

the
Legacy
of

The
Robert
Bowne
Foundation

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The Robert Bowne Foundation

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The Legacy of The Robert Bowne Foundation

The business [of Bowne & Company] grew and became sufficiently well-established for Robert Bowne to be able to devote some time to philanthropic and other endeavors. Out of the intellectual and spiritual awakening of the times grew the belief in the dignity of the common man and a feeling of social responsibility for those afflicted with ills not of their own making nor within their power to correct.¹

Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Founder
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Robert Bowne founded Bowne & Co., Stationers, in 1775; now, in 2012, it is “New York’s oldest existing business under the same name”² An active man engaged not only in business but in building the social underpinnings of a young country, Bowne was a founding director of both the Bank of New York (1784) and the Mutual Assurance Co., “the city’s first fire insurance company” (1787), as well as a founder of the New York Hospital, the American Chamber of Commerce, and, in 1805, the Society for Establishing a Free School in the City of New York. In 1784, along with Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Eddy, and George Clinton, Bowne helped found the Manumission Society of New York.³

Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Chief Executive Officer of Bowne & Co. from 1956-1981, established a family foundation in 1968, naming it after Robert Bowne in tribute to his legacy. Jennifer Stanley, current President of the Robert Bowne Foundation Board, says of Edmund, her husband: “He took Bowne and Company public in 1968. When that happened, there was this big windfall of money and he started the Foundation at that time. It was personal. . . . He ran it. He had a board but he was the engine.”⁴

From the start, the Robert Bowne Foundation has been dedicated to funding youth organizations. For the first 10 years, such organizations as the Boy Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, and the YMCAs, as well as small organizations that came to Stanley’s attention, benefited from the Foundation’s largesse. Jennifer Stanley recounts:

Ted would read the newspaper and things would catch his eye. . . . He saw an article in the newspaper about this Harlem-based newspaper called *40 Acres and a Mule*, run by an African American man⁵ [and, in 1969,] went up to him in a storefront and gave him a grant. . . . That’s what Ted would do.⁶

¹ Edmund J. Stanley, Jr., *Of Men and Dreams: The story of the people of Bowne & Co. and the fulfillment of their dreams in the company’s 200 years from 1775 to 1975* (New York, New York: Bowne & Co., Inc.), 20.

² The printing shop is part of the South Street Seaport Museum, under the auspices of the Museum of the City of New York. See: <http://pinterest.com/seaportmuseum/bowne-co-stationers/>

³ See: http://www.bownehouse.org/history_bowne_family.htm

⁴ Jennifer Stanley, Interview, October 28, 2011, hereafter referred to as “Jennifer Stanley, Interview.”

⁵ See: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0913F8385D137A93C0A91788D85F4D8685F9>

⁶ Jennifer Stanley, Interview.

In 1983, Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., asked Dianne Kangisser to run the Foundation, even as she continued to stay on at Literacy Volunteers. She brought her deep commitment to and expertise in literacy into the mix. Jennifer Stanley says of that creative partnership, “Yes, [Dianne] saw the early interest Ted had in youth programs. She melded the two [literacy and youth] and it was a great melding.”⁷ A year later, Dianne Kangisser left Literacy Volunteers and expanded her consulting work with Bowne where she continued until her retirement in 1999.

*We refer to this area as the ‘third arena,’ a time and place between the increasingly burdened institutions of school and family, where our children can learn and flourish. Since its inception in 1968, The Robert Bowne Foundation has supported this third arena, believing that its programs are a good investment for children and youth.*⁸

Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Founder
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Over the course of her tenure at Bowne, Kangisser articulated three major themes that continue at the core of the Foundation’s mission:

1. Creating an integrated focus on youth and literacy along with defining afterschool as the Foundation’s base of practice — afterschool, which she named the “third arena” where, along with family and school, children are educated
2. Recognizing the critical link between a program’s work and its organizational context
3. Acknowledging “afterschool” as a distinct field, an insight Kangisser built on when she initiated and helped establish and develop the Partnership for After School Education (PASE).⁹

Shortly after Kangisser’s retirement, Lena Townsend joined Bowne in January, 2000, as a consulting Program Officer and then, in 2001, became consulting Executive Director of the Foundation. In 2002, upon completion of her MPA Degree, she was named the first full-time Executive Director of the Foundation. In February 2002, Anne Lawrence joined Bowne as its first full-time Program Officer. Both continue at the Foundation today.

In 2010, The Robert Bowne Foundation decided to cease program funding and close its doors on December 31, 2015, after 47 years of working to foster and sustain afterschool and youth literacy.

The Robert Bowne Foundation Legacy Process

With the decision to close the Foundation, the staff and board continued their focus on strengthening grantee programs and, perhaps even more urgently, articulating and sharing the strategies they had honed and the lessons gleaned. Lena Townsend, in a brief announcement of the planned closing in the on-line *philanthropy new york*, says:

We have sketched out a general plan for spending out the Foundation’s assets, and over the next year many of you will be invited to help us develop a strategy that we hope will have maximum impact in improving programs and the field. During the final three years of our grantmaking we will focus our resources on a smaller group of our long-term grantees that represent the Foundation’s core principles that literacy happens in community; develops through active engagement; is a means to self-determination; and is a fundamental part of being human in 21st-century America.¹⁰

As part of its continuing effort to achieve “maximum impact in improving programs and the field,” the Foundation aims to document, through its Legacy process: (1) the work of the Foundation in supporting and developing literacy-infused

⁷ Jennifer Stanley, Interview.

⁸ Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., *Foreword, The Third Arena: Afterschool Youth Literacy Programs*, (New York, New York: The Robert Bowne Foundation, 1999), 16.

⁹ See Dianne Kangisser, *The Third Arena: Afterschool Youth Literacy Programs*.

¹⁰ “Philanthropy New York Currents May 2010,” in *philanthropy new york*, May 2010, 1: http://www.philanthropynewyork.org/s_nyrag/sec_wide.asp?CID=16222&DID=39436

afterschool programs and their organizations, as well as (2) the work of selected programs themselves. One strand of this effort has entailed ethnographic research, including in-depth work in the four selected “Legacy grantees,” described below, and interactions with a range of other current and previous Bowne grantees.¹¹ Through such fieldwork along with detailed discussions over months with Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence as well as an extensive review of Foundation documents, we have gained both a sense of the history and development of the Foundation and its practices as well as insight into the interactions between Bowne and many of its grantees, including but not exclusively the Legacy sites.¹²

Foundation staff selected the Legacy grantees based in part on their ability to reveal and demonstrate the principles and themes of Bowne’s work, especially the merging of literacy and program. They amply illustrate the Foundation’s expansive vision of “the development of quality programs that offer literacy education to children and youth of New York City, in the out-of-school hours”¹³ The Legacy grantees, briefly described, are:¹⁴

- **Arts & Literacy Program of Coalition for Hispanic Family Services** works with large populations of speakers of other languages — beginning with Spanish-speaking elementary school children in Bushwick, Brooklyn, and then expanding to sites in Corona, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights, all in Queens. Beyond serving more children and families, the expansion also has meant including speakers of Chinese and other Asian languages. The program focuses on: multiple forms of arts and literacy for participating children; partnering with families and school teachers; developing junior staff; and employing art therapy as an integral part of the afterschool program.
- **Page Turners of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, Metro Baptist Church**, a Bowne Foundation “Boutique program”¹⁵ that provides afterschool to elementary school children in Manhattan’s Hell’s Kitchen. The program largely takes place within the church building, with children receiving homework support, reading and writing in a Julia Palmer grant-developed library, participating in an online book club, meeting performer visitors from nearby theatres, and talking about nutrition while tasting and naming foods from the church roof garden, which helps stock the church’s food pantry.
- **TRaC (Teen Reviewers and Critics) founded by High 5 Tickets to the Arts and currently part of ArtsConnection**,¹⁶ engages teens in the arts — theatre, dance, music, visual art, film — and nurtures their critical literacy by informing their perspectives and sharpening their appraisals through required written reviews in the form of essays, haikus, twitter messages, and other formats well beyond the traditional five-paragraph essay. TRaC also provides teens with another forum and peer group outside of their school environments. Participants’ reviews are critiqued by instructors and fellow participants, rewritten, then published in the online *High 5 Review*.
- **Youth Programs at the Forest Hills Neighborhood Center of Queens Community House** offer a range of programs including afterschool and summer camp for school children ages 5-12. Within a community-centered setting, afterschool participants engage in theme-based reading, writing, and numeracy projects. One summer, through a curriculum focused on food and literacy, campers studied the effect of boiling water on a submerged whole raw egg, had their first

¹¹ See Appendix A, page 18, for a brief overview of ethnographic methodology.

¹² Our research went well beyond our in-depth work with the four Legacy sites. In addition, we conducted an extensive documents review covering the span of the Foundation’s history as well as: telephone interviews with an additional 20 grantees identified by Foundation staff; in-person interviews with selected individuals from across a range of organizations, roles, and affiliations with the Foundation, including, among others: Suzanne Carothers, Sara Hill, Dianne Kangisser, Suzanne Marten, Lori Roth, Jennifer Stanley, Robert Stonehill, and Marcie Wolfe; accompanied Anne Lawrence on Bowne support visits; attended Bowne-sponsored professional development sessions; participated in a variety of meetings; attended a range of After School Matters events, professional development sessions, and meetings; had many discussions with Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence, in meetings and impromptu; and conducted a focus group with seven professional development providers who worked with the Foundation over time. Through these means, we worked to piece together and understand the long, rich history and present-day work of the Foundation.

¹³ <http://www.robertbownefoundation.org/>

¹⁴ See Appendix B, page 19, for a graph providing basic information about each of the four Legacy programs.

¹⁵ The Bowne Foundation both: (1) recognizes that grantees differ in their stage of development, often requiring different kinds and degrees of foundation support, and (2) intentionally funds across the spectrum of development to support both potential and accomplishment. Thus, for example, the Foundation’s Strategic Goals, 2008-2012, defines “boutique programs” as small, community-based programs “often with budgets under \$1 million, that need more intensive support, i.e. technical assistance, to grow programmatically and to sustain their organizations.”

¹⁶ TRaC began as a program of High 5 Tickets to the Arts; in mid-2011, both TRaC and High 5 became part of ArtsConnection.

taste of such exotica as goat cheese and edamame, and ran the *Camp Café* where they created a café setting complete with written menus, took orders, served food, tallied up bills, and made change for family members and Center staff.

For the research, then, Bowne staff selected a mix of programs working with different age groups and populations across the city. The programs range in size, approach, location, and stage of development, and operate within a variety of organizational homes. Cutting across such variations, the four grantees have all benefited from their interaction with Bowne, including, of course, financial support but going much beyond that.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here the welcoming openness and thoughtful reflection extended to us through ongoing conversations with Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence, Suzanne Marten of Center for Educational Options, who led many of the professional development sessions we attended, and by the staff of each Legacy grantee. No one quite knows what it will mean to have ethnographic researchers enter the scene repeatedly, asking question after question. Everywhere, we found only warm hospitality and a great willingness of interviewees to share their work, reflections, goals, and values, a mark of people's deep esteem for the Foundation, its staff, and its practices.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and Its Support

The link between the Robert Bowne Foundation and its grantees rests essentially on two basic supports: the Foundation's funding practices and its provision of professional development and capacity building.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and Its Funding Practices

The Robert Bowne Foundation funds youth development programs that integrate literacy into out-of-school time activities. The Foundation seeks community-based programs that: (1) reflect deep knowledge of both the participating youth and their communities and (2) link, in true and compelling ways, literacy to particular expertise, such as the arts, cooking and foods, performance, book reviews, community service, or social justice.

