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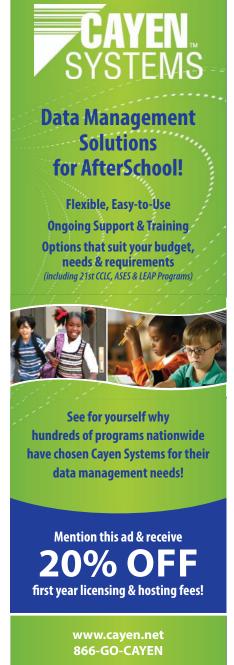
Gina Warner

Lisa Muntz









fromtheexecutivedirector



Gina Warner

ERRATA: In the Summer AfterSchool Today (page 9), Jaime Garcia was inadvertently referred to as executive director, rather than operations director, of Extend-A-Care for Kids. We apologize for the error.

Like many of you, the majority of my life—as a student and educator—has revolved around a school-year calendar. Every September, I'm overwhelmed by the desire to purchase new notebooks, sharpened pencils, and scented markers; I swoon over the school supply bins filling our store aisles. Unlike most friends and family members, I don't set New Year Resolutions: I set New School Year Resolutions! There's something about the advent of a new school year that fills me with possibility, determination, and full-to-overflowing lists of things I want to try and do-exactly why I'm so excited about this issue of AfterSchool Today. I know that after reading it, you'll also have ideas and inspiration to accelerate your new school year and carry you to Winter Break!

Will you sit down with your superintendent this year, for a one-on-one about the value of your program? Remember this: "Quality afterschool programming is vital to a school district's success." That's a direct quotation from Kathleen Greider, Farmington (Connecticut) Public Schools superintendent. In "Partnership, 21st Century Learning and Innovation," Greider explains in thoughtful detail the elements of her system's program and how they work to provide a seamless learning experience for the students and families they serve. See her five tips for aligning school-day and afterschool learning, on our News/Resources Page (right). Those talking points should make your superintendent meeting a success!

Will you seek committed community partners to add expertise to your program offerings this year? "Teaching Through Inquiry, Together" is about The STEM Educators Academy, an inspiring collaborative effort led by TASC and the New York Hall of Science that focuses on co-planning and co-teaching between inschool and out-of-school educators—with support from strong community partners. You'll find ideas to inspire and enhance your professional development offerings.

What's a New Year's resolution without a reference to eating healthier? The YMCA of Greater Rochester (New York) has students planning, planting, tending, and harvesting healthy herbs and vegetables in their community garden. Their lessons include art, literacy, and science. Learn more in "Growing Hope" (page 20). Talk about a well-rounded learning diet!

If you happen to see me on the treadmill this fall, I'll also be reading "The App Generation." (See page 6.) I've resolved to exercise more and learn more about technology-win/win!

Best of luck to you in this new school year. And best of luck with your New School-Year's resolutions!

Gina Warner Executive Director

National AfterSchool Association

gwarner@naaweb.org

p.s. Happy birthday to the Providence After School Alliance, celebrating its tenth Anniversary! You can read some of the secrets of PASA's success on page 22.

VISIT: VVVV

Read more about the people, products, and programs featured in this issue of AfterSchool Today!

The App Generation theappgenerationbook.com

Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek www.facebook.com/PopularTheMemoir

Expanding Minds and Opportunities: The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds

STEM Educators Academy video www.expandedschools.org/policy-documents/stem-educators-academy

Engineering Everywhere www.engineeringeverywhere.org

Engineering Adventures www.engineeringadventures.org Providence After School Alliance www.mypasa.org

After-School All-Stars www.afterschoolallstars.org

YMCA of Greater Rochester www.rochsterymca.org

Kay's Garden video (YMCA of Greater Rochester) www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDyUZ_090cQ

North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs at Public School Forum of North Carolina www.nccap.net

SofterWare www.ezcaresolutions.com

MORE: HELPFUL RESOURCES

FIVE TIPS FROM ... KATHLEEN GREIDER, FARMINGTON (CONNECTICUT) PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

Coherence and partnership accelerates improvement at scale, thus improving student outcomes. I encourage both urban and suburban districts to follow these five simple practices when it comes to alignment of during-the-day and afterschool programming:

- 1. Engage all members of your school district and community in meaningful partnerships by creating clarity, involving the community in goal-setting, and clearly communicating priorities based on current student needs. This creates the synergy that is essential for innovation and improvement at scale.
- **2.** Engage your afterschool providers in district training and leadership opportunities. This is essential in creating coherence between during-

the-day and afterschool programming and practices.

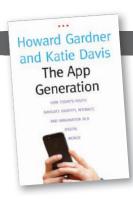
- 3. Work collaboratively with your afterschool providers to align their strategic plan to the school or school district strategic plan.
- 4. Keep lines of communication open and ensure that there are regular opportunities for two-way communication.
- 5. Be innovative, think outside the box, and engage your students in the improvement work. Student feedback, ownership, and enactment of district and afterschool providers' improvement efforts are essential for innovative and forward-thinking practices to emerge organically within the organization.

NOT RECEIVING ΤΗΕ ΝΔΔ **E-NEWSLETTER?**



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whatafterschoolisreading



THE APP **GENERATION**

By Howard Gardner and Katie Davis

FOR YOUR PROGRAM:

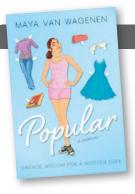
Traveling with today's technology is quite different from what it was even ten years ago. We no longer pull out maps to figure out how to get to our destination; now, we program the location into a device and following the directions given to us. This lack of engagement is concerning, because it's not just happening with adults, but also with the children in our programs and the staff we hire.

There are currently more than three million apps available to youth on their iPads, smartphones, and e-readers, and our challenge is to encourage the children in our programs to think beyond the ways the apps are designed to be used.

