

# From a Time of Risk to a Time of Opportunity

## This is Afterschool



The hours after the last school bell rings and before parents typically return home from work is a time of endless opportunities and potential for young people. It can be a time of learning and growth, when kids explore new topics in fields like science, technology, engineering, and math; discover new interests; and develop their communication, teamwork, and leadership skills alongside supportive mentors. It can also be a time of risk, as an October 2019 report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a membership organization of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and other law enforcement leaders, found.



**9 in 10 adults agree that afterschool programs are important to their community**

Although juvenile crime has dramatically decreased in the past decade, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks* determined that nationally, the hours between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak time for juvenile crime.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S., for every 1 young person in an afterschool program that inspires learning, provides enriching activities, and keeps them safe, there are 2 more who are waiting to get in. Public support for afterschool is high, with 9 in 10 adults agreeing that afterschool programs are important to their community, but there are not enough programs today to meet the needs of all children and families. The new Fight Crime: Invest in Kids data is further evidence of the need to do more to help ensure that all youth are able to take advantage of the benefits and supports that afterschool programs provide.

### Juvenile Crime in Maryland

Analyzing data obtained from law enforcement partners in the state, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids' report, *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*, determined that 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. is the peak time for juvenile crime in Maryland during school days, with 36% of crimes occurring during this time period. However, it is worthwhile to note that more than 1 in 5 juvenile crimes occur during the 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. window (22%). It is also important to note that in some instances, law enforcement agencies may code a criminal activity as noon or midnight if the exact time of the offense is unknown or unclear. Looking at the hourly crime rate breakdown in Maryland, 8% of crimes occur at noon.

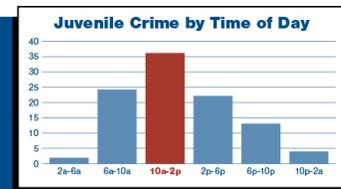
In Maryland, 64% of parents agree that afterschool programs help to give parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work and 54% agree that afterschool programs help to keep kids safe and out of trouble. Yet, for every student in an afterschool program, 2 more would participate if a program were available.

*With 280,319 students in Maryland waiting to get into an afterschool program, increased investment in afterschool programs is needed.*

### The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime in Maryland

#### Quality Afterschool Programs:

- Reduce Crime
- Boost Academics
- Improve Behavior
- Lead to Healthier Habits
- Save Money



#AfterschoolFightsCrime

FightCrime

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

# Program Spotlight

Project Pneuma | Baltimore, MD



Photo Source: Project Pneuma

Much like the name suggests, Project Pneuma (the Greek word for breath) focuses on the positive development of middle schoolers through the principles of mindfulness and self-control in Baltimore, Maryland. As a young adult, founder and executive director of Project Pneuma, Damion Cooper, was near fatally shot as part of a gang initiation in East Baltimore. Through his recovery process, Cooper discovered the importance of forgiveness as a part of living a healthy and successful life. Today, he works to impart this knowledge to young males through an afterschool program that focuses on social and emotional learning. Through a wide range of activities that include martial arts, meditation, camping, and poetry, Project Pneuma helps youth grades 4-8 work through their emotions and control their temper, driven by the belief that mindfulness can deter violent behavior.

Since the program's inception in 2014, the Baltimore City Police Department has served as an important partner in transforming youth mindsets from anger to positivity. Twice a week, Project Pneuma youth go to the Baltimore City Public Safety and Training Facility within the Police Academy for tutoring and physical fitness sessions. Serving as mentors, police officers and cadets work to build better relationships and foster mutual trust between the city's police force and youth. One program participant's mother remarks on the impact of adult male role models, saying, "I entered [my son] in Project Pneuma because of his attitude and anger. He needed to channel it. I've noticed his attitude has changed. It has leveled out. They've taught him about chivalry and humility." Cooper also reflects on the behavioral improvements of youth, saying, "since we started this program, not one of these boys has been suspended. All their grades have gone up."

Source

<sup>1</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. (2019). *From Risk to Opportunity: Afterschool Programs Keep Kids Safe When Juvenile Crime Peaks*. Retrieved from [www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe](http://www.strongnation.org/articles/930-from-risk-to-opportunity-afterschool-programs-keep-kids-safe)

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. Learn more at: [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)