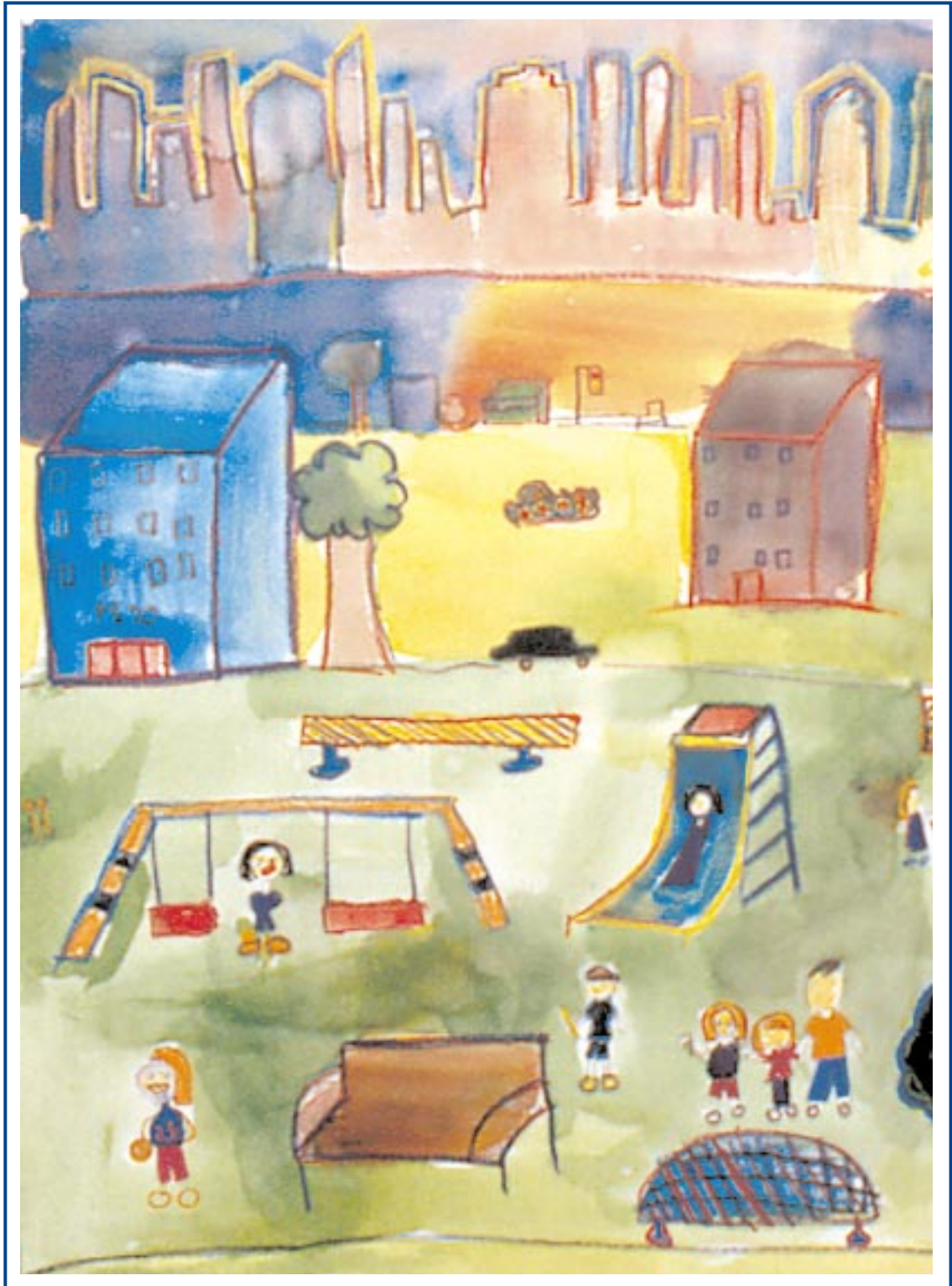# Afterschool Matters

Dialogues in Philosophy, Practice and Evaluation

about
Afterschool Matters

Afterschool Matters is a national journal
developed to promote professionalism,
scholarship, and consciousness in the field of
after school education.

Our mission

To provide a forum for scholarship concerning
the educational and developmental needs of our
youth during the after school hours and in the
community-based setting. The secondary aims
are to increase academic public awareness of the
field of after school education and to define the
parameters which distinguish this educational
arena from others. *Afterschool Matters* also
provides us with much needed opportunities
to encourage and train grassroots educators
in articulating their ideas and discoveries for
publication.

Who are our readers and contributors?

Social workers, education professionals,
developmental psychology researchers, youth
workers, arts educators, funders and nonprofit
executives. Our contributors and advisors are
among the leading lights in the areas of child
development, youth development, and after
school programming.

Who are our national advisors?

Our advisory committee is comprised of
program developers, funders, researchers,
authors, and executive directors of national
organizations. We are proud to feature such
a wide range of disciplines and perspectives
and such a high level of commitment from
our affiliates.

Who are our funders?

Afterschool Matters is made possible by
the generous support of the Robert Bowne
Foundation and the Charles A. Mastronardi
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Contents

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• On the cover: *Playground* (detail), Ryan, grade 4, Queens, N.Y.; courtesy of Studio in a School, New York, N.Y. •

editor's desk

We are pleased to present the second issue of *Afterschool Matters*. This issue features diverse articles on a range of topics, including the power of storytelling, the benefits of engaging children in focused activities and the powerful roles played by sports, technology, youth leadership and the arts during the after school hours. Articles in this volume describe after school agencies as unique cultures, and the vital connection between after school activities and positive youth development and our nation's future workforce. As in our premier issue, *Afterschool Matters* is committed to providing a space where after school practitioners can reflect upon and write about their practice. In addition, *Afterschool Matters* provides a space where practitioner-researchers can explore appropriate theoretical constructs in the area of teaching and learning in non-school settings and to share research findings.

Foundation for Children & the Classics and Interfaith Neighbors, the two agencies that originally spearheaded the journal, provide programming for young people, as well as professional development activities and an array of resources for fellow youth work practitioners. We are proud to have carefully—albeit slowly—produced the first two issues of *Afterschool Matters* with our own singular aesthetic. We could not have done so without the financial support of The Robert Bowne Foundation, The Charles A. Mastronardi Foundation, The Pinkerton Foundation, and the Fund for the City of New York.

We are now passing the baton to the capable staff of The Robert Bowne Foundation, who will henceforth assume the editorial and publishing responsibilities of the journal. We know the remarkable and talented staff of this foundation will safeguard both the editorial integrity and the future of *Afterschool Matters*. As for the founding staff members of Children & the Classics and Interfaith Neighbors, we can assure you that this has been an exciting journey. We shared a vision, were able to articulate, negotiate and achieve our goals in the collaborative style that we promote so fervently at our programs. We are proud to have been part of the founding of this journal, and we look forward to future issues with keen anticipation.

Susan Ingalls
Publisher

Eileen C. Lyons, C.S.W.
Editor

transformative **work**

in Programs for Children and Youth

by lena o. townsend

Children, and people more generally, are **builders, makers, speakers, creators.** The making of works and work itself, are in large measure what we humans are about. Held within that wide embrace are what we know and name as identity, worth, recognition and respect; and also, independence, livelihood and vocation. Looking at children from this perspective calls attention to that strong desire to make—things and sense; a world and a life—as broadly descriptive of us as persons, as selves.

Patricia F. Carini (1994)

photo © Elsa Ruiz

Youth programs that meet during the out-of-school hours, particularly those offered by organizations that have historically collaborated with their community members to support their interests and meet their needs, are in a unique position. These programs have the potential for and a history of engaging young people in experiences that can transform their lives in the most positive ways. In this article, I will explore the nature of engagement in

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Transformative work is engagement in physical, intellectual, artistic and other challenging activities that result in growth, development and change in the individuals engaged in the work as well as in those around them.

what will be referred to as "work" and some of the transformative experiences that can and do occur as a result of this "work." I will also highlight and celebrate those programs that engage youngsters in developmentally appropriate transformative experiences. My hope is that more youth programs will rethink their offerings and create programs that can truly engage young people in positive transformative experiences.

At the present time, a great deal of both national and local attention is focused on the American public education system. In New York City, for example, educational standards have been developed and implemented. There is wide recognition that schools are expected to play a crucial role in the intellectual development of young people. However, in 1992 the Carnegie Foundation reported in its publication, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours,* that "Only 60 percent of adolescents' waking hours are committed to such essentials as school, homework, eating, chores, or paid employment, while fully 40 percent are discretionary." It is probably safe to assume that

an even greater percentage of time spent by early adolescents and children is discretionary because they are less likely to be employed. Clearly, in addition to schools, young people both have and need other supports, such as their families, places of worship and community-based youth programs, where they can be safely involved in programs that support healthy physical, intellectual and social development.

What is necessary for healthy development? Participants in the Fund for the City of New York's Youth Development Institute, consisting of staff members from some of the most effective after school programs in New York City, met regularly for two years to discuss and identify the characteristics of programs that support children and young adults in becoming healthy, resilient individuals who respect, care for and support themselves, their families, friends, communities and the world in which they live. These characteristics, described in their publication, *A Guided Tour of Youth Development,* include:

- providing young people with opportunities for contribution;
- caring and trusting relationships;
- high expectations; and
- engaging activities.

These characteristics, however, do not develop in a vacuum but through engagement in meaningful social, physical, artistic and intellectual activities. These activities are opportunities to create tangible items such as pottery, a drawing or a doll, as well as less tangible concepts, like ideas, or, perhaps, some combination of the two, like skill at playing a sport, or developing a musical score or a dance routine. To me, these activities point to ideas about the value and importance of engaging in "work" which can serve to transform us as human beings.

The Philosophical Basis of the Importance of Engagement in "Work"

Individuals from a variety of fields who support human development, including educators and psychologists, have explored the nature and importance of engaging "work."

During a 1994 presentation entitled "Poets of Our Own Lives," educator Patricia F. Carini, former director of the Prospect School in Vermont, vividly described the importance of work in the lives of children when she said:

> The works that children make . . . reflect a widely distributed human capacity—the capacity to be makers and doers, active agents in the world and their own lives. Children everywhere make things. Children make things from mud, sand, snow, stones, blocks of wood or bits of cardboard or paper. They make things from their own bodies—from sounds, gestures, words. . . . They make a mark on any receptive surface using a fingertip on a frosted window, a sharp stick in the dirt or sand, or a pencil, a crayon, or paint on paper or lacking these, or just because it's handy, berry juice or some other natural dye. . . . Children do this enacting and constructing of the world everywhere [because] theirs is a sustained and powerful dialectic with the world, issuing in a seemingly infinite variation of activity and creations.

Works are conduits for expressiveness, as conversation with one's self and in commerce with others. Through works, the maker is carried through herself beyond herself—to join with others, to disclose possibilities previously unknown.

In his book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1991), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a psychologist and educator, describes "flow" as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it." Flow experiences are the kinds of experiences that he believes are necessary to live an "excellent" life. He writes in *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life* (1997):

> The quality of life does not depend on happiness alone, but also on what one does to be happy. If one fails to develop goals that give meaning to one's existence, if one does not use the mind to its fullest, then good feelings fulfill just a fraction of the potential we possess. A person who achieves contentment by withdrawing from the world to "cultivate his own garden," like Voltaire's Candide, cannot be said to lead an excellent life. Without dreams, without risks, only a trivial semblance of living can be achieved. (p. 22)

Characteristics of Flow

The characteristics of flow are very similar to those of engagement and, again, it is through what I have referred to as "work" that these experiences might occur. Csikszentmihalyi describes flow experiences as:

- occurring when a person faces a clear set of goals that require appropriate responses;
- providing immediate feedback;
- requiring forming an intention, or setting a goal for ourselves;
- focusing psychic energy, establishing priorities and thus creating order;
- tending to occur when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable; and
- usually involving a fine balance between one's ability to act, and the available opportunities for action. (1997, pp. 29-34)

When facing a clear set of goals, as in games like chess, tennis or poker, it is easy to enter flow, says Csikszentmihalyi, because there are goals and rules for action that make it possible for the player to act without questioning what should be done and how, so the player lives in a self-contained universe of black and white.

The same clarity of goals is present in a religious ritual or a musical performance, or while weaving, writing, climbing a mountain or performing surgery. Activities inducing flow make the experience more likely to occur. In contrast

> **Transformative work is engaging and pleasurable even when it is difficult.**

to much of our daily life, he believes, flow activities allow a person to focus on goals that are clear and compatible.

Csikszentmihalyi sees flow activities as offering immediate feedback, making clear how well the participant is doing after each move: With each step, the climber knows that he has inched higher; after each bar of a song the musician hears whether her notes matched the score; the weaver sees whether the last row of stitches fits the pattern of the tapestry.

Challenges which are too difficult bring frustration, worry and anxiety, he notes in *Finding Flow*. Challenges which are too easy lead to complacency and boredom. If the challenges are easy and the required skill levels are low, the result is apathy. However, when difficult challenges are matched with high skill levels, the deep involvement that sets flow apart from ordinary life occurs: The climber, when the mountain demands every ounce of strength; the singer, when the song demands the full range of her vocal ability; the weaver, when the design of the tapestry is complex; and the surgeon, when the operation involves new procedures or an unexpected variation.

Csikszentmihalyi believes that "it is the full involvement of flow, rather than happiness, that makes for excellence in life." (1997, p. 32) Flow experiences are transformative experiences that occur in the process of doing engaging work.

Transformative Work: Personal Perspectives

During their January 1999 retreat, the staff of the Institute for Literacy Studies (ILS),

located at Lehman College of the City University of New York, discussed the idea of transformative work and its meaning to them by sharing photographs that represented engagement in "work" and the stories behind those pictures. From the stories emerged a rich and moving description of transformative work and what it has meant in the lives of these individuals.

Elaine Avidon shared a photo of her husband, a stained glass artisan, working during their lakeside vacation. She described him, as he works with hundreds of tiny pieces of glass, in the following way:

> I almost want to say that I don't know him at those moments. He is so inside the complexity and articulateness of his work. He is totally and completely a worker. He is transforming something else from light and space. And, at the same time, he is himself being transformed. Life isn't compartmentalized into work and other; there is a thread and flow as a result of his work.

Deborah Freedman described a picture of her five-and-one-half-year-old daughter putting a jigsaw puzzle together. Her daughter is holding a puzzle piece, and even though we are looking at a photo, we can see that she is clearly focused and reflective. Deborah said, "She doesn't jump into anything. She is sometimes considered to be shy or introspective. But, really, she is reflective."

Barbara Martz shared a photo of her daughter, a college freshman, running in a cross-country race with 300 other girls for which she trained extensively. Barbara said,

> My daughter doesn't like this photo because she feels that it isn't pretty. But the moment I saw it I loved it! It makes me think of the connection between play and work. Running is work. It's not just running but it's the hour and a half of working out every day. Running transformed her, and having an athlete in the family transformed my view of sports. It made me look at sports in a different light. Looking at 300 freshman girls break out of a line—I don't think I'd ever seen anything like it before in terms of strength!

get a lesson here and there. Over time I became a pretty good knitter. I made lots of scarves initially, and then I graduated to sweaters. I don't have much time to knit anymore, so my skills have become a bit rusty. But whenever I can, I pick up those needles and let the knit, purl, knit, purl rhythm of the needles take me to another place as I create something wonderful.

These moving descriptions of individuals engaged in transformative work illustrate the contention that transformative work is engagement in physical, intellectual, artistic and other challenging activities that result in growth, development and change in the individuals engaged in that work, as well as in those around them. The descriptions also show us the power and importance of transformative work, which is so powerful because it requires focus, commitment and intensity, and yet is engaging and pleasurable, even when it is difficult.

Transformative Work: Instructional Perspectives

Recognizing the importance of the role of extended work in the lives of young people, the ILS brought the The Children's After School Literacy Project (CASL) project into existence. It was an outgrowth of the professional development work with youth practitioners in which the ILS has been engaged for more than a decade. The main objective of the project was to improve children's learning by increasing the opportunities for them to engage in and produce rich and meaningful work.

When I think of experiences that have shaped my life in some profound way, what I recall most often is learning how to knit. When I was about seven years old, I decided that I wanted to learn to knit. The women in my family crocheted, and they tried to convince me that crocheting was easier than knitting and that I should learn to crochet. But I was adamant about wanting to learn to knit, and no matter how I tried to learn to crochet, I couldn't do it! Finally, on Christmas morning, under the tree, I found a beginner's knitting kit. My grandmother was visiting and I practically kidnapped her and convinced her to teach me to knit. She too was a crocheter, but she knew the basic knitting stitches, so she taught me everything she knew. Even though learning to coordinate those needles was a challenge, I practiced and practiced for weeks until I got it! After learning that basic stitch, however, I had no one to teach me other stitches. So, I bought knitting instruction books which I somehow deciphered, and when I found someone who could knit, I'd

During the ten years prior to the CASL Project, the ILS had provided a variety of staff development experiences, including workshops,

> **Regardless of the kinds of activities in which children are involved, from shooting hoops to fidgeting over a worksheet, the body is moving because it must move. When that energy is channelled, not into boring, meaningless tasks, but into work of the hands and mind, children can become engaged and begin to create.**

institutes and technical assistance, to a wide range of after school programs in New York City. Those projects focused on program development and the professional development of youth practitioners in the belief that changes in programs and staff will result in better programs for children. We still believe that. Based on other ILS work, however, we increasingly believe that more emphasis should be placed on the children themselves. One way to do this was to focus on children's work, so we chose to use the Prospect Processes as a vehicle for looking at children's work.

The Prospect Processes are a set of inquiry-based processes developed by educators, from 1965 to 1991, at the Prospect School, located in Vermont, as a way of looking at children and their work. The processes are descriptive, not evaluative, and were developed as a means of exploring the many dimensions of a piece of work, looking at work from the many perspectives of the group, and coming to an understanding of the perspective of the child who created the work.

