

AFTERSCHOOL ALERT

ISSUE BRIEF

Issue Brief No. 20



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Older Youth Need Afterschool Programs

Afterschool programs provide myriad benefits to all who participate, but the lion's share of programs are geared toward younger children. According to a recent survey, 6.5 million children in the U.S. are in afterschool programs, and just 8 percent are in grades 9-12. However, there are 2.3 million high schoolers who would participate if programs were available.¹ In spite of the autonomy that typically comes with age, teens still need guidance and adult supervision to help keep them safe, in school and on the path to success in life.

Teens need guidance to stay on the path to productive adulthood.

There are 14.3 million children in the U.S. who take care of themselves after the school day ends; 51 percent of them are in grades 9-12.² The conventional wisdom is that by the time youth reach high school, they are old enough to take care of themselves and don't need adult supervision. However, if left to their own devices, teens might not make the best use of the free time they have after school.

- The rate of juvenile crime triples between 3 and 6pm, and youth are more likely to become victims of crime.
 - Compared to non-participants, participants in the Bayview Safe Haven afterschool program in San Francisco with a prior history of arrest were half as likely to be arrested during the six-month initial "intervention" period, and those with no history of arrest were one-third less likely to be arrested.³
- Self-care and boredom can increase the likelihood that a young person will experiment with drugs and alcohol as much as 50 percent,⁴ and ages 12-15 are the years in which youth develop their patterns of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use or nonuse.⁵
- A study of high-risk teens from an urban school district found that the likelihood of having sex for the first time increased with the number of unsupervised hours that teens have in a week. However, adult supervision is closely linked to reduced risky sexual behavior among teens. Research also shows that teens are "more likely to postpone sexual involvement and avoid pregnancy when they can envision a positive future."
 - The Quantum Opportunities Program involved students aged 13-17 who lived in families receiving public assistance. The program offered academic enrichment, community service and a developmental component that included research projects and computer skills development. By the end of the four-year program, 24 percent of the program participants reported becoming a parent, compared with 38 percent of the control group. Also, 63 percent of participants graduated high school, compared to 42 percent of the control group.⁶

Teens need additional help preparing for college and the workforce.

Today, 80 percent of jobs are classified as "skilled," and employment growth is expected to be fastest for positions that require some type of formal postsecondary education.⁷ However, only 32 percent of high school graduates are prepared for college coursework (meaning they require no remedial classes).⁸ Afterschool programs can provide the extra time for career exploration, skills development, and internships that will prepare high school students for college and beyond.

- In 2001, The After-School Corporation launched TASC Fellows, a year-round development program that offers income-eligible students afterschool programs, school year internships, summer jobs and summer enrichment programs. Some places the students have worked include the United Nations and the Queens District Attorney’s Office. The program also offers a work-readiness curriculum that includes mock interviews, resume writing and public speaking. Plus, fellows that have gone on to college or the work force come back to talk with younger students and act as role models for them.

The students that aren’t [in the program] are jealous because they see the great progress made by the Fellows.

Eric Azcuy, the Fellow Advisor of Queens Gateway High School.⁹

- After School Matters (ASM) in Chicago is a partnership between the city, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Public Library that offers apprenticeships and other enrichment activities to more than 20,000 teens. The city’s teens told the program operators that they wanted to learn “authentic skills,” and these skills they learn frequently benefit the city. For example, the city was experiencing a lifeguard shortage, so the ASM worked with the parks department to start a training program for these jobs that pay \$10-\$12 an hour.¹⁰

Reaching out to teens can be a challenge.

The typical afterschool program designed for younger students—homework time followed by a snack and some art or sports activities—isn’t going to appeal to older teens who see themselves as young adults. Afterschool programs specially geared toward high school students have to work that much harder to keep attendance up among students who can vote with their feet. For example, many older teens have adult responsibilities, including part-time jobs and caring for younger siblings, so afterschool programs might consider offering more flexible enrollment schedules.¹¹ Other strategies can include “street outreach” (peers as ambassadors) and recruiting groups of friends.

Perhaps the most important aspect of creating an afterschool program for older teens is listening to them. The After School Matters program evolved from a small arts program with six sites in 2000 to a citywide program with 35 sites, and a large part of that expansion involved simply listening to the young people they aimed to serve.

[W]e’ve done a lot of talking with kids to find out what interests them and what would generate their responsiveness.

B.J. Walker, chief of Human Infrastructure, City of Chicago¹²

¹ “America After 3 PM: A Household Survey on Afterschool in America,” Afterschool Alliance, 2004.

² Ibid.

³ *California’s Next After-School Challenge: Keeping High School Teens Off the Street and On the Right Track*, Fight Crime Invest in Kids California, 2004, www.fightcrime.org/ca/highschool/index.php.

⁴ National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse VIII: Teens and Parents, 2003; and *Pediatrics*, Volume 84, Issue 3, The American Academy of Pediatrics, 1989.

⁵ Bailey, William J., *Critical Hours and Critical Years: Precision Targeting in Prevention*, Indiana Prevention Resource Center, 1998, www.drugs.indiana.edu/publications/iprc/newsline/indiana_data.html.

⁶ Manlove, J.; Franzetta, K.; McKinney, K.; Romano-Papillo, A.; Terry-Humen, E.; *A good time: After-school programs to reduce teen pregnancy*, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2003.

⁷ “2002-12 Employment Projections,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t04.htm>, 2004.

⁸ Buehlmann, Beth B., VP and Executive Director, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “Careers for the 21st Century: The Importance of Education and Worker Training for Small Businesses,” Testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Committee, June 2, 2004.

⁹ “TASC Fellows (Workforce Investment Act),” www.tascorp.org/programs/special/fellows.

¹⁰ “High School: The Next Frontier for After-School Advocates?” *Forum Focus*, The Forum for Youth Investment, February 2004, www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/focus/focusv2i1feb04.pdf.

¹¹ Lauver, Sherri; Little, Priscilla; Weiss, Heather; “Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School Time Programs,” Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation Briefs, Number 6, Harvard Family Research Project, July 2004, www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/issuebrief6.html.

¹² *Forum Focus*, 2004.

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Afterschool programs level the playing field for all youth

We are living in a world where simply growing up, simply surviving is an extraordinary challenge. What we are trying to do here is offer children, youth and their families a permanent oasis of support.
--Michael Funk, San Francisco Beacons Program¹

In America today, a number of youth face significant challenges that classify them as “disadvantaged youth.” Failing schools, dangerous neighborhoods, poverty, disproportionate incarceration, poor health and nutrition, lack of employment opportunity, language difficulty and marginalization of their heritage and culture are just a few of the factors facing many of our youth today. The heavily structured school day does not offer many opportunities to address these problems, and when left to their own devices, youth can find themselves facing boredom at best and danger and risky behavior at worst in the hours after school. Afterschool programs can offer youth facing considerable trials and tribulations as a result of their socioeconomic circumstances alternative opportunities for learning and success. Fortunately, communities and schools across the country are choosing to give these youth the time and tools to excel by creating quality afterschool programs.

A variety of youth nationwide face myriad obstacles.

