community meetings are often filled with disruptions



Drawing by FUN program participant, age 6

At the end of the year, I'm always left with a sense of frustration that we didn't do all we set out to do. I remind myself that community building takes time, that inventing a kind society requires a lifetime of commitment.

when kids who feel uncomfortable with what we're talking about attempt to distract the rest of the group. At the end of the year, I'm always left with a sense of frustration that we didn't do all we set out to do. I remind myself that community building takes time, that inventing a kind society requires a lifetime of commitment. Such a society needs space to grow. Perhaps as intermediary spaces, as spaces that bridge home and school and community, as spaces that make room for dialogue and uncertainty, afterschool programs are in a unique position to nurture the kind of community we're committed to building at the FUN Program. I can think of many instances in which the

kids treated each other with disrespect. Yet they've treated each other with care and joy more times than I can count.

One night, as our community meeting broke up and we prepared to move on to other activities, Franklin and Miguel asked if they could perform a rap they had prepared for Antoine in celebration of his ninth birthday that day. Seven months before, when Antoine began the program, he had sought the attention—perhaps too avidly—of these two older boys, who initially ignored him before slowly warming to him. On this night, Franklin beat-boxed while Miguel launched into three verses of the performers' appreciation of the younger boy and their recognition of his birthday. As we sat in the circle together, Antoine leapt up and began to shake his hips and clap along in time to the rhythm. When the rap ended, we all applauded and let out loud whoops. Franklin and Miguel smiled shyly and were uncharacteristically quiet during the applause. Antoine beamed. Moments later we dispersed, to homework and painting and chess, and I chatted briefly with Miguel and Franklin. "That was amazing, you guys. When did you come up with that?"

They shrugged their shoulders, obviously pleased with the praise but not wanting to reveal how much: "You know, we've been working on that for a little while." As I moved on to the next activity, I felt a deep

sense of appreciation that we'd all had "a little while"—a little while for Miguel and Franklin to create and practice and perform; a little while for Antoine to be celebrated on his birthday; and a little while for all of us to make time for an unexpected, unscheduled event that made us smile as we went on into the night together.

References

- Halpern, R. (2003). *Making play work: The promise of after-school programs for low-income children*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- McGovern, M. (1997). *Starting small: Teaching children tolerance*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center & Margie McGovern Films.
- Noam, G. G., Biancarosa, G., & Dechausay, N. (2003). *Afterschool education: Approaches to an emerging field*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

About the Author

Kirsten Cole is the Director of the FUN (Family University) Afterschool Program at Long Island University's Brooklyn Campus. A member of the Robert Bowne Foundation Fellowship for 2002–2003, she is conducting research in the field of afterschool education. In 1999, she received an M.F.A. in textiles from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. As an artist, she considers working with children to be one of the most creative acts she can participate in.



Retooling Public Libraries to Attract and Engage Teens After School

by Lisa Wahl Moellman and Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger

According to the National Child Care Survey, approximately seven million children are spending some amount of time each day in self-care (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). When adolescents are included in these figures, some evidence suggests the number of youth without care after school approaches 15 million (White House, 1998). The large number of children and adolescents who are unsupervised during out-of-school hours has prompted a broad national dialogue about child and youth care in communities today.

The quality and accessibility of out-of-school options are important because youth without afterschool opportunities are at risk for a host of negative outcomes. The afterschool hours are when youth are most likely to perpetrate crimes or become victims of

crime, to be in or cause a car crash, to use drugs and alcohol, to experience depression, and to engage in risky sexual activity (Newman, Fox, & Flynn, 2000). Beyond addressing these pressing social concerns, adults must also take collective responsibility for shaping positive youth development as an *economic* necessity. Leaders across disciplines are pointing to social, economic, and technological trends that have changed the nature of work and of class composition in leading nations. There is increasing disparity between the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to earn a middle-class income in the present economy and those actually acquired by students in most public schools today, especially in urban districts.

Afterschool programs hold great potential to equip *all* youth with the skills and attitudes necessary for participation in our increasingly complex society. Public libraries represent community spaces in which teens who seek to cultivate their passions and interests can explore, create, and make progress in a low-

Moellman, L. W., & Tillinger, J. R. (2003). Civic Spaces: Retooling Public Libraries to Attract and Engage Teens After School. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 28–36.

stakes environment. Libraries can be venues in which teens define themselves at their own pace and in personally meaningful ways (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2001). Communities that want to support youth must understand the powerful role civic institutions such as libraries can play during the out-of-school hours.

What Do Teens Want and Need After School?

Adolescents tend not to be inclined toward rigidly structured programs. Instead, they gravitate toward programs that provide motivating and meaningful activities that respect their need for positive relationships, flexibility, and choices (Forum for Youth Investment, 2003). In gathering data for a 2002 report to the Boston After-School for All Partnership, the Center for Teen Empowerment (2002) conducted youth surveys and focus groups. The report stated that youth ages 13–18 want afterschool programs that provide opportunities for choice and voice. In focus groups, over 90 percent of participants 13 years and older said they want caring adult leaders who will help them develop a variety of new skills (Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002).

This age group ranked employment as their most important out-of-school opportunity. Thirteen- to 18-year-olds were also clear about their desire to have their ideas respected and integrated into afterschool

Public libraries are well poised to serve young people by serving as a bridge between the formal learning of the regular school day and the more self-directed, real-world application of knowledge required in the 21st century.

programming and decision-making processes. Youth went on to say that afterschool programs should have updated technology and equipment, including advanced hardware and software (Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002).

Teens also expressed a desire to participate in activities of their choosing, motivated by their own interests; they wanted afterschool programs that would allow them to determine their own points of entry and degree of engagement. Youth emphasized that the school day can be especially structured, impersonal,

and demanding. They rated afterschool programs that mimic the rigidity and organization of the regular school day as highly unappealing (Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002).

Teens have been identified as one of the least served populations during out-of-school hours (Boston After-School for All Partnership, 2003). Knowing that teens want jobs, opportunities to learn new skills, and a flexible structure they've helped to design, communities are obliged to provide accessible spaces that meet these needs. Public libraries, free to all and available in every neighborhood, have the potential to offer the resources and structure teens want.

The Public Library as a Youth Development Partner

Public libraries are well poised to serve young people by serving as a bridge between the formal learning of the regular school day and the more self-directed, real-world application of knowledge required in the 21st century. Nationally, young adults represent 23 percent of library users, with the majority visiting the library to use computers. However, many libraries have neither enhanced spaces for youth nor expanded resources and programming to capitalize on the presence of this sizable demographic. In fact, most library budgets earmark minimal funding for young adult services, and these services are often first to be discontinued in times of budget restraint (Whalen & Costello, 2002).

In this technology-driven era, with an ever-increasing range of information access points, many people are questioning the relevance of library buildings and services. A number of library systems have recently incurred significant budget cuts that have resulted in reduced operating hours and staff layoffs. For many systems, the current fiscal reality makes larger investment in teen programming seem counterintuitive. However, rather than enacting flat cuts across the system, libraries could look to exemplary organizations in the private sector that have successfully refocused goals and resources during recessionary times. In doing so, libraries may find that enhanced teen user rates could broaden the base of public support and, in turn, provide significant leverage to advocate for increased funding. Library systems have the potential to expand teen services as a mechanism to generate public support and political will—

both of which are essential to ensuring libraries are valued and funded well into the future.

With 7-15 million American youth in need of affordable afterschool programs, communities urgently need to maximize use of free civic spaces. Eleanor Jo Rodger, executive director of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), stated convincingly, “If we



Studio in a School

don't meet their needs as children and teens, it's naïve to think [youth] will come back at 18 or 19” (DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund, 1999, p. 15). Working with municipal and community partners, libraries have an unprecedented opportunity to enhance their existing networks in city neighborhoods. Some library systems have seized this opportunity to become effective youth spaces that attract and respond to urban youth. Other urban systems are at a crossroads, grappling with issues of mission and readiness. Libraries have enormous potential as a network of free civic spaces. How might we reinvent library branches as hubs for youth development? In what ways are libraries uniquely poised to support the learning and technology needs of youth outside the formal structure of the school day? How can we increase libraries’ potential to draw in and serve the vast number of young people who are without supportive and engaging afterschool opportunities?

The ULC Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development (PLPYD) project, funded by the DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund (DWRDF), advocates that public libraries are poised to become full community partners in promoting educational and career development for youth (Meyers, 1999). Grounded in a positive youth development philosophy, the PLPYD project challenged nine library sys-

tems, from 1999 to 2002, to improve teen services, develop tools for effective practice, and evaluate developmental outcomes (DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund, 1999).

The PLPYD project identified a number of issues central to improving services for youth. The most important findings came from youth themselves. Between November 1998 and May 1999, ten communities that had been awarded planning grants by DWRDF held a number of focus groups in which they discovered that most teens find libraries “uncool” (Meyers, 1999).

According to a report by the DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund (1999), a majority of focus group participants said their ideal library would have:

- Librarians who like to work with youth and who make teens feel wanted
- A special place of their own in the library that can be used as a multipurpose space
- More and faster computers, new graphics and multimedia software, and better technological assistance
- Opportunities to work in libraries as tutors, club leaders, technology assistants, customer service representatives, and website maintenance assistants

Focus group participants believed the library should help them to explore career opportunities and learn valuable job skills, beginning with *employing them* to serve other children and youth (DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund, 1999).

Following the planning phase, nine library systems received three-year implementation grants, with which they developed an array of programming and opportunities to attract and involve teens. A final report by Yohalem and Pittman (2003) illustrates the many ways in which libraries have more fully entered the youth development arena by engaging in both *inreach* and *outreach*. Yohalem and Pittman use the term *inreach* to describe capacity-building and organizational activities associated with successfully shifting traditional library culture. As these library systems engaged in the change process, youth and community development became central to their mandate. Critical inreach activities included staff support and training, the development of teen-friendly policies, and the establishment of leadership and employment opportunities for youth (Yohalem & Pittman, 2003).

Simultaneously, libraries engaged in a host of *out-reach* efforts in order to connect with youth-serving partners, municipal agencies, and teens. Active efforts such as marketing, collaborating with other youth organizations, and becoming involved in existing community partnerships enabled libraries to get on young people's radar screen. Moreover, effective outreach assisted these systems to become valued voices at the youth development tables in their communities (Yohalem & Pittman, 2003).

The Library's Unique Role in Promoting Positive Youth Development

Because libraries support the notion of “free-choice learning,” they are an ideal space in which youth can engage in real-world, self-paced learning opportunities (Pittman, 2002). “Free-choice learning” is defined by Dierking and Falk (2003) as “learning that is guided by learners’ needs and interests—the learning that people engage in throughout their lives to find out more about what is useful, compelling, or just plain interesting to them” (p. 77).

During out-of-school time, public libraries are situated to be places for teens to engage in relaxed, socially oriented learning opportunities that align with their interests. As spaces for intrinsically motivated learning, libraries house resources teens can use to drill deeper into concepts that have captured their attention. Exploration, especially through relevant projects, can promote civic engagement and foster stronger connections between youth and their communities. Libraries also present opportunities for youth to apply and synthesize learning across subject areas. This type of informal learning can be particularly appropriate and conducive for the increasing number of immigrant youth. Teens striving to learn English and navigate a new culture may find the library to be more supportive and manageable than their school is.

Recent findings indicate that cultivating passion, sense of agency, and new skill sets in young people during out-of-school time has a positive impact on students’ learning during the regular school day (Farbman, 2003). Through informal learning opportunities youth explore, apply, and develop their skills. In fact, a pivotal study on informal learning in high-performing workplaces, led by Monika Aring at the Education Development Center, showed that “people learn 70% of what they know about their jobs infor-

mally, through projects, meetings, and networking” (as cited in Pearlman, 2002). The report emphasizes that authentic learning is social and is situated in a meaningful context.

Libraries are poised to offer a range of structured options that support the learning needs and interests of teens. Dierking and Falk (2003) have identified learning goals that can be realized via “free-choice” activities-outcomes that fit well with learning in public library venues:

- Developing lifelong learning skills in real-world contexts
- Engaging in self-guided study in areas of interest
- Interacting with adults in meaningful ways; experiencing adult models of problem-solving and social interaction
- Finding pathways to increased independence and responsibility
- Mastering new skills and exploring life choices
- Locating supportive adults and peers for guidance in learning

Seizing the Momentum

Getting it right with teenagers is not easy. The Boston Public Library (BPL) is an example of a large urban library system that wants to get it right for Boston's teens. The PLPYD project emphasized

Urban libraries most successful in realizing system-wide change for youth engaged in a comprehensive research and planning process.

that urban libraries most successful in realizing system-wide change for youth engaged in a comprehensive research and planning process prior to implementation (DeWitt Wallace–Reader's Digest Fund, 1999). Aligned with this recommendation, the BPL has embarked on an extensive planning process, funded by the Boston Public Library Foundation, aimed at reinventing teen services to better engage youth after school. At the time of this writing, the BPL has completed an initial research and development phase culminating in an organizational implementation plan.

As a key activity in this process, a collaborative working group researched successful library systems in other urban centers that had revitalized one or more segments of their teen services. The working group communicated with library and municipal personnel in Chicago, Phoenix, Tucson-Pima, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. They also interviewed researchers and evaluators of library teen services, including the ULC and Chapin Hall Center for Children in Chicago.