Staff members, usually education directors and other professional staff members, from six programs participated in the CASL project. Structures included cross-site inquiry group meetings, workshops and site visits. At each of the inquiry group meetings between April 1997 and June 1998, one program shared either a collection or sample of work done by one child or several pieces sharing a similar theme done by several children. During the year the kinds of work shared included writing, comic strips and other drawings, and a doll. In addition to inquiry group meetings, we visited programs and also held a mural-making workshop for inquiry group members and two evening workshops for line staff, one on revision and the second on spelling.

What We Learned About Children by Studying Children's Work

The following is a description of what we, as CASL participants, collectively learned about several children by describing their work. Children in the program write in their journals once a week about something that interests them, and one of the first journal entries that we described was a piece of writing by an eleven-year-old boy.

The group described its style and mechanics as follows:

- the tone was conversational;

- it moves from the abstract to the concrete by shifting from impersonal references to friends to the use of the friends' names;

- the use of language builds movement and creates a sense of excitement; and

- he used conventions, including: indentations to indicate paragraphs, parentheses, an apostrophe, a hyphen, a caret mark to

indicate an inserted word, and past and present tenses.

In addition, this was a good example of a piece which offered us insight into the child, as we came to know the child through his writing in a way that we might not have done otherwise. Also, this opportunity for journal-writing provided the child with an opportunity to better know and express his feelings. The writing portrayed a child we described as sensitive and sympathetic towards his friend, one who downplayed, at least in this situation, his own problems and focused on his friend. Gender issues were introduced in an unexpected way: we learned, surprisingly, that his friend was a girl.

The second, and very different piece of work was a drawing done by an eighth-grade girl participating in a program which meets twice a week, for two and one-half hours, to explore math and science through art, cooking and other activities. Looking at this piece, the group:

- Described the various ways in which lines were used in the drawing: short, quick, straight strokes to create the door and the window; the lines of the person's pant legs more fanciful, pointing toward a sense of movement; the lines of the tree less defined, creating a sense of distance in the drawing.

- Noticed the child's use of perspective and how space was used to "invite" the viewer into the picture.

- Described the tone of the drawing as somewhat serious, and the look on the person's face as pensive.

The group members saw the child as having a vivid imagination and being unafraid to think. They sensed deliberation and precision in the work. There was a great deal of attention to detail; she used smaller details to create a large picture.

This sense of deliberation, precision and attention to detail was also evident in the creation of a doll made out of hosiery, yarn and

felt by another child. By looking closely at the product of this young girl's work, we learned about her creativity as well as her design and sewing skills.

A site visit and discussion with staff at another program, a community service program, provided us with a portrait of a different kind of transformative work. In this program, young people from the ages of 10 to 21 are invited and encouraged to develop their own community service projects. One youngster, upon learning that clothing donated to the Salvation Army is not given to the poor but sold instead, developed a proposal to create a project to collect clothing and distribute it free of charge to people in need. The proposal was accepted; the idea was marketed and implemented. As a result, those in need of clothing in Washington Heights are receiving it free of charge!

When I think about or visit children's places such as homes, schools, and after school programs, something that strikes me in all of these settings is the level of activity. Regardless of the kinds of activities in which children are involved, from shooting hoops to fidgeting over a worksheet, the body is moving because it *must* move. When that energy is channelled, not into boring, meaningless tasks, but into work of the hands and mind, children can become engaged and begin to create. They can, through their work, come to better know themselves, their ideas, likes, dislikes and abilities. They become transformed through their engagement in "work." Clearly, by creating things and ideas, and through the process of creation itself, a unique self evolves during a healthy childhood and during development into young adulthood.

How We Were Transformed By Studying Children's Work

Transformative work is also important in our personal and professional lives as adults. Participants in the CASL project, including the facilitators, discovered that studying the works of children was transformative for themselves as well. Learning about the children through their

work—the strengths, interests and unique qualities that become apparent when collaborative "looking" and discussion occur—is transformative. How, for example, can an adult work with a child who cares passionately enough about other human beings to conceptualize, propose, market and implement a program to provide free clothing to those who need it and not be transformed? How can that adult, based on his or her experience with this child, not look at other children and see the possibility that they have ideas that can transform both their own lives and those of others in their communities and beyond?

Studying children's artwork and writing inspired several participants to include these activities in their programs. One participant reconceptualized her program and created comedy and drama clubs in which children became active and engaged creators. Another participant developed a mural project, the first of its kind for this program.

Transformation is an ongoing and circular process which, as the above example illustrates, occurs on many different levels. Individuals, through their engagement in "work," can transform themselves and members of the varied communities of which they are a part and, in turn, can be transformed by others.

Maleeka, Grade 2, Manhattan

Rich Opportunities for Transformative Work in Out-of-School Programs

Unlike many schools, out-of-school programs do not have to be bound by scheduling constraints. They can, therefore, arrange the three or more hours each afternoon in ways that are conducive to meeting the needs and serving the interests of the young people who attend the program. Program schedules can, for example, be designed to give children a "taste," as my colleague Claudia Ullman says, of many different experiences, as well as extended periods of time to savor experiences, by engaging in "work" activities. It is this extended time spent on enjoyable and challenging tasks that allows an individual to recognize and develop his or her unique abilities. It is also during this extended time that transformative work and work in a flow state can occur.

One of the characteristics of work in the flow state, as I stated previously when discussing Csikszentmihalyi, occurs when a person faces a clear set of goals requiring appropriate responses. Out-of-school programs that support youth development provide youngsters with opportunities to set goals for their work.

Program staff often talk about the importance of building young people's self-esteem. As Carini (1994) said, it is through engagement in making and creating that we find ourselves: our talents and interests and, as a result, our identity. Finding one's identity is the work of childhood and adolescence. By providing youngsters with experiences that support them in developing their skills, and by using these skills to challenge them in manageable ways, programs support the development of young people's self-esteem. Programs can support young people who are developing their skills in a variety of areas by providing structure and support, quality instruction, opportunities for them to choose the activities in which they want to be involved and extended time for these activities.

Think about how you and your friends came to enjoy and become "expert" at your favorite activities. Whether the activity is basketball,

drawing, playing an instrument, sculpting, dancing, reading or writing, it was by being exposed to the activity, making a decision to pursue it, setting goals for how well you wanted to do it, and having extended time to engage in the activity—in other words, by "working" on it.

Implications for After School Programs

Transformative work is done in relation to materials, to ideas and to other people, and it transforms not only the worker but the materials, ideas and other people. We clearly see this transformation of materials in all of the stories, and particularly in Elaine's story of her husband creating stained glass, Deborah's story about her daughter putting a jigsaw puzzle together, and the creation of art, written stories and a doll by the children in the after school programs.

It is simultaneously solitary yet shared with other individuals and groups. Elaine's husband performs solitary work, but the final product will be shared with more people than we can possibly know. When Barbara's daughter works out, she, alone, is transforming her own body into a stronger one with more stamina. However, she is a part of a larger community of athletes. When I knit, I usually do it because I want to be alone and quiet. Yet I know that all over the world, there are people knitting for themselves and for individuals and organizations about whom and which they care.

This work supports us in developing skills and, often, tangible products as well as vision for our work and our lives. Elaine's husband develops the skills of a stained glass maker as well as

an identity as an artisan. Barbara's daughter develops her physical abilities as well as an identity as an athlete.

We see the transformation of ideas and other people in all of these stories. Elaine, Deborah and Barbara are watching others work, yet their ideas about the work, and their ideas about the people doing the work, and they, themselves, are clearly being transformed. Not only are the "workers" growing and changing but, through their mutual interaction, the observers are changing as well. Perhaps most powerfully, we can see the transformation of a community as a result of the work of young people in a community service program. As a result of the transformation of a young person's idea for a clothing bank where clothing would be free, a community has an invaluable resource and others have a model for pursuing their own transformative ideas.

Finally, transformative work gives us access to our humanity. Through our own transformative work, as well as in the work of others, we find our connection to other human beings and recognize and appreciate their value and that of the human spirit. We see this in all of the stories as the storytellers describe the pride, love and even awe of the experience of watching their loved ones at work and coming to know them better through their work.

Early in this article I stated that, increasingly, standards are being developed and implemented in school systems across the nation. What isn't described is the effect that these standards have had on instruction in many schools where emphasis on the "basics" and "meeting standards" has meant increased time on isolated

skills-based activities, leaving little or no time for involvement in arts, music, physical education and various other activities that can become the "transformative work" that it is so necessary for young people to pursue.

Supporting young people to live "excellent" lives now and in the future is the goal of most educators and youth practitioners. The "flow" experiences that Csikszentmihalyi describes occur as a result of engagement in what has been referred to earlier in this article as "work:" activities such as games, music and visual arts, crafts, writing, reading, physical challenges and interesting conversation which can all lead to the experience of living "excellent" lives. Out-of-school programs are the only settings in which some young people will find opportunities to have these experiences.

Many after school programs have developed their identities based on their perceived relationship to schools. They view their purpose as supporting schools and the goals of schools, a view they hold because they seek to support youngsters. In a political climate where the push toward extended school day programs (many of which will replicate the regular school day practices) is intensifying, there are very few spaces where children can discover and engage in "work" that they love. After school and other youth programs may become the only places where young people have opportunities to "taste" a variety of experiences and spend extended periods of time pursuing their interests and passions. Therefore, after school programs *must* continue to think about the developmental needs of youth, particularly the need for engagement in transformational "work."

In addition, each program must identify its own way of meeting those needs, based on the program's expertise. The most exciting and engaging programs are clear about their specialty: dance, the arts, community service and sports, for example. They have a special identity and focus, and they hire staff with expertise in their special area and/or they provide staff development opportunities for continuous skills enhancement. Their program structure allows young people to make choices as they provide youngsters with as much time as possible to remain involved in engaging activities. They know that the after school program may be one of very few places where young people can get involved in these challenging and engaging experiences, the kinds of experiences through which they will realize that it is possible to live a life filled with "work" that they will love and seek throughout their lives, if they are to live "excellent" lives.

As stated earlier, many after school programs are in the privileged position of having the flexibility of scheduling and freedom from prescribed curricula to provide young people with extended opportunities for engaging in work. At a time when there is greater pressure to be more "school-like," after school programs have a responsibility to think carefully about the developmental needs of the young people they serve and to meet these needs in creative and developmentally appropriate ways.

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Art + Technology
integration

Developing an After School Curriculum

by j. david betts

James, Grade 7

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More than three million children in the United States participate in some type of after school program (National Study, 1993) offering wide-ranging benefits to children, their families and the community (Pederson, et al, 1998). After school programs of many descriptions provide responsible adult supervision for youth, constructive activities and insulation from harmful peer pressures during high-risk hours (Fox & Newman, 1997). Common goals include psychosocial development, education, recreation and career awareness (Schwartz, 1996). No impact assessment has been done of the many programs that are in place; however, studies of programs for low-income children have shown positive effects (Posner & Vandell, 1994). The important role of the arts in prevention programs for youth has been acknowledged for some time. "The promises the arts hold for prevention . . . are grounded in a growing number of evaluation studies and in scientific studies of human development." (Bonnie Bernard in Magie & Miller, 1997, p. 18). The arts education community, both locally and nationally, is an important source of successful programs that keep young people on track and promote a variety of useful art skills and activities.

The Multimedia Arts Education Program (MAEP) is an ongoing, intensive, after school computer-mediated art

technology program begun in 1996 by the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) in Tucson, Arizona. This five-semester program targeted at-risk middle school youth from disadvantaged families. Students worked with professional artist/teachers, learning to do computer graphics and publishing, language arts and word processing, computer animation and video production. Each semester was structured around the acquisition of basic art and computer skills as well as the completion of individual projects.

Curriculum Development

The need for a formalized curriculum arose from the need to be able to continue the program in a cohesive form, without regard to the availability of the original teachers, because the program's repeatability and replicability are important considerations for its growth and continued success. There is also, of course, an unrelenting need for financial support for the program, which costs an estimated $5,000 per student for the five semesters, which includes 600 hours of instruction, materials, educational incentives, bus passes and a computer. Also, the initial cost for the four labs was over $20,000.

The prospect of discontinuing the program weighs heavily upon the sponsoring agencies. How do you tell youngsters who have spent a year in the program that they are not going to get their computer? In order to avoid this outcome, staff paid close attention to the development of the MAEP curriculum and the evaluation of its effects.

At its inception, the MAEP planned to let any formal curriculum evolve from the interaction of the artist/teachers and the students. MAEP faculty members had been recruited as artist/teachers from the arts community, bringing professional art technology experience to the program, and several University of Arizona graduate and undergraduate students worked with the program as teaching assistants (TAs) in the labs. Often the artist/teachers, who typically did not have much teaching experience, were working out their learning objectives on the fly, so having another adult in the lab was beneficial. The TAs recorded the actual teaching operations involved and helped to refine the activities in each lab. Lab activities began with basic skills and concepts; the ultimate goal was to combine the arts activities with the available electronic tools. The lesson outlines, which were later reworked with the artist/teachers and the director, are now being assembled into a

Hypothetical schedules.

The table below illustrates some possible ways that students might complete the program schedule. Most start with language arts and all end with portfolio within two years. Family vacations and sports activities accounted for most of the semesters off.

	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring
1	Language Arts	x	Animation	Graphics	Video	Portfolio
2	Graphics	Animation	Video	Language Arts	Portfolio	x
3	Language Arts	Video	x	Graphics	Animation	Portfolio
4	Language Arts	Graphics	Video	Animation	Portfolio	x
5	Video	Language arts	Graphics	x	Animation	Portfolio
6	Language Arts	Animation	Video	Graphics	Portfolio	x

manual that will include program procedures and curriculum.

In addition to working on the lesson plans, the TAs recorded observations about the MAEP activities, and students completed a perceived self-efficacy and attitude questionnaire several times during their participation in the program. Students' written journals were collected in each of the labs, along with artifacts such as computer graphics, videos, poems, and animated logos. Graduating students were interviewed, as were their parents or guardians. Additional follow-up interviews, some already conducted with program graduates, will continue as part of a longitudinal study to determine the effects of MAEP on high school graduation.

MAEP Labs

The four basic labs (computer graphics, animation, language arts/desktop publishing and video) each lasted one semester. The interconnected 20' x 40' rooms in the TPAC building in downtown Tucson shared a common area with a smaller room where the portfolio class was headquartered. Each lab experience included art and design theory and practice, technology instruction, literacy activities and school-to-work skill components. A semester consisted of sessions from 4:00-6:00 PM, Mondays through Thursdays. The fifth semester portfolio class, which capitalized on their cumulative skills to produce a web page, a newsletter or a multimedia program, met Thursdays and Fridays after school and Saturday mornings.

Students used professional computer application programs as they learned how to make aesthetic choices in design, develop critical skills and revise their work. As much as possible, the artist/teachers maintained professional standards for productivity, and students were held to high standards for their job performance and products.

MAEP students kept journals, wrote proposals for their projects and created storyboards, video logs and scripts, as well as poems and stories. Their work was collected on a server and published as a CD-ROM at the completion of the program. Students created a "culture of critique" in which they grew accustomed to having their work reviewed and commented upon by their peers and others. In turn they learned to participate in constructive criticism of the work being done by their peers.
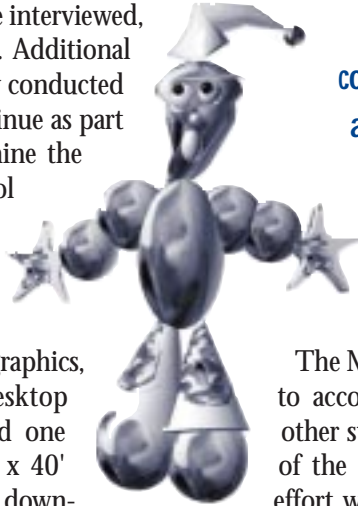
> **Students used professional computer application programs as they learned how to make aesthetic choices in design, develop critical skills, and revise their work.**

The MAEP design was flexible enough to accommodate family schedules and other student activities, but two aspects of the program were salient issues: An effort was made to start students in the language arts lab whenever possible; and the portfolio lab, which builds on the other lab experiences, was always offered during the last semester. Aside from these two requirements, there is no set way for a student to proceed through the program (see hypothetical schedules, opposite).

Multimedia Labs

The four basic labs were connected with a bank of printers and a server. There was one Internet connection in the beginning, which offered limited use, but by the end of the spring semester of 1998, all the Mac and PC computers were linked to the Web via the TPAC server. The common area was used for snacks (a very important part of any after school program), and the labs coordinated the use of the tables for drawing, writing and collaborative work.

Above: Alienz, *Andres, grade 8*

Computer Graphics Lab

Curriculum Summary

Week 1 will be a thorough review of all rules, regulations and procedures for the fall semester. The first two days will be dedicated to classroom policy and behavior expectations. I will perform numerous enthusiasm-building demonstrations of the material that will be covered during the semester, and by the end of the first week, the students will be introduced to their first project, a personal logo. At this time they will be asked to begin sketching and planning the logo.

Claudia, grade 8

Week 2 will be dedicated to the teaching and exploration of the conceptual design process using experimentation in mini-projects with cut paper and acrylic paint. These skill-building projects will be an aid to the students' understanding of the conceptual process which begins long before the computer is used as a tool. At the end of the week, they will be assigned a weekend homework assignment of 50 thumbnails for their personal logo, which will give them plenty of time to plan and sketch their thoughts.

Week 3 is when the students will be given a chance to scan and manipulate their hand-done projects from the previous week. Adobe Photoshop will be the first program to which they will be introduced. As a way of easing them into its complexities, I will have them interact during a series of lessons that will demand a progression of skills. At the end of this week, the students will meet with me individually to review the direction and progress of the project.