- In the 2000-2001 school year, 27.4 million kids were receiving free or reduced-price lunch.²
- Sixth-graders who regularly care for themselves after school have shown poor behavior adjustment and academic performance later in school.³
- By the end of the fourth grade, African American, Latino, and low-income students of all races are already about two years behind other students. By the time they reach eighth grade, they are about three years behind.⁴
- African American and Latino youth are more likely to drop out of school than their white and Asian peers. 10.9 percent of African American youth drop out, as do 27 percent of Latino youth. By comparison, 7.3 percent of white youth and 3.6 percent of Asian youth drop out.⁵
- In 1999, 55 percent of poor, single rural mothers were working, but many rural communities face shortages of formal child care providers and children often are left unsupervised. Rural schools are less likely than urban and suburban schools to offer extended-day and afterschool programs.⁶
- Families leaving welfare may need afterschool more than most. The US General Accounting Office estimates that welfare reform will be associated with a “substantial increase” in unmet child care needs.⁷
- Several studies have found effects of hunger and poor nutrition on cognitive ability. One such study found that among fourth-grade students, those who had the least protein intake in their diets had the lowest achievement scores. Also, children who are hungry or undernourished have more difficulty fighting infection. Therefore, they are more likely to become sick, miss school and fall behind in class.⁸
- According to a study examining access to afterschool in varying neighborhoods, inner-city young people appear to have fewer afterschool opportunities. Chapin Hall researchers Julia Littell and Joan Wynn documented that both the quantity and variety of programs were dramatically higher in a suburban Chicago neighborhood (71 activities and 42 facilities per 1,000 youth) than an urban one (23 activities and 9 facilities per 1,000 youth) even though the population of the inner-city neighborhood was six times as dense.⁹

Afterschool programs are key to keeping youth on the path to success.

- Researchers compared five housing projects with new Boys & Girls Clubs to five housing projects without clubs. The projects with clubs had 50% less vandalized housing units and 30% less drug activity than those with new clubs.¹⁰
- The boys and girls randomly assigned to participate in the Quantum Opportunities program were half as likely to drop out of high school and two and one half times more likely to go on to further education after high school.¹¹
- The Children's Hunger Alliance provides nutritious meals and enriching experiences to more than 1,300 youth, ages 5-18 at 45 afterschool programs in Franklin County, Ohio. Youth who participate in Children's Hunger Alliance-sponsored programs are more likely to:¹²
 - Meet minimum USDA requirements for all key nutrients.
 - Arrive at school on time, attend school more regularly and pass on to the next grade than their peers.
 - Pass 4th- and 6th-grade proficiency tests than their peers.
- Teens who do not engage in afterschool activities are five times more likely to be "D" students than teens who do.¹³
- Roosevelt Village Center is an afterschool program at an Oakland, CA, middle school that serves a student population that speaks 17 primary languages. Nearly two-thirds of the students are English language learners. The academic program provides homework help in students' native languages, which makes them feel more comfortable and encourages them to reach higher academic goals. Also, despite the lack of formal ESL instruction, many students are improving their English skills because of the program's small group environments in which students can practice the language without fear of ridicule or judgment.¹⁴
- An evaluation of LA's BEST found the program "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 students' 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."¹⁵

All of America's youth deserve a fair chance to succeed in life.

A recent National Research Council report concluded that "at least 25 percent of adolescents in the United States are at serious risk of not achieving 'productive adulthood.'"¹⁶ Afterschool programs are a proven way to reach at-risk youth and keep them on a positive path; they have the ability to reach youth in meaningful ways that take their backgrounds and cultures into account. A quality afterschool program is an open place where youth can feel safe, express themselves, and learn from and form bonds with both their teachers and their peers. Quality afterschool has the potential to help youth develop life skills and turn young people into problem solvers, creative thinkers, community participants, lifelong learners and productive, successful adults.

¹ *Abandoned in the Back Row: New Lessons in Education and Delinquency Prevention*, Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2001.

² Food Research and Action Center, Summary of National School Lunch Program, www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/nslp.html.

³ National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 1997.

⁴ *Pursuing the Promise: Addressing Equity, Access, and Diversity in After School and Youth Programs*, California Tomorrow, 2003.

⁵ "High School Dropout Rates," ChildTrends Databank, 2003, <http://revised.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/1HighSchoolDropout.cfm>.

⁶ *America's Forgotten Children: Rural Poverty in America*, Save the Children, 2002.

⁷ *After-School Programs: An Analysis of Need, Current Research, and Public Opinion*, The After-School Corporation, the National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University, 1999.

⁸ "Children's Nutrition and Learning," ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 1994.

⁹ "The Availability and Use of Community Resources for Young Adolescents in an Inner-City and a Suburban Community," The Chapin Hall Center for Children, 1989.

¹⁰ *America's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime, Or Youth Enrichment and Achievement*, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2000.

¹¹ Fight Crime, 2000.

¹² Children's Hunger Alliance, www.childrenshungeralliance.org/youth%20development.htm.

¹³ *After School for America's Teens: A national survey of teen attitudes and behaviors in the hours after school*, YMCA of the USA 2001.

¹⁴ California Tomorrow, 2003.

¹⁵ *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*, University of California, Los Angeles Center for the Study of Evaluation, June 2000.

¹⁶ *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002.

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Afterschool programs help working families

“It’s midafternoon, and working parents across America are getting that sinking feeling—often with good reason. A glut of free time and a dearth of out-of-school care can spell trouble for children and stress for parents.”¹

Changing family structures place extra burdens on children, parents and employers.

The image of 21st century families is vastly different from that of previous centuries, or even the family image of 50 years ago. Today, less than one-fourth of American families portray the “traditional” image of one parent at home, caring for children full-time, while the other parent provides financial support. In 1950, 56 percent of families fit this profile.² While women are still the primary caregivers, either as single mothers or part of a two-parent family, they are entering the workforce in greater numbers than ever. In fact, 77 percent of mothers with school-age children are employed.³ Plus, both men and women are working more hours. Average work hours per adult increased 7.9 percent between 1960 and 1998,⁴ and nearly three-fourths of working adults say they have little or no control over their work schedule.⁵

The burden on parents:

While the work day grows longer for working parents, the school day has not. The gap between work and school schedules amounts to as much as 25 hours per week,⁶ which presents working parents with the challenge of finding someone to care for their children while they are at work. Nationwide, between 2 million and 6 million youngsters under 13 regularly care for themselves, and 44% of families do not have any regular after-school care for their children.⁷ Further, commercial child care can be prohibitively expensive for some working families. Nearly half of America's working families with a child younger than 13 have child care expenses that consume, on average, 9 percent of their monthly earnings, and families with earnings below the federal poverty level spend an average of 23 percent of their monthly earnings on childcare.⁸

The dangers for children:

Studies show that children are most at risk during the hours after school--the time of day when juvenile crime triples and children are most likely to be involved in risky behavior. Even if unsupervised kids are not getting into trouble, they are oftentimes at home eating, playing video games or watching TV. These kids are not benefiting much from time spent alone.⁹

The drain on employers:

While concerns about unsupervised children pressure families, they also profoundly affect employers. Polling shows that 87 percent of working mothers say the hours afterschool are when they are most concerned about their children's safety,¹⁰ and this “afterschool stress” can lead to distraction that causes lower productivity, high turnover and absenteeism. In fact, 80 percent of employees with children miss work because of child care problems.¹¹

Quality afterschool programs are proven to alleviate these burdens.

