



The First Step—News from The After School Project

March 2005

Volume 1, Issue 2

Point of View:

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Greetings, and welcome to the second of our occasional e-newsletters.

In this issue, we feature two stories. The first is a summary of the themes covered in *After School Grows Up: Building Knowledge About Good Practices in Citywide After School Initiatives*, a symposium held on December 1-3, 2004 in Scottsdale Arizona, and co-sponsored with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). The meeting brought together some of the best minds in the country in the field of youth development, and addressed a number of important issues about, among others, outcomes, delivery systems, evaluation and sustainability.

There's an important conversation taking place out in the afterschool field about outcomes and expectations. What outcomes can afterschool programs deliver for children, their parents, their schools and communities? This is a healthy conversation, proving the maturation of afterschool as a distinct and coherent "field." But it leads us to several important questions about *what realistically can be delivered*, who are afterschool's intended beneficiaries, how do we ensure that kids get what we think they need from afterschool and how do we know if we have succeeded?

Underneath all of this is a delivery system comprised of small, often fragile service providers, each with their own style, philosophy, and emphasis, together forming a tapestry of activities for young people in their own neighborhoods. How do we take to scale this highly decentralized and fragmented system, which prides itself on intimate, nurturing environments for all young people?

This is a critical conversation at a pivotal point in the field's growth, and we are privileged to participate in it along with our colleagues in the afterschool community. The questions we asked of ourselves at the Scottsdale conference should guide us, not only in 2005, but in years to come as we continue to mature as a field.

The second story we feature is a case study on ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco (ACSF), a superb afterschool

organization that teaches the Afro-Brazilian art form capoeira, which was created during the slavery era in Brazil. ACSF, a Team-Up for Youth grantee, embodies many values of community-based afterschool organizations, particularly those organizations rooted in the civil rights movement and the struggle against disinvestment in our inner city neighborhoods.

Looking Ahead ...

The explosive growth in interest in afterschool programs over the last several years unfortunately now collides with a period of diminished federal support that is shaping up to be the most radical in decades. Our allies in the policy advocacy arena—clever and resourceful as they are—face the daunting challenge of framing messages that are sufficiently compelling that they can weather the perfect storm of massive tax cuts, big war spending and large and growing federal budget deficits.

Fortunately, there are very few who would argue against the fact that children need a strong foundation of nurturing communities and healthy developmental supports. Let us work toward establishing more and ever stronger alliances to provide what we all know our kids need.

Carol Glazer and
JoAnne Vellardita
The After School Project



Inside this issue:

Point of View	1
Quote of the Month	1
After School Project Updates	2
News from the Field	2-3
Case in Point— <i>ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco</i>	4-5
Contact Information	5

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 on the web at www.theafterschoolproject.org

Quote of Month:

"He who opens a school door, closes a prison." - Victor Hugo

After School Project Updates:

After School Matters, Chicago— Developing Future Innovators

Demand for After School Matters (ASM) apprenticeship programs exceeded supply for the spring 2005 school term by 56%. In response, ASM has developed some great new apprenticeships, including the SIEMENS Advanced Apprenticeship for teens.

SIEMENS apprentices will develop a comprehensive understanding of engineering principles as they relate to energy and energy conservation to the individual and the global community. They will learn the current history of energy and its ramifications for current and future trends. The teens are working on new engineering product concepts or making improvements on existing products, such as developing a cell phone that acts as a satellite! For more information, go to www.afterschoolmatters.org.

Boston After School & Beyond—A New Beginning

Boston's After-School for All Partnership and the Mayor's Boston 2:00-to-6:00 After School Initiative have announced their

merger to become Boston After School & Beyond. On March 29, 2005, friends, partners, and allies of the Boston afterschool community will come together at the Tremont Boston Hotel to celebrate the official launch of this new effort. Boston After School & Beyond starts off with a vast store of knowledge and experience in supporting the many hundreds of Boston's community organizations that serve children in the out-of-school hours providing academics, arts and culture, sports, and community service. For more information, go to www.afterschoolforall.org.