The language arts lab was equipped with six Apple 580s for word processing and basic desktop publishing using ClarisWorks and Microsoft Creative Writer II. Students wrote poetry and newspaper articles and learned to use the Web for research. Many of the participants were limited in their English proficiency, so there was an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, as well as on reading. A library of age-appropriate chapter books was at their disposal as a resource and for recreation. Students were expected to keep a journal of their own writing and to share their work with others in their group.

The computer graphics lab contained five Mac 7200 Power PCs, a scanner and a digital camera. Students were able to find and download images from the Internet in order to integrate them into their own designs using professional electronic arts tools such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and Quark Xpress to create their projects. They designed and produced projects such as personal logos, business letterheads and family calendars, often working from their sketchbooks, bringing ideas to the computer for further processing and publication. These activities involved the integration of many design skills and a professional approach to project planning and management. Student work was posted regularly around the room and online.

The animation lab contained six Amiga computers on which students developed narratives and characters and produced two-dimensional computer animations with a program called D-Paint II. The basic techniques of animation were explored via examples on tape and in practice. Students also created three-dimensional figures out of clay, and one group experimented with Claymation with their peers in the video class. Student work on storyboards paralleled one of the writing exercises used in language arts.

The video lab was equipped with several camcorder kits with lights and microphones, SVHS and Hi-8 format video editors and an Amiga computer equipped with a Video Toaster special effects generator. Students learned

how to practice basic production techniques, such as camera work and editing, using this equipment in group and individual projects. Storyboard development and experiments with animation techniques such as Claymation were also important activities in the video class. Students learned that teamwork, planning and attention to detail were very important aspects of video production, so each semester the class completed a collaborative project that was presented at the graduation ceremony.

The fifth and final lab was the portfolio lab. Here, students worked on combining what they had learned in the previous four basic labs into a portfolio for presentation. They moved from producing a newsletter about their experiences, to a web site, and finally to a multimedia presentation on CD-ROM using Hyperstudio software. Experience and collaboration among the artist/teachers have shown that many of the various lab activities can be articulated. That is, narrative stories that originated in the language arts class became animations; logos created in the computer graphics lab appeared in the produced videos. These truly electronic portfolios, representing the culmination of projects completed in earlier labs, have been very impressive. The graduation ceremony at the end of the semester provided the first audience for these products.

Patrick, grade 8

Upon completion of the five-semester program, each student was awarded a desktop computer. This feature of the program greatly motivated students, as one might expect, because the families of program participants did not have computers at home. The students also received an educational incentive of $25 twice each semester upon attaining the required skill benchmarks and completing their independent projects.

Learning Objectives and Incentives

To help the artist/teachers develop a scope and sequence for their arts technology lab, brief tests were given to students at the beginning and end of each semester. Each artist/teacher developed a series of questions based on what the students would be expected to learn in order to meet the requirements of their lab, so the test questions varied from semester to semester as the courses took shape and the staff changed.

As a result, outcome skills were identified, and the artist/teachers used these as a basis for evaluating student completion of the skill requirement for each lab and eligibility for their first $25 check. (The negotiation and completion of an independent project in each lab was required to earn the other $25 educational incentive.)

On each test, students were asked questions related to the operations that they were to perform in each lab. The definitions of various terms for tools and actions that they would encounter were included. For example, these concepts, among others, were covered:

- Video: pan and tilt, white balance, control track
- Graphics: dpi, marquee, selecting
- Language Arts: keyboard shortcuts, plot, dialogue
- Animation: cell, squash and stretch, frame rate

Students were asked to describe the operations or processes, such as logging, scanning,

Video Production Lab

Sample Learning Objectives

Students will be able to do the following:

- Identify the VHS, SVHS and Hi-8 cameras, their parts and functions, and the associated tapes, connectors and cables

- Name the different types of microphones and their properties

- Explain light in relation to filmmaking

- Produce a storyboard, log sheet, and edit decision list

They will demonstrate competency in:

- Manual operation of the camera, including audio metering and aperature setting

- Proper use of a tripod

- Shooting according to storyboard

- Safe and effective use of lights

- Basic editing, including insert and three-point edits.

rhyming and storyboarding, that they would be using in the lab activities. These tests were formative, measuring the students' knowledge in the art technology. Assigned projects and critique sessions focusing on their individual and independent projects assessed their skill and higher-level integration. Overall, evaluation was based on performance and the demonstrated understanding of these concepts.

These data proved to be very useful in creating the learning objectives for each lab and the formalized curriculum. Rather than establishing a summative, or pass-fail, evaluation for the students, the skill test helped the group to focus on the upcoming activities and provided a benchmark for student knowledge at the beginning of each semester. This was an iterative process in which the test helped to create the curriculum. The influence was bi-directional, each part of the process helping to formulate the other.

Population

Approximately eight to ten middle-school students, selected from a pool of 16 to 18 different schools enrolled in each of the five labs each semester. Since the second year (1997), the population profile has remained constant:

- Most started the program during the sixth or seventh grade and finished before entering high school.
- Male and female students were evenly apportioned.
- A very small number were on free or reduced lunch programs at their school.
- 54% were bilingual Spanish, 79% Hispanic, 7% Native American, 7% African American and 7% Anglo.

Most live in neighborhoods associated with downtown Tucson where the high school graduation rate is less than 40 percent, but students are required to maintain a C average in school in order to continue in the program. There is currently a waiting list of interested students and families.

It is important to note that students did not have to audition for this program; instead, they were selected for their interest in and stated commitment to the five-semester program, as well for at-risk factors such as low family income. Interviews with the students and their parents were an important part of the admission process, emphasizing the scope of the program and the expectation of commitment on the part of all parties rather than focusing on the student's skills or personal history.

History

The Multimedia Arts Education Program began in 1996, when TPAC reeceived a grant to incorporate a computer graphics lab and an animation lab into its after school arts education program. The first cohorts of students tended to be in seventh grade or above, with some in high school. The faculty members were hired primarily for their skills and artistic

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ability and for their experience working with children. Initial funding came from the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge Grant, which supported the first three years. Subsequent grants from the Stocker Foundation, Target, Inc., the City of Tucson, Pima County School-to- Work, the Amazon Foundation, US West, the Cummings Foundation and the Arizona governor's office have kept the program going.

As the program evolved, other after school practitioners wanted to replicate it, so ways were sought to formalize the curriculum based on the teaching, rather than by imposing a set scope and sequence. The author, as principal investigator, has been involved in the program from the initial grant-writing stage, and has also developed evaluative procedures and consulted with the teachers on curriculum as well. Having the teachers create the pre- and post-tests for their students served to focus attention on desirable educational objectives. These tests were modified several times, reflecting the development of the teaching methods and changes in personnel, and, from this beginning, a series of learning objectives, discussed below, was developed.

The program grew, and additional labs in language arts and video were added. At the end of the second year, the portfolio class was added. Also, after the initial year, the average age of the students entering the program was lowered to sixth grade, which kept the program more strictly middle-school based.

The TPAC arts education director, with input from a community-based advisory committee, administered MAEP, but the faculty was regularly consulted on matters of policy and encouraged to create their own curricula. Guidelines for student deportment and program expectations promoting a safe, supportive and productive atmosphere evolved over the

Joel, *by Isaac, grade 9*

first three years of the program. There were, of course, occasional behavioral issues typical of this age range to be dealt with, so the program director worked with the faculty and consulted with the TPAC advisory committee to determine policy on issues such as deportment and attendance, developing guidelines which established a sequence of warning letters and disciplinary actions, suspensions, and expulsions. For example, students received warning letters and were put on "contracts" for inappropriate behavior, absence, and/or tardiness. Development of the contract was a collaborative effort involving the student, the faculty, the program director and the parents or guardians.

The success of the program can be attributed to a combination of circumstances. Program administration used a developmental, iterative approach to setting standards, with policies and procedures developed on a case-by-case basis. The faculty was dedicated, caring and learner-centered, although each semester brought new challenges to the program in the form of behavior and commitment problems. During the year of this study (1998-99), the university TAs made important contributions to the program as participant observers and teaching aides. Regular communication among faculty, staff and parents helped to establish a coherent set of guidelines that has been published and distributed to parents and prospective families.

At first, the curriculum was informal, based on the teachers' sense of what was needed, with these needs varying from lab to lab. For example, the language arts lab was more directly linked to school curriculum because the TPAC staff and faculty had conceived MAEP to be based, in part, on language arts, and a portion of each lab would require these skills. Basic keyboarding, which most of the students under-
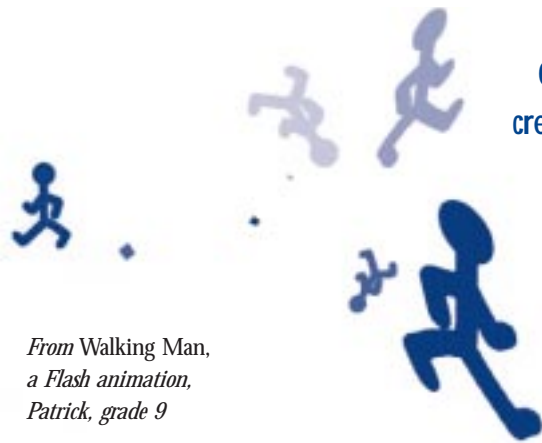
From Walking Man,
a Flash animation,
Patrick, grade 9

stood before entering the program, was secondary to grammar and composition, skills which needed development in most of the incoming students for them to be able to write reflective journals, proposals and reports for their independent projects.

In the computer graphics and animation labs, the computer itself was more basic to the program, and students learned new computer tools and techniques based on the application programs used. Video activities involved the same media tools, but students were also required to write proposals as well as scripts, and to use the computer-based special effects system. Writing proposals and abstracts was part of each lab, and students were required to draft a proposal and a time line for an independent project in each lab, identifying the project and its components, the applications and hardware to be used and a schedule for its completion. The abstracts consisted of one-page descriptions of the finished product.

University/Community Partnership Grant

In the fall of 1998, the Kellogg Foundation awarded a grant to facilitate both a longitudinal study of the MAEP and the codification of the curriculum. The primary goals of the grant were to institute a longitudinal study of the effects of the program on high school graduation rates and to document the curriculum used in the labs. Crucial to this enterprise, known as the University of Arizona/Tucson Pima Arts Council Multimedia Partnership Pro-

ject, was the hiring of University of Arizona students to work as teaching assistants in each lab.

In September, about a month into the school year, Andrew and Grace, graduate students from the Department of Language, Reading and Culture in the College of Education, were hired. They each worked three or four afternoons per week, with the dual responsibility of collecting data as participant observers and "working into" each teacher's lab as a coach and mentor to the students. Both had some prior teaching and computer experience.

The job priority at the outset was simply to be of help to the artist/teachers. The three experienced artist/teachers had developed their own teaching process without other adults in the room. They were concerned that the small labs would be crowded because they were expecting full enrollment (40-45 students) for the spring semester, including some children with special needs, such as LD and ADHD. Although they were all art technology specialists and professionals, the language arts teacher was new to the program. Meetings held with the program director, the teachers and the principal investigator helped to establish some reasonable expectations for the way the partnership would function.

The TAs initially reported feeling that they were not being fully utilized. However, as they observed in each lab and got to know the teachers and the students, they were able to make themselves more useful even if they sometimes only served as monitors, allowing the groups to make short field trips around the downtown area more easily. There was also a learning curve associated with the various software applications, but, as older students themselves, the TAs were able to gain enough skills to support the middle schoolers in short order. Gaining experience in the structure of each teacher's lab and

in the knowledge domain of the art technology were the keys to their successful integration.

The Arts Council was also looking to the Partnership Grant for support in the development of curriculum materials. At this point in MAEP development, all labs were to be wired for expanded Internet access at each workstation, so there was an important opportunity for the TAs to help the teachers integrate the Internet into their labs.

The participant observation notes submitted from that first week indicated that the TAs found the atmosphere of the program to be "laid back." Overall, there were many indications that, compared to their school situations, the students liked the less regimented atmosphere of the labs. In fact, the language arts lab was running without very many rules at all, and "the kids were all over the place," as one TA wrote. Many comments referred to the perceived lack of discipline, but the TAs were impressed with the level of computer skill and knowledge displayed by many of the students. Their time during the first week was divided among the four labs; observations included an introductory lesson in one lab and notes on students' work in another. They also drew comparisons between the different teaching styles, one teacher using a step-by-step approach, the other more comfortable with exploratory activities. They each spent an entire session with one teacher during the second week.

By the end of the first semester, the TAs had become a part of the MAEP environment, having learned a lot about the students while working with each teacher in the four labs. Grace gravitated to the computer graphics lab and Andrew to the language arts lab, but toward the end of the semester we decided that they should concentrate on the language arts lab, so they undertook the development of Internet resources for the language arts lab. The web site they created contained numerous links to age-appropriate language arts sites and offered new possibilities for the teacher to begin to "work into" her class, and these suggested activities were well accepted.

For the second semester (Spring 1999) three new TAs (two undergraduates from fine arts and an English graduate student), including a replacement for Andrew, were hired, each for a full-time lab assignment. This arrangement made it easier to settle on appropriate roles for the TAs in each lab. Grace would specialize in the computer graphics lab and begin working right away on some suggested ways to integrate the Internet into that curriculum. George was assigned to the video lab, Celine to the computer animation lab and Nick, the graduate student, to the language arts lab. Each had the same assignment: to do participant observation with twice-weekly report/reflections e-mailed to the principal investigator; to become useful as aides in the various lab situations; and to work with the lab teachers to continue to develop the curriculum. As the arts council's Internet server became a reality, more and more use was to be made of the Internet, so TAs were also asked to develop a series of learning objectives based on the skill tests and lesson outlines each teacher had developed.

Raymond, grade 9
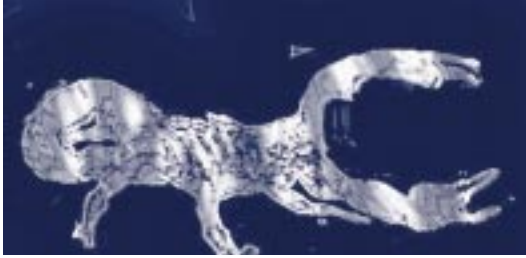
Scorpion, *Jesus, grade 8*

The observations and commentary they submitted described a period of adjustment similar to that of the first semester. However, it was not as much of an issue, perhaps because it was the second semester of the partnership project, and the TAs were able to start at the beginning of the second semester, each working the full four days a week in just one lab. This new arrangement seemed to help establish good working relationships and greater acceptance by the students and artist/teachers.

The Multimedia Partnership Project was able to purchase some software and equipment for use in the lab, including some interactive CD-ROMs and a low-cost Alpha-Smart keyboard composition machine. The CD-ROMs were used primarily to facilitate research and to promote constructive computer activities for the handful of students who frequently arrived early, before the program began. The Alpha-Smart Pro supplemented the five computers in the lab, providing an opportunity to use a portable computer.

The results of the portion of the University of Arizona/Tucson Pima Arts Council Multimedia Partnership Project designed to formalize the curriculum indicate a steady refinement of the goals and objectives for the labs through a reciprocal process based on iterations of the initial instruction about the tools and procedures involved in each lab, the lesson outlines, the skill tests, the learning objectives and the curriculum. The final curriculum, when published, will represent the work and input of the major stakeholders in the program: the faculty, the administration and the kids.

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Further Information

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you don't need a weatherman...

by susan ingalls

"You can count on it," said Rick, very good-looking in his impeccably cut suit. "It's coming down the pike. So the question for all of you is: Do you want a place at the table?" Immediately grumpy, I decided to ignore his mixed metaphor. Predictably, however, I was sitting at a table. It was the spring of 2001, and I was in one of P.A.S.E.'s (Partnership for After School Education) large meeting rooms. My anger spiking, I thought, "Open your eyes, Rick! Take a good look! We're already seated around the table. It is the table before which you've been invited to speak. Furthermore, we have been at the P.A.S.E. table since 1992. In fact, now that I think about it, we're the ones, my colleagues and I, who built the damn table you now seem to think you're the head of."

Susan Ingalls is the Founder and Executive Director of Children & the Classics—a New York City agency that offers technical assistance, arts resources, and direct programming to more than two dozen Community-Based Organizations in New York City. Ms. Ingalls has worked with young people after school since her graduation from college in 1967. She is currently writing a book about creating theater with children in a CBO setting.

Storm, *Annie, age 4*

My bad mood simmered. I'm no dumb bunny. I understood that this whole conversation was political. It was, in the end, all about power and money, and the metaphorical "table" that Rick seemed to think he controlled (and perhaps he did) was, in reality, access to state and federal funds. You see, Rick is a lobbyist. A lobbyist who is supposedly arguing on behalf of our mutual cause, which is making after school activities available to all kids throughout the United States.

But while it was safe to say that everyone at the P.A.S.E. table agreed with the broad goal of offering after school programs to all children, and while all of our agencies would welcome state and federal monies for such an expansion,

Rosemary, Brooklyn

it was in the implementation of such government mandates that my colleagues and I felt, if not outright opposition, at least some deep, time-honored reservations. The state, according to Rick, was going to issue licenses, develop requirements and create standards. I feared that, in all likelihood, standardized tests would lead to standardized preparation. Everybody would have to be fingerprinted.

I thought about getting up and walking into the alcove next to the meeting room, where I could wake up with another cup of coffee. Maybe I could drink some orange juice to raise my blood sugar. But such a move would necessitate my leaving "the table." That choice seemed symbolically ill-advised. It was only 9:20 in the morning, and I hadn't expected to feel as if I was sitting in a battle zone, but I did. In some ways, my colleagues and I had been like a merry band of outlaws, living for several decades in a forest primeval. But just as cutting down the trees in Brazil or drilling for oil in Alaska can seem necessary, so had I felt for the last few years the steady encroachment of "the obvious solution." Like its need for more timber and oil, our nation needs to provide more after school programs for many, many more children. The "Reasonable Answer," the one I knew Rick's model advocates, is to systematically place hun-

dreds, if not thousands, of new after school programs inside existing school buildings.