In the Foundation's early years, there were limited numbers of programs that met these criteria. However, by 2001, when Lena Townsend became Executive Director, the Foundation began receiving more applications than could be funded. Moreover, based on Bowne's practice of providing programs with consistent funding over time, there were limited slots for new grantees. As a result, the Foundation initiated a policy whereby grantees received funding for five years (later reduced to four years) and then went on a two-year hiatus before they could reapply.

In 2009, Bowne initiated its "boutique program" category, whereby it set aside five grantee slots for small (under \$1 million) organizations with few other sources of funding — often with committed staff members who were willing to work for little or no pay. Qualifying grantee organizations in this category receive funding every year.

In addition to funding community-based programs providing direct services to youth, including funding to create program libraries for children and youth, the Foundation also awards: Dianne Kangisser Grants for Capacity Building to technical assistance providers; Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Research Grants for research and publication; and grants to advocacy organizations.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and Evolution of Its Programmatic Support of Grantees

The Robert Bowne Foundation's commitment to professional development and capacity building grew out of its initial decision, in 1987, to target funding to youth education programs. Then Vice President Dianne Kangisser believed that community-based programs served as critically important links between local communities and schools. At the same time, it was often the case that program staff members who came from the community — therefore bringing a sense of its culture and a grasp of the needs of its children and youth — often had little or no background in education. During this time, Kangisser implemented two practices that set the course for much of the Foundation's efforts:

- First, she told potential grantees to visit and learn from programs and educators she had funded, convinced that programs in general could and would benefit from sharing with and learning from each other.

- Second, she gave grants to experts she trusted from her earlier work in adult literacy to provide technical assistance support to grantees. This was substantive support from people who themselves were steeped in the fields of literacy and education.

Such experts — including Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence — formed the nucleus of Bowne’s earliest Professional Development Group. Over time, the group grew to include not only literacy experts, but youth practitioners themselves, with their on-the-ground experience and perspectives gleaned from work in out-of-school time programs. This is an early instance of how the Foundation perceives, unites, and draws on both academic and experiential learning as equally important — a critically valuable insight.

In 1988, with a grant from the Robert Bowne Foundation, the Institute for Literacy Studies [ILS] at Lehman College, the Literacy Assistance Center, and the American Reading Council began to provide technical assistance, including staff development, to after-school youth-education agencies. Through this work, staff from the three organizations recognized that they needed to learn more about youth education programs, and they convened a group of literacy specialists and after-school practitioners to explore the issues. This group evolved into the Professional Development Group which today [1995] consists of youth educators and literacy practitioners from a wide variety of experiences and programs. What we have in common is a commitment to providing quality educational experiences for young people and adults.¹⁷

Two aspects of the Professional Development Group — (1) the joining of specialists *and* practitioners in a common effort and (2) the employment of a grounded inquiry approach — marked the Foundation’s efforts to identify and develop ways to meet the needs of afterschool practitioners while, at the same time, supporting creative, effective, literacy-imbued afterschool programs.

Thus, for example, in 1991, Kangisser provided the support for ILS to investigate the question: “What inspires an organization to change the way they do things?” As the basis for the study, she suggested eight afterschool programs where she had seen significant change. The resulting report, *Portraits of Youth Programs*,¹⁸ draws on case studies of program growth to identify factors that support educational change, including exposure to new educational ideas and changes in organizational structure. Such findings affirmed and bolster the Foundation’s conviction that strong programs need supportive management/organizational practices as well as focused and effective content and methods.

The Foundation’s approach to professional development is both practitioner driven and constantly developing. Kangisser invited practitioners to join the Professional Development Group as well as hired such practitioners as Marcie Wolfe and Lena Townsend of ILS and Sara Hill and Anne Lawrence of the Literacy Assistance Center, as consultants and later sometimes as staff. When Townsend and Lawrence became the Foundation’s Executive Director and Program Officer respectively, they continued the practice of identifying grantees with the potential to support youth practitioners and hired, among others, Suzanne Marten of the Center for Educational Options as a literacy consultant and Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D., as an evaluation consultant.

Bowne consultants and staff shared a set of core beliefs about literacy¹⁹ as well as a commitment to an inquiry approach to articulating, analyzing, and meeting practitioner needs. Such an approach involves identifying critical questions about practice, working with practitioners to study what works and what doesn’t, and then sharing lessons learned among practitioners.

¹⁷ Sara Louisa Hill, Lena O. Townsend, Anne Lawrence, Jonathan Shevin, Susan Ingalls, *Supporting Community Learning: A Staff Development and Resource Guide for After-School Youth-Education Programs* (New York: Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, The City University of New York, 1995).

¹⁸ Azi Ellowitch, Karen Griswold, Melanie Hammer, Deborah Shelton, Lena O. Townsend, and Marcie Wolfe, *Portraits of Youth Programs: Education Afterschool*, ed. M. Wolfe (New York: Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, The City University of New York, 1991).

¹⁹ Thus, for example, Suzanne Marten set out the following core beliefs when interviewed on July 21, 2011:

- Literacy is a right for everybody.
- Literacy happens in community.
- People learn best by doing, when they are engaged in inquiry, whether they are children or adults.
- Literacy is happening all the time throughout the day and throughout our lives, not just at school for academic purposes.
- Learning takes place over time. It is not a one-shot deal for kids or adults. Kids learn best by doing and coming back to things over and over again over time.

Bowne's commitment to inquiry includes a focus on the practices of the Foundation itself as well as of literacy education and management practices within programs. That is, it practices what it preaches. As a result, Bowne-supported professional development continually evolves, with planning for the future incorporating lessons learned as well as addressing new conditions and conundrums in the field of Out-of-School-Time (OST) education. For example:

- In 2003, with assistance from participatory evaluation expert Sabo-Flores, Lawrence designed a comprehensive self-administered questionnaire — eliciting reflections on the grantee's program and organization — as a means of preparation for the Foundation's support visit;
- In 2006, Marten and Lawrence began offering Networking sessions, primarily to provide opportunities for programs to learn from each other but also, in part, to address changing circumstances that made it more difficult for organizations to commit release time so staff could attend the more intensive seminars; and
- The current (2012-2013) Julia Palmer Library and Literacy Support Project — which combines library development, literacy learning, organizational support, and use of online technologies — grew out of lessons learned from previous Bowne seminars.

Work of The Robert Bowne Foundation: Key Themes

The following discussion is organized by key themes of the work of The Robert Bowne Foundation. Interactions between a foundation and a grantee reveal a great deal about both parties. Our on-the-ground look at the development and work of the Legacy sites has allowed us to view — *often through grantee eyes* — the approach and efforts of the Foundation. Moreover, such examination of current practice along with our review of Bowne organizational files has allowed us to understand that the values and aims of the Foundation *over time* have maintained a clarity, internal consistency, and steadiness that grantees and others greatly value. These standards and aims are articulated through the procedures, statements, and interests of the Foundation's staff and board members — and instituted through support visits, professional development sessions, personal interactions, supported networking, and funding practices.

Below, we look at key themes of the Foundation's work, grouping them into three broad and interlocking sections:

- The Robert Bowne Foundation and Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs
- The Robert Bowne Foundation and Capacity Building
- Methodology of The Robert Bowne Foundation.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and Out-Of-School Time (OST) Programs

A. Deeply-Held and Clearly Articulated Principles Guide the Robert Bowne Foundation

True to the vision of Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., the work of the Foundation is supported and guided by deeply-held beliefs, with a focus on youth and literacy:

- The meaning and value of literacy
- The birthright of every child to grow up literate
- The vision of out-of-school time programs as arenas of literacy practices that enliven, engage, and intrigue youth, opening up and deepening their views of their lives and their worlds. Often, such practices and possibilities strongly distinguish afterschool programs from the test score culture that currently is so prevalent in schools
- Program staffs as skillful, creative, caring, and effective integrators of literacy into their out-of-school time programs for children and teens.

Moreover, echoing the many different forms encompassed within the historical Robert Bowne's sense of social responsibility and belief in the dignity of the common man — from New York Hospital to the Manumission Society of New York and including The Society for Establishing a Free School in New York City²⁰ — so the programmatic efforts at childhood literacy differ across the roster of Bowne grantees. Significantly, the Foundation does not look for or try to impose a particular model of literacy programming or adherence to a specific approach. Instead, its

²⁰ See: http://www.bownehouse.org/history_bowne_family.htm

programmatic supports aim deeper: first to spark an interest and then — often through the work itself — a grasp of the meaning and value of literacy for each participating child and family. This is accompanied with a commitment to further, deepen, and enrich literacy practice within the parameters of each program.

B. Passion and the Robert Bowne Foundation: A Focus on Engaging and Working with Youth

In addition, the Foundation — guided again by the example of Edmund A. Stanley, Jr. — looks for and values *passion* in its grantees — passion about their work with — and for — youth and literacy. The earlier example (on page 1 above) of Stanley’s grant to “. . . *40 Acres and a Mule*, a monthly newspaper written and published by students in Harlem and financed by contributions, subscription sales and advertisements”²¹ reflects the significance of such passion. The *New York Times* article continues:

Mr. James [the paper’s managing editor] said: ‘Our big problem is money. If we can’t pay the printer, we can’t get the paper out.’ At one point last winter, Mr. James said, the paper was so short of funds that its [teen] writers went into the subway stations and asked the passengers for money.

Cyril James, according to the March 1969 article, directed one of the New York Urban League’s street academy programs when he began collecting stories and poetry written by program participants. Over time, he had the collection bound and passed it around “from reader to reader.” Rooted in these beginnings — and initially funded by donations — the newspaper began in the mid-60s, written by students and members of Urban League programs.

One of the student writers says:

‘I dropped out of public school because I wasn’t learning anything, said Vernell Polite, 16. She later went to one of the Urban League’s street schools; when she asked for a part-time job, she was sent to *40 Acres*. [She says,] ‘I’ve had four poems in the paper, but that’s not all. They help you here, they understand you. It’s not a paper, it’s a family.’²²

The newspaper was a passion that, as Lena Townsend names it, became a “path” to and for youth. It is such passion and vision that redound in multiple ways through programs receiving support — in all its diverse forms — from the Robert Bowne Foundation.

Thus, for example, *Rocking the Boat*, a Bowne grantee working in the Hunt’s Point section of the South Bronx, focuses on the skills and visions of boat building as its path to and for youth:

. . . . empower[ing] young people challenged by severe economic, educational, and social conditions to develop the self-confidence to set ambitious goals and gain the skills necessary to achieve them. Students work together to build wooden boats, learn to row and sail, and restore local urban waterways, revitalizing their community while creating better lives for themselves.²³

Or again, the Horticultural Society of New York’s Apple Seed program — offered both in classrooms and in afterschool programs — generally takes place in gardens and involves hands-on activities linking “science learning with reading, mathematics, writing, cultural history, geography, and artistic expression.”²⁴ The Global Action Project works “with young people most affected by injustice to build the knowledge, tools, and relationships needed to create media for community power, cultural expression, and political change.”²⁵ The Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, founded by Sister Kwayera Archer-Cunningham “out of her love of our children and a desire to enrich their lives with the arts and knowledge of their African cultural heritage.”²⁶ And again, there is the Educational Video Center, “dedicated to teaching documentary video as a means to develop the artistic, critical literacy, and career skills of young people, while nurturing their idealism and commitment to social change.”²⁷

²¹ See: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0913F8385D137A93C0A91788D85F4D8685F9>

²² See: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FB0913F8385D137A93C0A91788D85F4D8685F9>

²³ See: <http://www.rockingtheboat.org/about/>

²⁴ See: http://thehort.org/education_appleseed.html

²⁵ See: <http://global-action.org/>

²⁶ See: <http://www.ifetayo.org/about/ifetayo-history.shtml>

²⁷ See: <http://www.evc.org/about>

For these programs and for many others, including the Legacy programs, the passion of the program and its staff — whether it is discovering nature in a garden or building boats or experiencing, writing, and publishing about the arts, as in TRaC, or discovering self-expression through art, as in Arts & Literacy, or serving at the Forest Hills Camp Café — the passion instilled in creating, animating, and modeling these paths open up ways for children and teens to discover, develop, and hone passions for learning of their own.