Across the board, the planners and evaluators the BPL consulted emphasized the importance of clearly identifying the opportunities and challenges associated with creating “cool” teen spaces and programming in library systems. Respected youth-serving organizations—and teens themselves—explained to BPL representatives what it would take to get young people hooked into library spaces. In its implementation plan, BPL leaders have identified six keys to successfully attracting and serving teenagers.

1. Create Dedicated Teen Spaces That Are “Cool”

Teens, librarians, and members of the youth-serving community in Boston have told the BPL that there is a tremendous need for comfortable, teen-friendly spaces designed for socializing and relaxing. The BPL has heard—from youth focus groups, a teen survey, and numerous community partners—that teens need flexible spaces that can accommodate multiple activities. Currently, in most branch libraries of the BPL, approximately half of the space and resources are reserved for small children and half for adults. Twelve- to 18-year-old customers do not currently have access to a dedicated teen space in most branch libraries. The BPL sees creating dedicated teen spaces in every branch as an important system-wide goal.

Teens and staff from other model systems suggest that a library teen space could include a lounge area, a technology lab, a career and college center, a café, and areas for both individual and group study. The BPL is interested in bringing together architectural firms and young people to participate in a conceptual design competition focused on recreating the downtown teen space. BPL intends to put teens at the heart of the process, approaching space redesign as a collaboration between youth and professionals.

To move forward in an intentional manner, the BPL intends to pilot the teen initiative at the historic central branch at Copley Square, the first publicly supported municipal library in the nation, built in 1848. As the BPL plans for rolling out the initiative to its 27

branches in subsequent years, it will need to consider the unique characteristics of each community and branch space.

2. Embed Youth Voice in Governance and Program Development

The BPL has identified two questions critical to this initiative: “If we build it, will teens *come*? What must we do to ensure that teens want to *come back again and again* to the library?” Dialogue with teens, youth-serving organizations, and other library systems confirmed that teen customers must have opportunities to shape the programs, policies, and services that affect them; otherwise, they won’t participate. In order to be an effective resource to youth, the BPL must offer opportunities and services that align with teens’ schedules, needs, and wants. The BPL thus plans to develop a Teen Advisory Board, better supports for teens who currently work for the BPL as tutors for children, and a stronger connection with youth-serving organizations in Boston.

First, to ensure that youths’ voices become embedded in the organization, the BPL is planning to establish a Teen Advisory Board (TAB) that will provide recommendations to the BPL about youth-friendly trainings, policies, and procedures, as well as about employment and programming opportunities. The TAB will also publicize opportunities for teens at the BPL and contribute to the maintenance of a new teen website.

Second, to better support teens already working within the library system, the BPL has identified a need to provide enhanced training and programming for teen tutors working for the library-based Homework Assistance Program (HAP). Currently, this program provides stipends to over 60 teens who serve as afterschool tutors for younger children throughout the library system. By providing increased services and training to HAP tutors, the BPL will further develop the potential for teens to engage in a unique service-learning opportunity.

Finally, the BPL is developing a youth engagement strategy centered on partnering with city agencies and youth-serving organizations to tap into well-developed teen networks. During the initial phase of the planning process, the BPL gathered preliminary feedback from Boston youth. However, on an ongoing basis, stronger collaborations with community-based organizations and with the city will assist the BPL to get input from a broad and diverse representation of Boston’s teen

population. This effort will also help to publicize opportunities and resources at the library and to correct teen misconceptions about library cards, overdue books, and lost book fees.

3. Offer Meaningful Teen Employment Opportunities

Young people have indicated that effective programming must include employment opportunities; jobs are at the top of their list (Center for Teen Empowerment, 2002). In collaboration with community partners who can support the library with recruitment and training activities, the BPL has identified several new youth employment opportunities. Currently, teens can apply for jobs at the library as HAP tutors for an annual stipend or as shelvers in branch libraries for an hourly wage. In expanding the employment program, the BPL is considering new teen positions including patron assistant, technology intern, and even tour guide at the historic Copley library.



Studio in a School

4. Enhance and Expand Technology Resources

In focus groups and meetings, librarians and teens alike recognized that youth want access to better and faster technology. In an increasingly technological world, libraries are well poised to equip *all* young people—especially those at risk of being digitally excluded—with the ability to constructively and fluently engage technology as an integral part of their lives (Papert & Resnick, 1993).

The BPL plans to provide a computer lab in its pilot space, offering mentored technology experiences for youth. Currently, the BPL offers wireless Internet across the library system; it is therefore in a unique position to expand technological opportunities for young people who don't have regular Internet access.

The BPL, however, aims to provide more than access points. When teens and technology are brought together in the library, adult volunteers help maximize the experience. Adult mentors provide the scaffolding needed for teens to express themselves constructively and proficiently with high-tech tools (Resnick, 2002). As the BPL moves forward on this component of the initiative, its technology committee will examine not only hardware and software

needs but also the recruitment and training of adult mentors for the technology lab.

5. Expand Collaborative Community Programming

Building on a tradition of community partnership, the BPL and youth-serving organizations in Boston have identified collaborative opportunities to provide strands of successful community-based programming in a revitalized library space, including youth-led media literacy seminars, community research and service projects, and teen-identified workshops.

The BPL has taken note of Yohalem and Pittman's (2003) recommendation that libraries not over-structure programming for teens. While enrollment-based workshops might align with the needs and interests of some youth, others come to the library seeking a supportive space for self-directed learning. Still others simply want to socialize and “chill” in safe and comfortable surroundings. In the current environment of educational reform, which favors enrollment and academic programs in afterschool time, the BPL advocates

for free-choice learning spaces that provide a balanced array of opportunities for teens. Providing programming that offers differing levels of intensity and requires differing levels of participation is central to this perspective.

6. Bolster Learning Supports and College/Career Resources

With so many students struggling to master the skills necessary to be successful in school, libraries can offer creative opportunities to support scholastic achievement. The BPL aims to aggressively promote its free online tutoring and homework support services for youth. Once teens are hooked into programming and feel comfortable in the space and supported by the staff, the BPL recognizes the tremendous opportunity it has to guide teens to its many other resources that would support their learning—especially the books!

In identifying its unique youth resources, the BPL recognizes that it is in a strong position to provide support to teens in navigating college and career pathways. While some youth have access to higher education guidance in their schools, many do not. The library

offers teens an ideal space in which to explore job and college opportunities, as well as to get expert advice on their higher education decisions. The BPL has maintained an historic partnership with the Higher Education Information Center (HEIC), a model college and

While teen services look very different across model systems, most systems recognize that serving teens effectively requires an institutional culture shift—one that identifies teens as partners in programming and as assets to the library.

career access center housed at Copley central library. As a core component of revitalized teen services, the BPL plans to create a dedicated area in the teen space for HEIC advising and resources, career and college workshops, and regular visits from college admissions and financial aid officers. The BPL is also exploring the possibility of placing a career specialist in the teen space who would assist teens in finding and securing employment.

Moving Forward

As the BPL moves into the pre-implementation phase, it must consider how best to build sustainable organizational capacity for expanded teen services. Success in moving forward depends, in Yohalem and Pittman's terms, on effective *outreach*—efforts to connect with external stakeholders including teens—as well as *inreach*—bringing internal resources together to serve teens more effectively.

Outreach

BPL's outreach efforts in implementing the teen program focus on learning from best practices, engaging community collaborations, and partnering with teens.

Learning from Promising Practices

As BPL continues to refine its vision for enhanced teen services, it will look to successful model libraries. While teen services look very different across model systems, most systems recognize that serving teens effectively requires an institutional culture shift—one that identifies teens as partners in programming and as assets to the library (Yohalem & Pittman 2003).

The Free Library of Philadelphia sees its teens as assets. Its LEAP After School Program employs over

200 teens as Teen Leadership Assistants (TLAs) who provide support to patrons with technology and with programming for younger children. TLAs also plan Philadelphia's annual Youth Empowerment Summit. Teens receive ongoing training in customer service, workplace etiquette, technology and information literacy, and skills for working with children. Additional programming focuses on career development and public speaking. The Free Library of Philadelphia is valued as a youth development partner in the city, serving as a source of youth training for other municipal departments (Peterman, 2002).

The Phoenix Public Library sees its teens as partners. Inspired by the model of Los Angeles Public Library's successful TeenScape, Phoenix teens helped design a 4,000-square-foot teen space in Phoenix's downtown branch. Called Teen Central, it is *the* place to go after school, drawing 400-500 teens per day. A Library Teen Council advises the library on ensuring that programming, policies, and resources are relevant to teens. Teen Central supports both social and educational activities in a space designed for playing games, lounging, using computers, studying, and browsing an extensive collection of CDs, books, and graphic novels. There is also a café where teens can eat and chat (Phoenix Public Library, 2002).

Yohalem and Pittman (2003) provide a synopsis of teen programming and opportunities developed by the nine library systems funded through the PLPYD project. They emphasize that effective libraries demonstrate a commitment to a strengths-based youth development approach that builds on young people's energy and talent.

Sustaining Community Collaboration

Sustaining effective community collaborations is complex. It requires the staffing and infrastructure necessary to tend to relationships and to coordinate win-win partnerships that further each organization's mission while furthering meaningful collective work. In forwarding the teen initiative, the BPL is not only engaging partners for recruitment, training, and programming at implementation, but is also reaching out more broadly to the youth development community in Boston. Ongoing dialogue with community-based organizations and youth-serving agencies will help to

garner external support for the BPL Teen Initiative, while informing BPL designs for youth engagement, staff training, teen programming, and teen employment efforts.

Harnessing Teen Buy-In and Participation

The BPL has begun a process of talking with youth in Boston through preliminary focus groups. It has also developed an online survey that attracted over 300 respondents. The survey, expanding on one previously developed by Boston Mayor's Youth Council, focused on teen perceptions of the library. This preliminary data clearly showed that creating a welcoming climate for teens—a culture built on mutual respect between staff and youth—is central to teens' willingness to participate in library offerings and opportunities. Teens will be invited to help shape BPL staff training sessions and to join them in an advisory capacity. The BPL also acknowledges that the TAB must be a leading voice in shaping programming and leadership opportunities.

Inreach

Outreach is critical to the success of BPL's teen program, but *inreach* is also important to ensure that the institution will be prepared to receive teens when they arrive. Inreach efforts include creating institutional buy-in, integrating youth development principles into the library's core values, and providing effective ongoing staff development.

Integrating Youth Development Principles into BPL's Core Values

Facilitating a culture shift among staff in any library system requires the leadership to guide personnel in conceptualizing teen services as an important bridge between children's and adult services. If staff members understand that youth development is synonymous with community development, they can begin to think of teen patrons as core library customers. Then they can begin to explore the relationship between, on the one hand, the traditional mission of the library to provide safe spaces in the community and opportunities across the lifespan and, on the other, teens' developmental needs for safety, educational enrichment, leadership opportunities, and adult guidance. In attempting to integrate youth development values, the BPL will examine common adult stereotypes about teenagers and the traditional adult-oriented culture of the libraries.

Harnessing Staff Buy-In and Participation

In order to assist this developmental process of integrating values, ongoing staff training in positive youth development is central. Allocating resources for professional development and training in this area signals to staff that their leaders value this organizational learning. Creating welcoming spaces and relevant services for teens is grounded in providing continuing, high-quality staff development. Staff support also depends on providing opportunities for librarian input in the planning process. Librarians across the system emphasized the need both to plan for sustainability of teen services and to ensure that books and literacy stay at the heart of library services.

Evaluation

Evaluating outcomes in non-enrollment programs is difficult. Despite the case for offering a range of programming options for teens, researchers note that consistent and sustained programming is associated with achievement gains (Farbman, 2003). Unfortunately, programs that require daily attendance are often not feasible for teens. Many youth have responsibilities at home or part-time jobs; many simply want the freedom to participate in self-directed learning, sports, hobbies, and socializing (Forum for Youth Investment, 2003). The BPL will work to develop program evaluation tools that measure developmental outcomes appropriate to the multiple levels of programming offered. Youth must have free access to relevant neighborhood assets, such as libraries, that complement their lifelong learning and development.

Maximizing Community Assets for Youth

As communities become more diverse, libraries must serve democratic principles by providing equal access to information and knowledge. Increasingly, this equal access means offering relevant spaces in which youth feel welcomed and can find sophisticated technology and technology support, youth identified programming, resources to navigate career and college pathways, and employment opportunities.

Without affordable, flexible, and engaging programs, teenagers are left to navigate sensitive transitions without adult guidance. Likewise, the community loses a remarkable opportunity to develop leadership, civic engagement, and career readiness in its young people. In light of the current deficit of affordable

afterschool opportunities for teens, it is imperative that we maximize use of our existing civic spaces on their behalf. Since teenagers vote with their feet, we must make it our goal to create engaging libraries that effectively attract and respond to youth who do not benefit from enrollment programs.