In The App Generation, developmental psychologists Howard Gardner and Katie Davis examine the impact of new technologies on three vital areas of adolescent life: identity, intimacy, and imagination. Through innovative research, they discover what it means for kids to be "app-dependent" versus "app-enabled." By examining how youth identify themselves, develop relationships, and use their imagination when using apps, the authors discover not only the disturbing drawbacks of apps, but also their striking benefits.

As the caregivers for the children in our programs, it's our job to learn how best to maneuver these apps and actively engage children to help them develop life skills and offer ways apps can be a child's springboard to greater creativity and engagement.

Contributed by Jackie Thurnau-Anderson, Early Childhood & Afterschool Specialist, Membership Support and Program Services, YMCA of the USA



VINTAGE WISDOM FOR A **MODERN GEEK**

By Maya Van Wagenen

FOR YOUTH:

Maya Van Wagenen is a high school junior, in Statesboro, Georgia. Her book Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek has a 5-star rating on Amazon.com and will be made into a movie by DreamWorks. Maya has done many interviews and been on The Today Show. In addition to her studies, she's working on a second book, to complete her deal with Penguin Group Publishing.

The beginning: Maya's dad finds Betty Cornell's Teen-Age Popularity Guide, a 1951-published book full of tips on improving social status. Maya's mom suggests Maya read and follow the advice in Cornwell's book ... and write about the results.

Inspired in sixth grade by the advisor of her school's literary club, Maya has already written stories and poems for competitions. During her eighth-grade year, while attending school in Brownsville, Texas, Maya embarks on the experiment her mother suggested. Every month, she follows advice from a topic in Cornell's book and writes about what happened. She starts with easier topics in September, such as "Figure Problems," and moves on to more challenging topics, such as "It's a Date" and "Be a Hostess." Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek reads like a school-year diary and is intertwined with Cornell's advice and Maya's popularity tips. As Cornell's book was written sixty years ago, some suggestions—such as wearing a girdle and pearls—may seem old-fashioned, yet Maya tries them. She sums up the lessons she learned that year as, "real popularity is taking the time to love others, reaching out, and never being afraid to be the first one dancing."

Contributed by Alice Hall, Associate Professor at Georgia Southern University, NAA Board member



The Third Space

World-Class Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success

BY TERRY K. PETERSON, PhD, EDITED BY AMY L CHARLES

In developing well-rounded, caring, and productive youth, parents are the first, most important teachers, and good neighborhood schools are vital.

But for the up to eighty percent of time when students are awake and not in school-or the three hours weekdays (eight to nine during summer) when most parents work or commute, and youth aren't in school or supervised by adults—there's an important Third Space* for learning.

For some youth, this might fill with unhealthy, unsafe activities. Afterschool hours have the highest youth crime and victimization rates. Access to junk food, negative music and Internet posts, and

alcohol and drugs aren't uncommon.

Each time the Afterschool Alliance conducts its nationwide household survey, it finds most parents desire nearby access to quality, enriching afterschool/summer programs; more than eighty percent feel public financial support should help make opportunities affordable.

For our youth and country's health and education, there's a compelling need to fill the Third Space with engaging, positive opportunities. There's growing evidence this could be done on learning and youth development's cutting-edge.

Leading American and international education expert Dr. Milton Chen, former George Lucas Foundation CEO, describes the Third Space's power and potential: "The rise of the afterschool and summer learning movement continues to be a bright spot in the new landscape of American education. ... This 'third space of learning' engages and broadens students' experiences from their lives in school or at home. This is a distinctly American invention, fueled by the commitment and perseverance of thousands of local educators and a broad spectrum of nonprofit, public, and private partners."

As providers and leaders in expanding enriched learning and development in this Third Space, we have challenges and opportunities to address:

- Offer quality programs you're comfortable delivering. Reach out to other organizations and schools to broaden offerings and 1 experiences; capture school-community partnerships and innovation—the "bright spot" Chen mentions.
 - Afterschool Alliance surveys show parents wish access to more quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities than available. Could you collaborate with other programs to address availability barriers?
- Third Space lends itself to innovative partnerships and collaboration, and the cost of expansion and providing more offerings is less than "everyone doing their own thing." Yet public investment is often needed.
 - Encourage caring providers, families, and community leaders to seek school district, municipality, county government, and state official support, to create opportunities for success.
 - Work better with your state's afterschool network to inform policymakers of this bipartisan need and potential. Increasing federal investment in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers is essential; strengthen your voice for this vital initiative.

For some, afterschool remains an afterthought; for others, enriching programming and partnerships are on the education innovation cutting edge. You're on the frontlines of this Third Space. Please help lead efforts to make offerings and opportunities engaging and enriching. Organize larger efforts to create awareness of how important your work is for our children and future—and how policymakers could provide support and funding. •

* Chen, M. (2013). The rise of any time, any place, any path, any pace learning: Afterschool and summer learning as the new American frontier for Innovative learning. In T. K. Peterson (Ed.). Expanding minds and opportunities: Leveraging the power of afterschool and summer learning for student success (pp. 107-109). Washington, DC: Collaborative Communications Group.

PARTNERSHIP, CENTURY LEARNING and Innovation

One school district's approach to extending learning opportunities for all children. I BY KATHLEEN C. GREIDER, SUPERINTENDENT, FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FARMINGTON, CONECTICUT, FPSCT.ORG

Quality afterschool programming is vital to a school district's success. Given the unique challenges of the twentyfirst century, districts must maximize resources through community organization and business partnerships to meet all students' needs. Emerging demands on school districts, students, and families require consideration when developing quality afterschool learning experiences. School districts need to extend the school day and provide highly engaging, cognitively challenging, authentic hands-on experiences that enhance and infuse a love of learning, and promote

transfer. This is significantly important when districts experience achievement gaps or are creating an urgency to push forward innovative practices leading to all students mastering rigorous content and the skills and dispositions our complex world community requires. Afterschool programming could help accelerate student learning if it is well-aligned to a school's goals and the district's goals, beliefs, and strategic planning priorities. Families seek high-quality programming that provides unique enrichment experiences supporting engagement and learning.