Afterschool programs provide a safe, enriching environment for kids while their parents are still at work, allowing them to focus on work and ultimately improve family life.

- Parents in a study from The After-School Corporation said afterschool programs helped them balance work and family life, with 60 percent saying they missed less work than before their child was in the program, and 59 percent saying it supported them in keeping their job.¹²
- An evaluation of LA’s BEST found that three-quarters of the parents [surveyed] indicated that they worried significantly less about their children’s safety and that they had more energy in the evening since enrolling their children in the program. A clear majority also indicated that the program resulted in sizeable time savings.¹³

- "Because of that [afterschool] program, I can stay at work and I can earn extra hours. I work two jobs, and that program allows my kids to stay in school while I get the necessities taken care of."
--Irma Villarreal, parent of two sons in the afterschool program at Harms Elementary School in Detroit.¹⁴

Employers have noticed the effect on their bottom line.

For 18 years, *Working Mother* magazine has published a list of "100 Best Companies for Working Mothers." A slot on the list is a coveted designation—companies have to apply, and child care options, including afterschool care, are a significant factor. Companies see these programs as an investment. As the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care (ABC) notes in its 10th Anniversary Report, "The companies view their investments in dependent care in the community not as charity, but as sound business practice."¹⁵ The First Tennessee Bank echoed that sentiment in noting the benefits of its work/life programs. Namely, employee satisfaction impacts the service-profit chain: increase employee satisfaction, increase customer retention, increase profit.¹⁶

Afterschool for All is possible.

The movement to provide afterschool for all children, nationwide, is growing and local efforts are providing examples of success. For example, the city of San Diego now offers an afterschool program at every middle and high school through its San Diego 6 to 6 program. And a recent survey reveals that 51 percent of schoolchildren in Boston now participate in afterschool programming.¹⁷ Both cities are examples of successful public-private partnerships that use varied funding streams to provide quality afterschool programs. Boston's After-School for All Partnership includes 13 philanthropic, education, business and government institutions that have committed more than \$24 million in new funding over five years, and the program also receives federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds.

America's working families still need more afterschool programs.

Despite the many cities, states and businesses that take steps to provide care for the children of employees, there are still plenty of gaps in care. Mayors surveyed in 86 cities reported that only one-third of children needing afterschool care were receiving it,¹⁸ and only 4 percent of companies nationwide offer afterschool care.¹⁹ Further, 67 percent of the Boston parents whose children were not in an afterschool program wanted their child to participate.²⁰ Although some large corporations may be able to contribute to the cost of providing quality afterschool care for their employee's families, most businesses find it difficult, if not prohibitive. Healthy families are part of healthy businesses, and investments at all levels, federal to local, and from all sectors, public to private, are crucial to ensuring that America's children do not fall through the cracks while their parents are at work and they are out of school.

¹ Jackson, Maggie, "Now What?" *Working Mother* magazine, October 2003, 42.

² Bailyn, Lotte; Drago, Robert; Kochan, Thomas; *Integrating Work and Family Life: A Holistic Approach*, Sloan Work-Family Policy Network, MIT Sloan School of Management, September 14, 2001.

³ 10th Anniversary Report, American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care (ABC), 2002.

⁴ Bailyn, et al.

⁵ AFL-CIO, Website: Work & Family, <http://www.aflcio.org/issuespolitics/workfamily>, accessed October 3, 2003.

⁶ Barnett, Rosalind Chait, Ph.D. "Working Parents Sweat It Out Over Unsupervised Children," Community, Families & Work Program, Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University, PowerPoint presentation, 2003.

⁷ Barnett, Rosalind Chait; Rivers, Caryl; "Commentary: Out-of-Sync Work Shifts, Out-of-Sync Families; Child care is a pressing need for those with odd work hours," Los Angeles Times, September 2, 2002.

⁸ Barsimantov, J.; Giannarelli, L.; "Child Care Expenses of America's Families," *Assessing the New Federalism*, Occasional Paper Number 40, The Urban Institute, December 2000.

⁹ Jackson, Maggie, 43.

¹⁰ Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Poll of Working Mothers, www.fightcrime.org, August 2003.

¹¹ 10th Anniversary Report, ABC.

¹² Policy Studies Associates, Inc., February 2001.

¹³ Huang, Denise et al. *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program*, UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, June 2000.

¹⁴ Kresnak, Jack, "After school-and all alone; State not doing enough to put kids on right track, study says," *Detroit Free Press*, May 16, 2002.

¹⁵ 10th Anniversary Report, ABC.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 2003 After-School Parent Survey, Boston After-School Partnership, October 1, 2003.

¹⁸ *After-School Programs in Cities Across the United States*, U.S. Conference of Mayors, January 2003.

¹⁹ Jackson, Maggie, 62.

²⁰ Boston After-School Partnership.

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ISSUE BRIEF



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Afterschool and School Improvement

Afterschool programs are a proven method of helping to improve a school's performance. Studies show that afterschool programs improve academic achievement, reduce grade retention and increase student attendance and interest in school. Across the country, afterschool is a key element in strategies to turn around under-performing schools. The superintendent of Philadelphia and the governor of Virginia have used afterschool to turn their schools around. Congress recognized the benefits of afterschool by mandating provision of extra learning opportunities in afterschool hours through the creation of the Title I Supplemental Educational Services program.

According to state departments of education, more than 7,000 schools in the United States are considered in need of improvement.¹ Some characteristics of successful schools include high academic achievement, clear standards and evaluation processes, community involvement and students who are engaged in learning. Afterschool programs offer a chance to reinforce and supplement the curriculum by offering new and different opportunities for learning that further engage students in school. Community involvement frequently is built in, as many afterschool programs are partners with community- and faith-based organizations.

Of Principal Importance

Principals and superintendents acknowledge that afterschool plays an important role in turning around failing or under-performing schools.

- According to a survey of K-8 principals by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, afterschool is becoming an integral part of their schools. Principals say afterschool programs have improved academic performance, provided safe environments and helped the school connect with parents and the community.

Principals have embraced...after-school programs because there is clearly a need. Most see the payoff in terms of benefits to the children. If they are helping children make progress academically and helping to keep them safe, those are very good incentives to keep going.

Vincent L. Ferrandino, executive director, NAESP²

- Paul Vallas, current head of the Philadelphia Public School District and former chief of Chicago public schools, has seen first-hand the difference afterschool programs can make in turning around failing schools. When he took charge in Chicago, the district had a dropout rate of more than 50 percent and an average daily attendance rate of about 86 percent. On standardized reading exams, only about 25 percent of the kids were scoring above the national average. Now, thanks in part to afterschool programs such as Lighthouse, which is

mandatory for students with attendance problems or who are in danger of being retained, 35 percent of students are scoring above the national average in reading. Also, the attendance rate is above 90 percent.

