



## The First Step—News from The After School Project

### Point of View:

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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The After School Project has concluded as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. Inspired by the meteoric growth of the field over the last decade, and with great hopes for its “lasting song,” we write our last e-newsletter.

When the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation created the Project in 1998, it had an ambitious goal—to connect significant numbers of young people in urban, low-income neighborhoods with responsible adults outside of the classroom. The out-of-school-time landscape in each of the cities where we have funded intermediary organizations—Boston After School & Beyond, After School Matters, in Chicago, and Team-Up for Youth, in the San Francisco Bay Area—varied greatly, yet the challenges were the same: to organize the many disparate players and programs working with vulnerable children during their non-school hours, into a more coherent and durable delivery system.

The three After School Project grantees have made great leaps forward in meeting these chal-



lenges. Not only have they created more and better opportunities for youth in their own communities, they have also become leaders in the field, bringing the vision, focus and tenacity that have won them acclaim locally, to the national conversation about what can be achieved as a field and how to get there.

With the goal of sharing these

valuable experiences, we have completed a final report to the field, entitled, *Making the Most of the Day*. Based on interviews with the Project’s site leadership, author Tony Proscio outlines important lessons we’ve learned during the eight years since the Project was created and looks ahead to the major questions we think are facing the field in this decade and beyond. We have included excerpts in the Case in Point section of the newsletter on page 3 and the full report is now available for downloading from the Project’s web site .

For the extraordinary opportunity and privilege of undertaking this work with you, we extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their vision and support on behalf of children and their futures.

As we move on to new endeavors, we are heartened by the knowledge that the out-of-school-time field is led by compassionate, intelligent, and dedicated people whom we have come to know and admire. We have learned much from you, professionally and personally, and we hope our paths continue to cross with yours in the years to come.

Carol Glazer and  
JoAnne Vellardita  
*The After School Project*



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### The First Step

The First Step is a forum for sharing updates on the After School Project, news from the afterschool field, and issues critical to the healthy development of young people.

The After School Project is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and can be found online at [www.theafterschoolproject.org](http://www.theafterschoolproject.org)

### Quote of the Month:

*“God guard me from those thoughts men think in the mind alone.  
He that sings a lasting song thinks in a marrow bone.”*

— William Butler Yeats

*“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”*

— William Butler Yeats

## After School Project Updates:

### Boston After School & Beyond— Partners for Student Success

Boston After School & Beyond was awarded an \$8 million grant from The Wallace Foundation in order to fund three years of its “Partners for Student Success” (PSS) initiative. The first phase of PSS will work to align in-school, out-of-school and community resources to better serve Boston’s young people.

PSS grew out of the recognition among city leaders, educators and philanthropists that schools alone – and academics alone – cannot move the needle on student achievement in a meaningful way. The approach of PSS is to identify clusters of need within the student population, which then get matched with community resources. This approach ensures that all children in the school, not just those who are struggling, have access to a variety of support and opportunities.

### After School Matters, Chicago— Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles

This summer After School Matters (ASM) introduced citywide Nutrition & Fitness programs that encourage teens to embrace physical activity and healthy eating in their daily lives. At various community-based organizations throughout Chicago, teens are training to prepare and serve nutritious

meals through the city’s Summer Food Service Program. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Summer Food Service Program provides wholesome and nourishing meals to children during the summer months, when school is out of session. ASM has also developed a unique curriculum that emphasizes the importance of good eating habits and physical activities for lifelong health.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley and his wife, Maggie, Chair of ASM, also recently joined members of the City’s Department of Children and Youth Services to accept an \$8 million, three-year grant from The Wallace Foundation which will create a system of supports to ensure the continued existence and growth of Chicago’s programs for teenagers. The initiative includes an online program locator for teen programs, a participant tracking system, expansion of an apprenticeship model, a more efficient process for grant applications, and the creation of a professional set of standards for the out-of-school time field.

### Team-Up for Youth, the Bay Area— Getting the Community Moving

Team-Up’s successful recruitment and training program for volunteer coaches is

expanding rapidly. In the past year, Coaching Corps has placed 75 volunteers within afterschool programs in the community. Potential recruits are now being screened in an effort to identify 70 additional volunteers for the fall 2006 rotation, and the number of afterschool sites involved with the program is expanding from 12 to a projected 20. Team-Up program coordinator Monica Santos says that a survey of the most recent class of coaches shows “a newfound dedication among many of the volunteers. Some have even told us that they have refocused their studies around working with kids in the community.”