Passion is also evident in perhaps less dramatic but no less demanding ways — a staff person working extra hours to develop a new summer camp curriculum for school-aged children; people who work in the world of the arts, but are not necessarily experienced teachers, put in extra time to hone the art of working with and supporting teen writers as they experience and review an off-Broadway play, a new dance performance, a discovered piece of visual art. It is passion to take the leap and expand your program beyond the Spanish-speaking population for whom it was created — and offer it in a new borough to new ethnic groups because you believe in what the program offers.

It is also passion that results in deeply committed staff leading an afterschool program in exchange for dorm lodging or, again, a director who repeatedly refuses a pay raise, wanting the resource to go into the program instead; or program staff who go beyond work hours to lobby and demonstrate against city budget cuts that will affect afterschool programs and therefore the lives of children, their families, and their communities. It is passion that drives program staff to work through furloughs months and years long, with pay cuts but hours that never diminish, to keep their program alive and thriving.

Bowne looks for and supports such passion through its funding practices. And it helps grow such passion as well, through its professional development, its accessibility, and its bringing together and linking staffs from across programs so they can share with and learn from each other.

C. Programmatic Clarity of Vision and Implementation

Bowne Foundation staff look for and support programs where the leadership and staff can translate their passion for youth into an articulated clarity about the program's vision, goals, and strategies — and then develop the operational structures and processes for program implementation. In critical and — for the Foundation — typical ways, it is important to stress that Bowne does *not* look to fund only those programs that already have translated passion into strategies. Instead, the Foundation helps support, extend, and create that translation when it finds the passion and sees potential. Interactions with its grantees regularly provide support for such translation into on-the-ground strategies, structures, and definition of goals. Such support occurs in ongoing ways. For example, Anne Lawrence's support visits to grantees is preceded by a detailed and wide-ranging pre-visit form to be completed and returned to the Foundation before such a visit.²⁸

One grantee comments:

Anne and Lena came up with some unique ways of getting us to talk about and look at what we do — through the surveys and reports they ask for every June or July. This process has been good for me in terms of putting that information together; then you go and talk with them about it. It's a really great process for thinking through what you do and doing the work to make it even better. A lot of times, I think the reporting you are asked to do for corporations and foundations, you do *for them* and then never think about it again. For the Bowne Foundation, they challenge you to think about how you do things — then you can use what you've written and thought about because [the writing and thinking] have been valuable to do.²⁹

In a conversation with another grantee, a similar theme arises: “[Anne] is more hands-on than most foundations . . . [Bowne] seemed more interested in strengthening the program they were funding. Anne would visit . . . and help us think about the program, and things like how to strengthen the [organization's] board.”³⁰

Even a skim through the Foundation's *Grantee Questionnaire* (pages 20-26 below) reveals the breadth and depth of the topics covered. There are, as might be expected, many questions about the program's activities and ways that literacy is integrated —

²⁸ See Appendix C, pages 20-26, for a copy of “The Robert Bowne Foundation Grantee Questionnaire 2011.”

²⁹ Matt Mahoney, Executive Director, Operation Exodus Inner City, interviewed October 19, 2011.

³⁰ Emily Bratten, Development Director, and Liza Hunte-Dennis, Program Director, Greater New York Councils, Boy Scouts of America, interviewed October 10, 2011.

as well as grantee aims to strengthen the program and how Bowne might help. But then, the questionnaire goes on to ask more broadly about the program's circumstances: the program/organization's board of directors, fundraising strategies, the impact of the current economic crisis, program management, the use of strategic planning, and staffing and staff development. The questionnaire also probes into whether and how Bowne's funding and technical assistance has had an impact on the program.

These are not light questions, and the responses are not taken lightly either. Before a support visit, Anne Lawrence reads and annotates the responses, always with an eye to finding ways that Bowne might provide support. Is there an issue that the grantee might want to talk through? Are there places where professional development or technical assistance might help? Can Bowne offer the help of Community Resources Exchange, an offer we have witnessed during several support visits, including support to Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, discussed in the case study of the Page Turner Afterschool Program, as well as referenced in interviews with grantees, as in the quote below.

A third interviewee reinforces and adds to our understanding of the depth and breadth of Bowne's support:

They have roundtables and forums all the time. They are supportive in terms of training. . . . When I became the Executive Director, they sent me to a program for new executive directors at CRE [Community Resource Exchange]. I had more than 12 months of training from CRE. And then they paid for CRE consultant days for me to have a coach. They've helped with board development and with capacity building of the agency. . . . It was not just a monetary gift, but weeks and weeks of training for [me and] our staff.

They're also a foundation that links. They're always saying, 'You should be talking to this [executive director] over here that we just helped do what you're trying to do.' Or, 'There's this training over here, the Institute for Non-Profit Management, that you might get a lot out of.' Or 'There's this great book over here.' They have worked at *real* development. Other foundations use money as a carrot dangling in front of us. For Bowne, money is one of many tools to help develop the program, but not the only thing they see as necessary. . . .³¹

There are, of course, many aspects to such work: translating a concept into programmatic terms, hiring and developing staff, budgeting, outreach and recruiting, and so forth. Bowne also understands that organizational priorities and practices — such as, hiring rules and processes, fiscal and programmatic priorities, training and professional development opportunities, and so forth — directly affect and shape each program's operations. These combine to create the sense that the program and its staff together have the potential to evolve over time. Once seen, it is this potential that the Foundation has the will and proficiency to help cultivate.

D. The Robert Bowne Foundation is Clear about the Value, Development, and Meaning of Literacy

The Foundation's grasp of the value, means of development, and cultural significance of literacy is basic to its practice:

Literacy takes many forms as it develops according to principles we believe to be fundamental:

- Literacy happens in community.
- Literacy develops through active engagement.
- Literacy is a means to self-determination.
- Literacy is a fundamental part of being human in 21st century America.³²

This is a clear, direct, uncompromising declaration of the principles and meaning of literacy. In pointing to the essential significance of literacy, the statement integrates individual and community, active engagement and self-determination. In our work, we have seen this understanding and value translated into action. The unequivocal statement undergirds the Foundation's work across multiple realms, including: grantmaking; working with grantees through support visits, individual conversations, and professional development; and sparking collegial networks. The Foundation supports access to tools that allow programs and organizations to demystify, develop, and fruitfully employ: literacy strategies; program development approaches; evaluation processes; fund-raising strategies; inquiry and action research; field-engagement and development; program libraries; and researching and writing for publication.

³¹ Reverend Kimberly Wright, Executive Director, Booker T. Washington Learning Center, Interview, October 23, 2011.

³² See: http://www.bownefoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55

Bowne staff are, moreover, accessible and responsive — a quality that more than one grantee staff person has noted, at times with surprise that this could be true of a foundation. When grantees call, Bowne staff provide advice, make referrals, suggest trainings, and ask the pertinent question — all while building personal relationships. A guiding principle of the Foundation — that the practitioner’s voice must be heard in shaping the field — begins at home.

E. Literacy Can Be Seamlessly Infused into All Programs

Arts & Literacy, Page Turners, Teen Reviewers and Critics (TRaC), and Youth Programs at the Forest Hills Neighborhood Center of Queens Community House all arrived at The Robert Bowne Foundation with different histories, programs, and perspectives on the possibilities of integrating literacy into their programs. As the case studies below portray, each has grown and, with the help of the Bowne Foundation, developed the ability to infuse literacy into its program.

In providing such support, Bowne has worked at times in very fundamental ways. Thus, when Rauschenbusch Baptist Church approached the Foundation for support to start its Metro Ministries arm (a Legacy grantee), it used the common grant application format in its first-ever request for foundation funding. As it happened, the common application runs totally counter to the Foundation’s interest in learning about an applicant’s larger aims and its programmatic values, work, and goals. It was a proposal that could easily have been turned away. But Lena Townsend perceived potential — although largely-unarticulated — in the proposal. Given this and the possibility of helping to infuse literacy in a new program and thereby reaching new constituencies, she worked with Rauschenbusch as it strove to articulate both its social programs aspect (Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries) and a desired children’s afterschool program within that sphere. The effort has proven worthwhile. The Page Turners Afterschool staff has, over time, become increasingly literacy-conscious in all its efforts while providing the only *free* afterschool program in its Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood.

During our fieldwork, we have seen Legacy grantee staff members *think and act* in terms of literacy without hesitation — naming actions and feelings; using new vocabulary through food, performance, the arts; developing absorbing summer camp curricula; engaging parents; publishing *haiku* and twitter reviews of the arts. Each program has remained individual, true to its history and context — each has grown and changed as well as it has grasped, adapted, and employed literacy practices.

We have also seen such consciousness about the many intersections of literacy and program activity named, discussed, sharpened, and shared through Bowne-supported professional development sessions for grantees with, for example, Suzanne Marten of the Center for Educational Options or previously with Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D., on evaluation. Moreover, with Foundation staff who are themselves deeply experienced in both literacy and out-of-school time programs, Anne Lawrence, Bowne Program Officer, helps develop and participates in all literacy professional development offerings as well as provides one-on-one assistance during support visits to grantee sites.

F. Bowne’s Interests Span from Individual Programs to the Field of Afterschool and Literacy

The Foundation helps grantees think about ways to work with and link multiple levels:

- the individual to the program
- the program to the organization
- the program to the community
- the program to other afterschool literacy programs
- the program to the larger fields of afterschool and of literacy.

We have seen the Foundation working in all these venues, and the case studies, in one way or another, highlight aspects of each. Here, we elaborate on the final two bullets above, the linking of programs to each other as well as to the larger arenas of afterschool programs and the field of literacy. In addition, it is important to note that in recognizing the ability of Bowne-supported programs to learn from each other, the Foundation also encourages growth, opening up ways for programs to develop and evolve over time.

- Collegueship across the afterschool field is a major source of cross-program/cross-organization learning and support. Thus, TRaC’s Eric Ost, for example, emphasizes the critical assistance of other Bowne grantees in the Foundation’s Action Research workshop — which he joined as part of Anne Lawrence’s support as he entered both the world of NYC afterschool programming for the first time and undertook the challenge of leading and growing the TRaC program. The development of such collegueship has been and continues to be an important ingredient in Bowne’s approach to professional development, which intentionally fosters cross-program sharing of ideas, approaches, and dilemmas.

- Networking meetings in particular play an important role in allowing staff from different Bowne-supported programs to highlight particular perspectives and expertise. Such efforts both support the exchange of ideas and program elements, as well as help establish links between and among programs and their staffs. Moreover, such sharing among and linking of professionals across organizations help promote a sense both of professionalism and of a community of shared values and commitments.

At times, such linkage has led to long-term ongoing relationships not only across individuals but between programs and organizations. Thus, a mentoring program administered by Partnership for After School Education (PASE) and funded by The Robert Bowne Foundation, was the impetus for a lasting relationship between Queens Community House (QCH) and South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!) — to the benefit of both. QCH mentored and helped strengthen SAYA! as an organization, while SAYA! helped QCH better understand and serve the growing number of South Asians in Queens.