Of the schools that established Lighthouse programs two years ago, 90 percent have shown an improvement in academic performance. Some of them have improved so fast, in fact, that I've had to go in and audit the test scores to make sure they're kosher.

Paul Vallas, former CEO, Chicago Public Schools³

Blue Ribbon Success

Since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools program has honored schools that meet high academic standards or have shown significant improvement during the past five years. Studies show that afterschool programs help schools develop qualities necessary to win a Blue Ribbon designation, namely high student retention and graduation rates; challenging standards and curriculum; excellent teaching and an environment that strengthens teachers' skills and improvement; school, family and community partnerships; and good student performance on measures of achievement. In 2001, 264 schools were selected as Blue Ribbon Schools. What do many of them credit for their success? Afterschool programs.

- Good Elementary School in Irving, Texas, keeps its doors open from 7 a.m. until after 8 p.m. to serve its nearly 800 students. Of those, about 81 percent are considered economically disadvantaged; 63 percent speak limited English; and 79 percent are considered at-risk. The staff is committed to focusing on every aspect of youth development and working with both students and parents.

*This is an affirmation of everything we have been doing...Our mixed-aged, looping, technology and **after-school programs** played a big role in receiving this award.*

Cheryl Jennings, principal⁴

- Los Penasquitos Elementary School of Rancho Penasquitos, California, was recognized for its afterschool program, which has a waiting list of more than 50 students. The program, using local high school volunteers, has helped the school improve dramatically in recent years.⁵ Forty percent of students, in a population that includes as many as 21 languages, scored at or above the 75th percentile on the SAT-9 in reading, compared to twenty-eighth percent in 1998.⁶

For us it was much less about receiving an award than it was about receiving an independent, external confirmation that what has happened here in the last five years has been nothing short of miraculous.

Jeff King, principal⁷

¹No Child Left Behind, Supplemental Services, "How many schools are in need of improvement?" 2002, available from <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/parents/supplementalservices/index.html>

²National Association of Elementary School Principals, *Principals and After School Programs: A Survey of PreK-8 Principals*, August 2001, available from <http://www.naesp.org/afterschool/report.pdf>.

³Paul G. Vallas, "Saving Public Schools," Civic Bulletin No. 16 (Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, March 1999), available from http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cb_16.htm.

⁴Stephen Terry, "With 'everything in place,' school wins Blue Ribbon," *Dallas Morning News*, 3 June, 2001.

⁵Shay K. McKinley, "2 schools in community earn national award," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 28 December, 2001.

⁶Los Penasquitos Elementary School Web site, Student Achievement Section, *SAT-9 Test Results: National Percentile Ranking*, 2001, available from <http://www.pusd.info/pusdlpes/Sachievement.htm>.

⁷McKinley, *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

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Laws for the liberal education of the youth ...are so extremely wise and useful, that, to a humane and generous mind, no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant.

—John Adams, “Thoughts on Government,” 1776

Afterschool Programs: A Wise Public Investment

Afterschool advocates and practitioners face a daily struggle for adequate funding. While there have been successes -- the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program grew from a small pilot to a billion-dollar funding stream in the No Child Left Behind Act – budgets have since grown tighter at all levels of government, afterschool funding has leveled off and advocates must be prepared to respond to the question: Are afterschool programs a worthy investment? Fortunately, both research and personal stories reveal the answer to be a resounding YES!

The Price We Pay

A struggling student is not the sole bearer of the cost of academic difficulty—society at large pays a great price, too. Remedial education, absenteeism, grade repetition, drop-outs, crime, drug use, teen pregnancy and income lost are just a few of the costs taxpayers bear when a young person does not succeed in school, and these costs start tallying when school begins and last for a lifetime.

- Each year's class of dropouts will cost the country more than \$200 billion during their lifetimes in lost earnings and unrealized tax revenue.¹
- Remedial education costs Alabama colleges and businesses an estimated \$304 million annually.²
- Teen motherhood costs society an estimated \$8 billion annually. (Costs are largely related to greater welfare expenditures and lost tax revenue.)³
- High school drop-outs earn 24 percent less money during their lifetimes than high school graduates.⁴

Incredible Cost to Businesses

As manufacturing jobs dwindle in 21st century America, the next generation of workers will need far more education and advanced skills in order to succeed as productive members of the workforce. Unfortunately, too many graduates lack basic skills in reading, writing and math, much less creative thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication, self-direction and technology. If future workers come out the end of the “education pipeline” unable to meet these standards, businesses bear the cost of retraining them.

- More than 70 percent of both college professors and employers said that recent high school graduates were unable to write clearly and had only poor or fair grammar and spelling skills.⁵
- American **business** currently **spends** more than **\$60 billion** each year on training, much of that on **remedial** reading, writing, and mathematics.⁶

Afterschool programs are an invaluable support for K-16 education because they provide extra time for academic help, career exploration, skills development, and internships that will prepare students for college and beyond. According to Corporate Voices for Working Families, “Quality after school programs provide a unique venue in which young people can develop the range of skills they need to enter the 21st Century workplace.” Therefore, they suggest, it is in the business community’s best interest to see that there is more public and private investment in afterschool programs.

Return on Investment

Myriad studies and evaluations have proved that, even with conservative estimates, afterschool programs are cost-effective and save money. Many of the areas in which afterschool programs save money through prevention are related to struggles with school. Juvenile crime, pregnancy, substance abuse, dropping out, these behaviors too often appear when a young person feels hopeless about the possibility of success in life.

Afterschool programs address these risky and expensive (for society) behaviors in two ways. First, afterschool programs simply keep youth busy during the hours they are most likely to get into trouble. Second, afterschool programs provide young people with access to caring adults who provide the support they need to succeed, whether it’s homework help or learning how to say no to drugs. As a result, children and youth who regularly attend quality afterschool programs have better grades and conduct in school, are more likely to graduate, and have lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy.

- Every dollar invested in afterschool programs will save taxpayers approximately \$3, according to a study by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College.⁷
- A 2001 evaluation of California’s state afterschool program revealed that the state was likely to save \$11 million that year because fewer students would be held back in school.⁸
- Schools in Manchester, New Hampshire, estimate that they saved more than \$72,000 over three years because students participating in afterschool programs avoided being held back a grade or being placed in special education. (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998)
- Effective after-school programs save between \$1.87 to \$5.29 for every \$1 spent because participants commit fewer crimes.⁹
- Every \$1 invested in the Quantum Opportunities afterschool program produced \$3 worth of benefits to youth and the general public. This figure does not include the added savings from a six-fold drop in crime by boys in the program.¹⁰
- An evaluation of the CAS-Carrera pregnancy-prevention program showed reduced births among girls by 50 percent. The program also saw a 61 percent college-enrollment rate among its eligible students.¹¹

Unexpected Contributions

As flexible as they are, afterschool programs are uniquely able to tailor themselves to what their community needs, even problems beyond education. For example, afterschool programs are increasingly seen as an essential weapon to fight the growing obesity epidemic. Because people form their fitness and nutrition habits during their youth, it is a positive trend that afterschool programs commonly provide young people with the time and space to participate safely in physical activity and nutrition education. In a 2001 survey of 800 elementary school principals conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP,) 78 percent reported that their afterschool programs offer recreation and sports activities.¹²

Helping to create healthy habits for a lifetime is no small contribution. Annual obesity-attributable medical expenditures in the U.S. were estimated to be \$75 billion in 2003, half of which were financed by Medicare and Medicaid.¹³ According to the CDC, 61.5 percent of children ages 9-13 do not participate in any organized physical activity outside of school hours, and 22.6 percent do not engage in any type of physical activity during free time.¹⁴ Experts agree that strategies to promote healthy behaviors in our youth must focus on reducing sedentary activities; ensuring that all youth have access to daily, quality opportunities for physical activity; and providing nutrition education and access to healthy foods. Afterschool programs provide much-needed opportunities to promote and support healthy lifestyles in our youth.

