Afterschool: The Natural Platform for Youth Development

"We can, and must, build on the extraordinary resources already in place: resources that are flourishing in some few instances, but that are usually underfunded, undervalued, and largely unknown; resources that are almost always run by underpaid staff and dedicated individuals and groups of volunteers. We must do everything that is within our power to do, so that all of today's adolescents enjoy equal opportunity to become the workers, parents, and leaders of tomorrow."

--Wilma S. Tisch, Co-Chair of Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs for the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

Youth Development Addresses the Needs of Youth

Since the 1900s, leaders of our nation have worked to address the needs of our society's children and youth. Social services, educational resources and health organizations have targeted the needs of youth. Every decade of the 20th century, the White House has brought together prominent scholars, social workers and community leaders to address the contemporary needs of youth. The emphasis of these events varied from President Theodore Roosevelt's 1909 White House Conference on Dependent Children addressing neglected and destitute youth to President Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1960 Golden Anniversary White House Conference On Children and Youth focusing on the impact of the nation's "moral decline" on youth, juvenile delinquency, school failure and juvenile drug use. While Roosevelt's efforts paved the way for The Children's Bureau, a federal agency promoting child welfare established in 1912, Eisenhower's conference resulted in no action despite 670 recommendations. As one scholar summarizes, "Some of the presidential gatherings were catalysts for significant and enduring reforms in child welfare, while others produced few lasting results."[1]

Despite this long history of youth programming, the youth development field is a relatively modern movement. It began in the late 1980s as research on prevention and intervention approaches in youth programming that did not attain desired results. Many publicly funded prevention or intervention programs assumed that the "problem" resulted from a fault or deficit in a young person rather than considering the complex environment. These prevention and intervention programs attempted to "fix" problems by offering youth

Principles of youth development, according to the National Governors Association Youth Policy Network:

- Youth development approaches are directed at all youth.
- Youth development is asset based.
- Families are essential to supporting healthy youth.
- Youth development is holistic and developmentally appropriate.
- Youth development strategies are place based and reflect local needs.
- Youth are involved in decision making.

corrective knowledge or skills, all of which proved unsuccessful and indicated that "social engineering" was limited.

The new youth development movement advocates for a more holistic approach - one that emphasizes supporting the development of youth, rather than the "fixing" of youth. This new orientation focuses more on building strengths as a way to reduce weaknesses. As one report states, "The movement's fundamental assumption—one receiving increased corroboration both from the study of human behavior and program evaluations—is that enduring, positive results in a youth's life are most effectively achieved by tending to basic needs for guidance, support and involvement, and not by surgical interventions aimed at removing problems."[2] This new youth development movement steadily gained more recognition in the field of youth programming, as evidenced by a 1997 Presidential Summit for America's Future. At the summit, three American presidents, nearly 30 governors, 100 mayors, 145 community representatives, dozens of prominent business leaders and several thousand citizens gathered to declare their support for youth development. The summit highlighted examples of programs designed to enhance social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of youth in structured, supportive and safe environments.

Although support for youth development increased, many called for more research and evaluation, beyond anecdotes and glowing compliments from empowered youth, to document its ability to deliver positive outcomes. Recent scientifically based research appears to validate the strengths of the more comprehensive youth development approach. Commenting on a recent National Research Council study, developmental psychologist Richard Lerner states, "The nature/nurture debate is simply out of date. The developmental community has rejected these reductionist notions for fused, integrated models."[3] He notes that the shift away from a deficit model of young people's development to a strength- or asset-based model signals a new era in the study of adolescence.

Youth Development as Key Strategy in Afterschool

Amid the wave of youth development came the pivotal 1992 Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development report, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Out-of-School Hours,* which highlights the modern needs of youth and communities in light of the growing number of "latch-key" kids. The report described how communities failed to adapt to significant changes in the workforce, leading to a new era of risk for youth. Some changes identified by the report included:

- *More single-parent families*
  One in five white adolescents grows up in a one-parent family, while 30 percent of Latino and 50 percent of African American adolescents live in such families.
- *More youth living in poverty*
  In 1992, more than one in five young people lived in poverty - an increase of five million more youth in poverty than in 1972.
- *Increased health risks*
  Increasing suicide and teen pregnancy rates in addition to youth experimenting with drugs and sexual activities at younger ages.

- *Increasing global competition in the workforce*
  American youth were not gaining the knowledge and skills needed to be competitive with other industrialized nations.