Currently operating in five Bay Area communities, the Neighborhood Sports Initiative (NSI) aims to organize parents, volunteers and neighbors around a sense of stewardship for youth sports in their community. In the Fruitvale (Oakland) neighborhood, a new basketball league was formed by volunteers to help keep 60 high school-aged boys off the streets and allow them to compete in a safe and supervised program. At the San Antonio (Oakland) recreation center, 150 elementary-age kids are playing summer soccer in a program led by teenagers. The teens have been trained in both leadership skills and sports fundamentals, and the soccer field was recently refurbished with state-of-the-art synthetic turf – all thanks to community activism. ■

## From the Field: Farewell Wishes to The After School Project

“The After School Project has made an important and lasting contribution to the entire field, now known as youth development and out-of-school time. With its emphasis on a citywide, systemic approach to supporting essential programs and services for kids outside of school, the Project has significantly changed the way that business is done in three key American cities: Boston, Chicago and San Francisco. Of equal importance are the important lessons they have generated from this experience and shared throughout the field. Key leaders have developed from this work and taken their places on a national stage; they now represent the

growing number of cities that are taking a systemic approach to this important work. The After School Project and the Robert Wood Johnson deserve enormous credit for the innovations they have seeded, the leadership that has been nurtured and an entire field of national activity that is stronger for those efforts. At the Wallace Foundation, we have appreciated and benefited from our informal partnership with staff of the Project and Robert Wood Johnson – our work is stronger for the lessons and experience they have so generously shared.”

-Sheila Murphy, Senior Program Officer  
Nancy Devine, Program Director, Arts & Communities  
The Wallace Foundation



“Without The After School Project, we would have been three nice but separate projects in different cities that would have struggled and been forced to ‘reinvent the wheel’ by ourselves. Their convening us and their emphasis on cross-site learning, sharing best practices, and bringing knowledge from other projects made us more than just three separate projects.

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## From the Field: Farewell Wishes to the After School Project (Continued)

The After School Project was a major player in the larger national debate on the topic of after-school recreation, education, and more. I'm really sorry to see them go. All of us really, really appreciate the leadership that Carol and JoAnne provided.

We obviously still have our work cut out for us in terms of making the case for after-school in the policy area, and The After School Project is a good example of how you can magnify and strengthen that voice."

-Sylvia Yee, Vice President of Programs  
Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund



"All of us interested in improving the quality of after-school programs appreciate that RWJ has been a productive force in that arena. Much of that had to do with the good work done by Carol Glazer and JoAnne Vellardita, along with RWJ staff.

In particular, Carol brought her depth of knowledge in related fields, and her willingness to collaborate and learn, to the work. She is a terrific colleague. The manuscript written by Tony Proscio on the city-wide initiatives will endure as an example of clear, useful writing. But I'll miss Carol's honesty, commitment, and clarity in meetings, both public and private."

-Robert C. Granger, Ed.D.  
President, William T. Grant Foundation



"The After School Project has a very broad impact that goes well beyond the three cities that received funding through the excellent publications, reports and meetings that have been held.

Carol Glazer and JoAnne Vellardita are fabulous people. Carol is a creative thinker, but her creativity is based on a strong knowledge of how systems and communities work. So as creative as she may be, she is also reality-based, which is an exceptional skill. JoAnne is an unusual administrator, because she is concerned and caring about everyone related to the work — from the recipients of the project, to every level of participant, to the people that she relies on for consultation.

The After School Project definitely has a legacy as a reinforcement and a reminder of the importance and complexity of systems building for youth work. I truly do appreciate them and the work they do. They will be missed."

-Joyce Shortt, Former Co-Director  
National Institute on Out-of-School Time ■

## Case in Point: TONY PROSCIO, Making the Most of the Day

*The final "Case in Point" seems to call for a look around and ahead, not just a look back. And so we would like to share with you the following excerpts from the Project's last report to the field, Making the Most of the Day, written by Tony Proscio. The report reflects the views of the site leadership on the process and progress of the work in their respective cities, the independent conclusion of the Project's evaluation consultant, and on the out-of-school-time field generally, including the opportunities and risks it faces in the remainder of this decade and beyond. This is an incisive and forward look at the field as a whole and we encourage to you to read the full report which is now available for downloading from the Project's website ([www.theafterschoolproject.org](http://www.theafterschoolproject.org)).*

### **BOSTON: AFTER-SCHOOL 2.0— BUILDING & MEASURING SCHOOL- LEVEL SYSTEMS**

When Boston Beyond formed, it naturally started by asking itself, "For what results should we hold ourselves accountable?"