The Foundation's commitment to afterschool as a distinct field underpins efforts both to help define the field as well as disseminate a grounded understanding of its work, including among those who work in the field. Bowne helps support investigation into afterschool topics through such efforts as:

- Afterschool Matters Initiative
 - *Afterschool Matters Journal*
 - Establishment of the American Education Research Association (AERA) Out-of-School Time Special Interest Group
 - Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Research Grants for Research in the Out-of-School Time
 - Practitioner Fellowship
 - Publication of articles by the Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., researchers and Practitioner Fellows in the *Afterschool Matters* journal
 - Ensuring continuation of the Afterschool Matters Initiative, including the *Afterschool Matters* journal, beyond the closing of the Foundation by relocating it at the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, as well as initially providing support for its continuation.
- The Edmund A. Stanley, Jr., Research Grant for investigation of out-of-school time efforts makes these intentions explicit:
 - To generate and disseminate research about community-based organizations serving youth during the out-of-school hours
 - To build a network of scholars studying community-based organizations serving youth
 - To contribute to basic knowledge and the improvement of practice and policy in the area of youth programs during the out-of-school hours.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and Capacity Building

A. Bowne Works to Support and Strengthen Grantees Big and Small, New and Established

The four Legacy grantees taken together reflect the span of Bowne's efforts:

- Queens Community House, home of Youth Programs at Forest Hills Neighborhood Center, first funded in 1995, now “serves nearly 25,000 children, youth, adults and older adults at 22 different sites in 11 neighborhoods throughout Queens.”³³
- Arts & Literacy at Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, also first funded in 1995, initially served one site in Bushwick, Brooklyn, and has grown to three Bushwick sites and three Queens sites (the third site in Jackson Heights opened in 2012-13).
- Page Turners of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries first received Bowne funding in 2001 and now serves 50 elementary school children, providing the only free afterschool programming in the neighborhood three afternoons a week.

³³ See: <http://www.queenscommunityhouse.org/>

- TRaC (Teen Reviewers & Critics), then of High 5 Tickets to the Arts, received its first Bowne funding in 2002, when the program was in development. The Foundation liked the concept of engaging teens both in the arts and review writing, and provided funding to help start TRaC.

Such an approach allows the Foundation to search out and support grantees with strong potential, including those *without* long proven records, well established organizational homes, or multiple funders. While the Foundation does not hang its hat on national recognition, it is noteworthy to add that:

- In 2011 and again in 2012, TRaC was one of 50 finalists nationally for the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award; and
- In 2004, the Arts & Literacy Program of the Coalition of Hispanic Family Services was honored as one of 17 recipients for that year's Coming Up Taller Awards given by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

B. Bowne Makes Realistic and Fitting Suggestions for Program Development and Growth

When a foundation's staff are steeped in the knowledge and craft of its field of interest — as Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence are steeped in literacy and afterschool — they are able to support grantees at the level of daily activity as well as with the big picture. They can see and name, for example, links between and among programmatic elements in action and make suggestions about strengthening both the links as well as the individual elements. Such a stance is evident, for example, in the way Bowne staff open up conversations in such areas as:

- Expanding definitions of the meaning of “literacy”
- Helping program staff see how to strengthen what they are already doing by linking it to literacy-enhancing practices
- Supporting program staff to understand that they are already “doing literacy,” but they just have not defined it that way.

Grantees recognize — and deeply appreciate — the fact that comments and suggestions by Townsend and Lawrence are rooted in personal experience, expertise, and vision. One grantee says, for example:

There is something so different about RBF — they *know* the field; they *know* childhood literacy, they *know* afterschool. They're not just funders — they know children and they know literacy. . . . There's not another foundation that has such a reputation. It's just a different approach. Other program officers don't know children; they don't know literacy.³⁴

Another grantee notes the approach as well, asserting that:

[Anne Lawrence and Lena Townsend] are so interested in literacy that it spills out into everything they do. As former teachers they have a very good approach to seeing how it is done when they come and visit you. They look at the program and help you learn.³⁵

As good teachers, they not only know their subject and how to use that knowledge, but, as we have observed and as grantee after grantee has attested, they work to help program staff see, understand, and create the links themselves. In such conversations, the clarity of the Foundation's alignment with the interests of the grantee is clear. One grantee comments on how and why Bowne's view of literacy is so useful to afterschool programs:

Bowne had an influence [on]. . . . literacy programming that was *not* a continuation of the school day, but multiple variations on it. They came at literacy from a youth development perspective. You don't promote reading to do well on tests; you read to experience the joy of reading.³⁶

Such conversations often lead as well to on-the-spot specifics about things to try programmatically, information about an upcoming professional development session that may be of interest, and/or the offer of an introduction to someone in a nearby organization whose program grew in similar ways.

³⁴ Linda Waltrous, former Director, Cornerstone Learning Center, current Education Director, Fresh Youth Initiative, Interview, October 21, 2011.

³⁵ Sister Kathleen, Founding Director, Dorothy Bennett Mercy Center, Interview, October 7, 2011.

³⁶ Keith Hefner, Executive Director, Youth Communications, Interview, October 10, 2011.

Moreover, access to Bowne staff and their knowledge and experience is not limited to current grantees. When, for example, there are open slots in a Bowne professional development offering or if there is a particular interest, former grantees are invited and welcomed. One grantee told us, “Once a Bowne grantee, always a Bowne grantee.”³⁷ The Foundation’s open-handed willingness to listen and provide suggestions, invite past grantees to professional development sessions, link grantees to each other — all continue.

It is all part of helping programs reach their potential so more program staff understand why and how to integrate literacy into activities, so more children and teens benefit in multiple ways from their participation, and more people reach their full potential.

C. Bowne Supports Literacy Development and Much More

The Foundation Provides Support and Basic Tools for the Healthy Flourishing of an OST Program

Just as the Foundation offers a broad range of support vehicles to grantees, so too is its area of focus broadly defined. The Robert Bowne Foundation staff and board bring a holistic view of program support to their funding endeavors, encompassing all the many interrelated pieces that make up a program. A grantee points to the Foundation’s encompassing perspective, saying:

[Anne] is more hands-on than most foundations Anne would visit the program and help us think about the program *and* things like how to strengthen the board. . . . One example of what Anne was delivering was when she came to visit and saw [the participants] were reading the books. What came out of it was keeping journals. . . . It wasn’t just one aspect, we’d buy some books and that was that — but helping us use the books more effectively. It has been great. This kind of significant support has helped the quality of all the programs. . . . We’ve been able to expand our program offerings because of the strength of the [Bowne-funded] program. . . . We have been able to take what we had learned from [Bowne staff] to other programs [such as our camp].³⁸

Thus, for example, Bowne brought a focus on programs self-evaluating through such efforts as the Participatory Evaluation Institutes and the Re-Imagining After School Initiative. Through these initiatives, programs learned how to articulate and monitor both what they do and how they do it. Such a process of self-communication and self-assessment enabled programs to understand where and how they could improve their offerings.

At the same time, Bowne understands that programs operate within organizational contexts and, therefore, are affected by the interests, practices, structure, and operational health of their home organizations. The truth of this insight is borne out clearly in each of the Legacy grantees: the bankruptcy of the original organizational home of the Teen Reviewers and Critics program; the efforts of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries to define itself more clearly vis-a-vis Metro Baptist Church; the introspection of the Coalition of Hispanic Family Services before deciding to try expanding its Arts & Literacy program into non-Hispanic neighborhoods; and the work of Queens Community House in expanding its afterschool programs into school sites.

Such an holistic view includes professional development support in such areas as, for example:

- Program content/practice — including clarity, articulation, and communication of program goals as well as translation of goals into engaging and effective practice
- Multiple shapes and facets of literacy and its integration into programs
- Professional Development — for program, development, library, administrative staffs
- Library Creation and Use
- Program Evaluation
- Action Research
- Strategic Planning
- Organizational Management
- Finances and Fundraising
- Linking staff and programs to larger conversations and circles.

³⁷ Susan Matloff-Nieves, Associate Executive Director for Youth Services, Queens Community House, Interview, July 21, 2011.

³⁸ Emily Bratten and Liza Hunte-Dennis Interview.

In 1999, Dianne Kangisser, in the Executive Summary for *The Third Arena: Afterschool Youth Literacy Programs*, says:

. . . in order to respond to the pressure and fulfill their potential as the *third arena* in which children are educated, CBOs [community-based organizations] need both financial and technical assistance. Recognizing this need, The Robert Bowne Foundation resolved in 1987 to devote its grantmaking entirely to building supports for CBOs to become quality educational providers that exhibit nine essential program elements: a philosophy of education, promotion of reading for enjoyment, literacy development as a social activity, use of a youth development model, use of educational approaches and content different from school, ongoing staff development opportunities, the availability of rich educational resources, promotion of parental involvement, and use of alternative assessment of program impacts.³⁹

It takes time, work, commitment, and focused attention to translate vision into practice. And it takes time, work, commitment, and focused attention to support and enrich that translation.

D. Bowne Has the Capacity to See Both the Program *and* the Organization, and How the Two Intersect

In funding a program, the Robert Bowne Foundation recognizes that it is also supporting an organization:

- The mission, purpose, and methodology of the program has to make sense and be in alignment with the larger organization — and the Foundation's commitment has to make sense in terms of the organization's orientation, mission and purpose, goals, and values as well as the practices, purposes, and goals of the program itself.

At times, this is something a program and its organization has to work through. For example, when the Arts & Literacy program of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services had the opportunity to apply for a contract to work in Queens, there was a fair amount of internal discussion about whether to submit the application at all. Winning the contract would mean working in another borough but even more, it would mean working with other ethnic groups, primarily Chinese families. In the end, the decision was to apply. Now the program is in two Queens communities (Corona and Elmhurst) and in fall 2012, began in a third, Jackson Heights. From the viewpoint of Laura Paris, Director, Arts & Literacy, the expansion has both enriched the program and allowed the Arts & Literacy model to be tested and shown to be a good one for *children* — across cultures, languages, and neighborhoods.

- Perhaps more frequently called on is Bowne's understanding of the interactional impact between a program and its organization. See, for example, Bowne's support for Rauschenbusch's strategic planning process. This arose in part because of the felt need of Rauschenbusch staff to help clarify the relationship between Metro Baptist Church (the organizational home) and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries (RMM, home of programs including the Page Turners). The growth of RMM's programs and the presence of two pastors — one of the church and the other the executive director of RMM as well as a pastor of the church — was beginning to create some perplexity among staff as well as the congregation over what fell into which category — church or RMM — and the meaning of each.

All of this points to the fact that Bowne does not define support for the development and well-being of a program in narrow terms. Rather, the program is viewed within the context of its organization, and with the understanding that organizational decision-making and operations affect the function and well-being of programs. This is clearly demonstrated in the following example where a site visit conversation with the Dorothy Bennett Mercy Center leads to assistance by Community Resource Exchange (CRE), with Bowne footing the bill:

The CRE also helped. I shared with Anne [Lawrence, RBF Program Officer] that I was going to be retiring. Anne asked what kind of preparations I was doing and I hadn't done much. She told us that it would be very important to inform the board and to do what needed to be done to leave the program in good condition for the future. So CRE came in, funded by the Bowne Foundation, and worked with us for a whole year, maybe fifteen (15) months. They met with the board, families, staff several times. They helped us with formalizing the program. Financial and personnel handbooks have been completed with their assistance in that fifteen months. They helped us solicit applications for the Executive Director position, they screened them and sent

³⁹ Dianne Kangisser, *The Third Arena*, p.6.

us those they felt would suit our needs. That was wonderful. It was a lot, it was great. They were so good, so professional. Everybody they dealt with said the same thing. . . . we could have never afforded to pay CRE for that kind of service.⁴⁰

The Robert Bowne Foundation Way of Working

Bowne Is Willing and Able to Work at the Ground Level

The Legacy Grantees in themselves reveal the willingness of the Foundation to enter at the ground level and work to support programs to reach their potential. Bowne does not wait for programs to prove themselves with other funding before being willing to engage with them. Thus, the Foundation provided funding to the Teen Reviewers and Critics (TRaC) program to help move the program from paper to reality. As noted above, TRaC is now receiving national attention for its work. In another instance, Lena Townsend received a proposal from Metro Baptist Church to help fund the establishment of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries. Fundamental rethinking was needed to make the proposal viable, but instead of simply rejecting it, she walked the pastor through a process of deliberation and articulation in order to develop a proposal that could be funded. In a similar way, Anne Lawrence, then linked to Bowne as a Literacy Assistance Center consultant, worked with staff from Queens Community House to help them think through and define the organization's approach to literacy.