The pitch of Rick and his cohorts, one which I had heard many times, went something like this: All our school buildings are empty by three o'clock in the afternoon. Children are forced to leave what in many communities is a safe space, only to wander the streets unattended; many use the time to get into trouble. The juvenile crime rate triples during the first hour after the school day ends. Eight-five percent of teenage pregnancies occur between 3 and 8 PM. Furthermore, here in New York City, 56 percent of fourth grade children are currently failing the statewide English test. The rate of illiteracy for fourth graders in some districts in this city has reached 75 percent (*NY Times*, May 20, 2000). We need to turn this disaster around. By running after school programs in schools, taught by certified staff, we might have a chance. The children are already in the building. If school buses take the kids home, the buses could just leave a few hours later.

Our schools are valuable assets, and they should be used 24/7. They should be the center of the community, not closed, remote citadels. Schools should teach children during the day but at night offer square-dancing classes for senior citizens, cooking classes for new mothers and computer classes for the unemployed. Closing schools at 3:00 made sense when the United States was largely rural, with a more agrarian economy. Young people no longer need to help plant the crops or assist with the harvest. Those days are long gone.

What we need now, in the 21st century, this new millennium, are schools that help us compete in the global economy. We need year-round schooling. We need extended school days. Sixteen studies begun early in the 1970s show that during the ten weeks that children are out of

school during the summer, they lose significant academic ground. For some youngsters this lost ground can amount to as much as a half a year's work. Summer vacations are a logistical nightmare, especially now that there are so many families with either the single parent or both parents working full time.

The "Rick argument" is a powerful one, and because it contains many truths, it's nearly impossible to counter. The solution he advocates—to dramatically increase after school programs by placing them in our nation's existing school buildings—is no longer just the handwriting on the wall; it now represents policies being passed into law. Like the emergence of HMOs to handle our nation's health care, Rick's vision for the future is understandable, if not inevitable.

But what Rick didn't quite understand that spring morning was that he was giving his speech to 20 leaders of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), leaders who run neighborhood centers that are currently providing the lion's share of after school programs, summer camps, arts and recreation programs not only throughout New York City but also across our entire nation. Those of us at the P.A.S.E. table run centers that are physically, and often psychologically, quite separate from schools. In some cases, like those of New York City's settlement houses, agencies have been creating their own identities for more than a hundred years. Therefore, we are a group of leaders who will fight for our agencies to preserve the character and the culture we have created within our own buildings. We do not want what we value to be left out or ignored. Rick didn't understand that his position was going to be challenged, and that for some of us, it will be a long contentious fight, during which we will draw blood, even if we do not prevail. There is no place in that fight for a freshly pressed suit.

Looking back, to be perfectly honest, the main reason I had found Rick's presentation so objectionable wasn't his style or his dress; the real source of my anger was myself. Like a sailor who hadn't paid enough attention to changes in the currents, shifts in the breeze or a drop in the barometer, I had seen the signs, but these signals hadn't led me to chart a new course.

For me, the first indication of the approaching conflict was the introduction of the Beacons After School Programs in the mid-1990s. The Beacons were located in schools, but designed to be run by Community-Based Organizations. This worried me. I feared that "down the pike" the CBOs might become too cumbersome or too expensive, and eventually be dropped, the expertise of the leaders lost. I worried that, without the attentive, seasoned leadership of people like Michele Cahill, who was instrumental in the creation of the Beacons, the integrity of the Beacons programs might erode. My biggest fear

> Like a sailor who hadn't paid enough attention to changes in the currents, shifts in the breezes, or a drop in the barometer, I had seen the signs, but these signals hadn't led me to chart a new course.

was that once situated inside school buildings, after school programs would eventually be taken over by the public school system. This same concern followed with the next wave of change, the introduction of the after school programs run within schools by the YMCAs of Greater New York.

Our company, Children & the Classics, was asked to be one of the primary trainers of the staff that the YMCA was hiring for their new initiative, dubbed "The Virtual Y." Again, the leadership from the Ys was experienced, fun, well organized and optimistic. Yet, even while Children & the Classics worked very hard to give all the new youth workers the techniques and resources to do theater activities with kids,

I personally never understood the whole concept behind the Virtual Ys. What I have always loved about the Y, the old McBurney Y on 23rd

Street being the one I know best, is that they always centered on sports and exercise. To me, Ys are primarily about swimming pools and weight rooms, basketball courts, indoor tracks and even saunas and steam rooms. So I never got it. Virtual means, "existing or resulting in essence or effect, though not in actual fact." But I saw very little of the essence of what I loved about programs at the Y in the public school classrooms where the new youth workers we had trained ended up teaching.

Because the mission of Children & the Classics is to propagate the wonderful artistic, academic and psychological benefits that occur when kids are engaged in theater, our company happily accepted all the training opportunities, along with the generous financial remuneration, that the YMCA offered us. But in the end, I was left feeling empty, sad and off-track. Long ago, when the organization was young, it was a Y leader who put up empty peach baskets at two ends of a field and invented basketball, and at another Y, volleyball was invented. I wondered how activities in a classroom, even the very good ones our company was supplying, did justice to that proud heritage. There was one moment, during the use of theater games, in which the deepest character of the Y's "twenty kids in a room with a ball" philosophy was almost honored. But that room, by my thinking, should have been empty of desks and chairs. And of course, it wasn't.

Way back in 1998, if I had been even mildly vigilant, I would have foreseen that this movement in New York—locating after school programs in public school buildings, started by the Beacons, followed by the Virtual Ys and ultimately joined by that colossus, The After School Corporation (T.A.S.C.)— would soon be accepted as the model for the rest of the country. But at that time any possible consequences for the small, independent CBOs failed to register.

While I was attending P.A.S.E.'s sixth annual conference in 2000, a second, even scarier assault on the freedom and independence of after school activities was proposed.

Essentially a professional development forum for after school educators, the annual P.A.S.E. conference started in 1995. It is a wonderful, unique opportunity for peers to share and train with one another. At the P.A.S.E. conference in May 2000, there were over 600 people attending more than 50 workshops. A few years after the one-day conference was established, we added a second day for symposia and panels, where academics, researchers, foundation staff and government leaders could meet with field practitioners to discuss and debate the issues driving youth development and after school education.

The 2000 symposium was located in the Puck Building; Angeliki, my assistant and I, arriving late, had missed the introduction, but the keynote speaker was Dr. Warren Simmons, Executive Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Settling into a chair near the back of the room, I turned my full attention to Dr. Simmons, who had begun to speak.

Dr. Simmons talked about the need for communities, and the need for organizations in those communities to build better relationships with their local schools. He talked about connecting the activities in after school learning

environments to in-school activities. He cautioned that our work was to make these connections between CBOs and schools happen in a way that would help students, not make them schizophrenic by creating too many outcomes to be reached in too many different ways.

Then Dr. Simmons began to talk about the history of the standards movement between 1983 and 1990. He recalled when the reformers pinpointed the basic issue: Schools serving poor minority children were staffed by less qualified teachers. As Dr. Simmons spoke, *the image of a broad, slow-moving river entered my mind. I saw the banks, filled with lush trees and dense flowering shrubs, mysterious and verdant. I floated by, apparently on a raft.* "Minority students are most often the last to be enrolled in college preparatory classes," he said. *Mist was lifting from my river like in a 19th-century Bingham painting.* "Standards were developed to clarify what students should know." *My raft moved slowly downstream. Ahead, a fish jumped out of the water and arched back down.*

But standards alone were not adequate. Standardized tests would provide, for both students and teachers, an indicator of where they needed to improve. *Immediate sounds of water lapping, birds singing, the distant drone of the cicadas. The brown muddy water, I now knew, was the Mississippi. Community arts. That's what I am—a community artist, who has, over a thirty-year period, created a body of work by engaging hundreds and hundreds of children as my partners. Working outside the curricula, the standards, and even the school buildings. Working together, the kids and I invented scores of magical worlds, one after the other. It was within these worlds of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Maya Angelou, Lewis Carroll, Langston Hughes and Mark Twain that we all advanced our knowledge, humor and compassion.*

The sound of clapping hands brought me back into the symposium just in time to hear

Dr. Simmons conclude that the biggest mistake of the educational reformers was to emphasize accountability through high-stakes testing without providing capacity-building. Here he was indicating that in this area of preparing students for these critical tests, after school programs could, and should, play a vital role.

Like Dr. Simmons, the next speaker, Jane Quinn, Assistant Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society, explained that after school programs had the opportunity to harmonize "the principles of the best youth work practices with the best of academic standards." Ms. Quinn gave as an example a cooking club that CBOs could offer to third graders. In such a club, at least fifteen of the promotion standards for third grade could be met while still focusing on the best practices in youth development. Ms. Quinn talked about creating "serious fun" for all of New York City's young people.

I was relieved to hear the final panelist, Dr. Eric Schaps, the president of the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, California, say
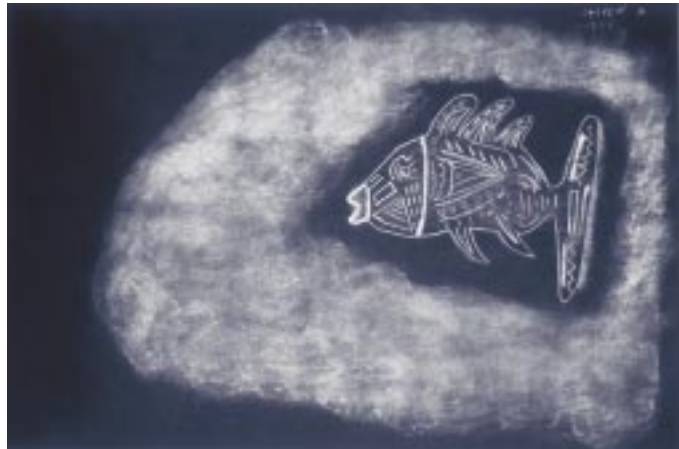
Steven, grade 3, Queens

that while he backed the new academic standards, he also did not like the high-stakes testing. In Dr. Schap's opinion, such testing "impoverished education" for most children and left teachers feeling pressured to "teach to the test."

When the panel ended, Angeliki and I slipped out to a nearby eatery. Angeliki, my

multi-talented assistant who had only two years earlier graduated from N.Y.U., ordered something vegetarian. I remember an overwhelming urge to order something deeply alcoholic, but instead I ordered a rather plain iced tea to accompany my B.L.T. and fries. After the food arrived, we talked about the symposium. I knew the mental state I was in, and it was an uncomfortable one; it was as though some horrible riddle that I couldn't quite name, and therefore couldn't examine or resolve, had settled into my brain to torture me. Seeking relief, I said, perhaps a bit too cheerfully, "Well—that's your first P.A.S.E. symposium. What did you think?"

One of the characteristics about Angeliki that I love the most, in addition to her contagious sense of humor, is that she is extremely thoughtful. Angeliki is not afraid to slow down and think. I sipped my iced tea, munched on a corner of my perfect sandwich, and waited.

"Well, for a conference that is supposed to be about what kids do once the school day ends, it seemed to me—and maybe I missed something because we were late—but it seemed to me that all the speeches were about schools and what the schools needed. The whole thing seemed to be about how we all needed to help the schools."

"BINGO!" I thought, "Oh, Bingo! Bingo! Bingo!" My young, ingenius assistant had just named, and therefore resolved, the mental tickle that had been tormenting me for more than an hour.

"I'm sure the schools do need help," continued Angeliki sympathetically. "Maybe I just don't understand what after school activities are supposed to be doing."

"Well, without any biased coaching from me," I said, "what does it mean to you—your own experience—what do you think about it?"

Again, a long pause.

"Well, to me, and this is just me, after school means you leave school. You leave school and you go somewhere else, like Vicki Lynn's School of Dance."

"Like where?" I asked, as if Angeliki had slipped into a foreign tongue.

"Vicki Lynn's School of Dance," said Angeliki brightly. "That's where I took jazz dance two days a week, from fourth to sixth grade, when we lived in Dayton."

I was due back at the symposium, but I delayed returning just long enough to hear the juicy lowdown about Vicki Lynn's: a long rectangular building in a strip mall; one big room that could be divided into three rooms, two

> "After school means you leave school. You leave school and you go somewhere else, . . . like Vicki Lynn's School of Dance. . . ."

medium and one small; jazz, tap, ballet and acrobatics; Angeliki's first glimpse of her costume in a catalog. The costumes arrived a few weeks before the big presentation, and hers was unbelievably exciting--hot pink with golden sequins, fringe, and tassels. But once it was determined that your costume fit, you had to carefully place it back in the box until the show. For The Big Night, Vicky Lynn rented a large "Broadway" auditorium in Dayton. Then each class performed their numbers, one after another, each with separate bows. The evening ended as all the proud moms and some dads took lots and lots of photographs. Then Angeliki and her friends, still in costume, went out for ice cream.

As I got up to return to the panel discussion back at the Puck Building, I asked Angeliki one last question: "Would it have made any difference if you had been able to do your dancing in the school building, but still after school?"

"I would never have done my jazz dance at school," replied Angeliki, momentarily reacting as though I had asked her to do something obscene.

Startled by the immature passion of her reaction, I asked, "Why not?" "Because all my friends would have seen me trying."

"But you went to Vicky Lynn's with your friends."

"Just two," said Angeliki.

Looking back, I am amazed at my blissful disregard of the changing breezes. Although that first tack, placing community-run programs in schools at the end of the academic day, had its psychological and environmental drawbacks, it also had advantages. When done well, the Beacons, YMCAs and TASC were reaching out and providing hundreds of new after school opportunities to thousands upon thousands of young people. Even though that's not what my agency wants to do, I am grateful for those who genuinely love teaching and creating within this structure. Furthermore, my company is now firmly dedicated to providing agencies that do this work with magical resources to help them stay on the course they have set for themselves.

The second tack, however, foreshadowed a major storm raging in my mind. The new direction—urging community educators and youth workers to adopt and advance activities to support the new academic standards and thereby help kids to pass the new standardized tests—while again seeming useful, ironically, triggered deep resistance in me. I say ironically because Children & the Classics is dedicated to teaching children through the use of complex core texts. Our projects immerse young people in the English language. All of our newest initiatives are dedicated to making sure that participants acquire not only a sense of mastery but an actual mastery of the English language. Furthermore, we prove our methods through vigorous evaluations, which will soon include tests based on the much-touted new English standards.

So, at the symposium in 2000 and again in 2001 (when the topic was evaluation of after school programs), I was still floating along with the misconception that all of these new directions that were being talked about were ideas that I could accept or reject. But the meeting with Rick blew away all such illusions. Rick made it clear that in the future, if you want to be legal, if you want government monies, these new guidelines in after school education were going to be mandatory.

This forecast for the future left me feeling unmoored. Later, in early July, I picked up the phone and arranged a date with Rodney Fuller, co-director (with Andrew Rubinson) of Fresh Youth Initiatives. I had never visited Rodney's agency, located in the Washington Heights–Inwood section of Manhattan. However, I needed some cheering up, and FYI was doing something that truly excited me. In this era of migration into school buildings, FYI was instead raising money to build its own center on the site of an illegal poultry farm, known as a *vivero* in Spanish.

We agreed on an early breakfast meeting, and even at 8:30 in the morning, there were three kids on Rodney's doorstep. After a quick tour of FYI's current facilities, a six-room apartment in a large building on 172nd Street, Rodney tucked his blueprints under his arm, and we headed to a local restaurant.

Just outside the door, we met two girls, introduced to me as Maria, who had done 300 hours of community service, and Yvette, who had completed an astounding 1200 hours. Rodney hugged both girls, each about 14 or 15 years old. He checked their schedule for the day, noting when he would next touch base with them. As we walked up the block, we passed large planters full of flowers, planters which had been built and painted by kids from FYI, giving the long block not only a wonderful and unique look, but also sending out an almost magical signal to all passers-by that, on this block, people cared.

This same sense of community caring extended into the adjacent street, with a large colorful mural on a nearby building and a small community garden, where Jose (who had 450 hours) worked with Tequesha and Lafonda (625 and 475 hours) and with newcomer Violette (a mere 80 hours). Rodney and I chatted briefly with the supervisor of the community gardeners, and I peered appreciatively at small green

shoots destined to become prizeworthy green beans one day.

Arriving at the restaurant, we took a booth towards the rear and ordered breakfast. Then I sat back, waiting to be fortified. I was hungry not only for my newly arriving scrambled eggs and bacon, but for a new perspective, for fresh energy. Why did I care? Why was I threatened? And what propelled this next generation on a similar journey?

Rodney, enthusiastic and energetic, is a social worker with a clear passion for youth empowerment. He talked about meaning. How does an agency with its own vision express what that vision means? According to Rodney, "You establish meaning by really digging your roots in, being a part of the community, becoming a fixture. The most obvious thing we could do to achieve this was to erect a building. From the time I was an undergrad, I thought about doing the exact same kind of job that we do here at FYI, and I always thought about having my own space in which to do it."

As if in a deep summer rain, I soak in Rodney's words. We finish eating and order more tea and coffee. The dishes are removed, and out come the blueprints. I thought about the trail of renovations, major and minor, I had left behind: the conversion of a former hair salon, a parking garage, a former restaurant, a storefront, a lumber mill and, finally, the most current renovation in the loft of Children & the Classics on West 17th Street.

But Rodney wasn't just renovating. He was building from the ground up, four stories tall. Looking at each blueprint, Rodney talked about open entrances, murals and workstations. Skylights which would illuminate places without windows. There would be a living room, a food pantry, storage rooms, multi-purpose spaces and a rooftop terrace for outdoor gatherings. He concluded by talking about providing space to help incubate new programs that other people in the community might like to start.