References

- Boston After-School for All Partnership. (2003). *Annual report*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.afterschoolforall.org/about/annualreport.pdf>.
- Center for Teen Empowerment. (2002). *After-school programs in Boston: What young people think and want*. Report to the Boston After-School for All Partnership. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from http://www.afterschoolforall.org/pdf/teen_study.pdf.
- DeWitt Wallace–Reader’s Digest Fund. (1999). *Public libraries as partners in youth development*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.wallacefunds.org/frameset/publications.htm>.
- Dierking, L., & Falk, J. (2003). Optimizing out-of-school time: The role of free-choice learning. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 97, Spring. San Francisco: Wiley.
- Farbman, D. A. (2003). *The forgotten eighty percent: The case for making the most of children’s out-of-school time*. Boston: Massachusetts 2020. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.mass2020.org/whitepaperFINAL.pdf>.
- Forum for Youth Investment. (2003). *High school after-school: What is it? What might it be? Why is it important?* Out-of-School Time Policy Commentary #2. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/comment/ostpc2.pdf>.
- Meyers, E. (1999). The coolness factor: Ten libraries listen to youth. *American Libraries*, 30(10). Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.urbanlibraries.org/coolnessfactor.html>.
- Newman, S. A., Fox, J. A., & Flynn, E. A. (2000). *America’s after-school choice: The prime time for juvenile crime, or youth enrichment and achievement*. A Report from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.fightcrime.org>.
- Papert, S., & Resnick, M. (1993). *Technological fluency and the representation of knowledge*. Proposal to the National Science Foundation. MIT Media Laboratory.
- Pearlman, B. (2002). *New ingredient for student success: Social networks*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from http://www.bobpearlman.org/Articles/Student_Success.htm.
- Peterman, H. (2002, April). *Free Library of Philadelphia LEAP Program*. Paper presented at the Urban Libraries Council Partners for Success: Urban Children, Youth and Families Conference, Boston.
- Phoenix Public Library. (2002). *Teen Central: Planning a state of the art teen space at the Phoenix Public Library*. PowerPoint Presentation on CD.
- Pittman, K. (2002, April). *What makes a difference?* Paper presented at the Urban Libraries Council Partners for Success: Urban Children, Youth and Families Conference, Boston.
- Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (2001). *Preventing problems, promoting development, encouraging engagement: Competing priorities or inseparable goals?* Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/preventproblems.pdf>.
- Resnick, M. (2002, April). *MIT Media Lab*. Presentation at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Who’s minding the kids? Child care arrangements*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2000pubs/p70-70.pdf>.
- Whalen, S., & Costello, J. (2002). *Public libraries and youth development: A guide to practice and policy*. Chapin Hall Working Paper (PS-39). Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.
- White House. (Nov. 12, 1998). *President Clinton: Building stronger communities*. White House Briefing: Washington, DC. Retrieved June 9, 2003 from <http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/Work/1112a98.html>.
- Yohalem, N., & Pittman, K. (2003). *Public libraries as partners in youth development: Lessons and voices from the field*. Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from http://www.urbanlibraries.org/PLPYDreport_FINAL.pdf.

About the Authors

Lisa Wahl Moellman, Ed.M., and Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger, Ed.M., are graduates of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Risk and Prevention program. They served as consultants to the Boston Public Library during the planning process for the teen initiative and completed a business plan for implementation. They also work as training and development coordinators at the Program in Afterschool Education and Research (PAER) at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education.

youth-adult partnerships



Studio in a School

A Powerful Force for Community Change

by Shuan Butcher

In the summer of 2001, a \$1,500 grant from Youth as Resources (YAR) in Pine River-Backus, Minnesota, enabled two teens and one adult to camp their way to Colorado, where they learned how to build and install solar water heaters. “Both youth were facing court-ordered community service, but they wanted to do something other than cleaning toilets in a nursing home,” said Jason Edens, then the boys’ ninth grade English teacher and founding director of the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL), an organization that installs solar heating systems in low-income houses. “They asked me if they could somehow complete their community service through RREAL” (Center for Youth as Resources [CYAR], in press). Serving as the project’s adult advisor, Edens contacted the county juvenile corrections office to

Butcher, S. (2003). Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Powerful Force for Community Change. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 37–43.

establish RREAL as an approved community service venue. The youth wrote and presented the grant proposal, secured YAR funding, and mapped out a camping itinerary. On their return home, the young men used their newly acquired skills to install solar heating systems in four low-income households. “Through this project, the participants gained valuable, real-world skills, saw a good chunk of their country in a fiscally frugal way, and then gave back to their

community,” observed Nolita Christensen, YAR co-coordinator in Pine River-Backus (CYAR, in press).

That same year, youth members of the Haydenville Preservation Committee in Haydenville, Ohio, applied for and received a YAR grant to beautify the landscape adjacent to a historic museum and community center. “We were the last company town in Ohio,” explained Nyla Vollmer, a preservation committee activist who served as adult coordinator on the project. “When the company sold the town in the 1960s, people were able to buy their homes, but many 19th-century buildings became dilapidated. The kids wanted to have a reason to take pride in where they were from. We met to brainstorm ideas for community improvements. Since the preservation committee has its meetings at the museum, that site was identified as a priority” (CYAR, in press). After the youth were awarded the \$600 grant, Vollmer recruited a local landscape architect to assess the site *pro bono* and

recommended flowers and shrubs reminiscent of turn-of-the-century gardens. She then worked with the youth to install plants purchased with grant funds, enhancing the aesthetic authenticity of the preservation site. “A lot of our kids come from homes where

Young people’s energy, enthusiasm, and optimism can be major catalysts for social change. Adults’ commitment, drive, and institutional knowledge can help transform raw ideas into action.

their parents don’t care where they are,” Vollmer said. “We’ve found that by empowering kids to design and implement their own clean-up projects, they are less apt to go around and mess up” (CYAR, in press).

These vignettes are just two examples of successful youth-adult partnerships gleaned from a recent audit of Youth as Resources programs nationwide. Audit findings were compiled using a number of research tools—including written questionnaires, an online survey, and phone interviews with both youth and adult activists—and reported in the publication *Optimizing Youth as Resources: Ideas for Successful Programming* (CYAR, in press). The young people who spearheaded each project were remarkably motivated and innovative, and they had the advantage of practicing good citizenship in real-world contexts. With the guidance, enthusiasm, and complementary support of adult mentors, they were able to exert a real and tangible impact on their communities.

Assets in Action

Whereas previous youth service models have viewed developmental assets as an *end*, Youth as Resources leverages positive youth assets such as creativity, leadership, and teamwork as a *means*. In YAR, young people and adults work together as equal partners to identify and address real community needs, thus ensuring fresh approaches to chronic problems and a continuum of civic stewardship. The model embraces a paradigm shift that Karen Pittman of the International Youth Foundation and the Forum for Youth Investment has described as moving from “youth participation for youth development to youth and adult partnerships for community change” (Pittman, 2000). Furthermore, while youth-led service

is often spontaneous and episodic, youth-adult partnerships, particularly in the YAR framework, are more formalized. As a result, outcomes often are more intentional and permanent, resulting in real community change and community building.

Both an organizational network and philosophy, Youth as Resources was first conceived in 1986 by the National Crime Prevention Council and implemented by three Indiana pilot communities in 1987, with funding from the Lilly Endowment. YAR encourages young people in a variety of settings—such as faith-based institutions, community organizations, public housing, schools, and correctional facilities—to team up with adults, conduct community assessments, apply for and receive grants, and carry out community service projects. Grant dollars have been used to fuel literacy programs, drug and violence prevention, youth advocacy, hunger relief, voting and citizenship initiatives, building renovations, and much more. Each project is shepherded by an adult advisor, but youth generate the ideas, formulate the budget, and design and implement the plan.

The YAR model hinges on three core principles:

- Youth-adult partnerships
- Youth-led service
- Youth in governance through grant making

Youth are not limited to the role of grant *recipients* in the Youth as Resources equation; they also work in partnership with adults as grant *makers*. Local YAR boards composed of both youth and adults screen proposals, interview potential grantees, select grant recipients, and award grants from a pool of funds provided by local program sponsors. Board members of all ages monitor and evaluate YAR-funded projects to make sure goals are met and to troubleshoot problems.

Since the inception of Youth as Resources, more than 350,000 youth from across the United States and beyond have joined forces with adults in their communities as service providers, board members, and philanthropists. Today there are 75 YAR programs in 22 states, funding service projects in rural, suburban, and urban settings.

Generation Gaps

The concept of youth-adult partnerships is not new. In 1974, the National Commission on Resources for Youth asserted that, “Youth participation can . . .

be defined as involving youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with the opportunity for planning and/or decision-making affecting others. . . . There is mutuality in teaching and learning. . . . [E]ach age group sees itself as a resource for the other and offers what it uniquely can provide” (cited in Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2003, p. 25). Young people’s energy, enthusiasm, and optimism can be major catalysts for social change. Adults’ commitment, drive, and institutional knowledge can help transform raw ideas into action.

This transaction, which can be referred to as *reciprocal mentoring*, constitutes a departure from traditional roles. Most young people do not have the opportunity to form relationships with adults in which power is absent from the equation. There is a top-down dynamic inherent in their interactions with parents, teachers, ministers, and guidance counselors. Youth-adult partnerships, on the other hand, create opportunities for shared learning.

Unfortunately, opportunities for reciprocal mentoring are sparse. Evidence suggests that youth have yet to be fully recognized by our society as worthy partners (and mentors) in the social contract. While Independent Sector (1996) reports that 59 percent of youth volunteer an average of 3.5 hours per week, stereotypes continue to characterize young people as incapable of enacting meaningful social and community change. According to a Public Agenda survey, only 37 percent of American adults believe today’s children, once grown, will make the world a better place. The same study found that 61 percent of American adults are convinced that today’s youth “face a crisis in their values and morals.” These adults “look at teenagers with misgiving, and view them as undisciplined, disrespectful and unfriendly” (Farkas & Johnson, 1997).

Perhaps the real crisis is not an epidemic of youth apathy or moral ineptitude, but rather our society’s hesitation to entrust young people with real—not hypothetical—social responsibility. That latter tendency leads youth to feel isolated, marginalized, and discounted. Lisa Hira (2001), a YAR youth board member in Stamford, Connecticut, wrote:

What makes or breaks young people is the community’s attitude toward us, the examples set in our environment, and a consistently condescending—or positive and encouraging—reception of our community input. There’s a real temptation to only produce as much as is expected of us. Involving youth in any

way, shape, or form in the issues that affect us immediately shows our power as agents of social change. . . . It is of utmost importance that young people feel their voice matters, but it is of even greater importance that their voice *does* matter! It’s time adults moved from patting young people on the head for having “cute little ideas” and actually began listening to them. My generation will be in control mere decades from now and voting even sooner than that. (Hira, 2001, p. 3)

Empirical data suggest that there is no lack of passion among our youth. A survey by Princeton Survey Research (1998) reveals that 73 percent of America’s 60 million young people believe they can make a difference in their communities. And, when given a seat at the table, they do. In spring 2003, a 4-H club in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, used a \$500 grant from Door County YAR to team up with a professional horse trainer to learn how to break a colt. The group then leveraged a second YAR mini-grant to organize a fundraiser to raffle off its newly trained colt. Some \$30,000 in proceeds from the raffle were used to provide accessibility accommodations for the home of a 4-H member with muscular dystrophy (CYAR, in press). Youth ingenuity was the key catalyst for this multi-faceted project; adult expertise helped increase its impact exponentially.

A Framework for Dialogue

Few dispute the value of youth-adult collaboration in theory. However, putting the concept into practice proves more difficult because meaningful communication between youth and adults is uncommon beyond the confines of school and family. Search Institute data confirms the persistence of a social disconnect between today’s youth and adults. The latest iteration of the study *Grading Grown-Ups* (Scales, Benson, & Mannes, 2002) asked both youth and adults to evaluate their intergenerational interactions outside their own families, focusing on 18 specific actions that adults can take to help build developmental assets among young people. The study concluded, “Although youth and adults share ideas about what’s important, there was general agreement among study participants that these relationship-building actions just aren’t happening very often” (Scales et al., 2002, p. 3). Only 46 percent of youth surveyed said that adults who were not teachers or family members

provided guidance in decision making; even fewer—38 percent—said adults in the community were likely to seek young people’s opinions when making decisions that affect youth.

Youth-adult partnerships do not occur naturally. Put an even mix of young people and adults in a room, and the youth will inevitably sit on one side and the adults on the other.

The reality is that youth-adult partnerships do not occur naturally. Put an even mix of young people and adults in a room, and the youth will inevitably sit on one side and the adults on the other. Yet experience has shown that engaging multiple generations as cohorts for community change can have a tremendous impact when shared decision-making is made a priority.

Youth instigators need not be limited to honor-roll students. At The Guidance Center, an aftercare program for juvenile offenders in Wayne County, Michigan, young people empowered with YAR funding worked with adult mentors to paint colorful murals and positive messages on a graffiti-riddled wall adjacent to a middle school. The same group advocated for the creation of a local teen center, creating a formal presentation and lobbying its city council twice (CYAR, in press). “YAR is ideal for the juvenile justice system. I wish we’d had something like it when my son was fourteen years old,” said Carrie, an adult advisor and YAR board member whose son, now 20, spent many of his teen years in Michigan detention facilities. “Back then, it was my responsibility as a parent to find community service projects for him to do [to fulfill the restorative justice requirement of the court], and I had to make sure he went, which made it more like punishment” (CYAR, in press). YAR grants, in contrast, empower at-risk youth to design and implement their own service ideas. Like Carrie, some adult mentors are drawn from the ranks of concerned parents and community volunteers, while others are correctional officers, clinicians, caseworkers, educators, or business leaders.