Many risks identified in the 1992 report continue to pose risks to our nation's youth as well as evolving additional challenges. A recent National Research Council (NRC) report, titled *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development,* identifies some of these most recent risks as:

- The incidence of gang activity has nearly doubled from 1989 to 1995;
- According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 6,000 students were expelled for bringing a gun to school in the 1996-97 school year;
- Ecstasy has become the most frequently mentioned drug in phone calls to the Poison Control Center; and
- Nearly 90 percent of 10th graders and 75 percent of 8th graders think alcohol is "very easy" or "fairly easy" to get.[4]

These risks pose daunting challenges to the seven million youth unsupervised after school on a daily basis. American communities need to act to ensure youth have the tools, skills and knowledge to thrive despite these pitfalls.

The NRC report held that these new risks facing youth could be transformed into opportunities by providing youth with positive youth development activities during the non-school hours. The report stated, "Communities must build or renew their networks of affordable, safe, and challenging youth development programs…Americans have witnessed the widespread erosion of supportive communities for their young people. It is now time to rebuild. Many sectors of the society must be involved in a renewed national initiative to turn the out-of-school hours into rich resources for the full educational and healthy development of young adolescents.[5]" The report highlighted several examples of community-based programs addressing the comprehensive needs of youth and called on the 17,000 national and local youth-serving organizations in the nation to follow their example.

Since the mid 1990s, schools, youth programs and community organizations encouraged youth to become healthy, productive, skilled citizens in a globally competitive world. Efforts have countered some negative trends in behavior such as decreasing violent juvenile crime and teen pregnancy, while increasing high school graduation rates and involvement in community service activities. Despite this progress, a recent NRC report indicates that some negative trends such as cigarette smoking, school violence, HIV infection and obesity are still on the rise. In addition, youth today lack skills and preparation for their transition into adult employment. Overall, too many of our youths' needs are still not being met. "At least 25 percent of adolescents in the United States are at serious risk of not achieving 'productive adulthood' and face such risks as substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, school failure, and involvement with the juvenile justice system."[6] Almost a decade after the Carnegie Council's charge to the nation, a significant portion of America's youth is being left behind.

The Current Wave of Afterschool Programs

Similar to youth development, afterschool is a relatively new field and intersects with many traditional social service fields. Initially, afterschool programs played a significant role in this country during World War II when the Lanham Act provided federal funding for programs to care for youth while their mothers entered the workforce. After the war, most programs disappeared until the 1970s when the feminist movement brought women in large numbers back to the workforce and the number of single-parent families increased. Although the landmark 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, highlighted the need to improve public education and initiated a wave of education reform efforts, it was not until the 1984 National Conference on Latchkey Children that out-of-school time was considered an issue separate from education reform. In the 1980s, more federal and state funds were made available for child care and school-age care. The Carnegie Council's 1992 report shifted the focus from extracurricular and school-age care programs toward academic achievement and youth development.

The increased attention on out-of-school time, which has become more popularly known as afterschool (but refers to programs that operate in the hours before school, after school, in evenings, and during weekends and school breaks), led to the creation of the first legislation and federal funding stream solely dedicated to such programs. This legislation created the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative. Since 1998, this Department of Education program has grown from a $40 million program to a $1 billion program reaching all fifty states.

The purpose of afterschool programs has evolved to include one or more of the following:

✓ to provide constructive, supervised activities for youth
✓ to provide caring; relationships with adults and other youth; and
✓ to provide accessible safe places for youth.

- Corporation for National Service and National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 1997

Currently, afterschool programs are growing in most communities. Local, state and federal government agencies have been joined by foundations, corporations and community-based organizations to support such programs. In addition to establishing programs in 1,587 communities, serving a total of 1.2 million children and 400,000 adults, 21st CCLC funds also leverage and link other federal, state and local funding streams, as well as spur partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations. 21st CCLC grants have been used to connect other streams of federal funding such as the Corporation for National and Community Service's Learn and Serve America, the U.S. Department of Agriculture afterschool snack money, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funds as well as programs in the Justice and Treasury Departments and many others. More than 20 states have current or proposed state funding for afterschool and out-of-school-time programs. Cities across the country are initiating community-wide efforts to build infrastructures and attract resources to support afterschool programs.