The innovative, homegrown, and

longstanding afterschool program at Farmington Public Schools (FPS), for which I'm superintendent, has expanded significantly in recently years. The aspects of alignment to school and district priorities, coherence, and strategic planning have been addressed by a robust Extended Learning Program (EXCL) led by a strategic and innovative leader, community organization partnerships, Parent Teacher Organization involvement, town recreational offerings, and a highly successful athletics program. We strive for partnership and addressing our community's and all learners' needs.

PARTNERSHIP

The seamless partnership between the district and our EXCL program helps students extend learning from their school day to afterschool. Vince LaFontan, Farmington EXCL program director, is a visionary leader for continuous improvement. EXCL faculty and staff have a clear understanding of our FPS Vision of the Graduate, Five-Year Goals, and Framework for Teaching and Learning. Their efforts in aligning their work with students to district priorities helps extend the school day, providing highly engaging, handson experiences that mirror school-day teaching and learning. This alignment of goals and priorities is vital to the program's success. LaFontan joins our District Leadership Council for trainings and Instructional Rounds, bringing this learning back to his faculty and staff to ensure tight alignment within the organization; he also uses these opportunities as a springboard for innovative ideas and practices unique to EXCL.

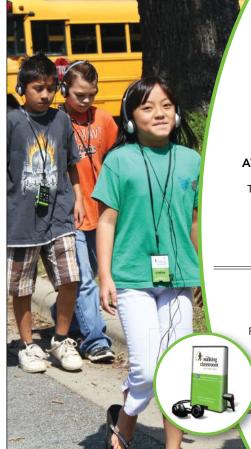
Many community partners also provide programming to promote comprehensive offerings, after school and on weekends. These partnerships are important to our students' daily lives and make Farmington a unique place to learn and grow, as individuals and as collaborators, communicators, innovators, problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and resourceful, self-directed learners.

21ST CENTURY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Farmington's board of education approved new five-year goals in 2010, merging the district's content standards with core thinking and learning skills required of students in college, careers, and citizens of our changing world community. Our EXCL program utilizes the district's goals to develop curriculum, programs, and instructional methods well-aligned to the school-day experience. EXCL provided intensive creativity training this past school year, bringing fun, enriching, authentic learning experiences to the highest number of participants in our EXCL program's history. The strong coherence between the Farmington school district and EXCL programming helps students accelerate learning, narrowing achievement gaps and increasing the achievement of all students as future global leaders and citizens. Creating a synergy that enriches learning experiences and promotes innovation and continuous improvement is essential for successful afterschool programming to make an impact on outcomes. This past year, Farmington was highlighted in the book School-Based Instructional Rounds, by Lee Teitel, and awarded a national P21 Exemplar District designation. Farmington High School consistently ranks among the top ten schools in Connecticut.

INNOVATION

Partnership, coherence, and innovation are critical to the district's comprehensive continuous improvement approach, something we strive to promote by partnering with all constituents. EXCL continues to expand high-quality preschool offerings, due to a community need. LaFontan continually works with school principals, central office staff, and parents to determine the EXCL program's next level of work. Each program promotes engagement by community members, high school students, and organizations. Innovation is essential to sustaining programming in difficult economic times. The self-sustaining EXCL program will only remain so if it constantly evolves to meet our community's unique needs. •





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TEACHING THROUGH INQUIRY, **TOGETHER**



Introducing the STEM Educators Academy | BY SABRINA GOMEZ AND JENNIFER CURRY, TASC

In August 2013, science teachers and educators from community-based organizations (CBOs) came together for the STEM Educators Academy, a weeklong professional development institute at the New York Hall of Science.

Through the Academy, each team was assembled under a principal's leadership, seeking to enhance learning after 3 p.m. with hands-on STEM education. The New York Hall of Science trained teams consisting of one science or technology teacher and two community educators (CBO staff working after school) to collaboratively teach the STEM disciplines through inquiry, and TASC identified and developed school/CBO partnerships and coached the teams to enhance quality. Trainers emphasized the power of questions in guiding student understanding, posed problems that

challenge science, and focused on the importance of the scientific method in teaching STEM. Teams also had the opportunity to think through how they would collaborate in the design and delivery of lessons throughout the course of the year.

What followed was an integrated approach to teaching STEM that aligned concepts from the school day with an enhanced learning experience after school. At PS 182 in Queens, fourthgraders applied their understanding of physics to egg parachute designs and reflected on their results with peers. Seventh-graders at MS 206 in the Bronx constructed large DNA models out of household items, while second-graders at IS 247 in Brooklyn researched the Earth's structure to construct volcano models. These activities, led by teachers

and community educators who trained together in the summer institute, challenged teachers to approach teaching STEM in new ways, taking advantage of the hours after school and providing a rich learning experience. Describing the Academy's impact on students, one community educator reflected that youth "have more time to explore, they have time to fail, and they are more comfortable" when learning science through engaging projects.

Joint professional development continued throughout the year, with the New York Hall of Science and TASC staff providing on-site coaching and professional development on breaking down design challenges into parts and creating lessons on specific scientific concepts. Teams were educated on new learning assessment techniques to push

The STEM Educators Academy is supported by the Pinkerton Foundation and completed its first year in June 2014. In its second year, the Academy will grow to fifteen teams and add a new partner, the Institute of Play, to provide a weeklong professional development experience for teams. To see the Academy in action, check out this video: www.expandedschools.org/policy-documents/stem-educators-academy

student understanding of scientific concepts. Mid-year workshops provided teams with new strategies that deepened students' understanding of processes and promoted authentic discussions.