Team-Up for Youth, the San Francisco Bay Area—Advocating for Kids' Health

Team-Up continues its efforts to shape a policy agenda that ensures access to quality youth sports programs to kids in low-income neighborhoods. Team-Up's most recent policy work has centered on advocating for after-school sports as a prevention strategy for childhood obesity.

On February 5, 2005, Team-Up organized a hearing at the California State Capitol with the State Assembly Health Committee, Assembly Committee on Education, and the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development to discuss the importance of physical activity for childhood obesity prevention. This hearing highlighted the role of after-school programs in increasing physical activity in low-income communities. Efforts like these will not only help young people fight childhood obesity today, but grow into healthy and confident adults tomorrow.

For more information, go to www.teamupforyouth.org.

News from the Field: "A Meeting of the Minds—and Hearts"

Who: Over 100 participants from the growing afterschool community including researchers, practitioners, funders, public officials and policy advocates from across the country.

What: *After-School Grows Up: Building Knowledge About Good Practices in City-wide AfterSchool Initiatives Symposium*, co-sponsored by the After School Project (ASP) and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST).

Where and When: Scottsdale, Arizona on December 1-3, 2004

Why: To discuss the major issues confronting the field as it seeks to expand access to programs, including defining quality, setting appropriate goals and measures for

afterschool programs, and ensuring sustainability for emerging delivery systems.

Symposium Highlights—Two Plenary Sessions Shape the Conversation

Plenary One: Outcomes and Expectations—

Panelists: Robert Granger, president, the William T. Grant Foundation; Robert Halpern, youth development researcher, the Erikson Institute; Elizabeth Reisner, evaluator, Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; Sylvia Yee, vice-president of programs, the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

Moderator Carol Glazer, senior program consultant to the ASP, posed the following questions to the panelists:

- What outcomes can afterschool programs realistically deliver for children, parents, schools, and communities?
- What interventions are appropriate for a given set of intended outcomes?
- What evaluation methodologies should be employed to measure these outcomes?

All the panelists acknowledged that defining quality is an ongoing issue and that to achieve any set of agreed upon outcomes requires a high level of intentionality in the program design. Several offered suggestions of measures that hold some promise for outcomes.

News from the Field, Page 4



News from the Field: “A Meeting of the Minds—and Hearts,” Continued

- Afterschool programs are pressured to deliver what other youth programs and schools have not, particularly academic outcomes. This focus may subvert other bona-fide goals.
- Ideally, a quality program and its desired outcomes should be driven by community preferences and the specific needs of youth to be served. These needs change as children move through developmental stages.
- It is unlikely that the afterschool workforce, especially when faced with the current fiscal pinch, can teach skills that move academic test scores.
- An alternative is to focus on defining program quality and seek measures of academic, social, emotional, and physical skills more closely aligned with what a program might realistically affect. This is important since despite our rhetoric about supply, many programs suffer spotty attendance.
- “The usefulness of research ought to exceed the cost of producing it.” (Robert Granger) Keep evaluations simple, focus on systematic ways to assess program quality. Arguments that appeal to common sense can still be compelling.

Plenary Two: Building Support For and Sustaining Our Work—

Panelists: Bruce Astrein, Arizona Community Foundation, Jennifer Davis, Mass 2020, Jeriel Heard, Mayor’s Time in Detroit, Steve Fowler, Fowler Hoffman

Moderator Elaine Fersh, of Community Matters, addressed the panelists and audience, “Sustainability is about more than just money; it is also about anchoring your



agenda, engaging your constituency, [and] embedding your work in your community....” Among the questions, she posed to the group:

- How do we convince the public that this is a valuable investment?
- How do we organize a constituency for afterschool?
- Are there opportunities to find new program money?

Relationships and partnerships emerged as the key themes from the responses by panelists and audience members to these questions. With regard to sustainability, the responses made clear that too often

“Sustainability is about more than just money; it is also about anchoring your agenda, engaging your constituency, [and] embedding your work in your community....”

– Elaine Fersh

just as we get where we want to be, the funding runs out. As a result, we need to take a hard look at just how long it takes us to achieve what we hope to accomplish and plan accordingly.