Extending the concept of youth-adult partnership to grant making and policy decisions is equally important. According to Morgan Smith, a ninth-grade board member for Youth as Resources of Central Indiana (YARCI), “Youth-adult partnerships are beneficial because we don’t know some of the things that adults

know and vice versa. Adults don’t usually understand how kids think and communicate, so, for instance, they don’t know how to reach out to kids to let them know grant funding is available. We help them get inside kids’ brains.” (CYAR, in press). Hosted by United Way of Central Indiana, YARCI has, since its inception in 1987, awarded more than \$1.6 million in grants for 1,340 community service projects involving more than 35,000 youth volunteers.

The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development has played a leading role in assessing the benefits of service collaborations between youth and adults. YAR was one of several models explored in the center’s study on youth in decision making, which stated:

The current emphasis is on infusing young people into all levels of organizational decision-making. Young people . . . need to be involved not only in day-to-day programming decisions, but they should also be involved in organizational governance. . . . The mutual contributions of youth and adults can result in a synergy, a new power and energy that propels decision-making groups to greater innovation and productivity. . . . We discovered that in this atmosphere youth and adults become more committed to attending meetings and create a climate that is grounded in honest appraisal, reflection and ongoing learning. (Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000, p. 7)

The Innovation Center study concluded that adults benefit from collaborating with young people in four primary ways:

- Having experienced the competence of youth firsthand, adults began to perceive young people as legitimate, crucial contributors to organizational decision-making processes.
- Working with youth enhanced the commitment and energy of adults to the organization.
- Adults felt more effective and more confident in working with and relating to youth.
- Adults came to understand the needs and concerns of youth. They became more attuned to programming issues, making them more likely to reach outside the organization and share their

new knowledge and insights. They gained a stronger sense of community connectedness. (Zeldin, et al., 2000, p. 8)

Achieving Balance of Power

Leon, 67, is a retired African-American who previously worked in a factory. Betsy, 17, is a white high school student. Under normal circumstances, it's unlikely the two would ever meet, much less interact and become friends—but both serve on the YAR board in Wood County, West Virginia. Their rapport is magical. This YAR site, like many across the country, shares power among the youth and adult board members. For example, two chairpersons, one youth and one adult, are selected, and two board secretaries are elected. The youth leaders are given the opportunity to assume responsibility, so that the adults perform their official roles only in the absence of the youth officer (CYAR, in press).

Naturally, there are challenges on the road to successful youth-adult partnerships. Like most long-lasting relationships, these partnerships don't happen overnight. Scheduling and logistics can be complicated for multigenerational grant-making boards and for grantee groups who design and implement service projects. Youth sometimes need training in how to participate equally and effectively in meetings, administrative duties, research, and other activities. Adults often need to learn how to speak less, create space, and share their knowledge and experience without overpowering the dialogue.

To make reciprocal mentoring work, training must be continuous and constant. Building a culture of trust and respect—often through group-building activities—is critical. Equally important is identifying clear expectations and discussing perceptions or stereotypes that each group has of the other. These challenges can and should be addressed at the onset, when partnerships are formed. At YARCI, for example, all board members undergo the same orientation, with tenured board members serving as one-on-one mentors for incoming board members. Age is not a factor; in many cases, the trainees are adults and the mentors are teenagers. Similarly, the YAR program in Pine River–Backus, Minnesota, is managed by adult co-coordinator Nolita Christensen and youth co-coordinator Andy Twiton, 15, who work equal hours for equal wages. Throughout the YAR network, meetings and committees are chaired just as often by youth

Finding Adults to Partner with Youth

YAR empowers young people in a variety of settings to enact powerful changes in their communities while gaining leadership skills, self-confidence, and a sense of connectedness. Recruiting dedicated adults to complete the partnership equation is often the biggest challenge. *Developing Communities in Partnership with Youth: A Manual for Starting and Maintaining Youth as Resources Programs* (2001) lists groups from which adult board members and advisors might be drawn:

- School officials—such as teachers, administrators, or counselors—who have immediate access to young people
- Correctional officers, teachers, and counselors who work with young people in juvenile justice settings and understand how to procure financial resources within the correctional framework
- Decision makers who influence local youth-related policies
- Public servants who can foster community-wide program support and assist in identifying sources of public funding
- Marketing professionals who can help market YAR programs to various parts of the community
- Businesspeople who have access to financial and donated resources, including professional services, materials, and equipment
- Funders and fundraisers who can help tap into available resources and provide guidance with proposal writing
- Trainers who can help facilitate meetings, build team spirit, plan and facilitate grant-writing workshops, and provide organizational management expertise
- Reporters, editors, and other media professionals who can provide assistance with media relations strategies
- Philanthropists who can lend expertise to YAR governance and incorporate the YAR message into their own work
- Parents who understand family dynamics and have vital access to young people
- Social service agency staff who can provide access to youth and adult volunteers and are often experienced proposal writers

as by adults. Training workshops for prospective grant applicants are often led concurrently by youth and adult mentors who not only profess the merits of youth-adult partnerships but also model the concept (CYAR, in press).

Pam Garza and Pam Stevens (2002) studied and cited the YAR model extensively in *Best Practices in Youth Philanthropy*:

Youth philanthropy aims to engage young people in the “real” action of community building with adults. This dynamic process fosters healthy relationships across generations with reciprocal commitments to share information, experience and resources. The resulting networks establish a pervasive sense of community membership, community pride and trust between youth and adults. (Garza & Stevens, 2002, p. 14)

Garza and Stevens suggest the following tips for successful youth-adult partnerships:

- In the initial orientation, include training on how partnerships work; continue to address this issue throughout the relationship. Both youth and adult members should regularly reflect on how their partnership is functioning and be ready to make changes.
- Create an atmosphere in which both youth and adults can discuss their real concerns or problems. Train boards to use parliamentary procedure so that all members can have their say.
- Give youth members the opportunity to provide leadership by, for instance, running meetings, reviewing proposals and visiting potential grantees, training new members, and making presentations.
- Give youth and adult partners the chance to reflect on the roles they have assumed in the group, changing their responsibilities as needed so that each individual’s strengths contribute as fully as possible to the group’s needs.
- Make important decisions by consensus of the group.

Diversity and Democracy

During the 2000 presidential elections, 22 million adult voters failed to show up at the polls. That same year, in St. Cloud, Minnesota, 3,600 students of

non-voting age turned out to cast their ballots as part of the Kids Vote Project, a national initiative designed to educate students in grades K–6 on the fundamentals of democracy. With a grant from the local YAR program at United Way, along with funding from local civic groups and the City of St. Cloud, roughly 200 youth activists partnered with an equal number of adult volunteers in the community to run kids’ polls concurrently with live elections in local precincts. Although kids’ votes didn’t officially count, their ballots were tallied and the results were broadcast live on a local radio station (CYAR, in press). Kids got a taste of what it means to be an American citizen, so that they are more likely to vote for real when the time comes.

“It was a very successful event, and the kids showed a great deal of insight,” said Eli Dean, a high school junior and member of the St. Cloud YAR board that approved funding for the project.

This board has shown me many things about life and myself. I have learned, first and foremost, that nearly anyone can be a leader if the dedication is there. I have also made a stronger connection with my community and have grown to have more concern for the community-wide picture than just the school I go to or the sports or activities I participate in. I recognize now that many stereotypes about teenagers and adults in the community are far from the truth. I have learned that adults and young people can work together constructively and with a very strong mutual respect for each other. (CYAR, in press)

Youth on Board (2001) observes that age diversity is an important consideration for boards that want to embrace multiple voices and perspectives. Age diversity, like cultural and ethnic diversity, fosters a rich, collaborative environment of mutual respect, open-mindedness, and empowerment. Multigenerational partnerships can lead to healthier, stronger communities by nurturing better leaders, collaborators, and thinkers. The process starts with engaging youth and adults together in joint problem solving in the context of real communities. For the success of our communities and of our democratic society, we must bring all members of society to the table if we are going to effect community change.

References

- Center for Youth as Resources. (2001). *Developing communities in partnership with youth: A manual for starting and maintaining Youth as Resources programs*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Center for Youth as Resources. (in press). *Optimizing youth as resources: Ideas for successful programming*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Farkas, S., & Johnson, J. (1997). *Kids these days: What Americans really think about the next generation* [Electronic version]. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved May 27, 2003, from <http://www.publicagenda.org/aboutpa/pdf/Kids99.pdf>.
- Garza, P., & Stevens, P. (2002). *Best practices in youth philanthropy*. Basehor, KS: Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth.
- Hira, L. (2001, Winter). Youth voice. Putting the "You! Act!" in youth activism. *Outlook, the newsletter of Youth as Resources*.
- Independent Sector. (1996). *Volunteering in America*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector/Gallup.
- Pittman, K. (2000). Balancing the equation: Communities supporting youth, youth supporting communities [Electronic version]. *CYD Journal*, 1(1). Retrieved May 27, 2003, from <http://www.cydjournal.org/2000Winter/pittman.html>.
- Princeton Survey Research. (1998). *Do something: Young people's involvement survey*. Princeton, NJ: Author.
- Scales, P., Benson, P., & Mannes, M. (2002). *Grading grown-ups 2002: How do American kids and adults relate?* Minneapolis: Search Institute. Retrieved September 14, 2003, from <http://www.search-institute.org/norms/gg2002.pdf>.
- Youth on Board. (2001). *14 points: Successfully involving youth in decision making* (2001). Somerville, MA: Youth-Build USA.
- Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A. K., Topitzes, D., & Calvert, M. (2000). *Youth in decision making* (2000). Madison, WI: Innovation Center/Tides Center, University of Wisconsin Extension.

About the Author

Shuan Butcher is director of the Center for Youth as Resources in Washington, DC, a national organization that connects youth to their communities through local Youth as Resources (YAR) programs, which engage youth as problem solvers, partners, and stakeholders in positive community change. Butcher has published *Inspiration to Serve*, a book of quotations about kindness, caring, and giving. In 2001, he received the national All-AmeriCorps Award for Continued Commitment to Service from the Corporation for National Service.

In Addition Afterschool Mathematics Program Principles, Practice, and Pitfalls

by Judith McVarish and
Patricia Birkmeier



Studio in a School

Afterschool math hours are most often spent on homework help, tutoring, drill, and test-preparation with instructors who may not be certified teachers or mathematics educators (National Research Council, 2001; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000). While such “extra math help” may be of value, it is unreasonable to expect students to enjoy learning experiences based on workbook-style exercises.

The In Addition project, a program of New York University’s Steinhardt School of Education, re-envisioned afterschool math. We seek to engage children in learning mathematics that is about curiosity, questions, and intrigue, incorporating inquiry-based mathematical learning into the urban community. This paper reflects on the program’s founding principles and on what we have learned in our first year of implementation: how we worked to shape our daily practice around inquiry-based math learning in the context of the urban community and the pitfalls we encountered along the way.

Classroom Math Learning

The reform movement in mathematics education (National Research Council, 1989; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1991, 2000) provides a clear vision of mathematical learning. It includes creating learning opportunities that engage students so that they both feel confident in their ability to solve mathematical problems and recognize mathematics as relevant in their everyday lives. The shifts being called for include building mathematical communities where students present, question, and defend ideas and thinking, with an emphasis on logic, problem solving, and reasoning over memorization, procedural thinking, and right answers.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000) posits that mathematical understanding increases when students are engaged in real-life, problem-based learning. The

McVarish, J., & Birkmeier, P. (2003). In Addition Afterschool Mathematics Program: Principles, Practice, and Pitfalls. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 44–51.

National Research Council (NRC, 2001) recommends providing students with opportunities to investigate ideas collaboratively as a community of learners in order to discover multiple strategies that lead to a deeper understanding of mathematics. Collaborative questioning and conversations can also contribute to a sense of shared learning that reduces the competitive inclinations often associated with a traditional learning environment. Steven Levy (1996) suggests, “Asking questions promotes an interest in the ‘Other,’ acting as a balance to the self-absorption and the self-centeredness that so pervades our culture” (p. 37).

Many elementary schools are not afforded such learning “luxury.” “Surveys of U.S. teachers have consistently shown that nearly all their instructional time is structured around textbooks or other commercially produced materials, even though teachers vary substantially in the extent to which they follow a book’s organization and suggested activities” (NRC, 2001, p. 36). In responding to a 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics assessment, teachers reported that fourth graders were usually tested in mathematics once or twice a month. About one-third of the children took tests once or twice a week, even though more frequent testing was associated with lower achievement (NRC, 2001, p. 40). Over 90 percent of these teachers reported that they gave considerable emphasis to facts, concepts, skills, and procedures; only 52 percent focused on reasoning processes and even fewer, 30 percent, on communication.

Often teachers explain the disparity between mathematics reform goals and the realities of the classroom as “not having enough time” to help students discover mathematics. Sometimes curriculum and testing pressures, fueled by an ever-increasing mantra of accountability based on standardized tests (Eisner, 2003), place rigid teaching and learning expectations on teachers and students. While rigid adherence to curriculum is meant to help students achieve higher test scores, national results show that this emphasis is not work-

ing (Eisner, 2002). The cost, however, is a loss of joy about learning mathematics that not only decreases learning potential, but also produces mathematics anxiety and frequently leaves students with a view that mathematics is a discrete set of skills with no relevance to their lives. Mathematics learning then becomes rote and compliant memorization of facts and procedures in which students merely plug in a formula to get the desired answer to an isolated, irrelevant question.