After breakfast we visited the site. After those beautiful blueprints, the actual building was a bit of a shock. What a dump! I marveled at Rodney's ability to see beyond a boarded-up eyesore, while Rodney marveled at everyone who had joined in to help: The $600,000 that had already been raised through private house parties in Washington Heights; the award-win-

> When it comes to children, it is our job as adults to provide and protect. But it's also our job to remember.

ning architect who had been attracted to the project; and so many more. The entire new building, which requires the demolition of the abandoned chicken ranch, will cost $2.5 million. Now he only had half a million left to raise.

"I've been blessed in the work I do," said Rodney as we walked back to the current location of Fresh Youth Initiatives. Almost everyone we passed—kids, parents, and old people alike—knew Rodney, said hello or exchanged some bit of information with him. As I hugged Rodney goodbye, next to the expectant flowers in their made-to-order planters, I couldn't help but think that for Washington Heights-Inwood, the blessings went both ways.

When it comes to children, it is our job as adults to provide and protect. But it's also our job to remember. To remember, if we can, childhood and the stages children move through on their way out into adulthood. We need to insist that children in our care receive the best that life can give them, and we need to protect those rare and wonderful differences between children and adults.

The current solution of placing the majority of new after school programs in school buildings poses a clear threat. In a time of increasing budgetary constraints, it is the cheap answer. Furthermore, the projected academic advantages and the convenience of keeping kids in schools after the official school day ends is an easy sell to lawmakers. What politician wouldn't

promote the idea of a "Virtual Y?" Who would want to take on the more difficult task of giving the *actual Ys real money* to build *genuine* centers that serve hundreds of thousands of kids with the Y's *truest* programs?

Most young people are already in school buildings for about seven hours each day. While not every school is based on this factory model, it would be fair to say that most are. The halls are long and the classrooms march on, left and right. The physical plant is often in disrepair, but even if children attend a well-maintained facility with gleaming tiles and polished linoleum, after seven hours they can use a change of scenery.

For high school students it is critical to offer a supportive academic environment after school, but staying in the same physical space for an extra three to six hours is not the best or only solution. Ideally, older students would go to programs tailored to their interests, in spaces specifically geared to this kind of support. The excitement kindled by success in any one discipline radiates outward—influencing that young person's entire perspective.

Younger children have an innate need to play. Even the most unobservant adult would be forced to admit this most obvious truth. Universally, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when grade school children leave their school buildings, they shout and scream with joy.

Do they hate school? Not necessarily, but they relish that moment of freedom. The very best after school programs build upon this desire to explore and discover.

Songwriter Bob Dylan says, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." Unfortunately, right now I believe an ill wind is blowing against Community-Based Organizations, particularly the small, independent ones. My fear, plain and simple, is that the activities and cultures in neighborhood centers, often developed indigenously and without school-centered vocabularies, might be carelessly blown away.

As these cultures disappear, so do the unique visions and the expertise of the independent artists and teachers who make them happen. Whether our visions become empires like the Girl Scouts (which began with just eighteen girls in Georgia) or focus on a smaller scale like Fresh Youth Initiatives, they are unique, valuable resources. We need to insist that CBOs, which provide opportunities for kids outside of schools, are honored and protected.

Pushed by the wind, I go back to my river and my raft. Here I raise a sail, and I encourage others to do likewise. Now I will use the wind in my sail to power a new course. Insist. Teach what you love. Insist. Do a pirouette. Insist. Fly a kite. Insist. Paint pictures, make puppets, wear bright orange wigs. Insist. Dance a jig, write a hip-hop song, shoot some photos. Insist. Insist that kids need environments other than school buildings in which to play, and grow, and transform.

Finally, insist on going back to the basics: Encourage kids to be persistent, to ask for help and to learn how to help others. Provide kids with experiences that require concentration. Allow them to learn the advantages of being organized and to enjoy the messy process of creation. Encourage them to speak from experience and to value insight gained through participation. Help kids figure out their goals, and let them see how long it takes to accomplish something.

After kids learn all this, passing standardized tests will be a snap.

Devaun, grade 4, Manhattan

the digital neighborhood

After School Resources on the World Wide Web

Searching the Internet for after school programming can be an overwhelming job because of the proliferation of sites. Our aim is to help teachers, parents and after school organizations find online information that is informative, accurate and helpful, so we have compiled a list of resources that we have found especially useful for after school planners and practitioners. There are many more sites related to this topic than we have listed, but this guide will get you started.

Diana, Kindergarten, Queens

of general interest

> www.ed.gov/21stcclc

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CLCC)

Part of the National Education Association, authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Provides expanded learning opportunities for children in a safe, drug-free, supervised environment. In 2000, approximately 1,600 rural and urban public schools received 21st Century funds to serve 650,000 children and 250,000 adults in all 50 states. This program is the only source of federal funds for school districts seeking to offer such programs. NEA, 1201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202-822-7300

> www.afterschoolalliance.org

The Afterschool Alliance

A coalition of public, private and non-profit organizations that works to ensure that all children have after school programs by the year 2010. The Alliance aims to serve as a public resource and voice by promoting after school programs and advocating for more resources for both existing and new programs. P.O. Box 65166, Washington, DC 20035-5166; 202-296-9378

> www.tascorp.org

The After School Corporation (TASC)

Established by The Open Society Institute in 1998 to enhance the quality and availability of after school programming. Over the next five years TASC, in collaboration with the New York City Board of Education and others, will nurture the development of programs that enrich the lives of children and help their parents with the goal of making in-school after school programs a public responsibility. 925 9th Ave., New York, NY 10019; 212-547-6950, 212-547-6983 (fax)

> www.americorps.org

AmeriCorps

Offers a multitude of after school and volunteer programs nationwide.

> www.carnegiefoundation.org/index2.htm

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

An independent national and international policy and research center dedicated to strengthening schools and colleges in America and beyond. The mission is to do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold and dignify the profession of teaching. 555 Middlefield Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025; 650-566-5100

> www.DEVSTU.org

The Developmental Studies Center (DSC)

A non-profit organization conducting research and developing school-based and after school programs that foster children's intellectual, ethical and social development. The mission is to deepen children's commitment to being kind, helpful, responsible and respectful of others, qualities essential to leading humane and productive lives in a democratic society. 200 Embarcadero, Suite 30, Oakland, CA 94606-5300; 510-533-0213, 510-464-3670 (fax)

> www.school.discovery.com

Discovery School.com

Part of Discovery.com, and organized into three sections: One for students, one for teachers and another for parents. It has good information and some helpful links.
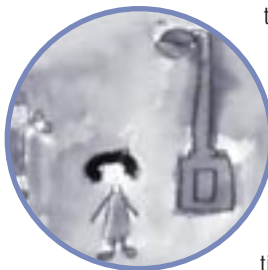
> www.dosomething.org

Do Something

A national non-profit organization that inspires young people to believe that change is possible, and trains, funds and mobilizes them to be leaders who measurably strengthen their communities. 423 W. 55th St., 8th fl., New York, NY 10019; 212-523-1175, 212-582-1307 (fax)

> www.ers.org

Educational Resource Service (ERS)

A non-profit foundation created by the American Association of School Administrators to serve the research and information needs of educators and the public. 2000 Clarendon Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201; 800-791-9308, 800-791-9309 (fax)

> www.foundations-inc.org

Foundations

The mission of Foundations is to support the development of programs that promote the well-being and quality of life for our most vulnerable children, their families and their communities. Moorestown West Corporate Center, 101 Executive Drive, Suite 2, Moorestown, NJ 08057-4236; 856-996-3070, 856-996-3075 (fax)

> www.f2online.org

Foundation 2

Focuses on crisis prevention and intervention. They strive to reach youth as close to the problem as possible, and do so through a range of after school programs. 1714 Johnson Avenue N.W., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405; 319-362-1170

> http://futureofchildren.org

The Future of Children

Disseminates timely information on major issues related to children's well-being, with special emphasis on providing objective analysis and evaluation, translating existing knowledge into effective programs and policies, and promoting constructive institutional change.

> www.ldresources.com

LD Resources

This award-winning site is filled with information and resources for people of all ages with learning disabilities.

> ### > SEARCH ENGINE TIPS
>
> The search engine we found to be most helpful is Google at http://www.google.com. Here's how to use it. Once Google's home page appears, type in a descriptive phrase such as "after school program" in the question box and hit return. (If you are looking for local information, try "after school program" Philadelphia, for example.) A descriptive list will appear; clicking on any of the entries will take you directly to that page. Here's another hint: When you find a good site, bookmark it for future reference. Many sites have excellent links to related organizations, so look for their link page.
>
>

> www.medallionsp.com

Medallion School Partnerships

Developed originally as a function of its sister division, Children's World Learning Centers, Medallion was created by ARAMARK Educational Resources, Inc. to provide customized educational and recreational programs for school-age and preschool children on the premises of elementary schools. They currently operate programs in more than 500 elementary schools in 24 states.
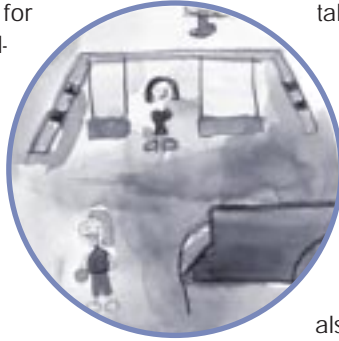
> www.nationalservice.org

Learn and Serve America

The Corporation for National and Community Service works with governor-appointed state commissions, nonprofits, faith-based groups, schools and other civic organizations to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages to serve their communities.

> www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC/index.htm

Making The Most of Out-of-School Time (The MOST Initiative)

Based at the Wellesley Center for Research on Women, MOST seeks to improve the quality and availability of programming, especially for low-income children, children of color and children with special needs. Located in Boston, Chicago and Seattle, MOST focuses on the hours children are not in school. National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA 02481; 781-283-2547

> www.nccenet.org

The National Center for Community Education (NCCE)

Providing community school training since 1963, NCCE has approximately 700 participants a year from all walks of life, including educators, community organizers, youth development workers, medical and law enforcement agencies and students. 1017 Anon St., Flint, MI 48503; 810-238-0463, 810-238-9211 (fax)

> http://nche.org

National Center for Health Education (NCHE)

A youth, parents and communities project site that features resources of interest to teachers, families, business and faith leaders and youth who are interested in promoting the optimum physical, mental, emotional and social health of school-aged children. They also have a program to benefit homeless children. 212-594-8001

> childrenyouthfamilydir.com

The National Directory of Children, Youth and Family Services

A leading research guide for professionals who work with at-risk youth. It includes both local and national agencies for human/social services, health, juvenile justice, education and related services. It is also a resource for child protection services and information referral. 14 Inverness Drive East, D144, Englewood, CO 80112; 800-343-6681, 800-845-6452 (fax)

> www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC/

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)

Includes ongoing initiatives, trainings, projects, research and consultation. The mission is to support all school-age children, youth and their families by promoting high-quality out-of-school opportunities. Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 106 Central St., Wellesley, MA 02181; 781-283-2554

> www.nsaca.org

The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA)

Represents a wide array of public, private and community-based providers of after school programs. NSACA has over 7,000 members, stages a national training conference, disseminates quality standards and grants program accreditation for school-age care programs. 1137 Washington St., Boston, MA, 02124; 617-298-5012, 617-298-5022 (fax)

> www.ncrel.org/after/bellkit.htm

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)

Has created Resources for After-School Programming, a tool kit for developing effective after school programs. The tool kit is designed around key decision points in six areas: Management, collaboration, programming, linkages with the traditional school day, evaluation and communication.

> www.pasesetter.com

The Partnership for After School Education (PASE)

Formed in 1993 as a professional association of after school staff, directors, education specialists and resource providers committed to enhancing the field of after school education and youth development. PASE holds an annual conference, quarterly meetings, trainings and networking opportunities and distributes a newsletter. 120 Broadway, Suite 3048, New York, NY 10271; 212-571-2664, 212-571-2676 (fax)

> www.pew-partnership.org

Pew Partnership

A civic research organization that explores how innovative partnerships, citizen participation and accessible technology catalyze civic solutions in these areas. They disseminate practical information to citizens and practitioners everywhere. 5 Boar's Head Lane, Suite 100, Charlottesville, VA 22903; 804-971-2073, 804-971-7042 (fax)

> www.readingrockets.org

Reading Rockets

Uses TV, video, print and the Web to help children in America with reading disabilities. They also provide accurate, practical information to anyone who would like to learn more on this subject.

> www.schoolagenotes.com

School-Age NOTES

Created an after school catalogue with access to over 100 resources. Ranging from projects and themes to program start-up and development, this wealth of information is wonderful to have. The catalogues are free and the information is also available on their web site. School-Age NOTES, P.O. Box 40205, Nashville, TN 37204-0205; 615-279-0700, 615-279-0800 (fax)

> www.studioinaschool.org

Studio in a School

Has provided New York City children, teachers and parents with educational experiences in the visual arts for over twenty years by bringing together artists and children to create art. For more on Studio in a School, see p. 60. K-12. 410 West 59th St., New York, NY 10019; 212-765-5900, 212-765-7985 (fax)

> www.tenet.edu/professional/main.html

TENET Web

Resources for professionals. Based at the University of Texas at Austin, this site includes links to grants, educational organizations, educator resources, federal educational resources and instructional technology resources.

> www.waveinc.org

Work, Achievement, Values & Education (WAVE)

A national network of over 200 school and community organizations. WAVE enables youth to complete their education and lead productive lives by providing schools and youth development organizations with turnkey programs, teaching strategies, resources, professional development and ongoing support. 525 School St. S.W., Suite 500, Washington DC 20024-2729; 202-484-0103, 202-488-7595 (fax)

> www.youthtreeusa.com

YouthTree USA

An online directory of programs related to youth, family and education, online resources and products, and services in local communities nationwide. YouthTree USA also publishes free directory pages for non-profits.

local & regional interest

> **www.chicagoyouthcenters.org**

Chicago Youth Centers

Founded in 1956 as a means of harvesting a next generation of socially responsible, contributing adults in Chicago's most underserved communities. "Forty-four years later, we remain committed to our founder's vision of serving Chicago's highest-need youth and communities. Through the development of research-based programming that focuses on real change and not simply motion, all CYC programs are designed as seeding processes that endeavor to fully mobilize youth's willingness and capacity to create positive change through the choices they make; they can no longer delegate responsibility upward, so we begin to build moral character where our future truly resides, in our youth."

> **www.ci.chulavista.ca.us/recreation/ after_school_programs.html**

City of Chula Vista Recreation Division—After School Programs

Chula Vista has many after school programs, two being STRETCH and DASH. STRETCH (Safe Time for Recreation, Enrichment and Tutoring for Children), currently being offered at eight district schools, is a literacy and arts enrichment program designed to give an academic boost to students who need it most by providing them with a stimulating, literacy-rich after school environment. DASH (Dynamic After School Hours) is an after school sports and recreation program held at 12 elementary school playgrounds, Monday through Friday, for two hours. The program includes: Sports clinics (soccer, track and field, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, flag football and field hockey), arts and crafts, cooperative/initiative games, weekly challenges and traditional playground games. All program activities are supervised and conducted by qualified recreation staff, and DASH is offered at 12 district schools. Keith Quigley, DASH Supervisor, at 619-585-5779. 365 F Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910

> **www.gsaca.com**

The Georgia School-Age Care Association (GSACA)

A member-based non-profit organization whose mission is to improve out-of-school time for children five and older. They provide technical assistance, training and consultation to after school, before school and summer programs. GSACA is a state affiliate of the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). 246 Sycamore St., Suite 252, Decatur, GA 30030 ; 404-373-7414, 404-373-7428 (fax)

> **www.msalliance.org/after_school.htm**

Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA)

With the help of Learn and Serve America, they fund 32 After School Community Service-Learning programs which engage participants in service that meets a defined community need. Participants learn how to perform the service and are offered structured opportunities to reflect on their impact upon the community. 120 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116; 617-542-2544, 617-542-0240 (fax)

> **http://170.115.249.12/recreation/ afterschool.htm**

Philadelphia Recreation Department

Good examples of typical after school programs in city recreation departments. This is a viable resource for the Philadelphia area. 215-686-8378

> **www.ridoe.net/**

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE)

Best for anyone in or near Rhode Island. There are many topics covered, including special and adult education.

> **www.schoolsout.org**

Schoolsout.org

A way for students, parents, teachers and mentors to learn about after school opportunities for children and youth in and around Pasadena, California.

Now More than Ever

Changing Lives in an After School Theater Program
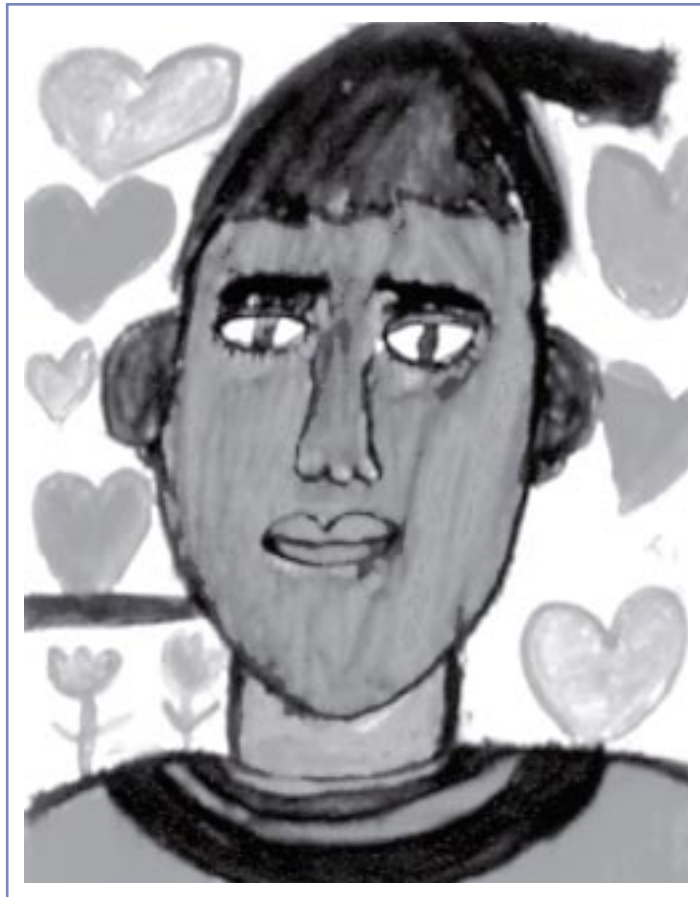
by carol macy

Carol Macy, who holds a master's degree in theater education from Norwich University, is a theater practitioner, speaker and arts consultant. She has directed young people in after school programs and led seminars and workshops at schools and at national conferences for educators and after school practitioners for over 25 years. Carol can be reached at elea@sover.net.