Through continued joint professional development, the second half of the year saw a strengthening of school and community partnerships. Science teachers met regularly with community educators to collaboratively plan and align STEM coursework with learning taking place after school. Co-planning and coteaching created learning communities where teachers serve as mentors, while community educators bring knowledge of youth development to the classroom. Science teacher Daniel Mozub reflected, "The STEM Educators Academy gave me the opportunity to be a mentor teacher to community educators and, through that role, to grow in my own practice." Middle school science teacher Toscilla Fatbarbha recognized, "there is much to learn from the community educators on my team about structuring activities that increase student engagement and build relationships among students and staff." Ultimately, teachers in the STEM Educators Academy acknowledge that although there is more work to be done, the emphasis on collaboration has helped "cultivate a vision for science education in the day school and in the afterschool," reinforcing the importance in joint professional development, alignment and expanded learning.

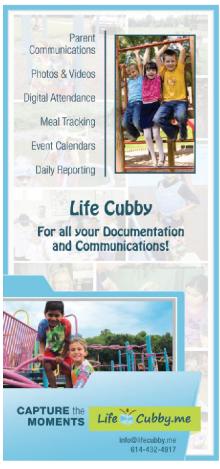
The team behind the Academy sees many opportunities to strengthen school/community partnerships for this work. We also have questions: Will joint professional development focused on inquiry-based approaches change the way teachers think about STEM in the classroom? If this collaborative approach

TASC is a nonprofit organization helping urban schools give kids more time, more ways, and more opportunities to learn so that everyone can succeed. For more information, please contact Sabrina Gomez, sgomez@expandedschools.org.

and team-teaching works well with STEM, could it also inform literacy, art and other content areas?

We look forward to learning more. •





THE **State** OF AFTERSCHOOL QUALITY

by gina warner

This fall, NAA will release a set of four papers focusing on The State of Afterschool Quality. These papers will include the latest in research, funding, and program design addressing quality in afterschool. AfterSchool Today sat down with the author, Shawn Stelow Griffin, to ask her about this work.

WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE FOCUS ON QUALITY IN AFTERSCHOOL?

It is clear from the results of our survey that the field has been working hard on quality in afterschool. Our look at quality elements across the country revealed a majority of states have developed foundational elements of quality-namely, afterschool standards and an aligned quality assessment tool. A majority of states also have Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) that licensed afterschool programs are eligible to participate in. It's now clear what afterschool quality is, and how to measure it and make it happen.

We have made great strides in defining and measuring afterschool quality. To sustain this progress, we now need to turn our focus on further developing the professionalism of the afterschool field.

AS YOU WERE CREATING THESE PAPERS, YOU EXAMINED DATA ACROSS THE NATION. WHAT WERE SOME ENCOURAGING THINGS **THAT YOU LEARNED?**

States and communities have done

the hard work of creating Afterschool Standards. Our survey identified twentynine states have created standards. An additional six states are in the process of creating standards. First and foremost, standards identify evidence- and research-based guidelines afterschool programs should follow. Equally important, however, the standards development process provides the time and space for families, providers, schools, and other stakeholders to identify and come to consensus regarding community goals and values for its afterschool programs.

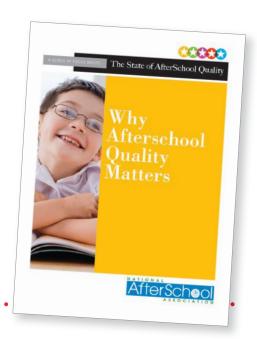
The number of afterschool credential programs continues to increase. This is an important development. Credentials provide a clear acknowledgment of a professional's skills and abilities that is easily understood by a prospective employer. Credentials differ from an associate or bachelor's degree in that they tend to be more prescriptive in the coursework, learning, and demonstration of skills they represent. Credentials provide a focused route for the profession preparation of those interested in pursuing a career in the afterschool field.

WHAT ARE SOME AREAS THAT YOU THINK **OUR FIELD NEEDS TO FOCUS ON NEXT?**

We need to continue to focus on creating professional development and training aligned to core knowledge and competencies for all afterschool

practitioners. NAA's 2013 survey of the afterschool workforce dispelled many commonly held beliefs regarding the afterschool workforce. Nearly fifty percent of afterschool professionals surveyed have been in the field ten or more years. Forty-five percent of afterschool professionals have completed some post-graduate work or have a master's or doctoral degree. We need to increase the professional development opportunities for afterschool practitioners at all stages of their career.

Complete with case studies that highlight best practices in state and local work, these papers will be an important tool for program leaders, funders, researchers, and all of those committed to high-quality afterschool experiences for our children and youth. •



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"It's not a fixed database system," said Ron Leatherman, Vice President of Childcare and Camp Solutions. "Our packages are a lot more rounded, to manage an entire program, not just federal requirements." SofterWare programs are designed to allow users to add categories in their data collection—a great convenience.

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In addition to software design flexibility, the support offered by SofterWare is among the reasons the company boasts a ninety-five percent client retention rate, and consistently high client ratings. "We take pride in answering calls live, and resolving issues on a first call. We know that when someone calls, they want to speak to someone right now."

The software itself is the primary draw—"its capabilities, ease of use, stability. With thirty years in this business, we know what people need to do." The Childcare Centers and

Before & After School Programs package offers Web-based management software featuring full contact management (which tracks and reports data), billing and accounts receivable, electronic payment and e-commerce, online registration, attendance and scheduling, and time clock.

On Capterra.com, reviewers consistently praised SofterWare's EZ-Care2 for its breadth of capability, allowing for data management of attendance, invoicing families with various scholarship rates, demographics, registrations, and its reporting and data generation functions for reporting out. Reviewers also praised the level of support provided by SofterWare. •

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WORK ENGINEERING INTO YOUR Viddle School PROGRAM

BY MELISSA HIGGINS, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ENGINEERING IS ELEMENTARY, MUSEUM OF SCIENCE, BOSTON







Middle school youth engineer ice cream as part of the Engineering Everywhere unit Food for Thought.

You've probably heard it's a good idea to include more engineering as part of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities in your afterschool or camp program. But maybe you're not sure why engineering is a valuable addition to your program.