What would it look like if the afterschool hours were used to tie students’ interest in their community with mathematics learning?

Art: *Studio in a School*



The Need for Afterschool Programs

According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1992), over 17,000 organizations in the U.S. provide afterschool programs to children. These include organizations such as Girl and Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and various community-based programs. These programs traditionally focus on sports and recreation, homework, and childcare. Some programs have a more specific focus, such as remedial tutoring in basic skills to improve test scores or enrichment activities for gifted and talented students (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992).

With their many different foci, afterschool programs have one thing in common: All are intended to keep

children safe and supervised while their parents are at work. Eight million children ages 5–14 are in need of care during the afterschool hours. Unsupervised children are more likely than supervised children to use drugs or to become parents. The juvenile crime rate triples between 3:00 and 6:00 PM, and young people are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a non-family member during this part of the day (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2000).

Not only are children who attend an afterschool program kept safe, but they also build social skills, enhance peer relationships, improve their grades, and suffer from fewer behavior problems in school and at home than students who do not attend. Vandell and Posner (1999) found that afterschool activities can have emotional benefits for children. They concluded that children who have more social connections during the afterschool hours are better adjusted than those who do not. Such children receive better grades and demonstrate stronger work habits (Vandell & Posner, 1999). Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative and learn to handle conflicts more effectively when they are involved in a structured activity after school (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2000).

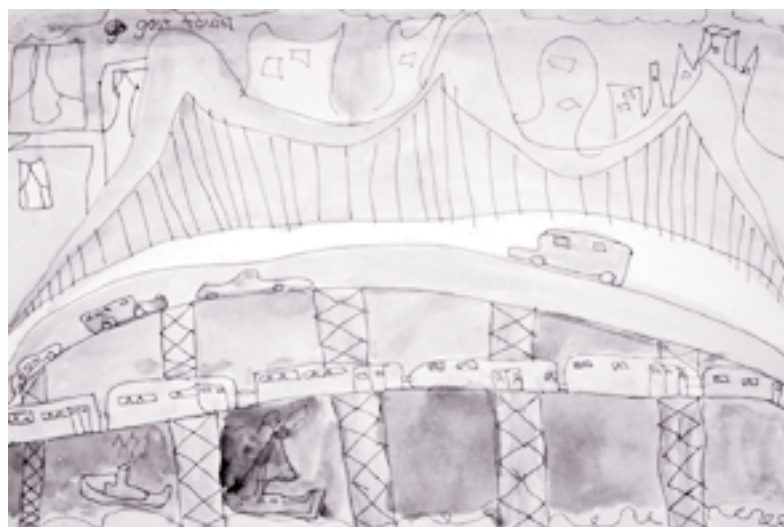
The In Addition program was created not only to meet the general need for afterschool programming but more specifically to help children both to build their mathematics problem-solving abilities and to feel connected to their environment. What would it look like if the afterschool hours were used to tie students' interest in their community with mathematics learning?

How the In Addition Project Works

Context

In Addition is situated in a public elementary school in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a neighborhood with one of the highest concentrations of immigrants in the nation. The school's population of 529 students

consists of Asian, Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and White students. The majority, 57 percent, are Hispanic; Black and Asian students comprise 35 percent of the school's population. From this population, we randomly selected 21 out of 46 interested students through a lottery system, taking seven students each from the third, fourth, and fifth grades. We did not limit the opportunity to distinct populations such as gifted or at-risk students, because we wanted to ensure



A typical day in the In Addition program last year began with a daily graphing question followed by discussion. For example, the following sentence was presented on a magnetic board: "I would rather travel by . . . car, bike, train, airplane, boat, motorcycle, subway, bus, or other." Art: *Studio in a School*

a heterogeneous group. The only criterion for acceptance was a commitment to attend two hours a day, four days a week, from September to May.

The In Addition project team is comprised of an associate professor and a graduate student from New York University specializing in mathematics education, as well as an environmental education consultant. Teaching responsibilities are shared among them.

Combining the recommendations of the NRC and the NCTM, In Addition aims to facilitate the teaching and learning of mathematics outside of classroom constraints such as high-stakes testing and grades. Though basic math skills are important, we are committed to studying the experience of children who learn mathematics when the motivation to learn comes from within; when the quest to satisfy curiosity is honored; when ideas can evolve and percolate and bring

forth insight, wonder, and understanding; when everyone—children, teachers, parents, and community members—is involved. The program uses students' questions and interests to guide them in mathematical investigations linked to their neighborhood. Students help each other become more aware of and connected to their community by examining their world through the lenses of their diverse backgrounds. Parent participation, through workshops and retreats, provides both a support system for students and links among home, school, and community.

A typical day in the In Addition program last year began with a daily graphing question followed by discussion. For example, the following sentence was presented on a magnetic board: "I would rather travel by . . . car, bike, train, airplane, boat, motorcycle, subway, bus, or other." Students placed tiles with their initials on them in their chosen category to create a graph on the magnet board. The ensuing discussion involved issues of time, destination, budgets, companions, experience, and purpose of travel. The graphing discussion was followed with a literature read-aloud. Students then began working on their small-group projects. The Bridge Group was building a bridge, using paper and masking tape, that would hold a five-pound weight; the People and Cultures Group was using the Internet to map migration patterns of people in their community from their original homelands; the Water Group was analyzing survey results on student water usage; and the TV Group was figuring out how to represent their data results from previous interviews. We closed the day by discussing the groups' progress, challenges, and successes, as well as identifying new questions that were emerging for investigation.

In Addition Afterschool Learning Principles

Our beliefs about how children learn, powered by our experiences as mathematics educators and by ideas from the literature, provided the framework on which we shaped our ideas about integrating inquiry-based math learning with the urban community. The result was the In Addition Afterschool Learning Principles:

1. Children learn when they are engaged and fascinated.
2. Children learn when they share their ideas and think with others in a community of learning.
3. Children learn when their learning is embedded in themselves, their homes, and their communities.

1. Children learn when they are engaged and fascinated.

Encouraging children to explore things they wonder about and to think about new questions creates a cycle of excitement. Instead of being drudgery, learning becomes an enjoyable, satisfying experience that begs to be repeated over and over again in a variety of new circumstances (Dewey, 1916). We offered children a variety of opportunities to explore their urban neighborhood: its bridges, parks, rivers, cultural communities, historical landmarks, and local businesses. Their investigations included interviews, surveys, observations, experiments, and mapping. On bridge field trips the children became curious about why people walked across the bridge, which led to a series of bridge interviews.

The following journal entry represents one student's learning experience:

Student Journal Entry (1/14/2003)

We had a lot of fun doing our interviews. We had five questions that we wanted to ask people on the bridges. I held the video camera and Kayla asked the questions to the people passing by. It was hard to get them to stop, though. Some people actually ignored us when we tried talking to them. Now, that's just rude! Most of the people we did talk to were visiting and it was their first time walking over the Brooklyn Bridge. One person said that they came all the way from Italy to see New York City. And one man said that he crosses the bridge every day to go to work. That bridge is so long and it was so cold out there, I would never want to cross it every day.

The Bridge Group used these interviews to gain insight into how people use the city's bridges. New questions arose through this investigation, as the students began to discuss the likelihood that their classmates had ever walked across the bridge. Such an investigation using data collection and analysis is closely aligned with the NCTM Data Analysis and Probability Standard (2000) recommending that students develop and evaluate inferences and predictions based on data.

2. Children learn when they share their ideas and think with others in a community of learning.

Building urban learning communities of trust (Ennis & McCauley, 2002; Wayne, 2002) leads to socially and experientially constructed learning that enhances people's ability to discuss ideas, develop reasoning

capabilities, and establish a habit of collaborative problem posing and solving. A learning environment in which respect for the thinking of all is the norm allows students to think about things from new perspectives. By pushing to ideas and solutions they had not thought about before, children and adults develop self-confidence and cultivate a sense that problems are not insurmountable.

Our main strategy for building such a community of trust was a weekly mathematics investigation involving active dialogue and debate. Over time, as students shared their various solutions and problem-solving strategies, they began to see the value in multiple perspectives and to appreciate the thinking of their peers.

The following excerpt written by Tricia, the teacher, shows the students in this type of exchange while working on “The Three Coin Problem.” Students pretended that they had three coins in their pocket: one dime, one nickel, and one penny. They reached into their pocket, recorded the type of coin they pulled out, and then replaced it in their pocket. This was repeated twice. Student groups then had to determine how many different three-coin combinations were possible. (Student names have been changed in all excerpts.)

Research Field Log 2/6/2003

The discussion began with Rosa’s group. Kayla and Rosa came to the board and said that they had 21 combinations. I asked the class to take a couple of minutes to really look at their work and raise their hand when they understood the pattern this group used to find all possible combinations. Kenny explained that they had opposites following one another, but he noticed that the pattern doesn’t continue in some places. Rosa and Kayla said that they didn’t realize that they used a pattern. Beth and Jenny commented that they used “trees” to organize their work and they also found 21 combinations.

José and James explained that they got 27 combinations. The students began to question José. Rosa wanted to know the original order in which he wrote the combinations down. She said that his pattern was visible going down but not across. José explained that he started with dime, dime, dime (DDD) and then moved to DDN, DDP, DNN, DPP, DND, DPD, DPN, DNP. That was his first list of nine. He said that he repeated that same pattern for the two other columns but started with pennies and nickels instead of dimes.

Jenny objected, stating that she followed a pattern too, but didn’t see what José had that she didn’t. Jenny walked to the board to compare the two solutions.

As the students shared solutions, they challenged each other’s thinking and reflected on their own thinking processes. They thus created a metacognitive awareness of their solutions, which helped them monitor their own problem-solving behaviors (Schoenfeld, 1992) and deepen their learning.

3. Children learn when their learning is embedded in themselves, their homes, and their communities.

By assisting students to seek pathways of discovery for their curiosities, we are equipping them to bridge their school mathematics learning to their lives outside school. Helping students to look at their neighborhoods to ask questions about what they see and know provides a social life for knowledge and meaning-making as an ongoing, collaborative process.

In November 2002, 42 students, parents, and younger siblings attended an all-day retreat one Saturday at New York University. The theme of the day was “Geometry All Around Us.” Parents and students worked in groups to build the tallest tower possible using only straws and masking tape. We then discussed how the groups worked together and what construction challenges they encountered. Several groups raised questions about why triangular structures seemed to be the strongest. A walk around the community in search of architectural designs and characteristics elicited further questions and theories about geometric construction. The real-life examples provided an opportunity for the students and their families to think critically not only about the straw structures they had built but also about the geometry inherent in the world around them.

Research Field Log (11/2/2002)

Judy: What did you notice on your walk?

Jenny’s mom: All the scaffolding had diagonal bars just like the structure we built. I think it’s about creating triangles.

Kenny: But buildings are rectangles.

Kayla’s mom: It’s like I tell my daughter, it’s the foundation that matters the most—what holds it up. It might be that the base of buildings have more triangles in them than what we can see above ground.

Rosa’s dad: That’s interesting because we saw the construction over on the other side of the park and all the

walls above ground also had diagonal supports. So those supports are in between the walls, which we can't see.

Kenny's brother: I don't think it's necessarily the triangles, but it just has to do with angles. Like the fire escapes are all angular so they have a zigzag-type shape to them.

This vignette illustrates Milbrey McLaughlin's (2000) notion of learning from community involvement. McLaughlin posits that knowledge is socially constructed and involves higher-order concepts created in the lives and heads of those who want to know. This kind of knowledge carries over into a lifelong sense of empowerment and confidence in dealing with the complexities of life.

Pitfalls

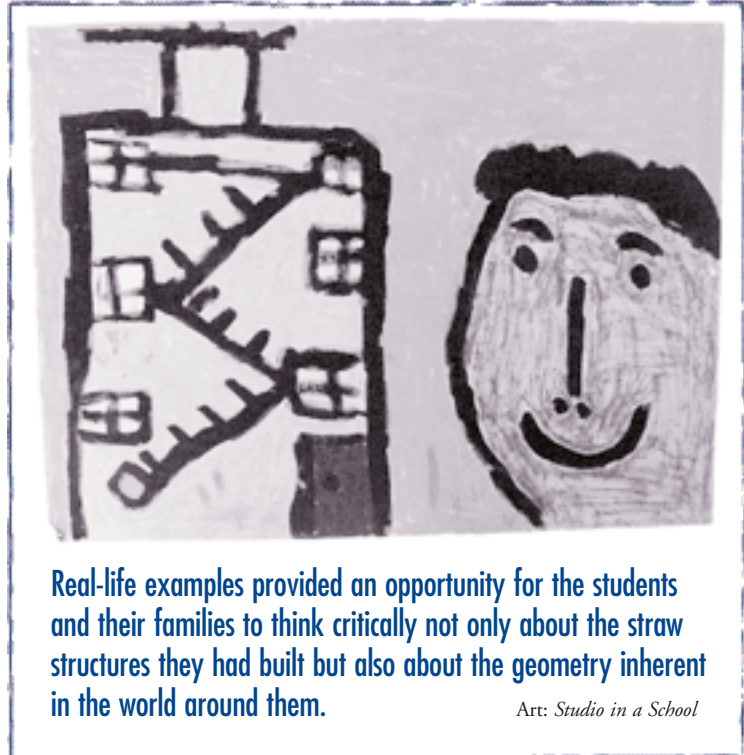
Reflecting on our Afterschool Principles in practice after one year of operation, we find that our vision encountered unexpected pitfalls. The following real-world factors created temporary challenges to implementation:

- The pervasiveness of high-stakes testing
- School homework policy
- Children's need for correct answers

Although these pitfalls can be overcome, they caused concern, and, in some cases, required us to adapt the In Addition program.