Despite the rapid growth in afterschool programs, the need for afterschool programs is not met in most communities. The Afterschool Alliance reports that nearly two-thirds of voters say they have difficulty in finding quality, affordable programs.[7] Other sources indicate that the amount of afterschool programs available meets only half the demand among elementary and middle school parents.[8] Communities need more programs to engage youth after school and transform a time of risk into a time of opportunities for growth and development.

Youth are Most At Risk After School

American youth are most at risk in the hours after school, as well as other out-of-school times. Youth are at risk in several ways when they are not engaged in structured, supervised activities during non-school hours. Emerging research shows that unsupervised time after school can negatively affect their success in school, social skills development and choices to engage in criminal or risky behaviors. Youth may miss opportunities to develop important social skills or engage in positive development opportunities. The following research outlines some of these risks:

- Children without adult supervision are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior and substance use. Children who spend more hours alone and begin self-care at younger ages have increased risk of "poor outcomes."[9]

- "Latchkey" youth left home alone after school to care for themselves may experience loneliness, fear and worry, rather than develop more maturity, as many popular beliefs assume.[10]

- Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and they are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and engage in sexual activity.[11]

- New York teens left unsupervised at least three days a week after school were four times more likely than supervised teens to say they had committed crimes and seven times more likely to be a victim of crime. A survey released showed that being unsupervised after school greatly increased the risk that kids would smoke cigarettes, use drugs, drink alcohol, and have sex.[12]

- Children are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a non-family member between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.[13]

Afterschool Emerges as Successful Delivery Model for Youth Development

Incorporating youth development principles in afterschool programs can transform these risks into opportunities for youth. Such programs can help youth enhance their academic skills, build resilience to risky behavior, provide safe and crime-free environments and encourage youth to develop positive self-image and interpersonal skills. Building on the recent expansion and support for afterschool programs and ensuring that youth development principles guide existing and new programs can move America much closer to meeting the needs of its youth, especially those most at risk.

Many youth programs on the local level succeed using youth development principles in afterschool settings. Although programs funded through different federal agencies such as the

U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Justice and framed by differing goals, many use youth development strategies to produce positive youth outcomes. Whether created around a U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools grant, a 4-H program connected to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a JUMP program funded through the U.S. Department of Justice or an AmeriCorps program made possible by a Corporation for National and Community Service grant, afterschool appears to be an effective delivery model for all facets of positive youth development. There are several reasons for this, especially the similarities between the afterschool and youth development approach, such as:

- providing mutually appropriate contexts,
- sharing outcomes - beyond prevention and academics,
- uniting under a neutral umbrella,
- utilizing community facilities and resources, and
- fostering family, school and community connections.

Below, these similarities are flushed out in light of recent theory and research and exemplified by real-life programs from across the nation.

Mutually Appropriate Contexts

Afterschool programs are not an extension of the school day. Youth need and want a change of environment and structure after spending their day in the classroom. Youth need relationships with adults that do not only involve authority and approval. Grounding afterschool programs in youth development provides youth with structured yet empowering environments and offer opportunities to develop relationships with adults based on mutual respect and cooperation. Afterschool and youth development programs both strive to balance structure and support. Research finds that afterschool programs "are effective in meeting the developmental needs of youth precisely because they can quickly shift, modify, and transform their way of working to better fit the changing circumstances, strengths, and needs of youth."[14] Schools typically follow set curricula and often operate on a rigid schedule in sync with grading periods and standardized tests. These factors can create an unforgiving school system for youth that struggle with a certain subject matter or fall behind for other reasons. Afterschool programs, on the other hand, have more flexibility to cater activities more to the needs and circumstances facing youth.

PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

Youth Engaged in Leadership & Learning (Y.E.L.L.)

The Youth Engaged in Leadership & Learning (Y.E.L.L.) afterschool program helps youth become active members in their community's policy process by training them as community researchers and supporting them in youth-led community action projects. Throughout the school year, about 20 students at McClymonds High School in West Oakland meet three times a week to design community action projects and gather information through interviews, surveys, community asset mapping, photojournalism and meeting with community advocates. In addition to learning research skills, youth also gain basic job readiness skills such as teamwork, time management and following through on job tasks and responsibilities. Youth earn a small stipend

and school credit in some cases.   Projects vary year to year. A previous project focusing on school reform led to the production of a video, "Life Behind the Walls," that captured everyday life at the school, race relations from the youths' perspective and misrepresentations of their school that negatively affected student success. School faculty and staff, as well as other groups in the community, viewed the video to inform their reform plans for a state-sponsored school improvement program. "The community youth research work that is happening now will provide our staff with valuable information around which we can work to create a more engaging learning environment and focus on necessary changes in our relationships with youth," said Lynn Dodd, McClymonds High School principal.[15]