The Engineering is Elementary program at the Museum of Science, Boston, recently developed a new curriculum, Engineering Everywhere (EE) that brings hands-on engineering activities to out-of-school time programs for middle school youth. Our EE program is fun, research-based, downloadable, and free! Here are the top four reasons we encourage you to try engineering with your middle school youth.

- ENGINEERING HELPS **YOUTH MAKE REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS -**

Engineers create technologies that solve problems and make our lives better. From coffee makers to highways to shoes, engineers design the objects and environment we interact with every day. Middle school youth are often excited to consider how they might affect the human-made world. When you engage them in engineering challenges, you give them an authentic way to explore how they could shape the future.

When we choose engineering challenges for our curriculum, the EE team selects problems middle schoolers will connect with. In the EE unit Put a Lid on It: Engineering Safety Helmets, youth learn about the dangers of concussions and how to protect the brain—a topic with several entry points. Some youth play sports, others may be drawn to discussions around concussions in professional athletes, and others may be interested in the science of the human

brain. The activities in this unit guide youth to test a variety of materials, share results, and ultimately use what they've learned to design helmets that protect a model head.

Another EE unit, Don't Runoff: Redesigning Urban Landscapes, introduces youth to the environmental problems created by stormwater runoff. Many communities grapple with this pressing problem. When a storm hits an urban area with few green spaces, the rain washes pollutants from roads and sidewalks directly into local waterways. Youth explore this phenomenon using a model city. They then design technologies to prevent runofftechnologies that could eventually be scaled up and applied in the real world.

- ENGINEERING BUILDS 21ST **CENTURY SKILLS -**

21st Century skills include thinking critically, exercising creativity, and effectively communicating with others. Engineers use a problem-solving methodthe engineering design process—that reinforces these skills.

The engineering design process introduced to youth in the EE curriculum includes eight steps: identify, investigate, imagine, plan, create, test, improve, and communicate.

You could further reinforce 21st Century skills by how you structure engineering activities. Give youth plenty of time to investigate materials and imagine solutions—the freedom sparks ideas for innovative designs. By asking questions such as, "What is working well in your design?" or "Why did you choose those materials?" you encourage reflection and critical thinking.

Engineers in the real world work in teams. Youth in your program will benefit from working in teams, too! As they share their ideas and work together to create and test designs, youth have opportunities to

offer critical feedback and collaboratively make decisions. This type of group work lets them practice sophisticated communication skills.

- ENGINEERING BUILDS **CONFIDENCE -**

Participating in engineering activities could help youth see themselves in a new light. Our research shows that after youth engage in an EE unit, they have more positive attitudes about engineering and their abilities as engineers. This boost in self-confidence could be incredibly empowering, and might prompt youth to consider engineering as a career.

Youth could further build a sense of pride as they share their engineering work with the members of your afterschool community. EE units each culminate with an "engineering showcase"—a time for youth to share all

they have learned about engineering and the design process with friends, family, and other members of your community.

- ENGINEERING IS FUN! -

Educators and youth who participate in engineering activities say it best: Engineering is fun!

"The unit has changed how I feel about leading engineering activities with kids," noted a Boys & Girls Clubs educator from California. "Hands-on participation has really sparked interest."

Middle school youth helping us test our units often confirm that having the chance to engineer has inspired them to learn more. "I improved on troubleshooting problems," one tester reflected. "I would like to continue [engineering]."

See how engineering challenges spark the creativity of youth in your program! •



programprofile







TO SUCCEE D.C. After-School All-Stars | BY JENNIFER REYNOLDS

After-School All-Stars (ASAS) is a free, nationwide program with more than three hundred fifty sites, held in Title I schools, where fifty percent or more of the students qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program. ASAS' mission is to provide comprehensive afterschool programs that keep children safe, and help them succeed in school and in life. ASAS is funded through contributions from philanthropic partners, and works in collaboration with a range of organizations to provide services to students. Stuart Hobson Middle School in Washington, D.C., is After-School All-Stars' first model site.

Aaron Dworkin, executive vice president of the National Network of After-School All-Stars, based in ASAS' East Coast National office in Washington D.C., currently oversees the implementation of the four ASAS national program initiatives: Middle to High School Transition, Service Learning, Career Exploration, and Sports-Based Youth Development. Dworkin says these four initiatives are woven into the fabric of all of

their programs. "It's not just two days; it's part of our DNA." Students might participate in sports tournaments on behalf of a charity, teach skills to younger students, or volunteer at a Special Olympics event. During spring break, when students might not have much to do, ASAS offers a basketball mentoring program called "Camp Hoop Heroes," which includes skills clinics and focuses on behavior issues, such as how to play with discipline, what it means to lose, and how to come back-not just in a game, but in life. Local community members mentor participants, and a variety of guest speakers, from referees to players, speak about leadership skills.

Using athletics as a vehicle for teaching leadership as well as fitness, ASAS launched "Sports as a Hook," with the help of FOX Sports Networks. The program connects sports activities to lessons on leadership, teamwork, resilience, discipline, nutrition, community service, gender equality, and exposure to nature. ASAS also introduces students to professional athletes, caring coaches, and successful role models in the sports industry who teach students about goal-setting, public speaking, interview skills, career exploration, and financial management.

Providing students with the motivation and tools to move forward academically is the goal driving ASAS' "We Are Ready" program. The curriculum targets eighth-graders who exhibit signs that they are at risk of dropping out, and helps them answer the question, "Why does graduating from high school matter?" Through career and college exposure, academic support, service projects, counseling, and mentoring, students develop the skills and confidence they need to successfully navigate their transition into high school. For rising ninth-grade students in need of an extra push, the program also includes an intensive one-week, overnight summer camp at a university. Students map out their next academic moves between meals in the cafeteria, classes in lecture halls, and lights out in the dorms. In addition, ASAS' Career Exploration Opportunities (CEO) program and boot camp help students plan their financial and professional future.