Benefits Beyond Dollars

As much as quality afterschool programs are capable of saving money and providing a significant monetary return on the investment, many benefits to individual students, teachers, schools and communities cannot be assigned a dollar value. Time to find a passion or a skill, better self-esteem, teamwork skills, confidence, a greater sense of curiosity, a lifelong love of learning—these things are priceless. Society will absolutely reap the benefits of making an investment to create future generations of scientists, teachers, leaders, artists and thoughtful citizens.

- Participants in the Go Grrrls program in Tucson, Arizona, reported significantly greater increases in body image, assertiveness positive attitudes regarding attractiveness, self-efficacy, self-liking and competence.¹⁵
- Evaluations of the 4 Counties for Kids program revealed myriad positive outcomes for youth, including better problem-solving skills, higher academic aspirations, better communications skills and improved grades. Their parents not only reported that their children were getting better grades, were reading better and had more interest in school, but also that they were playing a more active role in their child's education and even were noticing better interactions with their child.¹⁶
- Of the middle-grade students participating in a TASC program, 56 percent feel the program is giving them the leadership opportunities and life skills they need to become productive members of society. Half of the participants say the program exposes them to important new places, ideas, and activities and gives them a chance to master skills, and 62 percent report a high level of academic self-esteem.¹⁷
- Most principals with TASC programs at their schools say the programs boost school attendance and increase students' interest in learning, and 90 percent say the benefits of hosting the program outweigh the costs.¹⁸

Quality Counts

Research has proved time and time again that afterschool programs are an effective way to boost student achievement and set young people on the path to productive adulthood. Quality programs, however, cannot be produced out of thin air. If we are to reap the rewards of educating our youth well, we must make a solid and deliberate investment. Quality afterschool programs, like schools themselves, need quality staff, effective curricula and community collaboration in order to succeed. Federal, state and local governments need to put their weight behind developing policies that support staff and curriculum development and regular evaluation so programs can best serve our youth. If the K-12 education system is going to provide the education youth need to move on to productive adulthood and lifelong learning, then the support of afterschool programs is not just a good idea—it's an absolute necessity. We demand our children do their best in school, so why would we do any less than our best for them?

¹ “Quick Facts: Economy,” National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
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² Hammons, Christopher, *The Cost of Remedial Education: How Much Alabama Pays When Students Fail to Learn Basic Skills*, Alabama Policy Institute, April 2004.

³ Levine, Phillip and Zimmerman, David, *Evaluating the Benefits and Costs of After-School Care: Final Report*, The After-School Corporation, June 2003.

⁴ Aos, Steve and Pennucci, Annie, “High School Graduation Rates in Washington and the United States: A Long-Run View,” Washington State Institute for Public Policy, March 2005.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “The Impact of Education on: *The Economy*,” Alliance for Excellent Education, November 2003,
www.all4ed.org/publications/FactSheets.html.

⁷ Brown et. al, *The Costs and Benefits of After School Programs: The Estimated Effects of the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002*, The Rose Institute of Claremont-McKenna College, September 2002.

⁸ *Evaluation of California’s After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000 Final Report*, California Department of Education, University of California at Irvine, September 2001.

⁹ Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2001.

¹⁰ *America’s After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime Or Youth Enrichment and Achievement*, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2000.

¹¹ Children’s Aid Society Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, 2004,
www.stopteenpregnancy.com/success/teens.html.

¹² Fact Sheet. Principals and after-school programs: a survey of PreK-8 principals. National Association of Elementary School Principals. From the website: www.naesp.org

¹³ Finkelstein, E, Fiebelkorn, I, Wang, G. “State-level estimates of annual medical expenditures attributable to obesity,” *Obesity Research*; 2004.

¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Physical activity levels among children aged 9-13 years” --United States, 2002. *Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report*, 2003.

¹⁵ “Making the Case: A Fact Sheet on Children and Youth in Out-of-School Time,” National Institute on Out-of-School Time, January 2005.

¹⁶ *4 Counties for Kids: The Implementation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Final Evaluation Report*, Center for Prevention Research and Development—University of Illinois, October 2004.

¹⁷ TASC: The After-School Corporation, *Quality, Scale and Effectiveness in After-School Programs*, summary of 2004 Policy Studies Associates’ evaluations, 2005.

¹⁸ Ibid.

AFTERSCHOOL ALERT

ISSUE BRIEF



Issue Brief No. 18

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Afterschool programs strengthen communities

At their most sophisticated, [afterschool programs] represent a dynamic, authentic school-community partnership that brings both public and private resources to bear in order to strengthen community, improve schools' effectiveness, and develop the potential of the young people they serve.¹

Some say America's attention to community is in decline. As people work longer hours, endure longer commutes, and have less time to socialize and join community organizations, they are not getting to know their neighbors and communities. Schools exist in a vacuum, having little or no association with the surrounding neighborhood, and many neighborhoods lack safe places for youth to gather and socialize without parents being concerned about violence, drug use, abduction, traffic or other dangers. Afterschool programs are uniquely suited to fill this void and become America's new neighborhood -- a safe space for both kids and parents to gather to learn, play and connect. By giving schools, community based organizations and communities a sound investment in one another, afterschool programs have the power to reduce crime, increase safety, bring neighbors together, and foster community pride and ownership.

Youth reap the benefits of safe, stable environments.

A disconnected community is in jeopardy of becoming an unsafe community. Criminologist Robert J. Sampson asserts, "communities characterized by (a) anonymity and sparse acquaintanceship networks among residents, (b) unsupervised teenage peer groups and attenuated control of public space, and (c) a weak organizational base and low social participation in local activities face an increased risk of crime and violence."² Conversely, afterschool programs are proven to lower juvenile crime rates and generally improve neighborhoods, and not just by keeping youth occupied for a few hours every day. Afterschool programs help young people succeed by providing academic support and the chance to form meaningful relationships with adults from their community, and by encouraging them to get involved in their neighborhood through service projects. This support, these relationships and the benefits to the community create a mutually beneficial relationship of immeasurable value.