Each Bowne Grantee Receives Support in Fulfilling Its Own Afterschool Literacy Potential

As can be seen in the case studies, Foundation staff put their knowledge in the service of supporting the particular aims of each grantee at the particular point in time. This means that grantees are able to share the difficulties as well as successes of their programs; they know that Foundation staff will not hold difficulties against them — as demonstrated in the stories of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries and of Teen Reviewers and Critics. Instead, programs have an ally in analyzing circumstances and potentials as well as in strategizing about next steps. At Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries (RMM), for example, a site visit discussion covered programming possibilities as well as inquiries about the fund-raising potential of the RMM board.

Bowne staff understand that a grantee's larger aims and values — as well as practical constraints — largely determine the shape and priorities of any program. At the same time, with all its grantees, the Foundation makes suggestions, asks about all relevant aspects of the program and organization, advises about professional development possibilities, mentions other grantees with experience dealing with similar situations, points to opportunities the grantee might find relevant and want to pursue. The one thing the Foundation does *not* do is press a list of “must-dos.” Instead, Bowne respects grantees' decision-making, even when, as in the fund-raising inquiry, funding seems critical for a program whose director, for several years, was reimbursed with lodging within the church building.

Over and over, program personnel point to Bowne's capacity and willingness to see a program through the eyes of its staff and administrators — and not against a preferred Foundation model. An Arts & Literacy staff person explicitly points out that Bowne is not dogmatic; that it does not demand, unlike some other funders, that the organization “toe a foundation line.”

Instead, the Foundation finds ways to elicit, support, and enhance programs' and practitioners' views of what is possible and desirable within its literacy-infused programs. That is, once Bowne has decided to provide funding, it looks to support each *individual* grantee — taking into account its point of development — in defining and fulfilling its *own programmatic and organizational* aims within the literacy ↔ program arena. Thus, the Foundation fully supports the work of a Page Turners program (Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries) as well as that of an Arts & Literacy program (Coalition for Hispanic Family Services) and Youth Programs at the Center (Queens Community House), three very different afterschool offerings for young children.

Foundation Staff Are Accessible to Grantees, Big and Small, Old and New, Current and Past

Not only do Bowne staff have experience grounded in practice, but over and over, grantee personnel point out the accessibility of that experience. One person from a “boutique” program says:

I think the most significant [Bowne] legacy is the personal relationship with the agencies that they fund. These people really care. . . . I always feel I can call Anne Lawrence and Lena Townsend and ask them a question.

⁴⁰ Sister Kathleen Quinn Interview.

They are very up front and personal It's not just us. They do it for everyone. You don't get the same sense from other funders that they really *care* about literacy Most important is the kind of accessibility [at Bowne], and what they offer in terms of training and technical assistance.⁴¹

Another grantee points out:

I think with Bowne, if you say, 'We know literacy is important and we want to develop it,' they will help you develop it. They don't just look for the best programs around to fund. They work with you to build a good program. They work with you along the way to learn how to build your program.⁴²

A third grantee points to the important coalescing of Bowne's investment of care, time, and support that comes with a Foundation grant:

At the annual meeting, Anne [Lawrence] isn't focused on how the program funding was used and whether it was used in a certain way. It's more like an update — she actually *cares* about how the program is doing and she can help you think about the program, what's happening, where it's going. . . . When they fund you, they're willing to invest their *time* in you⁴³

Fundamental to its Efforts, The Robert Bowne Foundation Practices and Supports an Inquiry Approach — with Grantees, its own Foundation Work, and Through Initiatives

Support for the inquiry stance aims to help a grantee define and articulate its own questions — and then answer those questions, reflect on the response, and take the next steps.

The stance is evident in the way Foundation staff help grantees stand back from their work, the better to view, articulate, and improve it. This happens in a number of ways, including the Grantee Questionnaire that Bowne sends to the grantee to complete and return to the Foundation before a site support visit — a form that encourages grantees' rigorous self-examination. On the visit itself, Anne Lawrence uses the Questionnaire responses to jump-start specific, in-depth discussion about how the program is working and developing, including areas that might need improvement. She might also suggest aspects to consider and/or potential support in the form of professional development options, conversations with other grantees, or even, as in the Dorothy Bennett Mercy Center example above, possible direct assistance from Community Resource Exchange (CRE), funded by Bowne. Thus, for example, when, during a site visit, Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries talked about undertaking a Strategic Planning Process, Bowne again offered CRE assistance, if helpful; an offer that was accepted and put to good use.

In addition, Bowne has supported the inquiry stance for its grantees through such professional development opportunities as its evaluation training with Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D., and the Center for Educational Option's "Action Research" workshop series as well as its literacy professional development.

The Afterschool Matters Fellowship also provides venues for direct training and support for practitioners in their efforts to step back, view, and analyze their work. Here, there are two main objectives. First, Fellowship participants are trained in and practice action research. The aim is for each participant to define a work-related question, investigate it through research on the ground — including, for example, observations, interviews, surveys, or other methodologies — conduct a literature review, and then write up their analyses. Second, some participants will submit their articles, go through a peer-review process, and possibly be published by *Afterschool Matters* journal, a means by which practitioner analytic perspectives can contribute to, help shape, and engage with larger, field-wide discussions.

But all participants will have been trained in and practiced action research — taking an inquiry stance toward their work, programs, and/or organizations. The Fellowship experience proved to be a vital element of professional development for key staff at Queens Community House (QCH). Susan Matloff-Nieves, Associate Executive Director for Youth Services, and Helena Ku, Director of School-Based Programs, were two of several QCH staff who were Fellows. Matloff-Nieves employed action research to investigate QCH's informal practice of employing former participants.

⁴¹ Sister Kathleen Quinn Interview.

⁴² Reverend Kim Wright Interview.

⁴³ Christie Ko, Executive Director, The Fiver Foundation, Interview, October 19, 2011.

As a result, the informal practice — now articulated — became more intentional with, for example, early training and increasing responsibility for potential candidates. Matloff-Nieves published her article “Growing Our Own” in the Spring 2007 issue of the *Afterschool Matters* journal. She also co-wrote, with Sara Hill and Lena Townsend, “putting our questions at the center: Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowships,” published in the Spring 2009 issue of the journal.

Here, of course, the Foundation’s support of practitioner inquiry has personal, programmatic, organizational, and field impacts.

At the same time, Foundation staff themselves have incorporated the inquiry approach in ways that infuse their own planning and interactions. During internal planning sessions to develop effective networking meetings and professional development workshops, for example, Anne Lawrence regularly uses inquiry methodology to further the thinking. Thus, in working with Suzanne Marten of Center for Educational Options when planning a Hot Topics virtual seminar, inquiry was used to step back, review the proceedings, and consider what would work best with the group of participants at particular moments of the seminar series. In a similar process when working with Laura Paris of Arts & Literacy on a parent involvement networking meeting, the idea of helping participating programs through a strategic planning process arose when Lawrence’s inquiry stance began the step back to review and consider.

This is perhaps a fitting coda for the Robert Bowne Foundation’s work. Staff and board members promote practices that they believe in and know to be effective; they treat grantees as they themselves want to be treated — with respect for their aims and values, informed support for their endeavors, and belief in their potential. Four detailed case studies of the Foundation’s work follow.

Appendix A

Principles of Ethnographic Research

1. It's critical to understand *what* the effort is, *how* it operates, and *why* it operates as it does.
2. Examine the social structural context within which action takes place.
- 3 **Insights into *why* a program unfolds as it does and its impact (or lack thereof) must be drawn from interviews with involved actors.**
Only detailed fieldwork links program descriptions with the lived experiences of the men and women who actually implement programs.

Findings in these three areas comprise the individual and collective stories of social change efforts and their outcomes as well as the basis for consequential lessons and insights.

4. The ethnographic approach proceeds through the following methodologies:

- a. **Documents Review:** This includes, for the legacy study, a systematic review of Foundation documents to gain a formal understanding of the funder's interests, goals, and processes.
- b. **Interviews and Participant Observations:** Here, these are long-term systematic interviews with and observations of the principals and staff of the four (4) focus grantee programs selected through documents review and in discussion with Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence.
 - We are also conducting telephone interviews — with a set of more focused questions — with EDs and staff of 21 additional grantees, also selected with Lena Townsend and Anne Lawrence.
 - Plus interviews with and observations of RBF staff, Board members, mainstay programmatic technical assistance providers, program staff, participants, and others who are key to understanding the Foundation's efforts
5. **Ongoing data analysis takes place during the data collection process:** Interview and observation notes, typed up and reviewed, help inform subsequent interviews and observations. In this way, points are tested from one interview to the next to see which are generally shared and which are idiosyncratic. Such ongoing testing and retesting allows the researchers to identify and explore those perceptions and experiences that are generally shared; these become the bases for programmatic and funding lessons and insights.

Appendix B

Overview: Four (4) Robert Bowne Foundation Legacy Study Sites for Ethnographic Research

RBF-Supported Afterschool Program	Arts & Literacy After School + Summer Program	Center Based Out-Of-School Time Programs	Page Turners	TRaC: Teen Reviewers and Critics
Organization	Coalition for Hispanic Family Services	Queens Community House	Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, Metro Baptist Church	ArtsConnection
Program Location(s)	Bushwick, Brooklyn Added: 3 Queens sites	Forest Hills Neighborhood Center	Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan	NYC Art Venues Classes in Manhattan
Program Start	1993	1975	1996	2002
RBF Funding Start	1995	1995	2001	2002
Organization Provides Social Services	Yes, in Bushwick & Art Therapy: All sites	Yes	Yes	No
Community Based	Yes, in Bushwick	Yes, in Main Site	Yes	No
School-Based Sites	Yes, All Programs	No	No	No
Elementary and/or Middle School Students	Yes: Elementary School In 2012–13, A&L is expanding into Middle School	Yes: 5–12 year olds	Yes: Elementary School	Freelancers Corps: 13–18 years old youth independently review arts and publish in on-line <i>High 5 Review</i>
High School Student Participation	Yes: Apprenticeship Program	Yes: Evening Teen Center	No	TRaC: Yes, prefer Sophomores & older
Program Outline	Homework Support; Range of Arts/Artists (dance, music, visual, theatre) & Literacy; Art Therapy; Summer Camp	Elementary School: 5 days/week After School; Summer Camp; Transition to High School; Leadership for Teen Girls	3 days/week: Homework Support; Book Club; Writing; Arts/Crafts; Nutrition; Circle Activities; Visiting Performers; Outings	Engage with Arts in NYC; Develop critical literacy; Publish online reviews; Experience a social context beyond school; Abbreviated Summer Session
Julia Palmer Library	Yes, Library Carts	Yes	Yes	No
# of Participants During School Year	Incl. 2012–13 site: @783 children with full afterschool services	@150 children & teens	50	In 2011–12: @ 250 across all offerings

Appendix C

**The Robert Bowne Foundation
Grantee Questionnaire**

2011

Date of meeting:

Name of person(s) filling out questionnaire:	Title(s):
Name of program:	Organization:
Telephone: Fax:	E-mail:

Instructions: Please help us learn about your program by answering the following questions. This survey will help us at the Robert Bowne Foundation better support you in your program efforts. Please be as honest as possible. Thank you for your help.

1. For the program(s) we fund, what neighborhood(s) do you serve?
2. How many days per week does your program meet?
3. How many hours per day does your program meet?
4. Have there been any changes in your program since your last report or meeting with Anne Lawrence, the program officer? If so, please describe the changes.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

5. What are the MAJOR activities your afterschool program conducts on a regular basis (i.e. daily or weekly)?

Please mark all that apply.