Dworkin says ASAS recognizes that "these kids are not the leaders of tomorrow-they're leaders today." Providing them with leadership skills and venues to use them happens through

national advisory boards, in which students learn public speaking skills and plan service projects. ASAS brings one student from each program to Washington, D.C., for more intensive training, and those students meet with a range of groups, giving presentations as experts on afterschool issues. Lobbying on Capitol Hill for afterschool, students even met with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

ASAS is a collaborative organization, seeking opportunities as it finds them. Recognizing Washington, D.C., as the "middle school Mecca of the world," Dworkin says ASAS saw an opportunity for students to serve as ambassadors for their city. While many students live within a mile of its famous monuments, many had never seen them. A project involving training for students from professional tour guides to provide local youth with the opportunity to interact with visitors is underway with a local ASAS youth advisory board.

Along with providing training opportunities for ASAS staff and students from ASAS programs around the country, Dworkin says part of the importance of the Stuart Hobson Middle School model site is that it allows politicians to visit and see the importance of quality afterschool care. "Congress can't visit every program, but they can come see this one." •

As chairman of George H.W. Bush's President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, Arnold Schwarzenegger visited schools in all fifty states. What he learned led him to co-found Inner-City Games in East Los Angeles in 1991. By 1992, the program had expanded into fifteen cities; in 2002, the organization changed its name to After-School All-Stars, to better represent the program's expansion. Schwarzenegger continues supporting the program with personal visits, national fundraising efforts, and lobbying on Capitol Hill.













How Afterschool Can Work with MIDDLE AND EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

BY DEL RUFF, DIRECTOR, NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM OF NORTH CAROLINA

Middle and Early College High Schools have a unique format for collaborating with afterschool or expanded learning programs. Some programs may: provide a structured homework environment that supports academic achievement, support English Language Learner (ELL) students in developing a community of trust as they transition into a rigorous educational experience, and provide family engagement opportunities for students and parents in the expanded learning space.

DIGGING DEEPER AND LOOKING BACK

In 1974, an innovative education design was created to serve under-represented, low-socioeconomic students in a cohesive secondary to post-secondary experience. It created innovative curricula encompassing state standards, used creative pedagogy, and developed an environment that allowed students and teachers to nurture each other's passion and drive. This alone did not produce the success of the Middle College model. Partnership with colleges or universities willing to create a hybrid educational system in which high school students would have access to higher education resources including campus facilities, classes, and faculty was critical. The success of the Middle College Model was evident by increased graduation rates, decreased dropout rates, and increased college-going rates.

In 2002, the model expanded to providing students time to attain an associate degree, two years of college credit, and/or the opportunity to attain a bachelor's degree—tuition-free. This concept became the Early College High School Initiative. As an educator, college staff member, and district administrator, I've personally observed the effectiveness of these high-quality expanded learning opportunities. Below are examples of how an afterschool or expanded learning program can work within Middle and Early College High Schools.

PROVIDE STRUCTURED HOMEWORK TIME. Students in Middle and Early colleges are in challenging courses often honors and/or college-level. Homework time provides a facility and structure for students. Students have the chance to work in study groups, and consult with peers. It simulates the natural environment of higher education. The flexibility of such an environment could exist only in an out-ofschool time space. Additionally, opportunities exist for college tutors to engage with students in a space monitored by an adult. This strategy works due to the frequency and flexibility of time.

ENGAGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL). Students who have a native language other than English provide unique challenges as they struggle with English proficiency. Afterschool programs could connect students to local linguistic agencies, cultural awareness programs, and other academic support needed to help this population excel. Infusions of native language-speaking individuals have tremendous effects on student academic success, along with improved communication with the ELL parents. This builds understanding and trust required for student success.

ENGAGE FAMILIES. Afterschool and expanded learning programs connect parents with myriad engaging activities, such as science shows, literacy nights, and meet and greets. These activities give parents ownership in the school and the program, which increases family support and improves student success. •



INSPIRING IDEAS, EDUCATING MINDS, CREATING COMMUNI

It's been a year of growth for the National AfterSchool Association, as the organization seeks to lead the profession and provide information and opportunities to assist members in providing quality out-of-school time care.

The NAA website has a new logo—and a new look and feel creating a brand standard for NAA's content, which includes quick tips, professional development content, industry news, and a range of resources for those involved in afterschool care. NAA has diversified its reach, using Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram in addition to the NAA website and e-news, to connect with members no matter what information channels they favor.

for those who are active and involved with their state affiliate," said Gina Warner, executive director of the National AfterSchool Association. Executive level membership, at \$99 per year, adds a print subscription to AfterSchool Today magazine, complimentary registration for all NAA professional development webinars, discounted rates for NAA's Annual Convention, and access to exclusive content and resources. Executive level membership is appropriate for today's leaders in afterschool. Advocate level membership, available for \$350 per year, is available to businesses, nonprofit organizations, and associations wishing to better engage the afterschool professional community. Benefits



By modifying its membership levels, NAA creates opportunities for a broader range of those involved in the afterschool profession to utilize the organization's resources.



NAA's approach to membership has transformed to reach the range of individuals involved in the out-of-school time profession. The new Ambassador level membership, which is complimentary, provides afterschool professionals with access to the digital edition of AfterSchool Today magazine, communication tools, professional development opportunities, and a variety of discounts. This level of membership is designed for those young members beginning in the profession, and will help them grow into tomorrow's leaders in the afterschool field. "Ambassador level membership also makes a nice complimentary membership

include discounted exhibit space at the Annual Convention, discounted ad rates for AfterSchool Today, exclusive access to members, and more. By modifying its membership levels, NAA creates opportunities for a broader range of those involved in the afterschool profession to utilize the organization's resources.