- After the implementation of the city-wide San Diego 6 to 6 program, the San Diego Police Department's 2001 report indicated that although overall crime increased 8.8 percent since 2000, juvenile arrests during after school hours were down 13.1 percent. The police chief specifically cited the 6 to 6 program as one of the primary factors responsible for this decrease. Additionally, the rates of juveniles as victims of violent crime during after school hours decreased 11.7 percent from the previous year.³
- When young people form early connections with community groups through service activities, the groups themselves are often the beneficiaries. Young people can infuse a charity or civic group with energy and inspiration; become members of the volunteer force, staff, or board; help build awareness of the group's mission throughout the community; and help an organization garner positive press and media attention.⁴
- Evaluations of the first two years of The After-School Corporation (TASC) programming found that students felt that participating in after-school improved their ability to maintain self-control and avoid fights.⁵

Afterschool programs bring communities together.

In communities where at least 50 percent of the kids are participating in after-school programs, that community is five times more likely to be a healthy community because they are putting resources behind their children. —Grenae Dudley, executive director of the Youth Connection in Detroit.⁶

Schools and other organizations that invest in youth are prime facilitators of community connections. In 1935, when C.S. Mott and Frank Manley developed the model of the "lighted schoolhouse," or a school that is a

vibrant community center, open all evening, year-round, they gave birth to the idea of the community school. Community schools have flourished in some areas of the country and afterschool is serving as a stepping stone for community schools in others. Afterschool programs need community involvement to succeed, and asking for community support brings neighbors together for a common purpose--to help their children--and fosters a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the program, the entity that houses it and its results.

- In the report *What We Know Works*, the Pew Partnership for Civic Change compiled current research on the most effective strategies to promote and ensure healthy families and children, thriving neighborhoods, living-wage jobs and viable economies. Afterschool programs are number three on the partnership's Top Ten List For Community Success:
 “**Create quality and affordable after-school care.** ... Children who participate in quality after-school programs are much less likely to use drugs and alcohol, to have sex, or to be involved in criminal activity than their peers who go home to empty houses in neighborhoods that are not safe. Participation in after-school programs is linked to improved school attendance and academic performance.”⁷
- An afterschool program helped build a community center in Greensboro, NC. The Eastside Park Community Center grew out of an afterschool tutoring program that grew from a partnership between the predominantly black Eastside Park community in eastern Greensboro and the predominantly white Westminster Presbyterian Church in western Greensboro. The need for more space for the afterschool program prompted the idea for the community center, and residents are optimistic about the effects the center, the partnership and the program will have on the community. Vernon Bailey, president of the community center's board, said the partnership with the church has brought the Eastside Park community closer together. As children learn and play together, he said, their parents get to know each other, and neighbors are no longer politely waving at strangers.⁸
- Project C.H.A.N.C.E. in Wilmington, DE, has an annual Bike Award in which it gives refurbished bicycles to needy students who make significant academic improvement during the school year, and adult bikes are given to parents. The bikes are donated by the police department and refurbished by a bicycle club (Wilmington Velocity). The police department and Christiana Health Care System provide the bike safety training, a local helmet bank provides helmets, and a local bike store provides equipment such as gears, reflectors and mirrors. The program also promotes healthy living and uses the event to encourage families to go cycling together, program director Alina Columbus said.⁹
- In a survey of afterschool programs supported by The After-School Corporation, “forty-five percent of principals said that the after-school programs had increased parents' attendance at school events.”¹⁰

Flourishing communities, effective schools, productive youth, promising future.

The notion of community investment in youth cannot languish. Support for afterschool programs that bring together kids, parents, teachers, residents and community leaders and organizations is vital in building strong, supportive communities. Successful afterschool programs help young people become productive adults, get parents involved in their children's education, produce safer streets, address community needs, foster civic responsibility, strengthen community groups and rally residents around a common goal. In short, afterschool programs make communities safer and stronger.

¹ EdSource Online, Community Partnerships and After-School Programs, An Overview, www.edsource.org/edu_part.cfm, February 2002.

² Putnam, Robert, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, Pg. 307.

³ Ferrin & Amick, 2002.

⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service, *Students in Service to America*, Washington, D.C., 2002.

⁵ Friedman & Bleiberg, 2002.

⁶ Kresnak, Jack, “After school - and all alone; State not doing enough to put kids on right track, study says,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 16, 2002.

⁷ News Release, “Pew Partnership's Top Ten List For Community Success,” [www.pew-partnership.org/newsroom/top_ten\(pr\).html](http://www.pew-partnership.org/newsroom/top_ten(pr).html), accessed November 14, 2003.

⁸ Rutland, Aulica, “Building a dream; community center rises in eastside,” *Greensboro News & Record*, April 19, 2002.

⁹ Alina Columbus, Afterschool Ambassador.

¹⁰ Friedman & Bleiberg, 2002, p. 32.

AFTERSCHOOL ALERT

ISSUE BRIEF

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Active Hours Afterschool: Childhood Obesity Prevention & Afterschool Programs

The obesity crisis in America is ubiquitous and irrefutable, and it's hitting youth so hard that health experts warn that this generation of children will be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Tackling and reversing this epidemic will require a comprehensive and sustained effort in every community in America. The nation's growing network of afterschool providers can make a significant contribution to this battle. Afterschool programs can provide physical activity and nutrition education, healthy snacks and a safe place to play and socialize in the hours after school.

Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic.

- + In the past 30 years, the percentage of children in the U.S. who are overweight has more than doubled, and the number of teenagers who are overweight has nearly tripled. (National Center for Health Statistics, 2004)
- + A 2006 study predicts that by the year 2010 more than 46 percent of school-age children in the Americas will be overweight and one in seven will be obese. (International Journal of Pediatric Obesity, 2006)

The health and economic costs are astounding.

- + In 2003, obesity-attributable medical expenditures in the U.S. were estimated to be \$75 billion, approximately one-half of which were financed by Medicare and Medicaid. (Obesity Research, 2004)
- + The hospital costs for complications resulting from obesity in youth ages 6-17 soared from \$35 million in 1979 to \$127 million in 1999. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2002)
- + Severely obese children and adolescents have lower health-related quality of life than non-obese children and have health-related quality of life similar to children and adolescents with cancer. (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003)
- + The National Centers for Disease Control predicts that one in three U.S. children born in 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime, and nearly half of African-American and Hispanic children are likely to develop the disease. (National Centers for Disease Control, 2003)

Children are not getting enough physical activity and have unhealthy eating habits.

- + 61.5 percent of children ages 9-13 do not participate in any organized physical activity outside of school hours, and 22.6 percent do not engage in any type of physical activity during free time. (National Centers for Disease Control, 2003)
- + On average, children in the United States spend almost 6.5 hours each day consuming media. (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005)
- + In 2000, fewer than 10 percent of elementary, junior high, middle and high schools surveyed provided daily physical education or an equivalent, and fewer than half of all schools offered any out-of-school time intramural activities or physical activity clubs for students. (National Centers for Disease Control, 2000)
- + In 2003, just one-fifth of youth in grades 9-12 consumed the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. (National Centers for Disease Control, 2004)

Afterschool programs can help combat the epidemic of childhood obesity.

Additional before- and after- school programs will also help decrease child obesity, expand physical activity, and increase parent and community involvement in schools.

– New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson in his 2006 State of the State Address.