The program emphasizes youth leadership, and activities are structured to maximize youth voice, which helps the program adapt to the changing and diverse needs of its participants. About half of the youth participated in the program the previous year and serve as mentors to the new youth participants. These mentors meet monthly to discuss program issues, evaluate their progress and plan future activities. Youth mentors also take turns facilitating the sessions, leading their peers through the day's activities. All youth in the program have an opportunity to help adult staff design lesson plans and activities, voicing what type of activities they think are the most engaging and effective. Several other program features facilitate youth feedback on the process and program, such as check-in discussions at the end of sessions, quarterly one-on-one meetings with adult staff and a suggestion box. The program, sponsored by Stanford University's John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, works with the university's School of Education faculty and students to develop better methods of fostering youth voice and ownership of the program. The program also partners with a local AmeriCorps program, funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service, as well as several other community groups and private funders.

4-H Share/Care (Sharing Our Expertise As We Care for Our Youth) After School Program

More than 2,000 youth, ages 5-15, participated in the 4-H Share/Care (Sharing Our Expertise As We Care for Our Youth) After School Program and Summer program in counties throughout New Mexico in 2001. The program's curriculum focuses on substance abuse prevention, developing leadership capacity, increasing self-esteem and fostering active citizenship through hands-on learning activities. Despite sharing the 4-H Share/Care program model and curriculum, each program site adapts its activities to suit the needs of its participants, some of whom live in the most economically deprived neighborhoods in the state. Each site caters to its specific community needs, existing infrastructure, local advisory committee recommendations, and partnership capacity. Each of the 12 sites draws on the assets of its collaborators, which include three Pueblos, the Apache and Navajo Reservations, the Indian Center in Albuquerque, Youth Court, libraries, schools and other community organizations, in addition to its two major funders, the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and New Mexico's Cooperative Extension Service funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The program has succeeded in many aspects, particularly in teaching youth decision-making skills about health risks. In one program geared to fifth-graders, program staff reported that 96 percent of the youth indicated on year-end surveys that they "have a goal to not use drugs." Another assessment tool asked youth, "What is the most important thing you learned from this

program?" and solicited positive responses such as: "Not to take tobacco or drugs, and succeed;" "How to make decisions;" "I learned that you don't have to smoke to be cool;" and "You can say no to your friends."[16]

Sharing Outcomes - Beyond Prevention and Academics

Evaluations of major afterschool initiatives, including the 21st CCLC initiative, show that quality long-term programs with youth development elements increase positive outcomes and decrease negative behaviors among youth. Collectively these studies indicated:

> Youth improved their interpersonal skills, peer and adult relationships, self-control, problem solving, cognition, self-efficacy, commitment to schooling, and academic achievement. There were also reductions in problem behaviors including drug and alcohol use, school misbehavior, aggressive behavior, violence, truancy, high-risk sexual behavior, and smoking.[17]

Afterschool programs and youth development programs share a laundry list of positive outcomes for youth. Afterschool programs have shown schools and education groups first-hand the value of strengthening youths' developmental assets in conjunction with their academic skills. Afterschool programs reinforce the learning that happens during the school day with activities and assistance after school. Emerging research shows that "youth participation in quality out-of-school time activities leads to better social and emotional health as well as improved cognitive skills. These outcomes are truly, but indirectly, tied to improved academic achievement."[18]

On the other hand, practitioners in the youth development field recognize the need to link afterschool and other youth development activities to the learning that occurs during the school day. As researcher Milbrey McLaughlin states in her report on more than 120 youth-based organizations serving youth in non-school hours, "These [community-based organizations] provide community sanctuaries and supports that enable youth to imagine positive paths and embark on them. These community organizations are learning environments that boost the success of many youth in school, but just as important, teach youth many life skills – without which academic success would mean little."[19]

The 2002 NRC report, viewed by many as the first comprehensive scientifically based research on youth development programs, emphasizes that youth development surpasses solely prevention strategies and affects intellectual and academic-related growth. The report states, "Beyond eliminating problems, one needs skills, knowledge, and a variety of other personal and social assets to function well during adolescence and adulthood. Thus a broader, more holistic view of helping youth to realize their full potential is gaining wider credence in the world of policy and practice."[20] The report delineates four groups of personal and social assets that increase positive youth development. These groups include physical development, psychological and emotional development, social development and intellectual development, which explicitly calls for intellectually challenging activities as youth mature, such as help with school work and preparing for the transition to college or employment. The reports also cites evidence from

several detailed youth program evaluations that demonstrates such programs produce outcomes related to academic performance as well as other areas.