All of us are aware that young people today are facing challenges far greater than the ones we ourselves faced growing up. Now more than ever, the music, television and film industries are busy parenting their young consumers at an alarming rate and with a fierce intensity. And the products of these industries are, for the most part, stripped of any magic or true inspiration so essential to childhood, often giving our young people access to far more information than they are able to process. In addition, recent news events have deeply shaken our children, leaving many of them vulnerable and uncertain about the future.

Waving a magic wand will not alleviate the pressures children feel at school, the messages communicated through movies and television, or the heartbreaks of home life so many children bring with them to the after school program. We, as after school educators, can balance what is happening

by finding ways to *slow our children down,* and to help them process all that they are exposed to each day. My work during the past twenty-five years as a workshop leader and theater director in public schools, and, in my own after school program for young people, has clearly shown that theater exercises and the dramatization of stories and poetry are vital to the education of young people.

The Village Theater in Brattleboro, Vermont, is an after school workshop for children and adolescents that involves young people aged 6-15 in the dramatization of poetry, stories and scripted plays. As the program's artistic director, I wanted to explore the relationship between the dramatization of stories and poetry and the development of self-esteem and empathy in the participants. In addition, I was interested in learning more about the role of the facilitator in contributing to the self-esteem of each actor and in bringing forth authentic, exciting work from student actors. This article will share what I have come to know both through my graduate research and in my practice over the years: After school programs can make a major contribution to the education of the *whole* child.

The very nature of the after school program allows practitioners the *extraordinary* opportunity to nurture, support and engage participants of many different ages in experiences designed to increase feelings of self-worth, develop intuition, foster empathy and bring forth the creative spirit in young people.

What the facilitator needs in order for theater experiences to succeed in meeting humanistic and artistic objectives with young people in after school programs are the following:

1. An understanding of how to foster self-esteem and develop empathy in young people.

2. An understanding of how the facilitator contributes to the self-esteem and moral growth of each child.

3. The ability to see the ways in which theater can address the whole child.

4. An understanding of how the discussion and dramatization of stories can contribute to the development of empathy.

5. Knowledge of the process involved in leading participants of all ages in theater games, exercises and the dramatization of poetry and stories.

6. A list of references that will give facilitators the much-needed tools for creating with young people.

7. An empty space, which, for a given period of the afternoon, becomes the stage.

The Question of Self-Esteem

In order to see how we, as after school practitioners, can increase self-concept and moral growth in young people, we must formulate questions that will provide a foundation upon which we can build a case for theater in the after school arena. What, for example, do we mean by "self-esteem"?

Nicole, grade 4, Staten Island

In *Educational Psychology* (1998) Anita Woolfolk tells us that people tend to confuse the terms "self-concept" and "self-esteem." Woolfolk states that the term self-concept means "our attempt to explain ourselves to ourselves." She believes that our self-concept is ever-changing and that the perceptions we have of ourselves will vary in different situations and in every phase of our lives. In differentiating between self-concept and self-esteem, Woolfolk says that our self-esteem emerges from our evaluation of our self-concept (p. 74). If a child has a positive self-concept, if the child likes what she sees, then we say she has high self-esteem.

Woolfolk believes that our self-concept evolves from a very simple definition, or attempt to explain ourselves, to an increasingly complex definition. The complex definitions are related to one another but remain separate. For example, a young child might define himself as a boy with brown hair. As he grows older,

he might define himself as a boy with brown hair who is tall and friendly and who likes to play tag at recess. As an adolescent, his thinking becomes more abstract. In high school, he begins to form beliefs about the nature of things, about his philosophy of life, his sexuality and what he wants to be after he leaves school. Woolfolk believes that this complex definition of self might include feelings of adequacy in certain subject areas and inadequacy in others, for example. By looking at this construct, we can begin to understand how these definitions of self can be related but separate.

The Role of the Practitioner

As after school practitioners, we have the privilege of responding to the children who come to us each day in ways that will help to build both self-concept and self-esteem. And we can present theater experiences in such a way that children and teens will experience success 100% of the time, leaving the workshops feeling more confident about who they are as individuals.

Anita Woolfolk lists 13 guidelines which she feels contribute to the self-esteem of young people, giving us an important key to meaningful interaction between director and actor and to successful work with students in the field of theater. And although it is possible to bring forth exciting performances from actors without following these suggestions, approaching participants with these objectives in mind creates an experience which builds confidence and encourages authentic work on the part of young people. I have chosen four of her guidelines, which are particularly helpful in the realm of theater education:

- Value and accept all pupils for their attempts as well as for their accomplishments.

- Create a climate that is physically and psychologically safe for students.

- Remember that positive self-concept grows from success in operating in the world and

from being valued by important people in the environment.

- Help students learn to evaluate their own accomplishments. (p. 78)

Equally important in looking at the role of the theater practitioner are Carl Rogers's beliefs about the role of the facilitator in creating an atmosphere where true learning can take place. In *Freedom to Learn for the 80's* (1983), Rogers insists that for true learning to take place:

- The facilitator must be genuine.

- The facilitator must value the learner, acknowledging where the learner is at any given moment, and seeing his/her potential.

- The facilitator must be empathic to the lives of the individuals with whom s\he works. (p. 21)

Developing these qualities as after school practitioners is not always easy. But understanding how important the guidelines set forth by these two authors are in bringing forth success make them worthwhile qualities to strengthen in ourselves. The role of the facilitator in fostering self-esteem in young people through theater experiences is a vital one.

In *Impro: Improvisation and the Theater* (1981), actor, playwright and teacher Keith Johnstone shares information that is crucial to this discussion. In the early pages of his book, he talks about the educational experience that helped shape his philosophy of education and his life's work. At a low point in his career, Johnstone decided to enter a training college in the hope of improving his teaching skills. By a stroke of good fortune, he found himself in Anthony Stirling's art class, and for the first time in his life he was "in the hands of a great teacher." Mr. Stirling believed that "art was 'in' the child, and wasn't something to be imposed by an adult" (p. 20). This idea again recalls the literal meaning of education: "to bring forth." He also believed that every session should be presented in such a way that each child will experience a feeling of success. This task is,

> **When the barriers of fear are dropped, the four year-old boy who clings to the practitioner and the fourteen year-old girl who smirks at the idea of taking herself seriously onstage will express the artist within and be as amazed as their peers that such creativity is possible.**

perhaps, harder for a seventh-grade math teacher, but as practitioners working with children and teens after school, it is the opportunity to change a life for the better.

As a new teacher, Johnstone chose to take a position in a poor working-class neighborhood in England and was given the "backward" and "uneducable" students, the ones that none of the other teachers wanted (p. 24). In a section called "Right Relationship," Johnstone shares his approach to learning. He noticed that these same children who looked dulled and defeated when it came to learning, came alive when they were doing something unrelated to "being educated." Johnstone shares the following guidelines necessary to developing the "Right Relationship" between teacher and student.

1. Take responsibility. Johnstone argues that good teachers can bring forth wonderful experiences with students no matter what method they are using, and that bad teachers will prevent children from learning in the most important ways, using the very same methods. He believes that teachers are sometimes quick to dismiss a group that seems uninterested by blaming the children or teens involved rather than taking responsibility for the lack of group motivation.

2. Encourage support within the group. Johnstone always explains to his children and adolescents on the first day that each actor is going to work for the other actors in the group, that each child needs to be interested in the progress of the other actors sitting there on the floor because "if a group supports its own members strongly, it'll be a better group to work in" (p. 29).

3. Play "low status" when beginning a theater workshop. When Johnstone first meets with a group, he sits on the floor with them, creating what he calls "low status." Playing the role of low status in the initial meeting helps the fearful seven-year-old and the streetwise (and fearful) fifteen-year-old to feel relaxed immediately, communicating emotional safety to them. The flexibility of the after school program, once again, provides an opportunity to sit together in a circle on the same level.

4. Guarantee success for each child. Johnstone goes a step further by sharing with his new students that, if they fail, they are to blame their teacher. Theater workshops can and must ensure success for each child because many of the children and teens who come to after school programs have been crushed by their inability to succeed academically and/or socially at school.

5. Connect with each child in the group. In his early years as a teacher, Johnstone trained himself to make eye contact with each actor in the group as he spoke. He believes that consciously remembering to make eye contact with every person present is crucial to the development of what he calls "a 'fair' relationship with them" (p. 29).

6. Accentuate the positive. It is also important to be conscious of staying positive when giving feedback to any age group. Johnstone, for example, says "Good!" when he is ending a scene that actors are improvising, rather than "That's enough." In The Village Theater, I find that looking at "what works" in an improvisation and then looking at ways to make the scene even better is a good approach to take in giving actors a response to their work. Our aim here is to frame what we say in a manner that will ensure the development of confidence, and in doing so,

contribute to authentic work on the part of the actors involved and the resulting growth in self-esteem.

7. "Relaxation is incompatible with anxiety." (p. 30) One of the reasons that I continue to see authentic, interesting work on stage—work that isn't diminished by the presence of an audience—is because children and adolescents will blossom as performing artists if encouraged in an atmosphere of support and trust. The young people who come to us are not lacking in creativity, but they are lacking in the *confidence* to create. The ten-year-old boy who "breaks character" by laughing during an improvisation, or the fourteen-year-old girl who constantly looks at the director for approval, rather than staying focused in the scene, are simply saying they don't yet feel comfortable.

When the barriers of fear are dropped, the four-year-old boy who clings to the practitioner and the fourteen-year-old girl who smirks at the idea of taking herself seriously onstage will express the artist within and be as amazed as their peers that such creativity is possible. Of course there will always be the gifted seven-year-old who startles us with her confident dramatization of a lonely frog by the side of a pond, or the fifteen-year-old boy who delivers a spontaneous monologue about life in his neighborhood, but we are not talking about those children here. They might blossom with a leader who is interested in directing a play, but not necessarily interested in developing people through the theater experience. I am speaking of the many fearful children and adolescents who come to us, awkward and scared on the first day, knowing that they will have to get up and do something. And when we see the creative spirit come alive in such unlikely candidates as these, we come closest again to that authentic meaning of education: "to bring forth."

The Role of Stories in Our Lives

In addition to helping children and teens feel better about who they are, practitioners leading after school theater workshops can create a moral climate in which individuals become

Maxine, grade 5, Brooklyn

more caring and more connected to one another. And, however lasting or fleeting this connection is, theater workshops and the dramatization of literature play a vital role in the development of empathy in young people. Robert Coles, in *The Moral Intelligence of Children* (1997), speaks passionately about the role of literature in the moral development of children. He says, "So many younger school chil-

> **The students showed each other how informally trained actors could produce good acting in a short time, and how literature can mean more when a reader can see it acted out.**

dren are eager to embrace the imaginary—indeed, their minds are often afire with it. Given a choice, they will leap into one or another scenario, be it historical or contemporary, factual or fictional, and bring to it their own moral or intellectual assumptions" (p. 121) because the elementary school years are "The Age of Conscience" and "the time for growth of the moral imagination, fueled constantly by the willingness, the eagerness of children to put themselves in the shoes of others, to experience that way of life" (p. 99).

As after school theater facilitators, we can encourage participants to step into the shoes of a character in a story about courage in the midst of obstacles, for example. We can involve children and teens in the dramatization of poetry that says something important about the ebb and flow of nature, or of a city neighborhood. In this way, learning is happening at a deeper level, and various aspects of intelligence are being addressed. The individuals involved, whether viewing a dramatization or presenting one, are able to connect more directly with the character who lives with prejudice, with a haiku that expresses the silence of snow falling before dawn, or with the girl who wakes up to find her world has changed forever because of an event in the life of her country.

We don't finally conquer the world's evil and forever after enjoy the moral harvest of that victory. Rather, we struggle, even stumble along, from day to day, needing to take stock yet again, with the help of a story or a movie or experiences that, inevitably and not even that rarely, simply occur in our daily lives (Coles, 1997, p. 20).

My graduate work in Vermont included a study of high school students at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts. Through that study, I learned that the vast majority of the members of two American literature classes felt more connected to the characters they portrayed (or viewed) on stage, and to the themes addressed in the story, as a result of the dramatization. Students shared that they felt less isolated on their own journeys as a result. "When I was on stage," wrote a seventeen-year-old, "I realized that the character and I are sort of similar; I understood him better." Another student wrote, "It simply made me understand why the character was feeling the way he was, and why he was having such difficulties and frustrations." In addition, the study confirmed that most students, who had initially appeared frightened and resentful when approached with the idea of pushing back their desks and interacting on stage with classmates, became more confident about their own creative abilities. Many, in fact, went on to make dramatic presentations a part of their final papers at the end of the term.

John Adams, head of the English department at Northfield Mount Hermon, wrote:

> From my perspective, the project was wonderful because the students showed each other how informally trained actors could produce good acting in such a short time, and how literature can mean more when a reader can see it acted out. I have to say that seeing the dramatic production of otherwise familiar scenes offered me a completely new way of looking at these books, especially because I was seeing how my students interpreted the readings. My teaching has

more than likely changed as a result. Despite my lack of formal training in theater, I shall get more classes to stage scenes of these readings because the benefits are simply too great to ignore.

In *The Moral Child* (1988), William Damon discusses the relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior. He states that it is generally recognized among researchers that children who demonstrate strong empathic capabilities are children who are more likely to be involved in sharing with and helping others. They also tend to be less aggressive than children who are not as empathic (p. 17). In some of Robert Coles's research, children were asked to view improvised or scripted scenes with child actors on video tape. In these scenes, actors displayed strong emotions such as fear, anger, pride, shame or sadness, and the emotions of the children viewing these tapes matched closely the emotions seen on the screen (Coles, 1997, p. 17).

This research reinforces the theory that dramatizing stories can help individuals, both actors and audience members, match their own feelings with those of the characters being portrayed on stage. Children and teens, when they step into the shoes of a character from a story (or view a dramatization), *can feel something* of what it is like to demonstrate courage while portraying a character whose friend is about to be evicted from her apartment (*The Sidewalk Story*, by Sharon Mathis), or can *empathize* with a dragon who would rather recite poetry than fight anyone (*The Reluctant Dragon*, by Kenneth Grahame).

If it is true that both children and adolescents are matching feelings with the characters they view, then we can surmise that it is also happening to them in movie theaters and in front of televisions around the world. Once again, it is the after school program that can balance what is happening with and to our

young people by creating a positive moral climate. It is the after school practitioner who can play a key role in this creation by giving children and teens the rich opportunity to match feelings with and model themselves after characters who demonstrate integrity, compassion and courage, and by dramatizing stories and poems that portray both the struggles and the triumphs of the human spirit.

Some of the schools that intend to create a moral climate, says Damon, have used teacher-led discussion, role-taking exercises and curriculum materials that expose students to conflicts in fairness and moral choice (p. 148). Both the study at Northfield Mount Hermon and the research conducted at The Village Theater School have incorporated these three guidelines by involving actors in the dramatization and discussion of works of fiction.

Addressing the Whole Child

In *Creative Dramatics and English Teaching* (1975), Charles Duke says that when children are very young, they demonstrate a genuine spark of interest in creativity and the arts and an excitement about the prospect of participating in them. Our children need to develop their imaginations and patterns of learning that will help steer them through life. And we,

Dragon, *Neil, grade 4, Staten Island*

Ages 10-12: A Suggested Sequence for a Poetry-Writing Session

Opening Circle

"The Ungame:" a series of statements and questions to be completed by participants in groups of 3 or 4.

Examples:

"The best dessert in the world is. . ."

"My name is Carol, and my favorite time of day is. . ."

Purpose: grounding and connection; opening of communication

Warm-up

"Group Pictures": build human pictures, or tableaux, of a suggested word or image in groups of 3 or 4.

Example: "Build me a picture of a garden in the moonlight."

Purpose: collaboration; preparation of the imagination

Main Body

Writing Poetry: construct a poem based on certain catalysts

Purpose: group cooperation; understanding of poetic structure; performance

Catalyst: Music—Choose an instrumental piece which suggests a mood

Exercise: Ask students to close their eyes and imagine a movie screen as they listen, seeing what images appear on the screen in response to music. A list of words and images might include:

dark, boys, stormy, wind, ocean, gray, sailing, fight, brown

and then become:

gray day boys in the sand the fighting ocean the dark sailing day

Catalyst: Art Prints—Use 10 to 12 prints of works of art depicting nature, people or animals

Exercise: Ask students to list one-word images in response to Van Gogh's *Sidewalk Cafe* and create a poem; words such as:

yellow, evening, chairs, eating, stars, blue, cobblestones, swirling, above and people

might become, by combining words not normally used together, and by ignoring sentence structure:

Sleepy cobblestones
People walking and eating
They listen to music
Sit on yellow chairs
And high above
the evening stars shining.

Catalyst: Poem—Use a poem to trigger the creation of an original poem.

Exercise: Use a poem by the Japanese poet Issa who wrote, "I am one who eats his breakfast gazing at the morning glories." Ask the group to think of how they would describe themselves:

"I am one who sits in a red chair every year and watches the Super Bowl."

"I am one who spins in a pink ballet dress while the sun is shining."

Dramatize the Poetry: Break up into groups of 3 or 4, each group with several poems, then choose a poem to dramatize, cast it, play music under it and then stage it, recalling the warm-up exercise, "Group Pictures."