Testing Is Pervasive

We intentionally designed In Addition to help children learn in a test-free context. We created a community of learning that allowed students to ask questions, follow their individual interests, and seek their own solutions. What we did not expect was the way testing hovered over our community. The forces in education and city politics that emphasize accountability in the form of "passing the test" made it impossible to escape the power of testing over the learning process. Early in September—after we had articulated our "No Test Prep" mantra several times to the school's principal and assistant principal and gained their agreement—the assistant principal handed us the fourth-grade test preparation booklet and suggested that we design afterschool lessons to "cover"



those skills. We chuckled and put the booklets away someplace, still unaware that they signaled that more testing mania would follow.

In March, In Addition students began announcing that they would not be able to attend the project every day because they had to get tutoring for the upcoming tests. The school had set up test preparation sessions after school, assigning students to particular days, times, and subjects for their tutoring—and sending a powerful message about what learning is and what counts. One parent even told us her child would not be returning until April because the child needed *math* tutoring.

One way we began to counter the message that only the test matters was to incorporate testing discussions in our bimonthly parent workshops. We talked about how to reduce the stress of testing, offered test-taking strategies, and raised awareness of the impact of high-stakes testing. As we move into our second year, we continue to work to ameliorate the test syndrome without destroying children's and parents' faith in their school.

Homework Dominates

We did not include homework help in our project design, nor did we assign homework. From the very first day, In Addition students wanted to know why

they couldn't do their homework. We were not surprised to find that the children's math homework consisted of computational, one-answer, short-response workbook problems. Spelling homework often involved writing words three times each and putting the words into sentences. Reading and social studies homework consisted of comprehension questions.

One day our daily graphing question asked, "How much time do you spend doing homework a night?" A majority of students answered that they spent an hour to an hour and a half on homework each night. The following excerpt illustrates the pressure they felt.

Research Field Log 11/20/2002

Kim: Our teacher gives us eight homework assignments a night!

Jenny: Yeah! Sometimes she gives us time to do it in school, but I still have a lot when I go home.

Rosa: And my father only gives me a little time to do my homework when I get home because I have to be in bed at eight.

José: And sometimes it's just so much, but I don't even want to know what my mom would do if I didn't get my homework done. She just tells me I have to do it.

Two students dropped out of In Addition because the pressure of homework was too great. The reality was that students left the program at 5 PM facing an hour or two of homework before bedtime. By November, we decided that we had to respect the students' and parents' need to have some homework completed after school so the evening at home would be less stressful. After discussion with the children, we came to a compromise that extended the afterschool program for thirty minutes to allow time for homework. We spoke with the principal and assistant principal about the homework issue and explained our solution.

However, we stated clearly that this compromise was a short-term answer. Our ultimate goal is to engage teachers and administrators in discussions about how much homework and what kind of homework is necessary. We spoke with the assistant principal about setting a meeting to discuss the possibility of changing the school's homework policy for the following year. His response was neutral, and our plan is to pursue this goal later in the year. At this juncture, our strategy is working: The children seem less harried and afterschool attendance is not suffering.

Children's Lives Are about Answers

Children are naturally curious about their environment. The role of the adults in their lives is to nurture this curiosity and wonder. In our afterschool program, we want to guide children to form questions, make decisions, and come to conclusions about the world around them. As Steven Levy (1996) points out:

Questions are at the heart of thinking. We carry on an internal dialogue that forms thoughts and then questions them. Many children do not yet engage in this inner dialogue. They need someone else to play the role of questioner. One of our goals must be to help the students develop the habit of inner dialogue, asking questions of themselves to explore and develop their own thinking. (p. 36)

However, we are discovering that children's academic lives are more about answers than about questions, more about "getting it" than about wondering, and more about what someone else believes they need to know than about letting their curiosity compel them. Nowhere in the lives of our students is the focus on their own questions. The following conversation between the In Addition students and Tricia, the NYU graduate student, shows how the students view their own learning, offering a glimpse into their classroom experience.

Research Field Log (11/6/2002)

Tricia (NYU graduate student): What I am most concerned about, when we are solving a problem like this as a class, is not who is right and who is wrong. I am interested in looking at the solutions so we can understand the thinking involved in getting any solution. The point is to learn from one another, not to be competitive.

Miguel: Not gonna happen, Tricia. We are competitive 'cause a lot of us are in the same class and we want to be right. Our teacher tells us that, if we don't get the right answer, she lowers our grades and the same kids always get a lot right.

Tricia: Can someone have an important idea without having the right answer?

Natalie: Like when I was in José's group, I thought that I was better than him because he's not in the advanced class, but then I realized that he had good ideas too.

In our afterschool program, we work to change the attitudes of children who, like Miguel, have internal-

ized the message that getting the right answer is more important than are wanting to know or gaining deeper understanding. We are always discussing the types of learning that are valued by others in the children's lives in hopes of expanding their thinking.

Coping with the Challenges

The In Addition story continues to unfold and to have its impact on its leaders, the students, their parents, and their classroom teachers. Rome wasn't built in a day, and school change doesn't happen as rapidly as we would like. As John Dewey (1916) notes, "Growing is not something which is completed in odd moments; it is a continuous leading into the future" (p. 65). In our second year, we continue to grapple with the challenges that the school environment imposes on our afterschool program. Our strategy depends on keeping our vision intact and sticking to practices that promote our Afterschool Learning Principles.

References

- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1992). *A matter of time: Risk and opportunity in the non-school hours*. Report of the Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Eisner, E. (2002). The kind of schools we need. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(8), 576–583.
- Eisner, E. (2003). Questionable assumptions about schooling. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(9), 648–657.
- Ennis, C., & McCauley, T. (2002). Creating urban communities worthy of trust. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 34(2), 149–172.
- Levy, S. (1996). *Starting from scratch: One classroom builds its own curriculum*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McLaughlin, M. (2000). Community counts. *Educational Leadership*, 58(7), 14–18.
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (1991). *Professional standards for teaching mathematics*. Reston, VA: Author.
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (2000). *Principles and standards for school mathematics*. Reston, VA: Author.
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2000). *Making an impact on out-of-school time*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College.
- National Research Council. (1989). *Everybody counts: A report to the nation on the future of mathematics education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- National Research Council. (2001). *Adding it up: Helping children learn mathematics*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Schoenfeld, A. H. (1992). Learning to think mathematically: Problem solving, metacognition, and sense making in mathematics. In D.A. Grouws (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching and learning* (pp. 334–370). Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.
- Vandell, D., & Posner, J. (1999). After-school activities and the development of low-income urban children: A longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 35(3), 868–879.
- Wayne, M. (2002). Getting smarter. In D. Worsley (Ed.), *Teaching for depth: Where math meets the humanities* (pp. 124–134). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

About the Authors

Dr. Judith McVarish is an assistant professor of mathematics education in the Steinhardt School of Education, Department of Teaching and Learning, at New York University. She has worked in mathematics education for over three decades as a teacher, tutor, staff developer, and professor. Her research interests include how teachers and students develop and assess their mathematics understanding and how the afterschool setting can be used to increase elementary students' mathematics engagement and learning. She has also studied urban teachers' beliefs about obstacles to effective mathematics teaching.

Patricia Birkmeier has a master's degree in elementary mathematics education from New York University and is currently a fifth-grade teacher in the New York City public school system. She previously taught fifth- and seventh-grade mathematics in Massachusetts. She has served as project coordinator for the In Addition Initiative for two years. Her research interests include teaching for mathematics understanding through exploration and problem posing

rites of **passage**



© Images.com/CORBIS

Preparing Youth for Social Change

by Susan Wilcox, Khary Lazarre-White, and Jason Warwin

In the late spring, four young women, 16 and 17 years of age, and the two leaders of their Brotherhood/Sister Sol chapter travel 25 miles outside New York City to wooded land protected by a Native American group that offers this natural sanctuary for reflection, prayer, cleansing, and respite from urban stresses. The young women and their immediate elders have become sister-friends over several years of bonding, learning, exploring together, and daring to trust each other. They choose a clearing just beyond a brook and over a narrow wooden footbridge where they lay down a blue, white, and gold cloth: the “Sister Sol fabric.” They place atop it candles, a bundle of sage, framed Oaths of Dedication, and special objects the girls have selected to include in the ceremony: a photo, a piece of jewelry. Their ritual begins with the young sisters sitting on the fabric in a circle. Each reads her Oath of Dedication while the others listen closely, though they are familiar with each other’s statements, having helped honed them over several weeks. The

chapter leaders sit outside this intimate circle. The rite-of-passage ceremony is centered on the young sisters who are declaring their dedications and offering support to each other to achieve them.

After reading their oaths, each sister walks alone to a place where she feels comfortable, taking whatever time she needs to silently reflect on the words she so carefully and purposefully wrote. When everyone has returned, the chapter leaders blindfold the girls and direct them to the footbridge they will walk across, one by one, using their own wits and agility. Although the bridge has a handrail, they are instructed not to touch it but to walk in the middle at their own pace. They are scared, some more so than others, not sure if they trust their physical judgment. One young sister cautiously steps along, another nearly runs across as if to complete the challenge as quickly as possible, but each makes it over in her own way. Once everyone is on the other side, the girls remove their blindfolds and share their thoughts about the entire process. The chapter leaders listen to their young sisters express their fears about both creating and celebrating their Oath of Dedication. The young women say their uncertainty was assuaged by the knowledge

Wilcox, W., Lazarre-White, K., & Warwin, J. (2003). Rites of Passage: Preparing Youth for Social Change. *Afterschool Matters*, 3, 52–60.

that their chapter leaders were there to guide them, not allowing them to hurt their bodies or spirits and believing in their ability even when they were not sure of themselves.

Making Connections

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol helps young people develop into critical thinkers who are committed to themselves and to community change. In single-gender chapters throughout New York City, primarily in Washington Heights and Harlem, teenagers learn to embrace and embody the ideals of brotherhood and sisterhood and to appreciate their connections to each other, connections that supercede friendship, rivaling the ties of blood. A recent evaluation of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (Castle & Arella, 2003) indicated that these ideals were being fostered, finding that both members and staff equated the organization to a family.

A culture of connection is promoted in different ways. For example, The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is led by the Directors' Circle (DC), a leadership team—consisting of the authors of this article and the Associate Director—that provides our organizational vision and echoes the underlying core ideals of the organization: community, collaboration, equity. The DC models collective and cooperative decision-making for the greater good of the organization. It brings together diverse ideas and talents, allows directors to have shared responsibility, and provides time for them to work directly with youth. Monday through Friday, at around 3:15 pm, the Harlem brownstone that serves as our headquarters begins to stir with the energy of young people. Staff know our focus will shift from paperwork to checking in with members who need

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol helps young people develop into critical thinkers who are committed to themselves and to community change.

assistance or someone with whom to talk. These informal interactions, seemingly ordinary moments, promote reciprocal concern and demonstrate every day how much elders care about the young people.

With the ideals of brotherhood and sisterhood as a foundation, our members are empowered to make constructive choices about their lives, choices that

consider the people around them. Some may choose to dedicate themselves to community service or organizing, others may become less activists than people with clear career goals or good parents who understands their role in sustaining strong communities. Because of the challenging conditions many of our members face each day—underfunded schools, poor housing, limited job opportunities—all manners of “giving back” are necessary and meaningful. As we go about helping our members realize their individual potential and that of their communities, we use ritual and ceremony to mark and celebrate their accomplishments and growth.

Rites of Passage

Whether in a *quinceañera* for a Puerto Rican girl, nubileity rites for a Ghanaian girl, or a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* for a Jewish boy or girl, transition from childhood into adulthood is publicly recognized and feted around the world through ceremonies initiating children into the responsibilities and expectations of adulthood. These rites are as intensely personal as they are communal; individuals go through a self-transformation with support from their family, peers, and community.

Brotherhood/Sister Sol celebrations echo the traditions found in different cultures, in particular rituals of people from the African Diaspora. Through the ceremonies, our members, Black and Latino youth from the Lower East Side to the Bronx—Black American, Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Haitian, Honduran, Ghanaian—reflect on their familial traditions by learning about age-old practices. For example, we have our members stand or sit in a circle representing an unbroken chain, continuity, and equality (since no one can be at the head). Sometimes we include a physical challenge that, when met, gives the young people evidence of their capabilities. We ask our members to give their oath, which the group collectively and formally accepts; we use candles, silence, and drumming to convey the solemnity of the act and to promote self-reflection. Our members also help shape the ceremonies by contributing their own words and offering ideas about what should take place. The diversity of our members also enhances the ceremonies (and our programming overall) because,

in sharing aspects of their culture, they expand each other's knowledge about their commonalities and differences and learn that the African Diaspora is far-reaching, rich, and varied. One of our few members of Indian descent remarked that she has become more interested in learning about her culture by seeing how empowering it is for Blacks and Latinos to learn about theirs.