Below are other highlights from the perspectives that emerged from the discussion:

- Engage corporate America. Kids in afterschool programs are its future workforce.
- Educate and organize parents. They are a major constituency. Build the skills of our ground troops.
- Create venues for people to express their concerns. Some suggested ideas: 1) kids’ march; 2) visit to city hall; 3) put items on ballots.
- Help organize the funding community to provide more timely support and to stay with it over time. They should fund advocacy and build programs’ organizational capacity.

- Join in on school funding. Even with public and private support, the afterschool field loses money because of budget downturns.
- Partner with schools and school districts. They want and need our support and are our natural allies.
- Develop best practices from a cultural perspective. Often, there are funds available in some cities, but a lack of knowledge on how best to spend it.

Continuing the Conversation

The conversation that emerged in Scottsdale is a part of the national dialogue that has taken place in New York, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. Clearly, whenever we in the afterschool field come together, the questions of how to address outcomes and expectations are top of mind. But in order to develop realistic answers to these questions, we must continue the conversation in our own states, cities, and organizations. Only then will we find the solutions we seek and need.

To continue building your knowledge about setting appropriate goals and measures for afterschool programs and ensuring sustainability for emerging delivery systems, click onto:

- www.niost.org/citywide
- www.theafterschoolproject.org/RepoProject0.html (Check out *After-School Grows Up*, the publication that inspired the conference title. Co-authors Tony Proscio and Basil Whiting helped set the context for the two-day meeting by opening with an overview of their report.)
- www.highscope.org (The Youth Program Quality Assessment Instrument developed by High/Scope offers a way to measure program quality.)



Case in Point: *ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco*

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) After School Project (ASP) supports intermediary organizations in three cities that in turn help connect local after-school programs to the funding and resources they need to provide a wide range of enriching and culturally relevant activities that engage children and youth in their own communities. The Case in Point feature highlights one of these afterschool programs.

Let's Capoeira!

Capoeira (pronounced ka-poo-e-da) is a dynamic Afro-Brazilian art form unique to Brazil, which developed during the slavery era through shared cultural customs, rituals, and fighting techniques. Capoeira is an athletic stream of consciousness that combines ritual, self-defense, acrobatics, and music in a rhythmic dialog of the mind, body, and spirit. ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco (ACSF), a grantee of Team-Up, the Project's site in the Bay area, offers professional instruction and performance of Capoeira at its Brazilian Arts Center, located in the Mission District of San Francisco.

ACSF is a grantee of the ASP's San Francisco partner, Team-Up for Youth. Now in its fourth year, Team-Up is supporting more than 40 community-based sports organizations, which together comprise a rich and varied array of culturally appropriate sports and physical activities for the Bay Area's most vulnerable children. With the growing epidemic of obesity among poor and minority children, Team-Up is poised to shed light on how a locally-based intermediary organization can broker resources to programs like ACSF and advocate for supportive policies to engage large numbers of young people in the fight against this serious health threat.

The ACSF's mission is to preserve and promote Afro-Brazilian culture through inspirational professional performance and instruction of capoeira and related Brazilian dance and music. By consistently seeking out new and creative ways of exploring and sharing the dynamic aspects of the multi-faceted art of capoeira and related arts, ACSF remains a pioneering force in the preservation and development of Brazilian cultural arts. Using traditional Brazilian



arts as its medium, ACSF seeks to inspire and empower people, especially youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, to realize their full potential as responsible, confident, productive citizens.

Younger pupils learn about movement and coordination and physical development. Older kids work more in partnership and the movements become more skilled and challenging. More than half of the enrolled students stay with the program year to year.

Artistic director Mestranda Márcia Treidler is one of the world's top female Capoeira artists.

Step up to the Window: Márcia Treidler Founder, Artistic Director, ABADA- Capoeira San Francisco

ASP: What is the history of capoeira?

MT: Capoeira developed in response to over three hundred years of slavery in Brazil. Generations of enslaved Africans—taken by the Portuguese colonists from various cultures in Africa—shared the cultural customs, dances, rituals, and fighting techniques, which overtime combined to become capoeira.