Closing Circle

Use this time to talk about the experience of writing and dramatizing the poems and about the various ways in which the students were affected by the poems.

as practitioners, must engage young people in the process of discovery and of original thought, whether or not someone else has had the same thought before. Duke argues that it is the process itself that contributes to an actively creative mind, so when we, as facilitators, involve individuals in this process, "We can jog them out of passive acceptance and mechanical routines; it makes familiar things different and worthy of noticing, provides new devices for thought, and encourages participation." With little dramatic experience, practitioners can help integrate drama into "the process of living and learning." If we believe in the importance of self-expression through drama, we cannot *help* but contribute to new and meaningful experiences in the lives of those participating (p. 13).

Brian Way, in *Development Through Drama* (1967), makes an important distinction between theater and drama. He believes that education must consider drama only as a means of developing individuals (p. 1). He is concerned with the development *of people,* defining drama as an opportunity to address the whole child in ways that are sorely lacking in many schools. If, the author says, we were to ask someone, "What is a blind person?" the response would very likely be, "Someone who cannot see." But if you close your eyes and walk around the room, you achieve moments of direct knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind.

As after school practitioners, we need to look at drama as an opportunity to give children a missing piece in the development of wholeness, and that missing piece is intuition. We need to find ways to design and implement programs so that the children coming into a theater experience can connect more directly to themselves, to one another and to the stories and poetry they are dramatizing. Now, more than ever, our children and adolescents are escaping

in droves into the world of instant gratification, entertainment and shallow pleasures because of a void that is not being filled by the kind of experiential learning that develops intuition, reflection and discovery.

Howard Gardner's theory on multiple intelligences (1991) states that there are several kinds

> **As after school practitioners, we need to look at drama as an opportunity to give children a missing piece in the development of wholeness, and that missing piece is intuition.**

of intelligences, suggesting that each of us is smart in different ways. The ten-year-old who struggles in math through the school years because logical/mathematical intelligence is not his strong suit finds himself confident and capable during the creation and dramatization of a mime sketch set to music. Suddenly, the same boy who might experience himself as a failure at school demonstrates bodily/kinesthetic intelligence and musical intelligence in an after school program, and goes to school the next day feeling a little more confident, because he is able to see himself in a new way. After school programs can, therefore, provide the flexibility that allows us to address these multiple intelligences in children and teens.

Much of this article has been devoted to the role of the facilitator in approaching theater experiences with children and teenagers and to the theoretical underpinnings of education for the whole child. Although the next section will, I hope, prove valuable by giving practitioners a sense of how to approach certain age groups, it is the warmth, enthusiasm and the genuine interest on the part of each practitioner that cannot be overstated in the fostering of self-esteem in the young people who come to us in after school programs.

On pages 44 and 46 are illustrations of a structure I use at The Village Theater in

Ages 12-15: A Suggested Sequence for an Improvisation Session

Opening Circle

"The Ungame," as described on page 44.

Purpose: The prompts provide a focus for the participants as they become acquainted, helpful at this age because of the need to feel safe in front of peers.

Examples: "My name is Jennifer, and my favorite holiday is. . ."

"My name is Robert, and after school I like to. . ."

Warm-up

Nonverbal improvisations in groups of 4 or 5.

Purpose: Inclusion of dramatic elements in performances without dialogue (note: if successful as nonverbals, repeat using dialogue).

Exercise: After introducing the four elements of good dramatic improv (who/what/where/problem or conflict), ask each group to quickly develop a brief improvisational scene, showing:

Who the character is
Where s/he is
What the action is
Problem or conflict in the scene

Begin by brainstorming with the group some possible Whats, Wheres, Whos and Conflicts and use side-coaching for support and re-direction as needed.

Main Body

"The Dream:" Based upon the warm-up described above, to develop in small groups an improvisation using a dream concept

Example: The young manager of a doughnut shop is nervous because the new employees are about to do the baking during the night shift. Having instructed them in what to do, s/he takes a nap in the back room, and then dreams that everything is going wrong. The other actors then nonverbally improvise what could go wrong: spilling flour, burning doughnuts, making a mess, etc., all in slow motion to create the "dream state."

Hint: After the first performance, ask the actors to rehearse the scenes further, and even develop them into a thematic presentation for an audience of parents and friends.

Closing Circle

Themes for the previous exercise could also include "fitting in," "being different," "losing someone you love," for example, and could provide subject matter for rich discussions. You might introduce the idea of improvising scenes from works of fiction with which the actors are familiar, either from home or school.

Closing circles can always include discussion (not critique) of what occurred in the Main Body of the session.

Brattleboro, Vermont, and which works well with all age groups: Opening Circle, Warm-up, Main Body and Closing Circle. Using this structure, I will share the ways in which I approach different age groups with the same objective for the main body of the workshop: the dramatization and discussion of fiction for the purpose of developing "a sense of wonder" in participants and a deeper connection to each other and to the human experience. The curriculum I use is suitable for children and youth four years of age and older, but for this article I will only offer detailed explanations of what I do with two of the age groups: 10-12 and 12-15.

In *Drama Improvised* (1997), Kenneth Pickering discusses the reasons that drama experiences are so important as children become adolescents, emphasizing the very real need to understand the world and to begin to develop interpersonal skills by successfully relating to

peers in different play situations (p. 12). Pickering believes that "adolescents, whose developing personalities are full of emotional and social complexities, and who frequently feel ill at ease with themselves and their bodies, can find in the drama lesson just the release and guidance they need. Introspective natures can be gently and painlessly nurtured" (p. 12).

The process of leading this age group in the dramatization of scenes from literature is worth further exploration. The technique of combining the experience of a narrator reading passages from a scene *while* the actors are improvising, nonverbally, in *response* to that passage, provides a wonderful entree into the rich world of dramatizing stories, scenes from stories or scripted works.

In one of my classes at The Village Theater, I briefly shared *The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain. A group of actors responded nonverbally to a passage that was being read. Suddenly, I stopped the narrative, and the actors knew that at this point they should begin creating dialogue and the improvisation would become a verbal one.

Stories can also provide a springboard for improvisations that come out of our own experiences and can involve the theme of wanting to trade places with someone for a day. And these kinds of workshops can stand alone or evolve into more polished pieces which can be shared with family and friends, or performed at the nursing home down the street.

Making a Difference

Walt Whitman wrote in *Leaves of Grass*:

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he looked upon,
That object he became,
And that object became part of him, for the
    day or a certain part of the day,
Or, for many years or stretching cycles of
    years.

We can never know exactly how, as practitioners, we affect the lives of the children and young adults who come to our programs. Both my practice and my research over three decades have shown me quite clearly that theater experiences, and particularly dramatizations of good literature, change lives for the better. And while the verbal feedback might be different according to age, the core experience is the same: theater workshops, led by enthusiastic, empathic facilitators contribute to the creative spirit in each child, and to a growing awareness of one's own abilities. The following written responses by children of various ages will illustrate how the impact of theater experiences becomes increasingly complex as children mature.

- •Seven year-old: The reason I like class is because I like to be in front of people.

- •Eight year-old: I like to do theater in the after school program because I love to act!

- •Nine year-old: I love drama. It makes me happy!!

- •Ten year-old: Drama helps the kids put themselves in another person's point of view. This is called empathy, and without it kids don't see how they are hurting each other by their behavior.

Naren, grade 4, Brooklyn

- Eleven year-old: One way I get stronger from drama is I overcome fear. This experience in drama has made it easier for me to conquer fears in my life.

- Twelve year-old: Working in drama has helped me to grow, not only as an actress, but also as a person. I have noticed that my confidence has gone up since I started performing, and now I know how to speak up when I feel it appropriate.

- Seventeen year-old: When I was on the stage playing that character, I realized that he and I are sort of similar. I understood him better.

Professor Andrew Garrod of Dartmouth College told me in an interview that in his experience, "Theater enhances empathy. It enhances sympathy. And it teaches habits of cooperation and working as a team" (May, 1998). Where *better* to develop these essential qualities in individuals than in after school programs throughout our country?

In the introduction of *Drama Improvised* (1997), Kenneth Pickering states:

> Human beings pass ever increasing numbers of years of their lives in front of television screens and the use of books as a source of wonderment, imagination and information is now receding with the advance of the CD-ROM. More alarmingly, perhaps, society seems to have absorbed the values of the technocrats and the market place. The only charters we seem to value now are those designed to protect our consumerism. Where, in all this drive for efficiency, productivity and information, is there a place for wisdom, or compassion or imagination? Where, in fact, is there room for our humanity?

Today, more than ever, we need to find resources that will inspire a celebration of our shared humanity. And theater experiences offer a resource, as English teacher John Adams stated, "whose benefits are simply too great to ignore."

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we think you need a vacation...

The Discipline Model at Fresh Youth Initiatives

by the FYI *writing team*

Fresh Youth Initiatives (FYI) is a youth development organization based in the Washington Heights–Inwood section of Manhattan. Our mission is to support and encourage the efforts of neighborhood young people and their families to design and carry out community service and social action projects, develop leadership skills, fulfill their potential and realize their dreams.

We accomplish our mission primarily through our youth-led, adult-facilitated community service and social action program, "Community Youth in Action." FYI programming consists of projects that include making sleeping bags for the homeless, the operation of New York City's only youth-run, adult-facilitated food pantry, painting the apartments of senior citizens, community mural projects, free clothing distribution and, coming soon, a "Goodwill-"style store. Yet with all of our very creative service and action projects, we are most proud of the culture that we have been able to create among our young people, their families and the community. Ours is a tightly knit, focused group dedicated to the development of altruistic and civic-minded behavior in our program participants. Our tag line, "Taking Responsibility for Things that Matter," has become a beacon for the behavior expected from our members.

Maria and Arabel Torres

The FYI Staff Writing Team: Tania Ortiz, Rodney Fuller, Jayson Guilbe, Maria Terrero, Laura Myers. Editors: Tania Ortiz and Rodney Fuller. FYI Staff Contributors without whom this article would not have been written: Joann Santiago, Esteban Ramos, Maziel Mejia, Dawn Kosnoski, Lidia Soriano, Dahlia Perry, Andrew Rubinson.

We have developed a successful culture by asking a very simple set of operational questions. We ask our participants, "What type of person do you wish to be?" We ask our families, "What type of family do you wish to be?" We ask the Washington Heights–Inwood community, "What type of community do you wish to be?" And we ask our collective, "Can we, FYI, help you be that person, that family and/or that community?" So far, we like our answers. The young people of FYI have performed a stunning 42,000 hours of volunteer community service since our inception, and volunteers within our community have assisted us in having a major impact on the landscape of Washington Heights–Inwood.

In this article we hope to introduce what we feel are some of the keys to our success: the marriage of community service and social action to youth development, and a philosophy of discipline that encourages the very best behavior from our program participants.

Discipline: Moving toward a Definition at FYI

FYI believes that the development of self-discipline in young people is shaped and defined by the drive toward self-consistency. This drive is often manifested in the natural conflict between the idealized self (who they wish to be) and the real self (who they really are). To assist in closing the gap between these inconsistencies in a young person, FYI seeks in its programming to develop opportunities that help young people to make important adjustments. FYI recognizes that the factors important to the development of self-discipline are both internal and external. All young people have needs and goals that they wish to fulfill, and these are the internal forces. However, they must exercise these needs and goals within a larger society and its institutions, and these represent the external influences.

After school programs are in a unique position: The development of discipline, or self-consistency, although a lifelong process, has foundations that are laid in childhood and adolescence. It is particularly during adolescence that individuals begin seriously to explore and define their own value systems. It is within the context of after school programming that we have the opportunities to facilitate this development in our participants. With the development of this discipline model and its use within our organizational fabric, FYI has attempted to become more intentional about its role in the development of young people.

FYI's Disciplinary Principles: A Positive Process

Effective discipline at FYI is rooted in the proper use of some basic principles that apply to most situations with young people. Our discipline model, grounded in the principles of youth development, reflects the spirit of our mission. It does not seek to enforce punitive measures, but seeks instead to facilitate the development of caring, responsible, independent adults. More than a model of discipline, it is a system of management that ensures our participants that they are getting the most out of their experiences at FYI. We believe that when these principles are properly used, they help young people to achieve the goals of discipline by moving them toward a clearer, more consistent definition of self by narrowing the gap between the "real self" and the "idealized self."

Effective discipline is the result of conscious strategic planning by program staff to manage behavior. The authors believe that discipline involves teaching young people to be autonomous, socialized individuals. Organizations can apply the following principles to guide their young people's behavior and development:

- Decide and agree upon the types of behaviors that you want your participants to learn and the types of behaviors you would like to help them change.

- Create a vehicle for discussing the behaviors that are important for your participants to change or develop.

• Create a vehicle for discussing and agreeing upon expectations with your participants, as well as incentives to be awarded for successful completion of specific tasks or movement toward developmental goals.

After school programs are in a unique position: The development of discipline, or self-consistency, although a lifelong process, has foundations that are laid in childhood and adolescence.

Leonel Gomez geared up for a park cleanup.

Organizations are responsible for observing their participants' behavior and consistently rewarding their success during these teachable moments.

Tales from Our Practice: Disciplinary Challenges

Several FYI staff members share their experiences applying this disciplinary model in their work with young people.

Rodney's Story. Our experiments with discipline began rather innocently. I recall meeting a wonderful young man named Walter, back in 1997. He was ten years old at the time, and clearly beginning to test a new attitude. Let's just say that it was negative.

Our staff observations about his attitude change came quickly. We took note, and an organizational strategy emerged that we felt would help him to make a choice about the type of young man he wished to be. That opportunity for change came about innocently enough when I walked into an FYI program space just in time to witness him firing a piece of balled-up paper across the room at another FYI participant.

On that very day he earned the first and perhaps one of the most notable FYI "vacations." In our practice "vacations" are an opportunity for reflection during which young people are asked to take anywhere from one day to one week off or, in the most severe cases, to take one month or more off from FYI programming. In each case the participant is asked to reflect upon the incident or behavior that caused the vacation and to return with answers to a carefully prescribed set of questions that include: "What type of person do you wish to be?" and "Can FYI help you be that person?" In our history, we have actually given away so few vacations that these vacations stand out, in and of themselves.

But, I'm getting ahead of my story. Walter was disciplined for one week, a disciplinary measure that is severe by FYI standards. He was so embarrassed that he never told his mother, but came to the FYI offices instead. He never set one foot inside, but ate his pizza and did his homework every day that week in the hallway outside our office doors. We, of course, had contacted his mother, who understood and endorsed our strategy.

At the end of his vacation, to the surprise of our entire staff, Walter returned, a more committed and dedicated participant.

Successive attempts at discipline with other young people yielded similar results. On each occasion, young people returned even more committed and dedicated, not only to the program, but to themselves. These young people seemed to have a clearer vision of the type of person they wished to be and of the role that FYI, or their participation in FYI could play in becoming that person.

Walter's family moved from Washington Heights–Inwood to the Bronx two years after this incident. However, in an ironic twist, he requested a summer job with FYI last summer. He commuted from the Bronx to Washington Heights–Inwood, and was, as before, a most disciplined and dedicated participant.

Maria's Story. Toward the end of a typical program day, I noticed that my cell phone was missing. Prior to this realization, one of the young people, Sonia, had come to my office to inquire about my cell phone, claiming that she was planning to buy one. I answered each of her questions without much thought. A little later, I made a possible connection and called my cell phone to see if it would ring somewhere in the office. When it rang, some girls picked it up, giggled and then hung up. I was upset.

A co-worker, Laura, happened by and found me in the middle of this distress. I informed her of the situation, so she too dialed my cell phone, pretending that she was calling for me. Some girls answered the cell phone again. Laura asked, "Can I speak to Maria?" This time, the girls seemed to become very nervous, and perhaps confused about what to do next. Sensing their plight, Laura identified them as FYI members, scolded them and demanded that they return the phone or risk not being invited on our next incentive field trip. The girls, apparently very nervous and confused, simply hung up.

Based on my experience, this was unusual behavior for young people in FYI. The next day when I arrived at work, I found messages from the mothers of two of FYI's program participants. Sonia's and Anja's (one of Sonia's closest friends) mothers had both called. I immediately returned their calls. Both mothers explained that their daughters had confessed to having made a terrible mistake by stealing my cell phone, and both mothers expressed their own anger, disappointment and embarrassment. It was only at this point that I finally realized that my phone had actually been stolen. Up until that moment, I thought that the girls had taken it simply to play a trick on me (not a very funny one, by the way, but still, just a trick).

In keeping with FYI's style, the parents and I agreed to have a meeting the next day at 3:00 P.M. Both moms and both daughters were present, as was one of my co-workers, Joann. As the story went, Anja saw the phone in FYI's computer lab and decided to put it in her bag so that she could share it with Sonia. We recognized that within this unfortunate event there was a teachable moment. At the meeting we all discussed the consequences of our actions. As a result of this incident, the girls did not receive a vacation, but were instead asked to write a reflection, in which they were able to express their apologies, regrets and feelings of remorse.

Shortly after this incident, FYI held "Community Presentations," a ceremony during which we recognize the young people for their accomplishments. Anja's mom was reluctant to come. She was still somewhat embarrassed over the phone incident. FYI staff members made a point of reaching out to her, reassuring her that the incident had been dealt with and forgiven. Anja's mom came to "Community Presentations" that year. Today, both families, including other siblings and relatives, are among the most dedicated members of the FYI family.