These changes have created a strong foundation for NAA: They make membership accessible to all of those involved in the afterschool field and make resources more readily available, allowing NAA to achieve its ultimate goal of leading the afterschool profession. •

BY SARA COLE, VICE PRESIDENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, YMCA OF GREATER ROCHESTER

This past winter, Rochester, New York, was named the nation's fifth-poorest city. It has the seventh-highest rate of youth poverty nationally, with 1 in 4 youth living in hunger. Many neighborhoods have little green space for youth to safely play outside or for families to grow their own food, and many families find themselves living in food deserts-miles from fresh, affordable produce. It is in this landscape that the YMCA of Greater Rochester offers a beacon of hope in the form of high-quality, accessible afterschool enrichment programming for thousands of youth daily; it is in this landscape that YMCA gardens have firmly taken root.

Through the generosity of passionate YMCA supporters and master gardeners Jurij and Marie Kushner, the YMCA of the Greater Rochester offers youth in our Bay View, Carlson, Maplewood, Northwest, and Westside afterschool program branches the opportunity to plan, plant, tend, and harvest gardens. These gardens grow carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, peppers, squash, corn, tomatoes, pumpkins, okra, strawberries, green beans, radishes, zucchini, and lettuceamong more than two dozen varieties of herbs and produce cultivated-and have become kinetic hubs of community

activity, filled with endless opportunities for learning.

Connecting youth to YMCA community gardens is one way our afterschool programs bring opportunities for academic and socialemotional growth out of the classroom and into Rochester neighborhoods. By creating and tending gardens, youth in our afterschool programs study STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) through hands-on lessons on the water cycle,

determining the PH of soil, and learning about wind and solar energy. Youth build teamwork and collaboration skills by working with one another and those in Early Education programs to plan gardens and harvest and distribute their yield. Afterschool participants engage in intergenerational service learning, working with seniors to harvest and distribute produce to YMCA members. They hone literacy skills by journaling about



their garden experiences. They even have the chance to engage in global learning through discussions of how various cultures and countries plant, grow, and prepare food. Art projects inspired by the garden's vibrant and ever-changing shapes and colors decorate the walls of afterschool classrooms. Daily trips to the garden allow even our youngest participants to explore the natural world as they study color, texture, insects and animals, and the weather cycle.

Fun taste testing opportunities ensure youth are regularly exposed to new fruits and vegetables. Research has confirmed that youth may need to be exposed to new foods seven or more times before reacting positively. For youth in our afterschool programs, interactive taste tests and hands-on cooking opportunities are the culmination of an education process that begins with planning gardens and learning how to plant seeds. Parents happily report that their children now ask for broccoli at the grocery store, and return home at the end of a day at the Y excited to share a new recipe or discuss the taste of a new favorite food. Produce and healthy recipes sent home with afterschool families encourage the exploration of new foods and even new cooking methods that involve all family members.

The YMCA of Greater Rochester is committed not only to healthy eating, but to hands-on gardening projects that allow youth to participate in garden-to-table eating and sustainable urban agriculture. Program youth eagerly look forward to incorporating the garden harvest into afterschool snacks. Working with an on-site nutritionist allows our afterschool programs to build seasonal snack menus around our garden produce, and picking produce from the garden for snack has become a favorite part of spring, summer, and fall days. Passion for the natural environment, love of fresh fruits and vegetables, interest in growing and preparing fresh foods, and increased curiosity about the world around them are some of the positive impacts of gardening on our afterschool participants.

We truly believe that YMCA gardens in our community grow more than just fruits and vegetables they grow hearts, minds, and opportunities, as well.

Together with Jurij and Marie Kushner and the youth and families in our programs and communities, the YMCA of Greater Rochester is proud to be improving the health and the landscape of our community, one seed at a time. •





Garden Harvest Salsa

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups tomatoes, chopped (about 4 tomatoes)
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION: Place all ingredients in a bowl. Stir to combine. Serve with carrots, celery, pita, or tortilla chips.

Red, White, and Green Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups cubed (1/2 inch) seeded watermelon
- 2 cups cubed (1/2 inch) peeled jicama
- 2 cups cubed (1/2 inch) peeled and seeded cucumber
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

PREPARATION: Toss together all ingredients in a serving bowl. Serve immediately. Older youth could help with cutting; younger participants could help peel and mix!

Building a SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM by Staying Youth-Centered

BY HILLARY SALMONS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROVIDENCE AFTER SCHOOL ALLIANCE, RHODE ISLAND



KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

"I wouldn't walk across the street for a bad program, but I'd walk across town for a good one."

That's what one middle school youth told us ten years ago, as the Providence After School Alliance began to design the AfterZone, Providence's first system of afterschool programs for middle school youth.

For any product to take off and have longevity, it needs to be designed with the needs and psychology of the customer in mind. Sustainability within the afterschool and expanded learning field isn't just about diverse funding streams or adult buy-in; it's also about making sure you know what gets your target customer base excited, what environments appeal to them, and what constitutes a "good" or "bad" program to them.

The middle school mind is expanding and making connections at lightning speed. These youth crave choice, experimentation, and variety. They also think they're superheroes, and will try new things with little discretion. For learning systems built with this age group as the target customer, it's important to create learning systems that respond to their developmentally unique needs in a variety of safe environments and with positive adult guidance. Boredom is the death knell of any well-intentioned learning environment.



BUILD AN INFORMED INFRASTRUCTURE

Knowing your customer goes beyond knowing what kind of experience they want. Even a highly engaging system that creates the kind of opportunities young people want won't last if youth and their families can't access them.

Barbara Wong, executive director of Providence CityArts for Youth, a longtime AfterZone program partner, noted that, "Transportation is huge. Not all of our families have cars to be able to get their kids from one place to another during afterschool time. Not all of our programs can necessarily afford great snacks for kids, when they need that healthy snack before they get into an extended day."

Educators have enough to worry about. An efficient infrastructure that takes care of all the logistics and youth access issues also ensures that program providers are free to focus on developing their practice and building engaging, hands-on programs.