The NRC report emphasizes the intertwined nature of academic and social development by also including a review of research on school transitions. Several studies indicate that adolescent youth typically experience a decline in school success when they transition from middle school to junior high and later into high school. Studies also demonstrate that reductions in self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation accompany this decline in school achievement. Some scholars attribute this to the fact that many junior and senior high schools do not offer appropriate educational environments. "Individuals are not likely to do very well or be very motivated if they are in social environments that do not fit their psychological needs."[21] The report notes that youth programs "may be able to counteract the experiences in many schools that undermine early adolescents' academic motivation and school engagement, through activities such as tutoring younger children and having a real voice in program decision making."

PROGRAM EXAMPLE:

LA's BEST

LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) is an after school enrichment program that reaches more than 17,500 youth at 101 elementary school sites throughout Los Angeles. The program was created in 1988 as a public-private partnership among the Office of the Mayor, the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District and community and business partners. The program blends academic enrichment activities such as homework assistance and tutoring with youth development and enrichment activities such as visual arts, theater, computer activities and recreation. The program encourages teachers, parents and volunteers to get involved in program activities and program staff is recruited from the neighborhood surrounding the program site.

LA's BEST's well-rounded approach to afterschool not only attracts youth, parents, community partners and private funders to the program, but it also contributes to positive youth outcomes in academic, social and personal development. In June 2000, the University of California, Los Angeles Center for the Study of Evaluation released a longitudinal study on the impact of LA's BEST on participants compared with non-LA's BEST participants at the same schools. Results revealed that youth participating in LA's BEST demonstrate higher school attendance and improved performance on standardized tests in mathematics, reading and language/arts. In addition to these academic and school success outcomes, the study states, "LA's BEST has a profound positive impact on the attitude that participants have towards school and towards themselves. Students in LA's BEST have higher expectations of themselves and have greater motivation and enthusiasm for school. The positive student attitudes associated with LA's BEST, and the student's greater trust of adults in their school environment, may well help develop students who later in their adolescence find it easier to apply themselves academically, finish high school and pursue higher education."[22]

The evaluation also highlighted some of the youth development outcomes gained by youth participating in LA's BEST. The report includes the following reactions from parents and classroom teachers about the program:

> …[T]he majority of LA's BEST parents perceived 'somewhat positive' or 'very positive' changes in their children's behavior, attitudes, and academic achievement since participating in LA's BEST. Parents noticed most changes in their children's happiness, their ability to get along with others and their confidence; they were least likely to notice changes in grades, though 71 percent of parents reported a positive change.

A fifth-grade participant from Hart Street Elementary School perhaps summed up his/her experience most succinctly by stating, "The most important thing I learned was that anything I set my mind to, I could do."[23]

The Neutral Umbrella Concept

Practitioners, researchers, scholars and community leaders agree that youth today need an array of programming and opportunities to meet their diverse needs. The NRC report clearly outlines the differing developmental needs for youth as they transition from early to late adolescence and emphasizes that programs need to adapt structures and activities to address these differences, particularly for the transition from early adolescence, usually ages 10 to 14, to older adolescence, ages 15 to 18. In addition to age, other factors contributing to the diversity of the youth population and the complexity of their environments need to be considered. In addition to increasingly multicultural communities, especially in light of the boom of foreign-born residents currently totaling 28.4 million, youth today vary in sexual orientation, educational ability, health and socioeconomic status. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, several socioeconomic characteristics of today's youth represent inherent risks to their future success. For example:

- 19 percent lived with a parent or guardian who never completed high school;
- 5 percent of all 16- and 17-year-olds were not enrolled in school;
- 3 percent of 16- and 17-year-old girls had given birth to and were living with one or more children; and
- 15 percent of the nation's children were living in households receiving cash assistance or food stamps.[24]

