

## Welcome

We are pleased to provide this special issue of *Afterschool Matters* to the attendees of the 2010 National Afterschool Association Convention in Washington, DC.

We are grateful to our partners Synergy Enterprises, Inc., WestEd, and the National Afterschool Association for their support of and contributions to this issue.

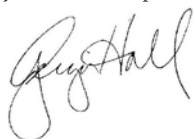
Professional development for out-of-school time and youth development practitioners is critical to delivering high-quality programs to children and youth. Across the country, local communities, cities, and states are conducting vital work in the areas of core competencies, training, certification, and credentialing. This convention is a timely opportunity to share that good work and the progress that has been made. This issue of *Afterschool Matters* brings together many examples of this professional development work and highlights the critical need to create a comprehensive professional development system that supports out-of-school time and youth development practitioners.

We open this issue with an interview with Sylvia Lyles, Ph.D., program director of the Academic Improvement Programs Group in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. She shares her vision for the role of the 21st Community Learning Centers in meeting the academic and developmental needs of children and youth and for the importance of staff development. In “Right Time, Right Place: Building an Online Learning Community for Afterschool Practitioners,” Y4Y colleagues introduce You for Youth, a user-centered web portal and learning community that includes multimedia learning modules. Attendees will have an opportunity to journey through this exciting web portal during the NAA Convention.

“Body and Soul” captures NIOST’s research findings on two professional development credential pilots in Massachusetts. It focuses on the connection between credential participation and quality program experiences for children and youth: how professional development can lead to change in participants’ knowledge, skill levels, attitudes, beliefs, and practice. In “Shared Research Dialogue: One College’s Model for Professional Development of Youth Practitioners,” Fusco and Espinet share their experience in developing and teaching a certificate program at York College, City University of New York. They highlight the value of action research and reflective practice as crucial components of professional development for out-of-school time and youth practitioners.

Marquart, Rizzi, and Parikh, in “Using E-learning to Train Youth Workers,” offer an effective model for overcoming familiar challenges to staff training such as limited resources, staff turnover, and multi-site programs. BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) has successfully implemented blended online and in-person training to train its summer program staff. In our last paper, “Enhancing Program Quality and Care through Supervision,” Olsen and Kowalski make the case for strengthening staff members’ capacity to supervise young people as they engage in afterschool activities.

We hope your experience at the 2010 National Afterschool Association Convention is memorable and that this issue of *Afterschool Matters* will contribute to the national discourse on professional development for the out-of-school time and youth development fields.



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*Afterschool Matters* is a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness in the field of afterschool education. Published by the Robert Bowne Foundation and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 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

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