As the organization considered this question, it certainly had a growing body of scholarship to grapple with. For example, many reports show that out-of-school-time programs are not often the precision instruments of academic and social engineering that some supporters had hoped for. While some programs may be good at helping students boost their test scores, stay out of gangs, or progress further in school, there is little evidence that enrolling kids in out-of-school-time activities generally will guarantee any consistent results.

"We had two choices," says Steve Pratt,

**"The goal is to ensure that there's a system, involving teachers and counselors and administrators throughout the school, to match the kids with the services and keep them interested."**

— Steve Pratt  
Executive Director, Boston Beyond

Boston Beyond's executive director. "We could move the goal posts — in effect come up with a different set of problems

we might think we could solve, like keeping kids safer from crime after school, rather than trying to reduce the crime itself or improve their school performance. Instead, we took a different approach."

Boston Beyond decided to concentrate on enrolling the young people at highest risk of failing in school, dropping out, joining gangs, or otherwise limiting their future options by forging a specific link between the out-of-school-time programming and the particular struggles of those kids." To help reach this goal, Boston Beyond started "Partners for Student Success," which will support the creation of a new position in each participating school, called Manager of Extended Learning Services. The managers will have direct responsibility for out-of-school-time activities in their respective schools, and be responsible for coordinating with other programs in their communities so that kids with the most urgent needs could benefit from those services and find the right activity and participate.

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## Case in Point: *TONY PROSCIO (Continued)*

“This is not a case-management model,” Pratt explains. “The goal is to ensure that there’s a system, involving teachers and counselors and administrators throughout the school, to match the kids with the services and keep them interested.”

This is a new, ambitious approach to the question of results and targeting in out-of-school-time programs, and it is hardly risk-free. But it proves one of the still-unfolding values of citywide intermediaries like Boston Beyond: they can marshal the financial and political support essential for taking such risks, and shield individual providers from the costs and pressures associated with breaking new ground.

Steve Pratt’s vision for this use of data is a demanding one: “I’m hoping that in six or seven years, I can point to a continuum of interlocking engagement strategies that runs from elementary school straight into high school.”

### **THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: FROM AN IDEA TO A SYSTEM**

Among the earliest grants made by the After School Project was initial support to help launch Team-Up for Youth, a region-wide intermediary promoting significantly more opportunities for physical activity for

**“In effect, we’ve added to our repertoire: not just brokering funding and information, but actually brokering people.”**

— *Tim Johnson*  
*Executive Director, Team-Up*

young people in the out-of-school hours. Although the idea was not unprecedented — the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation in New York City started in 1992 with a similar focus — concentrating exclusively on physical activity was an unusual choice for a new, aspiring out-of-school-time intermediary.

At the time, one branch of conventional wisdom argued that after-school services had to be varied to succeed. At the other extreme, some authorities seemed all too willing to concentrate out-of-school time activities solely on one topic, which most of the time was academics.

Enter Team-Up for Youth, bucking both these orthodoxies with an all-fronts effort to promote and enrich athletic activity in all its forms — from soccer and rowing to dance and yoga. Team-Up’s focus on athletic activity derived from an assessment that showed opportunities for such activities were scarce and actually declining in the Bay Area, with consequences that were both harmful to young people’s physical and social health.

To support its efforts to successfully turn a sports program into a youth development program, Team-Up focuses on the quality of the adult guidance behind it, and the kinds of skills, attitudes, and experiences it instills in its young participants.

The latest step in this effort has been the creation of a Coaching Corps, a volunteer program piloted at two local college campuses, in which students undergo Team-Up’s training curriculum and fan out as coaches in neighborhood programs across the Bay Area. “In effect,” says Team-Up Executive Director Tim Johnson, “we’ve added to our repertoire: not just brokering funding and information, but actually brokering people.”

In addition to quality training and experiences, Team-Up’s flagship program, the Neighborhood Sports Initiative, funds networks of providers, volunteers, parents, residents, schools, and public agencies in neighborhoods to a wide mix of physical activities in underserved, low-income neighborhoods. It also provides staff training, help in fundraising, and negotiation of useful relationships among the various parties.

The theme uniting all these various branches of Team-Up’s work is the creation of a cohesive field — and the establishment of a public priority — where there had previously been only a thinly dispersed assortment of activities. But providing the field with a definition, a common purpose, and a megaphone was in some ways the



easy part of the challenge. What made Team-Up an innovative leader, and why it continues to be one today, was its attention to the technical, financial, and logistical impediments to enlarging the field of activity.