Daily/Weekly Activities Conducted in Your Program			
Homework help		Arts and crafts	
Tutoring		Visual and fine arts	
Reading		Cooking	
Writing		Music	
Math		Drama	
Science		Environmental projects	
On-site library visits		Law/debate	
Off-site library visits (i.e. public library)		Chess	
Hands on projects		Community Service	
Research		Board games	
Individual reading		Organized sports (basketball, baseball, hockey, etc.)	
Group Reading		Playground/park time	
Educational computer games		Dance	
Swimming		Computers Instruction Projects Games	
Skating		Other:	
Games (not board games)		Other:	

6. How integrated are LITERACY activities into your overall program?

Very integrated	Somewhat integrated	Not at all integrated
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Please explain:

7. What aspects of your program would you like to improve? Please describe.

8. What would assist you in making these improvements?

YOUTH/CHILD PARTICIPATION

9. Does your program engage youth and children in decision making about the program? If so, in what ways?

10. Would you like to improve youth participation? If so, what would assist you in making these improvements?

ENVIRONMENT

- 11. Please describe your program's environment.
- 12. In what ways could it be improved?
- 13. What actions could be taken to support the improvement of your program environment?

LIBRARY

- 14. Do you have a library in your program?
- 15. What is the approximate number of books in your library?
- 16. Please describe how your library is used.
- 17. In what ways could your library be improved?
- 18. What actions could be taken to support the improvement of your library?

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 19. Please describe your program's strategy for community involvement.
- 20. In what ways could it improve?
- 21. What actions could be taken to improve your program's ability to involve the community?

PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- 22. Please describe your program's strategy for parents and family involvement.
- 23. In what ways could it improve?
- 24. What actions could be taken to improve your program's ability to involve parents and family?

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 25. How would you describe your board of directors? (mark all that apply)

Board Characteristics	
A) Founding Board	
B) Governing Board	
C) Fundraising Board	
D) Oversight Board	

- 26. In what ways could your board improve?
- 27. What actions could be taken to improve your board?

FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

28. In the chart below, please mark all of your program's fund raising strategies. Then mark the percent of funds that are raised through each strategy (note: these figures should add up to 100%).

Type of Fundraising Strategy	% of budgetary funds raised through this strategy
Events	%
In Kind Donations	%
Foundations	%
Government	%
Individual Donors	%
Earned Income Ventures	%
Corporate	%
Fees/membership	%

29. In what ways could your fund raising strategies improve?

30. What actions could be taken to support the improvement of the fund raising strategies?

IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

31. From last year, is your revenue	the same	up	down
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32a. What has been your experience with private grants this year?

32b. What has been your experience with public contracts this year?

32c. What is the impact on program?

33a. Have you received word that you should expect cuts from any of your current funders next fiscal year?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

33b. At what level are these expected cuts if you know?

34. How will this impact program?

35. What steps have you taken so far, or plan to take, as a result of these expected cuts?

36. What steps have you taken so far, or plan to take, to adjust expenses or raise revenue from alternative sources?

37. Have you developed a contingency plan?

38. How have you engaged your Board around these decisions?

39. How have you communicated with staff and your community of concern (constituents, clients, etc.) about what is happening?

40. What does your cash-flow look like for the next 9 – 12 months?

MANAGEMENT

41. How true would you say the following statements are?

	Very true	Somewhat True	Not at all true	Don't Know
A. Our program is constantly growing and improving.				
B. Our program has a guiding educational philosophy/principles.				
C. Our program has a clear mission that is known by all staff members .				
D. We continuously try to find new ways to fund our program.				
E. Our program engages in ongoing evaluation.				
F. Our management is knowledgeable about child and youth development.				
G. Our management sets aside an adequate amount of time for program planning.				
H. Our program has an effective budgeting strategy.				
I. Our management is involved in policy/ advocacy for the youth field.				
J. Our management works well with the board and uses their expertise effectively.				
K. Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of staff, children, youth, and families in the community.				

STRATEGIC PLANNING

42. Has your program conducted a strategic plan in the last five years?	Yes	No
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43. Is this plan being used? If so, how?

44. In what ways could your strategic planning process be improved?

45. What actions could be taken to improve your strategic plan?

-

STAFFING

46. How true would you say the following statements are?

	Very True	Somewhat True	Not At All True	Don't Know
Staffing and staff development				
A. The responsibilities of each staff member are clearly defined and appear in written job descriptions.				
B. All staff members are professionally qualified to work with children and youth.				
C. Staff (paid, volunteer, and substitute) is given an orientation to the organization and job before working with young people.				
D. The training needs of the staff are assessed and training is relevant to the responsibilities of each job.				
E. Staff receives regular ongoing support and feedback to make their work experience positive.				
F. In-service training is provided on site at regular intervals.				
G. Staff has the opportunity to attend professional training outside of the program.				
H. Regular staff meetings are scheduled and include an opportunity for staff to share ideas & materials with each other.				
I. Staff participates in self-evaluation and in an annual supervisory observation.				
J. Staff development is aligned with educational philosophy of the program.				

47. What professional development activities have your staff participated in this year? (In-house and outside)

48. Were you able to implement any changes based on these professional development activities? If so, please describe.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GOALS

49. What are one or two goals you want to work on over the next year? What are the action steps involved to achieve the goals? How can the Robert Bowne Foundation assist you?

**IMPACT OF FUNDING AND CAPACITY BUILDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF
THE ROBERT BOWNE FOUNDATION**

50. When did you receive your first grant from the Robert Bowne Foundation? What is the total number of years the Foundation has funded your program?

51. What Bowne Foundation technical assistance and/or capacity building seminars/ workshops have you and your staff participated in over the years?

52. What has been the impact of the funding and capacity building technical assistance on your organization?

53. What has been the impact of the capacity building technical assistance on your staff?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

2

Page Turners Afterschool Program of the Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, Metro Baptist Church

Walking west on 40th Street in mid-town Manhattan, the sidewalks and roadways are crowded with pedestrians and vehicles — cars, taxis, buses, small and large delivery vehicles and trucks — all impatient to move. Nearby are access points to the Lincoln Tunnel, linking New York City to Weehawken, New Jersey, as well as the huge Port Authority Bus Terminal, with its watchword “Helping 200,000 people a day get where they need to go”¹

In this area of Manhattan known as Hell’s Kitchen² — at 410 West 40th Street, just west of Ninth Avenue — stands the Metro Baptist Church (MBC), home of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries (RMM).

In the mid-1800s, shantytowns and tenements dotted the area, home to those who worked in the many slaughterhouses, lumberyards, warehouses, and other factories that served the Hudson River piers. These early workers, of poor Irish, African-American, Scottish, and German stock, were joined in the late 1800s by newcomers, including Greeks and Eastern Europeans. Conflict was common as immigrant groups moved simultaneously to assert and protect themselves, and by the early 1900s, many had joined in gangs to stake claims in the area. A few years later, during Prohibition (1920-1933), illegal breweries gained a foothold, joined eventually by organized crime elements. The 1940s brought still another wave of in-migration, this time including Puerto Ricans and Italians.

An oft-repeated story has it that the name Hell’s Kitchen came about one night when a rookie police officer, observing a melee in the area, said to his senior partner, “This place is hell itself.” His partner retorted, “Hell’s a mild climate. This is hell’s kitchen.”³ The name has stuck even as, by the late 1950s, some neighborhood residents, businesses, real estate developers, and others, hoping to transform the area’s image, pressed to dub it “Clinton” or “Midtown West.”

In fact, the area has changed — and continues to do so. Relatively low housing costs and the area’s proximity to the theatre district and Midtown have attracted newcomers, an ongoing shift that is

¹ See the Port Authority Bus Terminal website at: <http://www.panynj.gov/bus-terminals/port-authority-bus-terminal.html>

² Defined by Wikipedia as “a neighborhood of Manhattan in New York City between 34th Street and 59th Street, from 8th Avenue to the Hudson River.” See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell%27s_Kitchen,_Manhattan

³ Quoted from a sign posted in Hell’s Kitchen Park by City of New York Parks & Recreation. Hell’s Kitchen Park is located on 10th Avenue between West 47th Street and West 48th Street.

pushing up food prices and rents in the neighborhood, pushing out mom-and-pop stores, and sparking apprehensions of an expanding gentrification.⁴

At the same time, Rauschenbusch Metro Ministry staff note the rising number of residents seeking assistance through RMM's food pantry, clothes closet, and English Language classes. Ronnie Adams, a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Urban Minister working in partnership with MBC and, through several other service agencies, with the HIV/AIDS community, says:

As the community changes, we have to ask what we need to do to meet community needs. And the community is changing — there's greater diversity; poverty right next to luxury with high-rises coming in — which means stores with higher prices. Constantly there are the economic issues, how a family of five lives with the changes in housing, restaurants, Mom and Pop stores.⁵

Metro Baptist Church (MBC)

Metro Baptist Church had its beginnings in 1974 when a small study group began meeting at the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association building in Manhattan and then, in 1982, formally constituted as the Metro Baptist Church (MBC) of Manhattan. Two short years later, in 1984, several MBC members came across a former Polish Catholic Church in Hell's Kitchen, then in use as a drug rehabilitation center, and felt this was the space for their church.⁶ MBC purchased the spacious building, with many original features still intact, to be both its place of worship and of work in community ministries. By 1986, the Church had started its community food pantry and clothes closet.

Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries (RMM)

In August 1995, David Waugh, the third pastor of Metro Baptist Church, oversaw the creation of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries (RMM) as the church's community development ministry.⁷ The name "Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries" suggests both the spur and purpose of its creation. "Rauschenbusch" both to honor and draw inspiration from the work of Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), an important intellectual leader of the Social Gospel movement and a Baptist minister who himself worked in Hell's Kitchen from his church, the Second German Baptist Church (now Westside Theatre) a scant three-blocks from MBC.⁸ "Metro Ministries" to refer to the work of the Church in assisting and contributing to its neighborhood community.

In reflecting back on this period, Executive Director Henkel further explains:

In 1995 . . . [a]s the needs were shifting in the community and the church had the desire to meet those needs, there was the realization that the congregation couldn't do that on its own. If we wanted to be able to seek funding that a church couldn't get or to attract volunteers that wouldn't always want to be part of a church, we needed a non-profit. . . . [The church and non-profit] share the same mission. . . . The church desired that the non-profit could reach into nooks and crevices that the church couldn't.⁹

⁴ See, for example, *Hell's Kitchen South: Developing Strategies*, A project of the Design Trust for Public Space with the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association, by Michael Conard and David Smiley of Design + Urbanism, Copyright 2002 by the Design Trust for Public Space, Inc. Based on research, public discussion, engagement of a range of professionals, including academics, architects, community activists and researchers, and others during the late 1990s, the authors find, for example: "Even though the residential population in Hell's Kitchen has risen from 4,400 to 6,000 people in the last two decades, rising real estate values threaten the diversity of residents and housing. These economically prosperous times have priced low and moderate-income families out of Manhattan's housing market. In 1990, the average Hell's Kitchen South resident earned \$23,352 per year, which was significantly below the citywide average of \$32,262. In addition, the housing stock is aged: three-quarters of all buildings were constructed before 1945 and many are in need of substantive improvements. There is enormous development interest in constructing market rate housing units in the area. In its 1999 *Statement of District Needs*, Community Board 4 recognized the 'utmost importance' of affordable housing." p119 See: http://www.designtrust.org/pubs/02_Hells_Kitchen_South.pdf

⁵ Ronnie Adams Interview, October 18, 2011.

⁶ The Catholic Polish National church, originally housed at 552 West 50th Street, moved to 40th off 9th Avenue in 1909; later it was renamed St. Clemens Mary. See:

<http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID-HellsKitchen.htm>

http://storage.cloversites.com/metrobaptistchurch1/documents/Metro%20History_2.pdf

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nynewyo2/RCchurchregisters.htm>

⁷ David Waugh was pastor of Metro Baptist Church for 14 years, from 1993-2007; he founded and then directed Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries from 1995-2007.