- + The Food Research and Action Council identifies afterschool programs as effective venues for improving nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity (Food Research and Action Council, 2006)
- + The Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, in their 2000 report to the President, “Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports,” identified afterschool programs as a means to provide opportunities for youth to be physically active and called for support to enable afterschool programs to do so. (National Centers for Disease Control, 2000)
- + In the landmark report “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity,” former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher recommended that schools take action to provide opportunities for extracurricular physical activity such as intramural sports and physical activity clubs. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001)
- + The American Academy of Pediatrics’ Committees on Sports Medicine and Fitness and School Health recommend that schools provide extra-curricular and out-of-school-time physical activity programs that are inclusive of the needs and interests of the students. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000)
- + A study of afterschool program participants in three elementary schools found that the afterschool participants were significantly less likely to be obese at the follow-up and were more likely to have increased acceptance among their peers. (Applied Developmental Science, 2005)
- + A twelve-week intervention program featuring afterschool dance classes for African American girls between the ages of eight and 10 resulted in lower body mass index, increased physical activity and a trend toward improved grades at school. (Ethnicity & Disease, 2003)

Afterschool program models in practice.

The physical activity and health promotion activities that take place in the hours after school can be as varied as the programs that provide them. Activities can take place in a traditional afterschool setting and can be integrated into a traditional homework and tutoring format, or they can be part of a broader approach in which classroom learning and afterschool activities are part of a coordinated approach to address specific health concerns.

- ♦ In 1998, the University of Utah and the Utah Starzz of the WNBA formed a partnership with two Salt Lake City middle schools to create the afterschool physical activity program “U Move with the Starzz.” The program was created to promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity for urban, adolescent girls in the seventh and eighth grades. The popular program features facilitated activity sessions, cooperative activities and the creation of individual physical activity goals. Interns from the University of Utah visit the program sites on a weekly basis to facilitate the physical sessions, and players and coaches of the Utah Starzz frequently visit. (JOPERD, 2000)
- ♦ Each day after school, the student members of the Arriba Health Club at Roosevelt Elementary School in Santa Ana, California, are getting a workout. They are participating in a program started by the community group Latino Health Access as a means to improve eating habits and encourage physical activity. During their time spent in the club, students actively participate in a variety of physical activities, from team sports to calisthenics. They also engage in activities such as Five-A-Day Bingo to promote healthy eating habits. (Newsweek, 2003)
- ♦ The Mount Diablo Unified School District After School Program in Northern California promotes physical activity and nutrition for students in the first through eighth grades during the afterschool hours. Located at 14 sites throughout the district, each program provides 7 hours of physical activity and nutrition instruction per week. The students receive 30 minutes of physical activity per day, using “fitness cards” that include self-paced and self-monitored physical activities for the students to complete. For the nutrition component, the students participate in a garden-based nutrition program that focuses on the development of healthy eating habits with an emphasis on eating five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. (California Nutrition Network, 2003)

AFTERSCHOOL ALERT

ISSUE BRIEF



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Arts and Afterschool: A Powerful Combination

We work hard every day alongside our community partners to inspire, empower, and unite children and communities through education, arts and culture. We do this because we believe that a community, working together, can lift children up to better their lives using arts and culture as tools and catalysts...Our programs help them to achieve academic success, develop essential life and learning skills, and learn alongside their parents and families.

Big Thought, Dallas

In this increasingly competitive information age and creative economy, knowledge and skills in the arts and music are important in their own right. However, when done well, the integration of the arts into afterschool programs helps build and reinforce important student learning. Not only does it help strengthen teamwork, responsibility, persistence, self-discipline, and presentation skills, but arts education also can promote learning in core subjects such as reading, writing and math. “By working with half notes and quarter notes in a musical exercise, for example, students get a better understanding of fractions and ratios. Many educators who incorporate the arts in classroom instruction say it promotes interdisciplinary learning, engages students who would not otherwise excel and helps reveal students’ hidden talents.”¹

Most engaging and successful afterschool programs have well-designed art and music components. The arts provide a certain excitement and vibrancy that students need in general, but particularly in the afterschool and summer hours. The arts are a key element to attracting young people, especially middle and high school students, to afterschool programs because they allow for individual expression and demonstration of their work. This is essential because regular attendance is the only way afterschool and summer programs can impart their positive effects. An additional bonus is that the arts also can attract family members to the programs with events such as “family arts nights,” where families can both watch and participate in performances and projects with their children.

Creative Achievement

The arts enhance educational experience for a variety of reasons. First, there is intrinsic value in having the opportunity to express oneself creatively. Plus, the fun and engaging nature of the arts can provide opportunities for “stealth learning,” with drawing as an exercise in geometry, mixing paints as chemistry, dance and music as counting and drama as reading comprehension and public speaking. In addition, there now exists a great deal of research on the mental stimulation and life lessons provided by arts education, which help youth succeed in school and later in life. Afterschool arts programs across the country are bearing this out. (For examples of what afterschool art students are producing, visit www.afterschoolscene.com)

- “Original writing of plays by high school drama students made them more cooperative and confident learners in terms of valuing their own ideas and valuing their contribution to the group through improved attendance...These confident attitudes and behaviors led to more sustained activities of learning rather than giving up in the face of doubts or complex problems.”²

- “Many students in a theater acting program reported that the intense review of Shakespeare texts in preparation for performing helped them not only master that difficult material but also improve their reading of other complex material such as math and physics texts.”³
- “High school music students score higher on SATs in both verbal and math than their peers. In 2001, SAT takers with coursework/experience in music performance scored 57 points higher on the verbal portion of the test and 41 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework/experience in the arts.”⁴
- The Comic Book Project, an afterschool program that uses comic books as a path to literacy, is improving kids’ ability to read and their enjoyment of it. In the project evaluations, both youth and staff reported improved reading and writing skills, as well as increased enjoyment of reading.⁵
The art and the writing in a comic book are very naturally wedded. The idea is to forge an alternative pathway to literacy through the arts, and children love comics.
 –Michael Bitz, creator, The Comic Book Project⁶
- Sarasota Ballet of Florida runs a free dance program that uses the discipline of dance and classes on the history of dance, social etiquette and nutrition to build students’ confidence and improve their behavior. The program, Dance--The Next Generation, has been able to take youth with discipline problems and turn them into honor roll students. Students who successfully complete the seven-year course are guaranteed a scholarship to the University of South Florida, a program partner.⁷
- In 1968, Dr. Walter J. Turnbull founded the Boys Choir of Harlem as an alternative to the despair he found in the streets and schools of Harlem. In 1985, the Choir established a formal afterschool music education and tutoring program. 55 percent of the boys who participate in the Choir live below the poverty level, but 98 percent of its graduates go on to college. Many alumni say the program changed their life, and they frequently come back as instructors and counselors.⁸
We instill in these kids the belief that they can be the best at any thing they choose. Music lifts every voice, not just children who can sing and dance well but also those who are not blessed with natural talent yet still have a dream of becoming somebody.
 –Dr. Walter J. Turnbull, founder, Boys Choir of Harlem⁹

Uniting Communities

Arts education provides a number of creative, academic and developmental benefits to individual students, but those benefits do not stop there. Afterschool programs are often excellent venues to build partnerships with the local arts community, such as dance companies, theater troupes, music groups, cultural associations and museums. Strong partnerships are a key to not only long-term success for afterschool programs, but also sustainability. These partnerships bring students important, often missing, connections to caring adults and community groups and institutions that can build the students’ repertoire of skills and linkage to people for the future.