To meet the diverse needs of today's youth, our nation and communities need an array of youth programming. All sectors of community life need to pool resources to effectively serve our youth. Afterschool serves as a neutral umbrella for these sectors and varying groups to gather under to work on a comprehensive approach to support youth. The 1992 Carnegie Council stated, "Many sectors of the society must be involved in a renewed national initiative to turn the out-of-school hours into rich resources for the full educational and healthy development of young adolescents."[25] This notion is echoed in the more recent NRC report that states, "Adolescents who spend time in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience less risk and show evidence of higher rates of positive development. A

diversity of program opportunities in each community is more likely to support broad adolescent development and attract the interest of and meet the needs of a greater number of youth…Even with the best staff and the best funding, no single program can necessarily serve all young people or incorporate all of the features of positive developmental settings."[26]

PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

San Diego 6 to 6 Extended School Day Program

In 1998, then-Mayor Susan Golding, a single mother, pledged that she would work toward creating afterschool programs for all of the city's middle school children. From this public commitment and the grassroots efforts of parents and youth advocates came the San Diego 6 to 6 Extended School Day Program, designed to provide access to high quality, affordable enrichment programs before and after school to every elementary and middle school student in the city. The city serves as the central coordinator for about 15 community-based organizations that partner with schools to operate 196 school-based sites across the city, serving approximately 25,000 children. Some of the city's central coordinating functions include providing training, evaluation and general technical assistance to the program staff and sites. The program's community-based partners include faith-based organizations such as Bayview Baptist Church, social service agencies such as Social Advocates for Youth and Sudanese English Project, as well as youth development organizations such as the YMCA and San Diego Youth and Community Services. Funded by city, state and U.S. Department of Education 21st CCLC funds, the program has met its goal to serve all public elementary and middle school sites within the city limits.

Although slightly different at each site, the daily program consists of academic enrichment, youth development activities, creative and performing arts, leadership opportunities, and community service activities. An evaluation by WestEd showed that youth were, overall, satisfied with the program, while parents indicated they were highly satisfied. Parents reported that their children looked forward to the program and that the program fostered their school success and promoted positive behavior. A more recent evaluation conducted by Hoffman Clark and Associates, showed that 57 percent of sampled youth participants increased their reading scores on a standardized test over the course of a year and 44 percent of youth increased standardized math scores over a year.[27]

Mississippi's Lighthouse Partnerships

The Lighthouse Partnerships in Mississippi unite a higher education institution, a K-12 school, and a community-based organization to provide high-quality afterschool programs that incorporate service-learning in ten schools. The statewide program is centrally administered by the Center for Community and Civic Engagement at the University of Southern Mississippi and uses several Corporation for National and Community Service grants, as well as 21st CCLC funding. The program has successfully fostered local partnerships that pool resources to create or strengthen afterschool programs. An evaluation of the program states, "The Lighthouse effort became the central driving force to convene people and organizations for a primary purpose of supporting after-school programming and to build support for the school, in general."[28] Each of the school sites have several community partners such as 4-H clubs, Boys & Girls Clubs, police departments, firefighters associations and local businesses. Universities and colleges also contribute by mobilizing a large number of trained tutors. In addition to increasing the academic success of the afterschool participants, youth in the program also learn about reasoning, communication, responsibility, their communities, job skills and personal finance

through service-learning and other activities. The project also helps the high school and college students who serve as tutors develop interpersonal and communication skills. One high school student volunteering as an afterschool tutor remarked, "I learned how to communicate with the smaller children. It is kinda hard to learn to work with younger children. We build relationships. I feel like I am helping them to become better people. Ray, when he sees me he always runs up to me, hugs me, and says that he is happy to see me."[29]

In addition to providing afterschool, the program also fosters a comprehensive investment in youth from all aspects of the communities. As a program evaluation states, "Organizations were brought together to support the school, and in so forming, created a new collaborative unit in the community that had not existed before. Not only was the school support network strengthened, there was a partnering of organizations that were concerned about young people, in general. Many social service agencies and organizations that support education and youth development are now networking to improve their mutual capacity to help schools beyond the one involved in the Lighthouse initiative."[30]

Utilizing Community Facilities and Resources

Programs today are shifting in a direction that "places children and adolescents once again at the center of neighborhood and community life."[31] Using afterschool programs as the focal point to gather and leverage community resources for youth can lead to increased effectiveness and efficiency. Pooling community and public resources such as funding, facilities, equipment and personnel time reduces duplication and waste. Overlap among various organizations' and agencies' goals and capacity can be managed to maximize their use, especially for expensive resources such as transportation, equipment and specialized expertise.