Capoeira was born in Brazil as an expression of resistance, as well as a method of spiritual and emotional empowerment. Through music and song, slaves were able to conceal the combative purpose of capoeira, while simultaneously illustrating the strength and beauty of cultural sharing. The cultures of enslaved Africans, Brazilian indigenous peoples, and Portuguese immigrants all contributed to the art of capoeira. It is a reflection of Brazilian culture-

characterized by spirited cultural diversity.

ASP: How did you become involved in capoeira?

MT: I started teaching in my home country Brazil, and continued to do so when I moved to San Francisco in 1991. I taught both adults and children, primarily in the Mission District part of San Francisco, a primarily Latino neighborhood.

ASP: What did you see that capoeira had to offer children?

MT: For the kids, I would go to schools and teach afterschool classes. This was the only physical activity most of the kids received that day. San Francisco public elementary schools offer kids no arts and PE classes on a daily or regular basis. Capoeira makes a big difference in these kids' lives. Not only does it keep them safe after school/off the streets and get them physically active, but it provides them a supportive environment where in they learn about team work and community, and are introduced to a different culture and new art forms.



ASP: When and why did you found ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco?

MT: People who live in and around the Mission District need access to quality physical activities, a stronger sense of community, and exposure to new opportunities—especially the kids. Capoeira makes a positive difference in people's lives.

Not only does it get them physically active, but it fosters a sense of community and presents them with new ideas and a new way to approach life.

ASP: What is the RAY Project?

Case in Point, Page 5

Contact Information:

The
AfterSchool
Project



180 West 80th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10024

Phone: 646.277.2408
Fax: 646.505.5265
info@theafterschoolproject.org

For more information about the After School Project, please visit our website at www.theafterschoolproject.org



Case in Point: *ABADÁ-Capoeira San Francisco, Continued*

MT: One of my best students was a boy named Raymond. In January 2003 Raymond was killed in a drive-by shooting in the area. I knew we had to get kids off the Streets. We needed accessible, high quality physical activities for young people. I founded a free program for teens in 1998 in response to this clear community need. Raymond was a student in that program.

Then, following his death, with funds received from Team-UP, we expanded the program to also serve children aged 5 to 19 and renamed the program "The RAY Project" in his memory. "RAY" stands for *Reaching ALL Youth*.

The RAY Project offers free, on-going capoeira classes for low-income young people. The Project has since expanded to include special workshops, youth-led meetings and projects, public performances, study trips to Brazil, and professional training that provides teens with the necessary skills to pursue a career teaching capoeira. Students must meet income level requirements to keep the program exclusive for low income kids. But students from the



RAY Project do get to interact with students from different schools and neighborhoods when teachers from the center are hired to hold workshops and performances outside of the Mission District.

ASP: What changes do you see in the kids who participate?

MT: Most of these kids come in with little or no sports or other physical activity experience. They also come in shy and a little guarded given the neighborhood they live in. But over time practicing capoeira, the kids become confident; their physical coordination improves; and they learn how to play instruments and to speak different languages.

Capoeira also helps train and inspire kids to play other sports. They learn leadership skills, confidence, teamwork, and respect for other cultures. Most of these kids have no previous exposure to learning in a structured environment; the RAY Project helps them develop an understanding that the kids can apply to other activities.

ASP: Any success stories you are particularly proud of?

MT: There is one little boy, Jesse, who started coming to capoeira classes when he was about 5 years old. He was very shy, and had very little physical confidence. But, Jesse came to class each week and



little by little he became stronger and more self-assured. Today, at age 11, Jesse is one of my star students—even one of the best performers at ACSF. Jesse can even speak a little Portuguese and is confident around other kids and with adults. His parents were so impressed at what capoeira did for Jesse, that his father and little sister now take classes at ACSF!

But the most important thing is that I know Jesse will carry this experience with him as he gets older, and that is what the RAY Project at ACSF is all about.

For more information about ACSF, please visit www.abada.org.