One of the more successful community/school/arts partnerships going is Big Thought of Texas. It partners with more than 70 community agencies including school districts, library systems, child care centers, recreation centers and juvenile detention facilities to deliver arts programs that inspire and empower children, from preschoolers to teens, and help them become successful and productive adults.¹⁰

Its ArtsPartners program in Dallas coordinates programming both during and after school that supports curriculum goals and links to core subjects. Serving every public elementary school in the city (101,000 children at 156 schools), ArtsPartners provides professional development and curriculum guidance for teachers and student programs such as in-school performances, field trips, artist residences, master classes and workshops. As a result, student achievement is on the rise. For example, ArtsPartners fourth-graders’

average gain on the Reading Texas Learning Index is more than 6 percentage points higher than those students who did not receive ArtsPartners enrichment.¹¹

Aside from bolstering student achievement and creativity, another measure of ArtsPartners' success is its reciprocal relationship with the city of Dallas. Because of its extensive partnerships, ArtsPartners is firmly embedded in the community, spreading both the costs and benefits of widespread arts education so the entire community feels a sense of ownership in the programs. By connecting cultural organizations, city government and schools, ArtsPartners is able to respond to community needs, share support services such as fund raising and marketing, share ideas, and create a stable system of funding.

[R]eading scores as measured by TAAS went up 12.3 percent in five years. Writing scores increased 14 percent, and math scores shot up a remarkable 61 percent...There is no doubt in my mind that our enthusiastic and full immersion in comprehensive arts education has been a major reason for the school's sharp turnaround.

—Principal Russ Chapman, Shady Brook Elementary in Bedford, Texas¹²

Creating the Future, Preserving the Past

The arts define our culture and are embedded in our history. Through painting, writing, music, filmmaking, dance and other art forms, students in afterschool programs are able to express themselves, learn about their history and bring the past to life.

- Located in the heart of the Appalachia, Appalshop is a multi-disciplinary arts and education center with a variety of programs, such as “Holler to the Hood,” a weekly hip-hop radio program that combines rural and urban musical traditions. As part of its traditional music program, Appalshop offers the Passing the Pick and Bow afterschool music education program, which teaches traditional mountain music to about 100 students a year. Twice a year, the students gather with kids from across the region for Old Time Days for Youth, a day of music, storytelling, dancing and games.

Appalshop also runs the Appalachian Media Institute (AMI), which provides media literacy and production training year-round. The core program is a six-week summer session, in which high school sophomores and juniors make their own media pieces about their communities' unique traditions and issues, including documentaries that have aired on television. In eastern Kentucky, where Appalshop is based, two out of every five students who reach ninth grade drop out of high school and more than 29 percent of households exist on an annual income of less than \$10,000. Of the 105 former AMI interns who are now college age, 95 percent have either entered college or have committed to doing so, this in a region where only 7.6 percent of the general population holds a college degree.¹³

- The Save the Children After School Program in the Zuni Pueblo School District in New Mexico brings in local Native authors to work with the youth on literacy and writing. Students also make and publish their own books of stories, some of which are oral histories and fables passed down from elder family members. By employing the afterschool staff during the regular school day as well, this program stays connected to the school-day curriculum. As a result of this program, students are improving their self-esteem by improving their literacy skills in both English and Zuni. In fact, during the 2000-2001 school year, 84 percent of high school participants published work in student publications.¹⁴
- The Alaska Native Heritage Center High School Program offers Anchorage area Alaska Native and American Indian youth a chance to celebrate their culture in guided after-school classes five days a week. Through classes in dance, technology and leadership, participants are able to earn school district credits if they complete 120 hours per semester. The center runs the Alaska Native Heritage Center Dance Group, in which students learn traditional Yup'ik Eskimo dancing and perform at local events and festivals.¹⁵

The Arts as an Outlet

Youth today face a variety of difficult issues that affect their development, from divorce to drugs to violence in their communities. The arts provide an opportunity for youth to express their feelings in a creative and constructive manner, rather than through risky behaviors.

- College-age musicians are emotionally healthier than their non-musician counterparts. A study conducted at the University of Texas looked at 362 students who were in their first semester of college. They were given three tests, measuring performance anxiety, emotional concerns and alcohol related problems. In addition to having fewer battles with the bottle, researchers also noted that the college-aged music students seemed to have surer footing when facing tests.¹⁶
- Little Kids Rock started out as one teacher's afterschool guitar lessons and now provides musical instruments, instruction and enrichment to thousands of kids across the country. Their mission is to "inspire children to express themselves through music, building the creativity, confidence, and self-esteem that are critical to success in school and beyond."

Before I started producing music and writing songs, I was depressed. By being able to put emotions into my lyrics, I've been able to express myself in new ways. Music is like the key to the soul; it means everything to me. Everybody should have music in their lives.

Dee, Little Kids Rock student, age 14¹⁷

Making Room for the Arts

Education reforms that emphasize achievement in math and reading and drastic budget cuts are squeezing arts education out of school curricula around the country. News stories from across the country tell this tale of dwindling arts budgets and program downsizing. Afterschool arts programs are essential to filling this gap in education.

Palm Beach, FL: "Arts School Seeks \$600,000 to save 10 teaching posts"¹⁸

Chicago: "3 schools, but just 1 will have yearbook; Cash-strapped Thornton district cuts clubs, sports"
*All three schools have dumped fall plays, choral music, vocational clubs and other activities.*¹⁹

Clifton Park, NY: "Funds sought for school piano; Friends of Music of Shenendehowa wants to buy concert instrument"

*Budget cuts eliminated the \$20,000 in funds the district had set aside to buy the piano.*²⁰

Columbus, OH: "Musicians play to save their strings; Proposal would eliminate 10 music specialists to trim \$704,000 out of budget"²¹

Brookfield, WI: "Elmbrook group wants orchestra restored; Program victim of district budget cuts"²²

The Power of the Arts

Part of the mission of our educational institutions should be to produce well-rounded citizens who are capable of thinking in a variety of ways, and arts education is an important means to that end. Students of all ages benefit greatly from having robust arts opportunities in the school, afterschool and summers, and in the community. Uniting the schools, nonprofits, and cultural resources of a community in delivering arts education is a win-win partnership. Afterschool and summer programs can and should develop these partnerships to provide youth with positive, fun learning experiences that will keep them inspired for a lifetime.

¹ Ford Foundation Report, Winter 2005, www.fordfound.org/publications/ff_report/?report_year=2005&issue=Winter.

² "Highlights from Key National Research on Arts Education," Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/pac_article.asp?id=613.

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- ³ “Highlights from Key National Research on Arts Education,” Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/pac_article.asp?id=613.
- ⁴ “AMC Issue Brief—Did You Know?” American Music Conference, www.amc-music.org/research_briefs.htm.
- ⁵ Harvard Family Research Project, A Profile of the Evaluation of the Comic Book Project— New York City Pilot, April 2002, www.hfrp.org.
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