The experience of celebrating collective and individual achievement reinforces bonds among our members, deepening their appreciation of brotherhood and sisterhood. It also underscores the seriousness of their words and deeds, joins them to their elders by making clear the responsibilities and expectations of adulthood, and builds their confidence by highlighting their success. A new Sister Sol chapter was initiated during a Sister Sol retreat. The initiation ceremony stood out among the week's activities for several members, one of whom said, "It was so beautiful; the fact that these young girls wanted to be part of this bigger group made me proud and happy." Describing the significance of rites of passage, Somé (1998) discusses their personal and public implications:

Whether they are raised in indigenous or modern cultures, there are two things that people crave: the full realization of their innate gifts, and to have these gifts approved, acknowledged, and confirmed . . . This implies that our own authority needs the fuel of external recognition to inspire us to fulfill our life's purpose. (p. 27)

With such social trends as an increased opportunity to participate in higher education, marriage coming later in life, and the high cost of housing, the important life changes that signify a person moving from childhood to adulthood (Feldman & Elliott, 1990) are less pronounced. Young people may therefore not receive public recognition and approval of their accomplishments and "innate gifts," acknowledgments that promote the sense of self-empowerment of which Somé speaks. The leaders of Brotherhood/Sister Sol think it is crucial to help youth to grasp the significance of becoming a man or woman in order to help our members negotiate this all-important transition while they envision a world in which they want to live. In their words, from their Oaths of Dedication:

I am a woman who stands for peace, equality, strength, respect and the ability to just be me.

(Kewanna Ross, EleLoLi: The Pages Sister Sol Chapter)

From this day on I dedicate myself to this oath to achieve my goals and perfect my weaknesses. I will always strive to do my best and be the best I can. I will live up to my word! (Bryan Frans, Invincible/Untouchable Brotherhood Chapter)

A Comprehensive Program for Developing Young Leaders

Before our members can celebrate their achievements, they must first realize them. This process is ignited in different ways in each of the five programs we conduct and continues as our members move on to college, work, and raising families.

1. The Brotherhood/Sister Sol Development Program (BSDP) is described in this article. BSDP members also participate in the other programs listed below.
2. The After School Program for students ages 7–21 takes place each weekday at our brownstone, where we offer enrichment activities, mentoring, and academic assistance. We also facilitate Youth Council, a leadership group comprising members from our various programs; Lyrical Circle, a collective that writes positive and reflective poetry and spoken word; and Young Sisters and Young Brothers groups, which introduce our youngest members to the BSDP model.
3. The Liberation Program prepares a cadre of youth activists during the annual Summer Liberation School, where they learn about local and global social movements and the strategies and struggles to implement them. They then create and implement organizing campaigns.
4. The Summer Leadership Program engages our members and community residents in our International Study in Africa and Latin America, Summer Day Camp, and Youth Employment and Opportunity Program (a job training and internship program).
5. The Community Outreach Program allows us to connect and work cooperatively with youth, parents, educators, community activists, and community-based organizations toward our common goal of youth and community empowerment. Members and staff give presentations and facilitate work-

shops; we also maintain The Grapevine, a vast database of youth-serving organizations, and publish *Reality Check*, a bilingual newsletter.

Together our five programs encompass a holistic and comprehensive approach to youth development: In varying degrees, each of our programs infuses values of brotherhood and sisterhood that are the crux of our rites-of-passage programming. Members of our BSDP, however, go through the most intense and prolonged exploration of self in relation to historical, cultural and social issues.

Moving toward Adulthood in the Brotherhood/Sister Sol Development Program

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol Development Program establishes single-gender chapters at public secondary schools, working with youth over the course of their high school careers. Chapters are facilitated by two chapter leaders: skilled and dedicated young professionals who serve on a full-time basis as mentors, teachers, confidants, role models, and friends, and who are the link among members, schools, parents, and The Brotherhood/Sister Sol. Before being hired, chapter leaders go through an intensive screening process in which their ideas about education, race, gender, class, and other salient issues are explored. They demonstrate their facilitation skills and rapport with young people by conducting a workshop on a topic of their choosing, which allows members to assess the candidate.

Chapters consist of 10–20 youth in the same grade or two consecutive grades, beginning with the youngest grade in the school. They include youth who excel in school and those on the verge of dropping out, youth who have contact with only one parent and those from two-parent households. As chapter members move up in grade, chapters leaders stay with them through their graduation from high school and beyond. By partnering with schools—the common ground where youth, families, and educators come together—The Brotherhood/Sister Sol envelopes young people in a web of support necessary to building healthy and whole lives. For example, chapter leaders attend parent-teacher meetings, serve on exhibition committees, mediate conflict, and generally provide an outside perspective. We intentionally work in small schools because they offer flexible scheduling; student-centered, collaborative, and interactive approaches to youth development and curriculum; and easy access to their staff.

Program Processes

The BSDP has three components: brotherhood/sisterhood building, critical thinking/knowledge of self/global awareness, and rites of passage.

Brotherhood/Sisterhood Building

Developing a strong chapter begins with creating an environment that fosters honest exchange; the success of a chapter depends on developing and maintaining trust and respect among a group of young people and their chapter leaders. Chapters meet once a week for approximately two hours. Icebreakers, games, field

The BSDP helps young people build authentic relationships within and across genders while providing them with a space where they can openly explore and share, undistracted by the opposite gender.

The BSDP helps young people build authentic relationships within and across genders while providing them with a space where they can openly explore and share, undistracted by the opposite gender. Chapters are designed to promote open exchange and strong group identity so that members see themselves as a collective of individuals, all with a positive self-image, who learn with and support each other. Feldman and Elliott (1990) recognize how important peer relationships are during adolescence and, accordingly, the value of exposing young people to positive peer pressure.

trips, writing, and discussion help members explore issues of trust, respect, and leadership. The chapter comes up with a collective mission statement; definitions for *woman/sister/leader* or *man/brother/leader*; and a chapter name. One Brotherhood chapter chose *Akoma*, an Ashanti word meaning *heart*, for their name. A Sister Sol chapter created the name *EleLoLi: The Pages*. *EleLoLi* stands for *Elements of Love and Life*; *Pages* refers to each member being a page in the chapter. The chapter name, statement, and definitions become the core values each member struggles to

achieve and the process by which they discover the power of brotherhood and sisterhood: unconditional love and support. Each year chapters review their words, reshaping them as their ideals mature. Some chapters initially created separate definitions for *man*, *brother*, and *leader*. They later merged the separate definitions into one, realizing that to be a man is to be a brother is to be a leader.

Critical Thinking/Knowledge of Self/Global Awareness

The ultimate goal of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is to help youth develop the ability to analyze complex issues and make informed, sensitive decisions. These skills are essential if our members are to fully understand themselves and the world they have inherited. Each week members learn about and discuss topics from our 10-point curriculum:

1. Mind, Body, and Spirit
2. Leadership Development
3. Pan African and Latino History
4. Sexism and Misogyny
5. Sexual Education and Responsibility
6. Drugs and Substance Abuse
7. Conflict Resolution and Bias Reduction
8. Community Service and Responsibility
9. Political Education and Citizenship
10. Educational Achievement

Exposure to cultural events and conferences helps broaden members' worldview, wilderness retreats expose them to nature's beauty and tranquility, and college tours expand their knowledge of educational options. Members regularly reflect on diverse issues in writing. Publication of their work in *The Brotherhood Speaks* and *Voices of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol* enables them to see the effect of their words on others, again joining self-reflection to the public sphere.

Rites of Passage

The last phase of BSDP begins with an intensive process of analyzing self, community, and the world, culminating in the creation of an Oath of Dedication, a personal testimony of the beliefs, goals, and lifetime commitments each member will strive to live by. Those who complete the oath—which includes almost all of our members—take on a leadership role by facilitating sessions, recruiting and initiating new members, and guiding younger members.

The three components of the BSDP overlap. Bonding within the chapter and learning and reflecting on our 10 curriculum issues are ongoing processes. Elements of rites-of-passage activities also occur throughout, although they are most apparent in the process of creating a mission statement, the definitions, and an Oath of Dedication.

Chapter Mission Statement and Definitions for Brother/Sister, Man/Woman, and Leader

Many of the youth we work with are exposed from an early age to violence, drugs, poverty, misogyny, racism, and death, yet they are denied the supports *all* youth need. They are subjected in their communities and in the media to negative images of masculinity, in which men are expected to be “hard”; femininity, in which women are seen as sexual objects; and other identities, such as the notion that caring about school is not “being down.” These messages potentially promote self-destructive behavior characterized by low educational achievement, criminal involvement, early pregnancy, gang banging, and joblessness. Creating a mission statement and definitions for brother/man/leader or sister/woman/leader helps our members to deconstruct messages they glean from society about who they are expected to be as women, men, sisters, brothers, and leaders, and to redefine these roles for themselves. The process of gaining consensus, including everyone's voice and considering possible contradictions takes time. Chapter members struggle with such questions as:

- If being a man means you have to support your family financially, are you no longer a man if you lose your job?
- Is motherhood or marriage a necessary aspect of being a woman?
- Does being a leader mean you need followers or people you influence?

Only after spending several weeks refining their statements and definitions do members feel ready to literally sign their name to them. Each mission statement and definition is unique, yet all express similar ideas about what comprises positive and healthy communities: respect, trust, tolerance. Where the mission statements articulate a global perspective, the definitions are more personal in speaking to specific human qualities such as strength, leadership, and intelligence. The statements are decisive and optimistic, actually flying

in the face of much of what our members are learning about and experiencing in their communities. Even knowing that the path to achieving their goals is multifaceted and long, our members maintain hope for a world that includes their values.

Every chapter's mission statement and definitions are hung around the mantle on the first floor of our brownstone. They are a tangible and daily reminder of the force of the crafted and affirmed declaration, reiterating to our members not only the commitments of their own chapters, but those of their brothers and sisters. The motivation to live up to their ideals is thus multiplied.

Oath of Dedication

Brotherhood/Sister Sol members who have been learning together and involved in self-reflection for at least two years go on to write an Oath of Dedication. They are now able to identify what they personally stand for and to strive to achieve it. Completing an oath requires taking public ownership of their individual beliefs and aspirations. Chapter leaders introduce the activity to their members by setting a serious tone for the session, describing what an oath is and reviewing previous steps in the rites-of-passage process: statements, definitions, study of Brotherhood/Sister Sol curriculum issues, self-reflection, exposure to new experiences. Chapter leaders point out that they have not gone through this process. While many staff keep journals, writing an Oath of Dedication requires not only articulating one's future plans but also stating them to the world. Few adults have gone through this process. Chapter leaders let members know that they are being asked to complete a very difficult task, one the leaders too would have benefited from doing.

Members who are ready to write an oath then step forth. They draft oaths and bring them in to read to each other. Because they know each other well, they are able to offer constructive feedback and to point out an overlooked characteristic, perspective, or goal they know their sister or brother to have. They discuss the tone and flow of the oath. Chapter leaders work closely with each member, helping each one craft a statement he or she is proud of for both its content and its quality. This process continues for about three months until the oath is finalized. In a ceremony like that of the young sisters described earlier, each chapter then celebrates its accomplishment and commitments, and each member receives a framed Oath of Dedication.

Mission Statements

Knowledge of Self Brotherhood Chapter

Our Mission in The Brotherhood is to be positive, to build confidence within each other, and to stand up for our brothers no matter what the situation. There is no racism in The Brotherhood. We respect each other's cultures and beliefs. We will achieve in school and reach our goals. We are not hypocrites in The Brotherhood. We will talk about issues in our community and seek to change our negative ways of thinking to positive. We will gain as much knowledge as we can because our power is in what we know: Knowledge of Self.

Sol-Axé Sister Sol Chapter

We are beautiful young women in every way. We are sisters no matter our ethnicity, culture, background, shape, or size. We retrieve our strength from our unity. In respecting our bodies and souls, we honor and cherish each other. Each of us has dreams and the ability to make them come true by setting goals each and every day. Love, trust, and acceptance form Sister Sol. We are the first and next generation of Sister Sol, leading the way for other sisters. My Sister, Myself.

Definitions

EleLoLi: The Pages Sister Sol Chapter

A Sister, Woman, Leader is . . . proud of herself and is no one's object. She will rise together with other women, accept their differences and the ties that bind them as one. She knows how to love herself: defines, cares and can be there for herself. She helps others to understand who she is. She lets no one or nothing stand in the way of where she wants to go or who she wants to become. She will become the woman that other women look up to and admire.

Akoma Brotherhood Chapter

A Man, Brother, Leader is: persistent, patient, intelligent, aware of his surroundings, has self-respect and respects others, open minded and cares for others, confident, a positive role model, responsible, seeks to find his purpose in life, is cooperative, loyal and righteous, and is someone you can confide in.

An excerpt from an oath by Jose Lora of Invincible/Untouchable Brotherhood Chapter begins by articulating the significance of his transition from adolescent to adult. He recognizes the inherent struggles of growing up but is willing to make commitments about how he will approach his future.

My Oath for Life and Peace

There comes a time in the life of every person when they make the transition from a child to an adult. With this transition comes certain inevitable choices and struggles that one must go through, that determines their future. My struggle into manhood, although difficult and in progress, I have acknowledged and embraced. By realizing what I'm going through in my life and its significance to my future, I have entered a new light—an awakening.