### **CHICAGO: LADDERS OF OPPORTUNITY**

A widely known but rarely spoken belief about the after-school field is that many practitioners turn suddenly anxious or despondent at the first mention of teenagers. Assuming this is true, then some of the very few individuals who understand how to work with

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— *David Sinski*  
*Executive Director, After School Matters*

teens must be on staff at After School Matters (ASM) in Chicago.

It is true that ASM is one of the few successful models and practices for older kids. But ASM also has accomplished things that some experts and practitioners used to think were improbable.

For example, recent research has shown that when young people participate in ASM programs they attend school more faithfully and fail fewer courses. The program has also demonstrated that high-school-age young people are interested in certain kinds of after-school programming, will sign up and keep coming, and will in the end learn something valuable in the course of an enjoyable experience.

With the considerable benefit of strong mayoral backing, After School Matters has linked the Chicago Park District, Public Schools, and Public Library into a network of support for the apprenticeships and clubs, in which the public agencies provide facilities, equipment, personnel, and logistical support that would have been prohibitively expensive and complicated to arrange in any other way. After School Matters has also built a widening circle of community-based organizations that are replicating the apprenticeships that

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## Case in Point: *TONY PROSCIO (Continued)*

ASM originally designed and implemented direct operator of programs in some three dozen high schools across the city.

Today, ASM is at least as much a planning and coordinating body as it is a provider, though it has been careful to keep its feet planted firmly in both worlds. Still, as the coordinating role expands, the pressures familiar to other intermediaries begin to mount. For example, without radically expanding your staff, how do you maintain quality over an ever-widening universe of sites, partners, and curricula? How do you enforce basic requirements without seeming heavy-handed or stifling creativity? How do you recruit and train more adults with the requisite backgrounds, and then retain them?

The test only grows harder as the apprenticeships become more popular, more familiar, and more widely embraced. As David Sinski, executive director of After School Matters, puts it, "Now that we're coming to be seen less as something new and innovative, and more as part of the daily norm, especially in schools, we find we have to work harder to maintain [the program's] distinctness and clarity of purpose. For example, as you become more and more embedded in schools, principals and administrators no longer see the program as some unfamiliar, outside phenomenon ... but that means that they sometimes tend to see it as an extension of the school day."

For Sinski, the ultimate question is "How do you collaborate and cooperate without losing your identity?"

Undoubtedly, a wider sense of ownership for the program is a sign of its success and something to celebrate. In fact, widening the circle of "co-owners" is essential if ASM is to meet its goal of serving at least half the teenagers in Chicago who need an after-school activity. Still, for the sake of maintaining quality and for keeping the model consistent enough to be studied and evaluated over time, ASM will have to maintain a careful, constantly shifting balance between flexibility and control, consensus-building and rule-setting, encouraging innovation and enforcing common standards.



### **FROM HERE ON: ORGANIZING AN UNRULY UNIVERSE**

Central coordinating and planning groups in the after-school field have generally aimed their efforts in one of two directions: either seeking to serve as many kids as possible with a wide variety of programs to suit many needs and tastes, or zeroing in on a particular type of programming or demographic target and trying to enlarge and strengthen that segment of the field. In our sample of three intermediaries, we noted that Boston Beyond had been taking the former approach and ASM and Team-Up the latter.

The point is not that we consider one or

more of these approaches better than the others. The point is that the different intermediaries have made their different choices with great deliberation, tested them with years of effort, refined them with wave after wave of new information, and described their aims to the rest of the field with uncommon candor and intelligence. They have set clear enough criteria for their own success so that in a few years close observers will be able to judge for themselves whether these models are on track. That alone is an excellent sign that something important and useful is under way.

But more to the point, for the purposes of this Project, it is the existence of the intermediaries that has made all the deliberation, testing, refinement, and public accountability possible. They did this, first of all, by reaching a community-wide consensus on a pair of crucial questions: *What does this community want from its after-school programs, and how do we propose to get what we want?* They then pursued the answers with all (or nearly all) of the interested and responsible parties working around a single table. The answers they came up differed from place to place, both in their goals and in their chosen methods. But they were all carefully arrived at and, in the end, widely endorsed. And they carried a more or less consistent concern for quality, accountability, sustainability, and responsible methods of evaluation.

The process of collectively grappling with the twin questions *What do we want?* and *How will we produce it?* is the best way we know of, at least so far, for achieving a clearer vision of means and ends in the field and adjusting that vision as more and

## Contact Information:

We want to share news about our own futures.



Carol is moving on to lead a new initiative, the National EmployAbility Partnership, for the National Organization on Disability (NOD).

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