Tania and Jayson's Story. One of our main criterion for young people participating in our program is their ability to arrive at the office in time to sign up for and join a community service group. Carl lives in the same building that houses our main office. Long before he was old enough to participate in our organization, he was joining us for service every now and then. Once he was old enough to fully attend, his

participation was inconsistent, at best. This past year he has made numerous attempts to participate. Unfortunately, he consistently arrived at the office half an hour, sometimes an hour, after program has already started, hoping that we would bend the rules to accommodate him. Each time he came to the office he was usually met, by me or by some other staff person, with the same response: "If you want to do community service, you have to get here no later than 4:00." He usually responded with some excuse, which may or may not have been legitimate. "But Tania, I had to go somewhere with my aunt," or "I had to stay late at school because I got into a fight." I would often reply, "Carl, if you want to join a group, you have to be able to get here by 4:00, or even earlier if you want to have more choices, because spots get filled up quickly." He would eventually leave, sometimes in anger, feeling that we had wronged him and were making it impossible for him to participate. This went on for several weeks. One day he again came in late, but this time was greeted by another staff member, Jayson, who reminded him of the same policy, but followed up with:

Jayson: What time do you get out of school?
Carl: Three.

Jayson: That certainly leaves you enough time to get here on time.

Carl: But I like to hang out with my friends.

Jayson: Well you need to decide what you want to do—hang out with your friends or get here in time to join a community service group.

Ultimately, Carl opted to hang out with his friends, a decision that we would not have made for him, but nonetheless was his decision to make. However, since that last interaction, he has decided to get to the office in time for program more frequently.

> **Our goal is to help the participants take ownership of their behavior and make a decision about how valuable that behavior is in their lives.**

FYI community planter. Handmade and managed by kids.

Adoni Famalia working in the youth-run food pantry, the Helping Hands Food Bank.

Rosalva Casanova at work in the FYI community garden at P.S. 128.

Laura's Story. After having been a part of the FYI staff team for ten months, I find it fascinating to look back at my early days and reflect on my evolution as a young staff member. During my first few months I was frequently confronted with difficult situations where discipline was required. They tended to be minor incidents, such as cursing, a young person goofing off rather than working, two boys calling each other names and teasing and taunting each other, kids taking off before their community service project was finished and cleaned up. We're not talking about guns, drugs or fist fights. I was just a new adult facilitator trying to gain the respect of a few youths, figuring out how to establish and use power correctly, while at the same time wanting to be liked.

Today, I laugh at the ways the kids tested and frustrated me.

After sleeping in the same cabin during overnight field trips, working together daily, painting side by side for many months, the small scenes happen less frequently now. We finally trust each other. The trust is still young, but I look at them with understanding eyes. I know what makes the participants laugh, and, when it is time for me to talk about behavior, the conversation takes place in a wider context of trust, acceptance and desire for better personal development. They show more willingness to listen to me, because they know me. This comfort level invites our participants into a dialogue. My concern for the youth in FYI allows me to share my ideas regarding their behavior and they are free to offer criticism of me as well.

> **Acceptance, tempered with calmly enforced high expectations, characterizes the healthy participant-organization relationship.**

Priscilla Novas and Mabel Frias show visitors how to make an FYI sleeping bag for the homeless.

Mabel Frias and Lorraine Mercado with their homemade gingerbread house.

FYI youth-designed community mural at the intersection of Wadsworth and 181st Street in Manhattan.

FYI's Principles of Effective Discipline

Staff and organizational teamwork

Faced with a situation requiring discipline, a staff member should seek the assistance of another staff member in order to develop an appropriate strategy and ensure objectivity in the handling of the situation. No single staff member should ever own a particular issue, and, when involved in a disciplinary action, should always be accompanied by another staff member.

Reasonable consequences with follow-through

This entails staff/organizational attention to the appropriateness of a disciplinary action. Once decided upon, the action must be carried out. Upon completion, there must be a reflective process between the involved staff and the participant(s).

Consistency

When working with young people, expectations must be uniformly maintained. Rules should be applied as uniformly as possible.

Pacing and ownership

Expectations and disciplinary actions are consistent and adapted to each young person's developmental level. Punishment is never the goal. The goal is to help the participants take ownership of their behavior and make a decision about how valuable that behavior is in their lives.

Modeling

Staff and the organization monitor their own behavior, in order to model agreed-upon behaviors for our participants.

Immediate feedback

The quicker the consequences of actions are experienced, the greater the opportunity for learning.

Truthfulness

Staff and the organization must be truthful with participants. It is especially important to be truthful about the reasons for the organization's expectations.

Trust

Staff and the organization verbally express trust in the participants and act in a trustful manner toward them until such trust is violated. Should trust be broken, the door is always left open for the participant to restore and repair that trust.

Acknowledging the drive

No matter how severe the circumstances, staff should be mindful of their language and approach to the participant to avoid creating a "defensive" situation. Effective disciplinary practice facilitates closing the gap between the inconsistencies of the "real self" and the "ideal self."

Confidentiality

Rooted in the staff/organization's ethical responsibility to keep material confidential is the need to deal with a participant's issues privately and discreetly.

Self-disclosure

Program participants need to feel and understand that the organization and staff are as human and fallible as they are. They especially need us to acknowledge the mistakes we make in their presence.

Acceptance

Finally, perhaps the most important principle of FYI's discipline model is acceptance, the type of acceptance that says, "Even though you have earned a vacation for several days, you will never be asked to leave our family. We expect you to return. In fact, we want you to return. But please return with a clearer sense of the type of person that you wish to be and the role that you think we can play in helping you become that person." Acceptance, tempered with calmly enforced high expectations, characterizes the healthy participant-organization relationship. Acceptance is never achieved by accident. True

acceptance cannot be won, earned, bought or feigned. It is given and deserved because we are human. The organizational act of acceptance includes forgiveness, grace and closure.

Conclusion

The opportunities present in after school programming are exciting. As FYI staff, we have often discovered our own ability to struggle, grow and develop as individuals as a result of our discipline model's goals of self-direction, self-actualization and socialization.

In addition to the principles of discipline presented above, there are several other program elements that we feel can help the young people of our organization to accomplish their developmental goals. They include: having fun, setting limits, looking for learning opportunities, making room for a participant's liberty, supporting appropriate choices, helping them understand and experience their own personal power and facilitating the understanding of consequences. We attempt to keep these factors in relative balance with each other and with the aforementioned principles of discipline, as we develop and perform community service and social action programming within our community.

About the Writing Team

This article was produced by the FYI staff writing team, a group which meets every Tuesday morning throughout the program year. The team's goal is to put the developing science of FYI programming and practice into writing. Other FYI staff teams include program, space and service teams; team meetings, a consistent fixture in the FYI culture since 1994, are an offshoot of the weekly staff team meeting during which all programming issues and new developments are presented, discussed and acted upon. All other teams have been meeting for one or two years.

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suburban**myths**

by elizabeth c. knight

The first place most people think of when they hear the phrase "youth center" is the inner city. There are numerous programs in cities, as well there should be. However, suburban kids need direction and positive role models, too.

I grew up in a beautiful, safe, wealthy town; from the outside it looked as if nothing bad ever happened there. Most of the kids came from affluent families, giving them access to easy money. Our homes were beautiful, with pools and manicured lawns, and our fathers were always at work. Our mothers were pretty busy, too: They shopped, lunched or did volunteer work. As a result, we really didn't have anyone at home until the evening. That gave us plenty of time to do whatever we wanted. We were a hugely insecure group, and already jaded at age twelve.

My high school bred apathy. It was not cool to be a jock or a good student, and classmates would be embarrassed to be at the top of the class. The top 20% was okay, but higher than that brought little respect. Pep rallies were ridiculous; no student in the gymnasium was proud to be associated with the town. Even the jocks did not look all that ecstatic. I never heard anyone say that they loved, or even liked the school. It was much cooler to hate the school and most of the teachers than to admit that some of our teachers were actually good people.

Because the town was only one golden square mile, and everyone knew each other, it was assumed that the kids were not misbehaving after school. We were on our own, expected to get home by ourselves after school, grab a snack, do our homework and, basically, be good until our parents got home. We were allowed to go out, but we had to be back in time for dinner. We could have friends over, and with our new partners-in-crime we were prepared for anything.

Most of us had cars by the time we were 17, and nice ones at that (the only clunkers were in the teachers' parking lot). We had plenty of possessions and impeccable manners when they were needed; we were very good at hiding the

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Elizabeth C. Knight *left the suburbs to major in English at Boston University. She is on the boards of non-profit organizations that help families with terminally ill children or promote the arts. Elizabeth currently lives in New York City and works for an afterschool program that deals primarily with inner city youth. The name "Elizabeth C. Knight" is a pseudonym.*

Above: *Carmen, grade 6, Manhattan*

truth—that we were angry, confused and depressed.

In today's economy a household with two working parents is commonplace, so when our

> **We were a hugely insecure group, already jaded at age twelve.**

parents did take a more active role in our welfare, it usually happened because of trouble in school, or when our grades dropped too low. A call from a teacher to a parent was a sure-fire way to get grounded. Acceptable grades and behavior in school were the barometers of our welfare. Keep up the grades and life was fine and we were okay.

The fact of the matter is that most kids were going to keg parties that started at 3:00 P.M. Our parents were away a great deal of the time on business trips or vacations, so it was extremely easy to find a house without parents. Our party locations usually revolved around our parents' scheduled absences. If there was ever a problem, we could always run next door to our neighbors, so no one was that concerned about leaving us alone. Sometimes the police were asked to keep an eye on the house, but they hardly ever did.

No cheap beer or liquor for us, either: We drank like the adults we knew. Cocaine, LSD and marijuana were the drugs of choice and were always readily available as long as you had cash. We were teenagers on a Friday or Saturday night with an ounce of excellent cocaine, an ocean of booze and an assortment of other brain-melting substances. The scary thing is we were not considered druggies, because we were the norm. It is unbelievable that no one died or even OD'ed. When I look back, I realize that we were extremely lucky to have survived our adolescence.

Alcohol and drugs were the big problems, not sex. We were somehow taught that sex was bad, but so was sobriety. In fact, according to an anonymous poll, my graduating class of 99 students boasted 82 virgins.

When our parents did come home, conversations rarely went past: "What did you do in school today?" "Nothing." "Did you do your homework?" "Yes." Current events were always good diversionary topics, while anything personal was kept bottled up. They didn't want to hear any bad news and we knew it. Most parents were in such a heavy state of denial that blatant clues that we were not okay went completely ignored. To admit that your kid had a problem meant that you also had a problem, and problems were a disgrace. Maybe that's why we pushed so hard to get noticed. A punishment and lecture at least represented attention, and, good or bad, attention counted.

When things got bad, we would confide in each other, but since we were all minors there was not much we could do but to listen. Alcoholic parents were common, as were all forms of abuse, but we had no idea how to get help. In cases of emotional abuse, most of us had no idea it was even happening. No scars and welts meant that things weren't so bad. Neglect was the norm, so most of us did not see going home to a house that was empty for days on end as a

> **We were very good at hiding the truth that we were angry, confused, and depressed.**

bad thing. We had few adult supports; most of our parents knew each other from the country club, making it too awkward to ask another adult for advice or help.

We were taught that there are certain things that you just do not discuss outside of the home, these being the very same topics we were desperately trying to understand. The parents who did notice tended to look away, especially if they lived nearby. They also had no idea what to do, especially since many of the problems required more than a band-aid or a quick fix.

I had some friends in neighboring towns, and I would try to spend lots of time at their homes. Looking back, I realize now that these friends' parents were not as driven by money, which translated into them being home on a more regular basis, which gave them an opportunity to really get to know their kids. Their homes had a mom calling everyone together for meals during which they had fun, or even substantial conversations. Not nearly as many topics were taboo, and everyone was allowed to have their own opinions. They may have been teased for their ideas, but it was usually good-natured ribbing and did not lead to a "go to your room." Being there was like being in a fantasy, or a sitcom from the seventies. It was wonderful.

I knew some kids in the city, too, and the funny thing is, they did not get into nearly as much trouble as we did. They always had busy schedules, with no time to waste. Most of them had their act more together than any of us ever did because they had adult role models and they had after school programs. They certainly had tougher reputations, but we just never got caught.

The money-equals-happiness theory may have a ring of truth to it, as money buys us food, a roof over our heads and a million luxuries. However, the concept that much more money brings much more happiness is not always true, my town being a perfect example of this. Too much of anything is bad, and even money tends to come at a price.

Growing up is difficult, no matter what the circumstance. We all work very hard and are tired at night. We could all use a few more hours in a day. Kids are expensive, but all kids need time with mentors and role models much more than they need that new pair of Nikes.

I hear that my town's attitudes are healthier now, and the parents more attentive. Raising the drinking age has helped. Drugs, cigarettes and drinking aren't cool anymore, and I hope it stays that way. Otherwise, my hometown has not changed, and that really is a shame.

I considered trying to start an after school
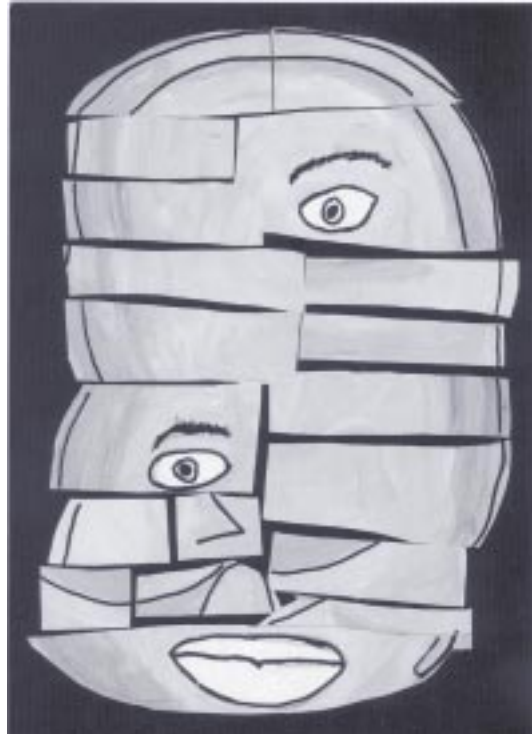
Adreana, grade 4, Brooklyn

program in my hometown, but I knew they would not want my kind there, especially to work with their kids, kids I understood because I used to be one of them. So, I moved to a large city and fabricated a playroom for children with AIDS. I am on the board of a non-profit organization that helps the families of kids with terminal diseases. Recently, an arts education program has asked me to teach at a planned, inner-city after school program, and I am very much looking forward to it.

It is a terrible shame to me that my hometown does not realize that after school programs are necessary for all children of all ages in order to help them understand more about life and themselves. No matter what their financial background, kids are kids. They need to be heard and understood. They require guidance, positive role models and meaningful activities.

I hear they are thinking about opening a teen center in my hometown. But then, they've been talking about that for the past twenty years.

Studio in a School

For a quarter of a century, Studio in a School has provided New York City children, teachers, and parents with educational experiences in the visual arts. Our unique approach to arts education is centered around a professional artist who introduces the creative process to children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in art-making. STUDIO's artists work in public schools, housing developments, childcare centers, and community organizations to ensure a meaningful place for the visual arts in children's lives. Our programs are dedicated to creating a permanent impact on participating sites by providing professional development for teachers and direct services to children from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Since 1977, Studio in a School has provided nearly 500 sites with visual arts programs, serving over 30,000 students and 2,000 teachers this year. Through three main programs, STUDIO provides arts programming to general- and special-education students and at-risk youth.

Long Term Art Studio Program. In the Long Term Art Studio Program, STUDIO collaborates with public elementary schools to create long-term partnerships and sustainable arts programming that will have a lasting impact on their communities. The multi-year program creates a place for the visual arts within the curriculum and culture of a school by placing a professional artist in the school for a minimum of five years, enabling the entire school to benefit from the working artist's experience.

Early Childhood Program. The Early Childhood Program makes the visual arts an integral part of young children's education by placing professional artists in public schools, childcare centers, and transitional housing facilities to introduce the creative process and expand the children's

perceptions of and engagement with the outside world. During a three-year residency, artists develop close collaborative relationships with students, teachers, and parents through in-class instruction as well as through special staff development sessions and parent workshops.

Special Programs. The Day Program pairs professional artists with classroom teachers to provide 6- to 17-year-old students with sequential, age-appropriate art lessons that lead to a final project, displayed at a closing exhibition. The After School Program gives small groups of students the opportunity to work closely with a STUDIO artist on activities designed to stimulate critical thinking, foster social interaction, and encourage rich language use. In the Professional Development Programs, STUDIO assists teachers in becoming comfortable and enthusiastic about bringing art into the classroom with hands-on workshops that offer guidance in developing and leading art lessons and linking the arts to the curriculum.

Studio in a School
410 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10009

Afterschool Matters thanks Studio in a School for generously allowing us to use photographs and children's artwork from its programs throughout this journal.

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Dialogues in Philosophy, Practice, and Evaluation

CALL FOR PAPERS

Afterschool Matters, a national, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to promoting professionalism, scholarship, and consciousness in the field of after school education, is seeking material for all sections of the publication. Now published by The Robert Bowne Foundation, the journal serves those involved in developing and running programs for youth during the out-of-school hours, in addition to those engaged in research and shaping policy.

Afterschool Matters welcomes submissions from a variety of disciplines which explore practical ideas for working with young people during the out-of-school hours. In addition, the journal seeks scholarly work and theoretical material that can be applied to the after school arena. Articles from a range of academic perspectives will be considered along with personal or inspirational narratives and essays, book reviews, art work and photographs.

The theme for the **Spring 2004** issue will be "Youth Programs in the Community Context." Some suggested article topics under this theme include:

- The relationships between community-based after school youth organizations (CBOs) and public schools;
- Relationships between CBOs and other community institutions;
- Opportunities for learning in CBOs.

Submission guidelines:

- Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is **June 15th, 2003.**
- Submissions should be typed double-spaced, including quotations and references, and submitted electronically or on a disk in Microsoft Word format.
- Submissions should be typed in 12-point font, and not exceed 5,000 words.
- Include a cover sheet with the manuscript title, authors' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- The names of the authors should not appear on the text as submissions are reviewed anonymously by peers.
- Follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Fifth Edition, for reference style guidelines. Present important information in the text and do not use footnotes or extensive endnotes.

For questions or to submit materials:

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