⁸ See: <http://rmmnyc.org/about/background/> and <http://daytoninmanhattan.blogspot.com/2012/02/1889-2nd-german-baptist-church-407-west.html>

⁹ Tiffany Henkel Interview, December 6, 2011.

To play this role, RMM was incorporated as a tax-exempt nonprofit [501(c)(3)], thereby enabling it both to act independently of MBC — even as it represents its social, non-proselytizing extension — and to partner with nonsectarian organizations.

Forging Links with Local Communities

Soon, community development plans supported existing links and fostered new ones between RMM and local communities. Under Waugh's leadership, and building on the efforts of his predecessor Rev. Gene Bolan as well as those of associate minister Rev. Dean Kaufman, the work of Metro Baptist Church and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries began expanding to include the following:

- MBC had for years housed a food pantry and clothes closet for community use, both now part of RMM.
- Bankstreet College of Education's Head Start West, a tenant on the Church's third floor since 1985, was providing the community with two free full-day programs, one for 3-year olds and the other for 4-year olds and their families for eleven (11) months each year.¹⁰
- The Church opened dormitory-like space on its fourth floor to Women In Need, an organization offering safe, clean housing and supports to homeless women and their families. Similarly, the Church supplied space to Sanctuary for Families, which offers emergency housing and crisis intervention for victims of domestic violence.¹¹
- An initial impetus for creating RMM was impending work with Clinton Housing Development Corporation [CHDC], which then operated across the street from the Church. A CHDC aim has been to “. . . build upon the existing sense of community by preserving, improving, and creating affordable housing. The empowerment of local residents is [its] primary strategy.”¹² In the past, MBC had operated as a social service partner to CHDC. But in the late 1990s, a larger project was at hand. Clinton Housing planned to open new apartments for Section 8 tenants.¹³ RMM would provide a tenant-rights advocate to work with the resident families, children, and teens. The two non-profits envisioned a single-level development with a community room where the advocate would work. In 1997, when funding and other issues hindered plans for the new apartments, the “community room” moved into the Metro Baptist Church facility.
- About the same time, a housing project for HIV adults was under discussion, and, in late 1995, Ronnie Adams, an Urban Minister of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, arrived from Texas to work both with the HIV/AIDS community in Hell's Kitchen and with MBC as Program Consultant to RMM. He was drawn in large part by Waugh's “vision of a church ↔ community link that . . . fit [his] own vision of the interaction.”¹⁴
- When a documentary filmmaker needed space to complete his MA project — a film on garment worker solidarity — he begins working at MBC. The film focuses primarily on Latino workers who, although in the main legal, were not allowed to join the union and had no place to meet. The Church opened its doors to them and also to their families.¹⁵

All of these activities brought a wide range of community residents — parents, workers, single adults, children, teens, and program staffs — in and out of the Church building. Soon, David Waugh says, people found themselves very comfortable in the building and with the staff — and many of those who had initially come into the church for a particular purpose began utilizing ongoing RMM services. As it happens, the connection also works in the other

¹⁰ Telephone interview with Lourdes Calderon, Site Director, Bankstreet College Head Start West, July 13, 2012. In summer 2012, the program was searching for a new sponsor in order to keep its doors open to the Hell's Kitchen children and families it had been serving for the past 25 years. Repeated calls in late fall 2012, revealed the site's phone was no longer in operation.

¹¹ See: <www.women-in-need.org> and <www.sanctuaryforfamilies.org>

¹² See: <http://www.idealists.org/view/org/J6jMbSpZ5M3p/>

¹³ “Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. § 1437f), often known simply as Section 8, as repeatedly amended, authorizes the payment of rental housing assistance to private landlords on behalf of approximately 3.1 million low-income households. . . . The US Department of Housing and Urban Development manages the Section 8 programs.” See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Section_8_\(housing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Section_8_(housing))

¹⁴ Interview with Ronnie Adams, October 18, 2011.

¹⁵ Telephone interview with David Waugh, June 22, 2012.

direction, as those who use existing services articulate further needs to RMM. Tiffany Triplett Henkel, the current Executive Director of RMM and Co-Pastor of Metro Baptist Church, describes this dynamic:

On the third floor, there is a Headstart program that's run by BankStreet. They rent the space, but that Headstart program has been on the third floor since we've been in the building. . . . it is one of the primary, initial connections we made to the community. . . . A lot of the ways RMM has grown into what it is now is related to that connection . . . because of the connection to Headstart, families would say they needed support for afterschool, and then, when their children became teenagers, they needed a teen center.¹⁶

From the start, David Waugh held to a basic tenet for the ministries: to practice a “nimbleness,” providing the space and supports to meet real community needs — and closing programs when they were no longer needed. Nimbleness at RMM meant, and continues to mean: not carrying a heavy budget; not duplicating services of other organizations; not becoming staffed up, which could mean “getting caught in the foundation box,” but instead using volunteers; not creating a big bureaucracy with multiple service arms, but instead helping to link participants to services in other organizations. Waugh points out that RMM’s nimbleness allowed the Church to provide support to organizations when and as needed, and then to stop such support as organizations grew and moved out on their own. Such was the case with both Women In Need and Sanctuary for Families, each of which, since their time using MBC space, have developed into well-established organizations, with multiple programs and service sites.

In the mid-1990s, based largely on interactions with people coming in and out of the Church, RMM identified two unmet community needs and set to work developing appropriate responses. This resulted in two new programs, both free to participants and both continuing today: adult English classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and, in 1996, a children’s afterschool program, the only *free* afterschool in the neighborhood, then and now.¹⁷

Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries and The Robert Bowne Foundation

In order to build Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries as envisioned, David Waugh knew that he had to develop funding streams, an effort he had never before undertaken. After talking with a staff person from another foundation about how to begin, he developed a proposal using what is known as the “common application form” and sent it off to Bowne as well as to the initial foundation. However, the form’s questions — focusing largely on financial matters and assuming already established programmatic aims, strategies, and staffing patterns — fit neither the then-status of RMM afterschool program nor the Bowne way of doing business. It would have been an easy matter to turn the proposal away.

Instead, Lena Townsend contacted David Waugh directly to hear what he had in mind — and began a process of questioning and listening that, over time, helped him more clearly articulate and promote his ideas for any funding he might receive. Essentially, she helped him translate initially deeply-felt but somewhat vague ideas about ways to meet neighborhood needs into plans for an effective afterschool program proposal. In 2001, Rauschenbusch

“When [the Bowne Foundation] funds you, they’re willing to invest their *time* in you — and they support capacity building at the organization. . . . I’d say that capacity building is the greatest need within any organization. It has institutional impact — it’s staff training, library support. They don’t just give you money and say, ‘Go build a library’ — but they give you training so your staff can develop the skills to use the library and integrate it into the program.”

Christie Ko,
Executive Director
Fiver Children’s Foundation¹⁸

¹⁶ Tiffany Henkel Interview, June 13, 2012.

¹⁷ The afterschool program began in a small space in Clinton Housing, then across the street from RMM; in 1996, the afterschool program moved to RMM when Clinton Housing moved.

¹⁸ Christie Ko Telephone Interview, October 19, 2011.

Metro Ministries began receiving assistance — monetary, programmatic, and organizational — from the Robert Bowne Foundation.¹⁹

It shortly became clear that Waugh's plans to develop RMM as the church's social programs arm required organizational underpinnings not yet in place. In June 2002, Anne Lawrence wrote David Waugh and Marti Williams, then-RMM Program Director and MBC Associate Pastor, outlining suggestions made during an in-person meeting. The suggestions are specific, practical, realistic, tailored to RMM needs, and organized into areas where Bowne could provide support, including:

- Strategic Planning:
 - Attendance at the executive-level seminar of the Institute for Not-For-Profit Management
 - Development of financial systems with the support of Community Resource Exchange, paid for by Bowne
 - Consultation with Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D., the Bowne consultant on planning and evaluation

- Summer Planning Grant:
 - Send Bowne a planning grant proposal, including how the funds will be used (“staff development workshops, planning retreats, resources., etc.”), along with suggestions to include Sabo-Flores in the planning, and, as an example, a copy of a successful planning grant proposal to fund an afterschool program within a community-based religious organization, “once I have their permission” [to send it to you]

- Library Development:
 - Visit some afterschool program libraries for ideas, including names and phone numbers
 - Call Pam Little, RBF library development consultant, to work on a library development plan, an undertaking supported through the Bowne Foundation's Library Development Initiative.

The letter ends on both a note of support as well as rigor: “Your program has such potential and is certainly needed. We want to support you in developing and expanding your program. But, I want to be clear that our continued support will be dependent on your progress in developing a plan for your program.” It is just such support and rigor that encouraged and has continued to buoy the transformation and development of the Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries Homework Center into the present-day Page Turners After School Program.

Julia Palmer Award for Library Development

It's a summer afternoon, Wednesday, June 1, 2011, when the research team first meets Tiffany Triplett Henkel. We are heading toward MBC separately and get explicit directions: “When you reach the church, you'll see four doors — some double sets — painted bright red — go up the small set of steps that lead to the door second from the right and ring the bell. Just wait, someone will answer!” We do, and very quickly we're out of the bright sun, ushered through a short passageway, and entering the main entrance hall that opens onto the sanctuary, with its high, beautifully-painted ceiling and stained-glass windows.

This is not a hushed space, however, but one full of evidence of multi-faceted, lively activity. Clearly the entrance hall serves as a welcoming gathering spot and an information center — the community's “bulletin board” with neatly-posted large sheets of paper providing program descriptions, events calendar, and photographic displays of outings and activities.

Tiffany Triplett Henkel greets us and suggests taking us first upstairs to see the ongoing development of an enlarged library space. A Bowne Foundation 2010 Julia Palmer Award for Library Development is providing for the transformation of two small rooms — one totally interior, without natural light — into a single generous space. The work is moving along — the dividing wall is gone and new flooring is in; soon the budding library space will be furnished with matching bookcases, rugs, a computer for children's use, and tables and chairs. A sink and counter space will be installed to help support art projects. Books and materials that are now in storage will be returned to the room and shelved in a useful and inviting way.

¹⁹ David Waugh recently recalled the continuing support of Lena Townsend and the Foundation:

One of my wonderful memories is the phone call which I received from Lena as she was reviewing applications for the coming year. We had received funding for two years and as I had understood that there was a two year limit for funding of programs, I had not submitted for a third year. Lena graciously affirmed my attention to that detail but informed me that Bowne, like RMM, was not bound to such parameters of support and urged me to get a funding request in immediately and to continue to do so until SHE told me enough. Gotta love that woman.”
Written Communication David Waugh to Janice Hirota, November 17, 2012.

It should be noted that RMM received Bowne support continuously from 2001 through 2011.

But much beyond the material improvements to the library, the Bowne grant has allowed RMM to re-think its previous one-room library for children, supported by the Foundation's Library Development Initiative through work with Pam Little and Lori Ragsdale. Now the space has been re-created as one to serve multiple populations. The library will be a constantly-used resource that, throughout the day and week, draws different groups: Page Turners' elementary school children (1st through 6th grades), youth from the Teen Center (7th through 12th grades), adult participants in evening English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, and more generally, Church members as well as others from the community.

The Library Grant comes with professional development (PD) for grantee staff. This is Bowne's way to support the most informed and imaginative use of its grant funds. And, as with all Bowne PD, the training is also used as a meaningful way to bring together staff members from different organizations. In this instance, these are program staff members with current Julia Palmer funding who are coming together to learn not only from the PD providers — Suzanne Marten and Anne Lawrence — but also to share challenges, practices, and discoveries with each other.