Through this awakening I've been able to look at myself and figure out who I am. This awakening has led me to become a visionary. Not only can I see a future made by me, but a better future for others. I envision the life I want to live and how I can bring this vision into reality.

Carmen Constant of the Sol-Axé Sister Sol Chapter begins her oath with a poem that forcefully expresses her goals and motivations. Her essay elaborates on these perspectives.

I am committed to myself because I always
put myself first in anything I do.
I'm committed to my sisters, by helping them with
any problem the best way I can.
I am committed to learning and teaching my
wisdom to others.
I am committed to living my life in the right way,
not how someone tells me to live.
I am committed to setting goals everyday,
and letting nothing stand in my way of
accomplishing them.

An excerpt from the oath of Kendall Calyen of the Invincible/Untouchable Chapter indicates the influence The Brotherhood/Sister Sol has had on the development of his beliefs. Later on in his essay, Kendall mentions the struggles he faces but says that he believes his chapter's mission statement and definitions will guide him through life.

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol has helped me to develop many of my beliefs about how I should live my life.

I intend to use this paper as written proof of my beliefs. It is my oath to stay true to myself.

I believe that being there for your family is important, as is setting an example for others and getting as much knowledge as possible. I promise that I will never be violent, there is too much violence and I don't want to be another statistic or stereotype. I want people to see me as an intelligent Black male who is going somewhere in his life Like everyone else I am not perfect and must work to achieve and overcome everything in my way. I hope to stay on course using my chapter's mission statement, and our definition of a brother, man, and leader. I realize how important it is to set example for those coming behind me.

Some oaths are stories or poems; most are more standard narratives. The oaths are a synthesis of our members' experiences in our rites-of-passage programming. In reflecting on his chapter's definitions, Kendall, currently a student at Antioch College, says, "This definition means to me that there is something I will live up to. It is something that came from my breath, something I believe in. It represents me."

Toward Social Change

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol evaluation (Castle & Arella, 2003) showed that almost all of our members had either participated in or expressed an interest in doing community service or organizing. Their interests spanned from giving back to The Brotherhood/Sister Sol to organizing in their communities to undertaking service activities in Africa and Latin America. Our members include co-creators of award-winning community gardens as well as organizers who are working to turn an abandoned building in Harlem into a community space. They have taught English as a second language in the Dominican Republic and worked on a school construction project in Ghana. On returning home from our most recent overseas program, the group initiated two projects on their own: sending a box of school supplies to a *bateye* (a poor rural community) in the Dominican Republic and writing and disseminating a petition on behalf of a Viequense activist who is facing a 15-year prison sentence.

Current and alumni Brotherhood/Sister Sol members serve on our board of directors (two of whom were selected by their peers to represent them), and they volunteer in our various programs. Two alumni are full-time staff. On their high school and college campuses, our members are leaders who hold execu-

tive positions in student clubs and have founded new student initiatives. Many of our members are the first in their family to attend college though they did not expect to graduate from high school. Those who decided not to go to college are raising their families. Young men are taking responsibility for their children though they may not have had a similar model to guide them as they were growing up, and young women are seeking to find their path or trying to bal-

Latina entitled to a better life? Was I influenced by my friends? Who was I? Who am I? Who will I become?" Following the attack of September 11, 2001, several Brotherhood members approached their chapter leaders and asked them for insight into why the attacks occurred. Their inquiry and desire for acquiring balanced understanding led two staff members to develop a three-part workshop on the topic. These examples, one quite personal and the other commu-

Perhaps the most lasting effect of our rites-of-passage experience is that it fosters deep and ongoing self-reflection in which young people see themselves (as we all are) as works in progress.

ance the demands of motherhood with their dreams as women, critically aware of the challenges imposed on their gender by society.

Research on resiliency in children contends that when youth believe they have some control over their lives and environment, they also have healthy aspirations and are motivated to achieve (Werner & Smith, 1989). This motivation, Werner and Smith (1989) argue—when combined with programming that reinforces bonds between youth and elders and among peers—gives deeper meaning to young people's lives and a reason for being committed not just to oneself but to others. Roach, Yu, and Lewis-Charp (2001) note that youth require secure and stable environments and relationships "that provide nurturing, standards, guidance, as well as opportunities for trying new roles, mastering challenges and contributing to family and community" (p. 4). The Brotherhood/Sister Sol has *preventative* programming that offers a safe space for our members to join and learn together, but we also facilitate *proactive* programming that creates opportunities for them to reflect on their ideas, then display and utilize their skills and knowledge.

Paolo Freire says that when historically oppressed people move toward organizing for change, "This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be praxis" (1997, p. 47). Beyond the litany of achievement, Brotherhood/Sister Sol members are showing signs of becoming thoughtful critical thinkers. Yomayra Caraballo, a Sister Sol member and currently a Hunter College student, asks herself: "Who was I three years ago? What were my views? Was I a

nity oriented, demonstrate that our members are becoming self-empowered by seeking to be articulate, knowledgeable, and proactive young people who give deep thought to the varied meanings of their experiences and aspirations.

The programming of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol basically speaks to the development of identity. Coté (1996) notes that people are shaped by the historical, cultural, and diverse social institutions—schools, family, community centers—we encounter: The specificity of our historical and cultural inheritance forms the basis for self-definition and provides the tools for development. Regardless of where in the world we grow up, adolescence can be described as the greatest period of change in our lives, encompassing puberty, changes in self-concept and social relationships, and maturing cognitive functions (Carnegie Quarterly, 1990). Adolescents are rigorously working to define who they are, a process fraught with emotional and physical changes and challenges (Carnegie Quarterly, 1990). In a report by UNICEF, an organization that advocates and provides support for programming for children all around the world, adolescence is characterized as:

. . . one of life's fascinating and perhaps most complex stages, a time when young people take on new responsibilities and experiment with independence. They search for identity, learn to apply values acquired in childhood and develop skills that will help them become caring and responsible adults. (2002, p. 1)

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol works with youth throughout their adolescence to provide a consistent,

stabilizing influence in their lives when they most need it. While we do not expect to turn out youth with specific perspectives, we are intentional about helping them identify with the idea of social change, however it manifests. When a Brotherhood /Sister Sol member becomes a productive member of his or her community, when he or she gives back to the community through service or activism, each degree of social participation is valid and necessary, and each has the potential to positively effect social change. Perhaps the most lasting effect of our rites-of-passage experience is that it fosters deep and ongoing self-reflection in which young people see themselves (as we all are) as works in progress. This perspective promotes ongoing and critical analysis of the self and of the larger environment, as well as the skills these young people need to apply their developing values.

References

- Castle, M. A., & Arella, L. R. (February, 2003). The Brotherhood/Sister Sol survey evaluation report. New York: Organizational Research & Development Associates.
- Carnegie Quarterly. (1990). Adolescence: Path to productive life or diminished future? *The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development: Work in Progress* 35, 1–2. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Coté, J. E. (1996). Sociological perspectives on identity formation: The culture-identity link and identity capital. *Journal of Adolescence* 19, 417–428.

- Feldman, S. S., & Elliott, G. G. (Eds.). (1990). *At the threshold, The developing adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Roach, C., Yu, H. C., & Lewis-Charp, H. (2001). Race, poverty and youth development. *Poverty & Race*, 10 (4), 3–6.
- Somé, M. P. (1998). *The healing wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through nature, ritual, and community*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- UNICEF (2002). Adolescence: A time that matters. New York: The United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF).
- Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1989). *Vulnerable but invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth* (2nd ed.). New York: Adams, Bannister and Cox.

About the Authors

Jason Warwin and Khary Lazarre-White are co-founders and co-directors of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol, creating the seeds of the program while seniors at Brown University and bringing it to New York City in 1995. Susan Wilcox, Ed.D., is a former co-director and current educational consultant of the organization, focusing on program, curriculum, and staff development. The authors' work has been recognized with the Long Walk to Freedom Award for continuing the work of 1960s civil rights activists, the Union Square Award from the Fund for the City of New York, and the Harlem Renaissance Award from the Abyssinian Development Corporation.

Studio in a School

For over 26 years, STUDIO IN A SCHOOL has enriched the lives of New York City's children with the creativity of the visual arts. Collaborating with teachers, STUDIO's professional artists integrate enriching art-making experiences with the academic curriculum. STUDIO works in public schools, childcare centers, and community organizations to help over 25,000 children each year discover their creativity through drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture.

STUDIO focuses exclusively on the visual arts: drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture and puppetry. This commitment has enabled the organization to develop a distinguished expertise in the field of arts education. Hundreds of thousands of children have experienced the excitement of looking, creating, and reflecting on their artwork as it relates to the world around them. STUDIO is proud to help children develop an awareness

of their creative potential and to enable them to boost their self-confidence through the artistic process.

Some highlights:

- STUDIO hires only professional artists to teach in its programs. Professional artists are well suited for teaching art, not only because they have extensive knowledge of the history and culture of art and strong technical skills, but also because they are able to model an artist's way of thinking and working.
- STUDIO programs are based on partnerships with teachers, students, administrators and caregivers. STUDIO believes that training, supporting and collaborating with those adults who help shape young people's lives is a key component of making art an integral part of education.

For more information about STUDIO IN A SCHOOL, visit www.studioinaschool.org.

Afterschool Matters Initiative

The Robert Bowne Foundation (RBF), seeking to have a long-term and substantial effect on the field of out-of-school education, launched several new initiatives to accomplish this mission. Afterschool Matters is one of the initiatives, the goals of which are to:

- Generate and disseminate research about community-based organizations serving youth during out-of-school hours
- Build a network of scholars studying community-based organizations serving youth
- Contribute to basic knowledge and the improvement of practice and policy in the area of community-based youth programs

Afterschool Matters/Occasional Papers

One of the projects of the Afterschool Matters Initiative is the journal *Afterschool Matters*, a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness of the field of afterschool education. The journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school hours, in addition to those engaged in research and in shaping policy. Articles for the journals are solicited from the field, and a range of academic perspectives are considered along with personal or inspirational narratives and essays, book reviews, artwork, and photographs.

The RBF Occasional Papers is a peer-reviewed series published twice a year. The goal of the Occasional Papers is to provide a venue for publishing research that explores key issues and topics in the practice and theory of afterschool programming, youth development, and learning during the non-school hours. In addition, the Occasional Papers address key policy issues in the area of youth development. The intended audience for this series includes researchers, university staff, afterschool program managers and practitioners, and policy makers. Prospective papers are solicited by the RBF.

Copies of both *Afterschool Matters* and the Occasional Papers are available on the RBF website, www.robertbownefoundation.org.

Research Grants/Research Fellowship

The RBF sponsors a national Research Grant competition. Four grants of \$10,000 are awarded to support either original empirical research in or about community-based youth programs during the non-school hours or research syntheses or policy analyses of community-based youth programs.

Now in its second year, the RBF Research Fellowship is dedicated to building the capacity of youth program staff to design and conduct research in the areas of youth development and education during the out-of-school hours. The goals of the Research Fellowship include generating and disseminating research in the area of education in community-based organizations serving youth during the out-of-school hours, building a network of scholars, contributing to basic knowledge and the improvement of practice, and informing policy in the area of community-based youth programs.

For more information about the RBF Afterschool Matters Initiative, contact

Sara Hill, Ed.D.
Research Officer
The Robert Bowne Foundation
345 Hudson St
New York, NY 10014
sara.hill@bowne.com
212.931.1895

CALL FOR PAPERS
AFTERSCHOOL MATTERS

Afterschool Matters, a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness in the field of afterschool education, is seeking material for all sections of the publication. Published by the Robert Bowne Foundation, the journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school hours, in addition to those engaged in research and shaping youth development policy.

SPRING 2005 Issue: Literacies in Afterschool Programs

Afterschool Matters welcomes submissions from a variety of disciplines that explore practical ideas for working with young people during the out-of-school hours. In addition, the journal seeks scholarly work that can be applied to or is based upon the afterschool arena. Articles from a range of academic perspectives will be considered, along with personal or inspirational narratives and essays, review essays, artwork, and photographs.

The theme for the **Spring 2005** issue is "Literacies in Afterschool Programs." By "literacies" we mean the multiple forms that literacy can assume. While including reading and writing, article topics can also include math, science, media, and computer literacy, as well as literacy embedded in other content areas. Some suggested article topics aligned with this theme include:

- The challenges and benefits of providing reading and writing instruction in the afterschool context. Should it look similar to or different from in-school instruction?
- What special features of the afterschool and youth development context support a rich literacy environment?
- Descriptions of innovative program activities that encourage literacy development. Such descriptions should address larger issues of literacy instruction in the afterschool context.

Submission Guidelines

- Deadline is May 15, 2004, for the fourth issue of *Afterschool Matters*, to be published in January 2005.
- Submissions should be double-spaced in 12-point font, including quotations and references, and submitted electronically or on a disk in Microsoft Word or Rich Text format.
- Submissions should not exceed 5,000 words.
- Include a cover sheet with the manuscript title, authors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- The names of the authors should not appear on the text, as submissions are reviewed anonymously by peers.
- Follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition, for reference style guidelines. Present important information in the text and do not use extensive footnotes or endnotes.

Queries on possible article topics are welcome. For inquiries or to submit articles, contact

Jan Gallagher, Editor
The Robert Bowne Foundation
345 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014
jgallagher@robertbownefoundation.org