The modern afterschool movement has been propelled in part by community school advocates who believe schools, as accessible public resources, should serve as the hub for activities and services related to youth and their families. Many community school models exist, including those supported by the National Center for Community Education in the tradition envisioned by philanthropist Charles Stewart Mott, settlement houses replicated by Children's Aid Society, and the Beacon Centers established in New York City and San Francisco. These models, which all include afterschool programs, have proven to increase parent and volunteer participation, expand the number and breadth of business and community partnerships and maximize use of public facilities such as schools.

Another way that youth development and afterschool programs efficiently use public resources is by preventing youth from entering costly punitive or corrective institutions such as juvenile detention centers. Although many youth advocates do not rally behind this negative perspective of youth, research supports the argument that current investment in positive youth development and afterschool programs can reduce potential costs to taxpayers resulting from negative youth behavior. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention states that preventing one adolescent from turning to a life of crime can save society up to $1.8 million.[32] School districts can save money if programs prevent youth from repeating grades or being placed

in special education. For example, a Cooperative Extension program reports that it reduced grade failures by 16 percent, saving the school district more than $1 million.[33]

PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

Afterschool Matters

Afterschool Matters is a nonprofit organization in Chicago that operates and expands afterschool programs through partnerships with public schools, parks and libraries. One of the goals of the program, which has served more than 3,000 youth in more than a dozen neighborhoods, is to utilize the city's recently improved physical infrastructure of schools, parks and libraries. The program uses a neighborhood-based approach, basing activities in a high school with a park and library close enough to serve as a single campus.[34] For example, even though the Chicago Park District operates the largest harbor system in the country, many youth had not been exposed to boating until Afterschool Matters incorporated sailing and yachting activities into afterschool programs. The program has also trained youth to help public library users of all ages access the library's computer and technology resources. Funding for the program includes portions from each city department involved, foundations, business contributions and a federal government earmark.

San Francisco Beacon Initiative

Beacon Centers started in New York City in the 1990s with the observation that public schools provide the best access to serve youth and their families, especially those most in need. Beacon Centers evolved as community centers where educational, social, health and other agencies converge in public schools to serve youth and families in a "one-stop" environment. San Francisco adopted this model through a partnership with the city, San Francisco Unified School District, private funders and several community and youth development organizations. These partners created eight Beacon Centers, each serving about 1,000 youth. Beacon Centers are open after school, on weekends, and in the summer to promote youth development and meet the needs of neighborhood youth and their families. Programming focuses on educational, leadership, arts and recreation, health and career development activities. The Community Network for Youth Development, a non-profit organization, manages the Beacons, coordinating staff training, evaluation, technical assistance and replication efforts.

One of the aspects that attracted San Francisco to this innovative youth development model is its efficient use of existing community facilities. As one local urban planner states:

> In a high-density city like San Francisco, public space is at a premium, and there often aren't enough public buildings to take care of a community's needs. One creative response to this problem is to bring new functions into existing buildings, and one of the most promising examples can be found right here -- the Beacon Centers. There has been a lot of interest in Beacon Centers from the fields of education, social services, and community development, but much less among urban planners, urban designers, and architects-and yet, the Centers represent a significant innovation in the use of public space.[35]

Although using school buildings not designed to accommodate Beacon activities presents some challenges, sharing public space that was previously idle after school has created afterschool programs, increased access to social services and fostered relationships among community institutions. A local urban planning nonprofit organization is even working with Beacon youth and staff to improve the physical space used by the centers and strengthen relationships with site facility staff, architects and planners.

Fosters Family, School and Community Connections

Partnerships are essential to provide quality youth development and afterschool programs. In 1992 the Carnegie Council stressed the value of partners by stating, "Community organizations and their programs constitute invaluable resources that can revitalize neighborhoods through partnerships with schools and families to support the education and healthy development of young adolescents." Partnerships are important for reasons beyond the cost-effectiveness of sharing resources as described previously. Partnerships help foster a connections among organizations and members of a community to ensure that all needs and concerns are met.

Partnerships also provide youth with access to build relationships with various members of the community that they otherwise might not come into contact with. As Patricia Hersch describes in her book *A Tribe Apart*, which traces the struggles a handful of adolescents face in daily life, "The most stunning change for adolescents today is their aloneness."[36] Hersch describes the struggles, challenges and victories of adolescents developing into young adults alone -- isolated from their families, their communities and often their peers as a separate "tribe." Citing several studies, she asserts that such separation is not just a problem for families, but for communities. "The effects go beyond issues of rules and discipline to the idea exchanges between generations that do not occur, the conversations not held, the guidance and role modeling not taking place, the wisdom and traditions no longer filtering down inevitably." More quantitative research also supports this notion. An initial report on the first phase of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, also referred to as Add Health, states, "Adolescents' connections to family and school make a big difference to their health and well-being."[37] Youth who report feeling connected to their families and schools are protected against several different types of health risks, including emotional distress, suicidal thoughts, drug and alcohol use, violent behavior and sexual activity. For these reasons, the connections to family, school and community that afterschool and youth development programs create are invaluable.

PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

Citizen Schools

Citizen Schools, an afterschool program that balances academic achievement with positive youth development activities, recruits volunteers to lead apprenticeships for youth. The program began in Boston, where 1,200 children annually enroll at 12 campuses, and recently the program has expanded to sites in Worcester and Framingham, Massachusetts, Houston, Texas, and San Jose, California. The program aims to strengthen youths' academic skills, develop their personal leadership capacity, facilitate access to resources and build community connections. The

program trains volunteers to lead youth in five- or ten-week apprenticeships that culminate in a community service project demonstrating their mastery of their new skills. Apprenticeships include activities such as designing web pages for local schools, refurbishing computers and donating them to families, writing children's books for local libraries and arguing mock trials in federal court.

Through its unique program model, Citizen Schools connects adults, businesses, agencies and youth in the community together in meaningful ways that allow them to learn from one another. Citizen Schools foster the idea that it takes a village to raise a child by training and supporting the villagers. A *Boston Globe* editorial described the Citizen Schools approach as "a charismatic vision that after-school programs, like colleges, can build social networks. Boston's public school students who work with their peers can grow up to become members of each others' weddings or Internet start-up companies -- weaving stronger communities along the way."[38] A businessman involved in Citizen Schools supports this contention and highlights the mutual benefits, for both youth and adults, of the program model. Jack Regan, senior partner of Hale and Dorr law firm in Boston remarked, "[Citizen Schools is a] movement towards an educational outcome for inner city kids. And the opportunity for our busy lawyers to step out of this intense environment, get a breather, and return to work reinvigorated. It validates the idea that lawyers should be giving back, not just monetarily, but also with their time."[39] To foster these villages of positive youth development, Citizen Schools uses funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps), the U.S. Department of Education (21st CCLC and mentoring grants) and state, local and private funds.

Children's Hunger Alliance

The Children's Hunger Alliance in Franklin County, Ohio, depends on strong partnerships with afterschool programs to offer meals and youth development activities critical for children's health and overall growth. The Alliance offers myriad activities to existing local afterschool programs that combine nutrition and learning, including several events aimed to involve families. One of the Alliance's programs, Food Folks, brings interactive nutrition education, cooking, literacy and fitness activities to eight communities throughout Ohio. More geared to career development, the Little Chefs program teaches youth about the culinary field and offers them a chance to prepare their own culinary delights with professional chefs.

Using funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Alliance provides nutritious meals and enriching experiences to more than 1,300 youth in 45 afterschool programs in the county. The program has succeeded in producing positive outcomes in youths' nutrition and school success with the efforts of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA members funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Program evaluations demonstrate that youth participants are more likely than their peers to meet minimum USDA requirements for key nutrients, attend school more regularly, advance to the next grade and pass fourth- and sixth-grade proficiency tests.[40]

Recommendations for Moving Forward

These afterschool programs demonstrate that using youth development principles during the critical hours after school produce benefits for youth, families and communities. However, the Forum for Youth Investment (FYI), a youth policy think tank, reports that currently only about one-third of American youth are in afterschool programs. American communities need the resources and support necessary to provide afterschool programs for all youth. As national and community leaders look for ways to address this critical need, they should consider the emerging research and lessons learned from practitioners. FYI advocates the following principles for addressing youth development during the out-of-school hours:

-Young people need and deserve supports throughout their waking hours, which includes mornings, school day, after-school hours, evenings and weekends.
-Young people need and deserve investments throughout the first two decades of life.
-Young people need and deserve investments that help them achieve a broad range of outcomes.[41]

The growing body of knowledge about youth development, both in research and in practice, clearly demonstrates that communities can successfully meet the diverse needs of the youth through afterschool programs. While individual communities need to take steps to meet the unique needs of youth during the hours after school, national leaders and federal agencies need to work together to build a supportive infrastructure of funding opportunities, technical assistance and research efforts to make a significant and long-term impact for our nation's youth.

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