DEVELOP HIGH QUALITY PRACTICES

Industry buzzwords come and go, but whether you call them soft skills, non-cognitive skills, essential skills, power skills, habits of mind, or 21st Century skills, critical thinking, perseverance, communication, et cetera, they are critical to both academic and life success. Those skills only develop when students have the room to try things in hands-on ways, fail, learn from their mistakes, and ask new questions.

Middle school students are a tough crowd—they want to be treated like independent adults, but they also crave support and are pros when it comes to asking questions. Today's youth also have a world of information at their fingertips; they no longer accept facts for facts' sake, and instead want the context for what they're learning.

As one student in a sailing program with Providence Community Boating Center told a visiting Providence mayoral candidate who asked how sailing could make him a better student, "When you're reading a book about boats, but you've never seen or been in one, it doesn't mean anything."

Here in Providence, we've invested heavily in professional development for program providers and school day teachers that focuses on growing youth development and inquiry instruction practices, to facilitate each student's learning process. These practices allow the student to pose a question while the educator serves as a guide in the process, rather than as an instructor who doles out the answer.

BE ADAPTABLE

When you come together as a community to design an afterschool or expanded learning system through your customer's lens, you'll get a product that appeals to young people, parents, informal and formal educators, and the community. And youth will engage in a learning process that's fun, developmentally aligned, based on their own everchanging interests, and sought-after. This approach ensures systemic adoption by a wide array of stakeholders, but it requires individual educators and the system itself to adapt with students, rather than the other way around.

As AfterZone alumna Joely Barrios recently told us, she kept coming back to her afterschool programs because they taught her "how to have meaningful conversations with adults; where it's not patronizing, and where they're not telling you what to do. Where it's reciprocal."

Reciprocal communication. Now, there's an essential power skill. •

truestory



In the education profession, support could make all of the difference. Whether from experienced mentors, professional organizations, or forward-thinking board members, the opportunity to ask questions, share information, and soak up the wisdom of others is integral to an educator's development. Denise Sellers, who has served as executive director of Haddonfield Child Care (HCC) in Haddonfield, New Jersey, for twenty-nine years, believes in paying that support forward.

Sellers became the director of HCC after earning a degree in art history, substitute teaching, working at the YMCA as a special events coordinator and in its pre-school program, and working in a nursing home. When she joined HCC, it was a newly formed, parent-run and -organized childcare program in search of a new director. The program was founded on strong principals, and right from the start, Sellers was encouraged to engage, professionally.

Care, Haddonfield, LOOKING FOR WISDOM, **New Jersey** EVERYWHF

BY IENNIFER REYNOLDS

Denise Sellers, **Haddonfield Child**

To handle all of her responsibilities, Sellers looked for wisdom everywhere. "I was a one-woman show. If I needed to know something, I read a bookor asked someone. I had really good mentors. I relied on other programs to share information." As her career in afterschool care progressed, she found professional organizations such as NAA to be a wellspring for rejuvenation. "The day-to-day stuff can get you down, but the opportunity to share and learn within the profession helps balance it out."

Grooming staff members to be their most successful is one of Sellers' strengths. It begins with getting to know them during the interview, and then allowing supervisors at each site to play to their strengths as they plan programming. One supervisor loves to travel, and his programs have a lot of international flavor; another is a "found art" enthusiast. and her programs have kids "finding" art in places you might not expect it. Sellers also provides opportunities for the kinds of development that helped her grow when she was new to the field. One recent endeavor is professional development to help supervisors learn more about STEM projects as enrichment.

Sellers has found that many of her promising staff members themselves are a product of quality afterschool programs.

"They remember what worked, and what didn't." She recognizes the potential in intentionally "growing" her own staff, working with middle school volunteers, employing high school students who work under adult supervisors and continuing to employ them through their college years, and, in some cases, adding them to her staff after college graduation. Sellers believes in helping staff to have a profession, not merely a job, by including them in professional development opportunities, such as the New Jersey School Age Care Coalition (NJSACC) annual conference.

In the time she's been involved in afterschool care, Sellers has seen expectations grow. Whereas once parents were merely seeking a warm, safe place for their latchkey kids, today's parents have grown to expect a high-quality experience that is not just fun, but enriching as well. Grooming and investing in staff is an effective way to meet those expectations.

Whether it is presenting at grant writing workshops or connecting young practitioners to professional development opportunities and helpful professional organizations, Sellers makes it a priority to support and spread the word about the tools available to professionals in afterschool care. •

Have a "True Story" you want to share? E-mail it to editorial@serendipity-media.com.



We're excited to announce NEW and enhanced membership opportunities with NAA!







The National AfterSchool Association fosters development, provides education, and encourages advocacy for the out-of-school-time community.

Be a part of this growing community today and enjoy all the benefits that membership provides!

AMBASSADOR MEMBER

- Stay informed about news and educational resources for the field through the NAA E-News, a bi-weekly e-newsletter.
- Enjoy inspiring and informative stories about programs and leaders around the country via the digital edition of AfterSchool Today, NAA's magazine quarterly.
- Eligible for professional liability, disability, and life insurance benefits through the Forrest T. Jones & Company. Members have access to comprehensive insurance benefits.
- Enjoy discounts on the program materials and supplies from NAA advocate member companies.
- Receive discounted rates on professional development webinars offered by NAA approved experts on topics of daily interest for the afterschool professional.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

- Enjoy the inspiring and informative stories about programs and leaders around the country through the digital and print edition of AfterSchool Today, NAA's magazine quarterly.
- Complimentary registration at all NAA professional development webinars.
- Discounted attendance rates for to attend the NAA annual convention.
- Access to exclusive content, resources, and information aimed towards the afterschool professional.
- Eligibility to run for a leadership position on the NAA Board of Directors and voting privileges in NAA Elections.
- Complimentary copy of the "New Directions in Youth Development" book in PDF format.

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