Michele Richardson, Director of RMM's Page Turners program, reflecting on both aspects, says:

I really appreciated the resource lists and websites with the wonderful book selections. Every year before the summer ends, we present the Page Turner students with a book to read over the summer. I selected many books based on these resource lists! I also liked reading and learning what other organizations were doing with their libraries. This information made me think about different ways to incorporate art work, library activities, and furniture options.

Now, in 2012, the library is a welcoming, comfortable space that has approximately 2,000 children's books, two computers, a printer, and high speed internet access, all available for library users. According to Richardson, "The renovations have made [the library] one of the nicest spaces in our building for adults and students alike."²⁰

For the Page Turners, the library provides resources that participants use in completing their homework, pursuing a particular interest, or simply exploring. As they work with their volunteer tutors — most often from New York Cares²¹ — and a homework question or topic calls out for exploration or greater detail, the children often turn to the library's resources.

When homework assignments are completed and there is time before the next program segment, the children can go up to use the library. The calm and comfortable space encourages browsing the shelves for a new book, playing a board game, settling in for a good read, or sharing a cozy conversation with a friend — an alternative to the open, lovely but echoing sanctuary space where children often engage in lively group activities and to the basement cafeteria-like space where children work with their tutors, enjoy snacks, and sometime meet in group discussions and quiet activities.

The RMM Afterschool Program and the Robert Bowne Foundation

The Robert Bowne Foundation has played a key role in supporting the development of RMM's afterschool program, from providing the first ever foundation funding for the program to supporting its development through: professional development sessions; one-on-one interactions with Anne Lawrence, Bowne's Program Officer; and interactions with other Bowne grantees. But, as is basic to the Foundation's grantmaking philosophy and practice, the transformation from Homework Center to Page Turners had roots in the organization's *own aims*, not the Foundation's.

According to Marti Williams, then-RMM Program Director and MBC Associate Pastor, it was in 2001 that:

. . . we realized that we wanted to really focus more on literacy. I was bothered by all of the random books thrown on shelves and had hoped that we could . . . form a library, and have volunteers and groups help us organize and gather good books . . . The kids needed good, nice stuff, not just somebody's trash. . . . I sent out letters to groups all over asking for them to donate quality, popular books, and telling them what we *didn't* want. . . . that if they wouldn't . . . want it on their own kids' bookshelf, then don't give it to the Page Turner kids. . . . this time, we got lots of popular Caldecott and Pulitzer prize-winning books with great illustrations.²²

²⁰ Both Michele Richardson quotes from RMM's "Robert Bowne Foundation Julia Palmer Grant for Library Development Report 2010," pp. 2-3.

²¹ New York Cares: The Way to Volunteer; see: <http://www.newyorkcares.org/>

²² Marti Williams became Associate Pastor of Metro Baptist Church in September 2001.

“Page Turners,” the new name and theme of RMM’s afterschool program, instantly spotlights literacy, language, and the allure of books. It also, as Marti Williams points out, has a double meaning: the program aims to support children as they turn pages in their own lives, acquiring new skills, knowledge, and an inquisitiveness about themselves and the worlds around them. There’s still a further meaning as well: the turning of a page for RMM as its relationship develops with the Bowne Foundation — its first ever foundation supporter.

Michele Richardson has been with the RMM afterschool program since 2007, first as Assistant Director and then as Director. During the 2011-2012 school year, she had nearly 50 children — girls and boys from a mix of ethnic, cultural, religious, and language backgrounds — attending the Page Turners program, which operates three afternoons a week — on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays — from 3:30 to 6:00 pm. Slightly more than half the children attend P.S. 51 Elias Howe, a few blocks away on West 45th Street; seven come a short walk away from Holy Cross school on West 43rd; and the rest arrive from a mix of other schools.

Fall 2011 Parent Meeting

During a mid-September 2011 parents meeting, a welcome-back after the summer break, it is clear that the children are delighted to be at Page Turners again: to get hugs from Michele Richardson and to see each other — a giddy group of children quickly form and race through the entrance hall and sanctuary, breaking off in twos and threes, laughing and talking, catching up after the summer, sharing snacks and jokes and news. The new children sit quietly next to their parents, but their heads turn as the others run in and out of the sanctuary, where tables are set up for the meeting.

As the meeting begins, Michele welcomes the new and returning parents and explains the program structure and activities. These include: pairing each child with a volunteer helper, mainly from New York Cares, for the homework session that opens each afternoon; use of the library, with its books, board games, and Spaghetti Book Club; group activities and games in the sanctuary space; art projects; and group outings. She also covers administrative details: pick-up times, release forms, health information forms, emergency contact information, and so forth.

In addition, the school year has begun in some turmoil for the P.S. 51 students. A major, two-year construction project to build an extension onto the school building had parents concerned about students’ health and safety. As a result, classes have suddenly been moved across town to Our Lady of Good Counsel Church on East 91st Street. Children used to walking to school will be bused back and forth. Michele is negotiating with the Department of Education for one school bus stop where she will meet and bring Page Turner children to the church.

At the end of the meeting, she reminds parents of RMM’s school supply store, open for a few September Saturdays, where parents can, if they wish, pick up school supplies for their children. The store joins other RMM services — the food pantry, clothing closet, toiletry shelf — to help meet community residents’ needs in a respectful way.

The Page Turners AfterSchool Program

In addition to homework help, Page Turners activities run the gamut: from individual time with books and writing to group discussions and reading circles; from art projects to active games of “Duck, Duck, Goose”. There are also special guests and outings.

Literacy now runs through all Page Turners activities, supported by RMM staff’s enhanced understanding of the many facets of literacy and ways to engage children. Drawing on a mix of resources, including their own motivation and knowledge, Bowne Foundation’s professional development sessions, and direct conversation with Anne Lawrence, RBF Program Officer, Michele Richardson now integrates literacy as the natural course of program development. Children engage in naming objects, reading aloud, talking in a nutrition segment about foods and flavors and favorite home recipes, defining what an emotion feels and looks like, calling out catch phrases in a running game, writing up what one likes — and doesn’t — about a book.

Page Turners’ Spaghetti Book Club

Now especially with the library as resource, Michele Richardson encourages Page Turners participants to write up and share their book reviews, asserting that children’s recommendations to each other are great motivators. To this

end, many RMM children actively participate through Page Turners in the Spaghetti Book Club,²³ where young readers write, illustrate, and electronically post book reviews to share with their friends, families, and other readers nationally. It was Anne Lawrence who suggested the Book Club to Michele as a way to extend children's reading activity into writing and publishing as well as discovering other readers and books through the web. Along with recommending (or not) particular reads, the reviews themselves are also a place for children to express their own preferences, explore relationships, and take a step back and make sense of their own social worlds. Thus:

- During the 2008-2009 Page Turners program, an 8-year-old writes in her review of Ludwig Bemelmans's *Madeline*: "I think second grade girls would love this book because the twelve little girls in the story do everything together."²⁴
- A year later, a 7-year-old writes in part about *Max's Dragon Shirt* by Rosemary Wells: "I like Max because he is quiet and sometimes doesn't make sense. I am like Max because sometimes my mom says I need new jeans, and I want sweat pants instead because they are comfortable."²⁵
- Earlier, from the 2006-07 cohort, which dubbed itself the "Reading Rascals," a 9-year-old finds familiarity in Marianne Macdonald's *Dragon for Sale*: "I think a dragon is the worst pet to keep, because it could be dangerous! I recommend this book to my family because it has dragon situations, which are a little scary!"²⁶
- And finally, a 9-year-old from the 2004-05 Page Turners feels akin to *Anastasia Krupnik* by Lois Lowry: "Anastasia Krupnik is a very good girl. She does a lot of crazy things, like says she is stupid. She also likes boys. What she does not like is this boring old teacher. . . . She is a teacher who never understands what Anastasia is saying. But do you know what else? Anastasia's mother is having another baby. . . . I recommend this book . . . to my friend at school, Priscilla, because she got a new baby brother, and her teacher never understands what she is saying, either."²⁷

Visitors from New Victory Theater

One afternoon, two members of the New Victory Theater arrive to help prepare the first, second, and third graders for a trip that all Page Turners will be making to see the Shanghai Circus at the Theater just a few blocks away. In part, the Theater describes its work as follows:

Intrinsic to the New Victory mission is that its performance season and education programs combine to create a unique artistic and learning experience that complements student development by using the performing arts as an educational resource. New Victory presentations inspire students of all ages to explore their imaginations and the world around them; many of these students experience their first ever, live performance in The New Victory Theater.²⁸

During the visit to Page Turners, a dozen children sit in a semi-circle on the floor with Michele and watch closely as the visitors perform an acrobatic trick. As they work, the performers talk through each step and ask the children to repeat the professional vocabulary. "Catcher lock" names the way they are holding hands; "hup" signals when each is connected and ready to go. "Style" refers to the final pose; and with "Tada!" they show off the style, ending with a flourish.

Michele then selects two children — of about the same height — from those who indicate they want to try the trick. The performers then coach them to do the trick, talking about what circus performers have to do: "grip," "spot," "support each other." After several pairs try this trick, the performers demonstrate another — and then help other volunteers through the second trick. Throughout, the performers break down the trick, talking first themselves and then the children through each step.

Later, the performers talk about "points of contact," asking the children to watch as they freeze into a "picture." Holding the pose, the performers ask the children to count and name all the body parts touching the floor —

²³ See: <http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/>

²⁴ See: http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/class.php?class_id=1036

²⁵ See: http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/class.php?class_id=1123

²⁶ See: http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/class.php?class_id=882

²⁷ See: http://www.spaghettibookclub.org/class.php?class_id=678

²⁸ For a fuller description of the New Victory Theater, see: <http://www.newvictory.org/>

and quickly children begin looking under, around, and behind the pair, calling out parts to add to the inventory.

The performers leave shortly thereafter, with the children primed and ready for the theatre trip and show. Then Michele jumps into a circle game of “Duck, Duck, Goose,” helping release some of the children’s pent-up energy and eager anticipation!

Staffing Page Turners and Other RMM Positions

Until 2008, Metro Baptist Church and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries combined had a total of three paid positions: the two pastors/executive director and a custodian. From its founding in 1995, whenever RMM programs needed staffing, the Church building’s fourth floor dormitory space provided housing in exchange for services. Henkel describes the origins and workings of the system:

We are a church and a non-profit, and we’re part of a church network. So people who knew somebody who needed a place to stay while getting on their feet in New York would call us and ask, ‘Do you have a room?’ In exchange, they would help out with the afterschool program, food pantry, or clothes closet. They would stay for a few weeks until they found something else. That’s how it started — and then it began to evolve. Over the past few years, we realized that . . . for a lot of people, living in this area and working in this place is good for their resumes — and that we have valuable space.

We’ve more recently . . . [become] more intentional about the spaces We send out notices to our networks and post the jobs on *Idealist* and other websites. So . . . we put up the posting for [the Afterschool] Assistant Director, Resident Staff. The true job description is that the compensation is housing in midtown Manhattan, and give the afterschool program hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Then we interview people who respond with those conditions. . . .

Sometimes it’s hard to find the right person, but more people respond than you might think. We maximize the resources we have in unique ways.²⁹

In 2009-2010, with Robert Bowne Foundation’s support, RMM was able to pay a monetary salary to its afterschool director for the first time. Recognizing the importance of salaries, Henkel notes, “We’re growing. We’d like to build consistency, and know that we can’t unless we can provide the option of cash payment for work.”

In 2008, with the growth of RMM services, funds were found for the first time to help hire a Volunteer Coordinator, albeit for one year only, with compensation partially in cash and partially with housing. By the end of the year, however, recognizing the pivotal nature of the position, RMM was able to stretch the arrangement for a second year. Now the position is permanently established, and compensation currently includes health insurance as well.

The Hell’s Kitchen Farm Project (HKFP)

In 2011, a new project started growing at Metro Baptist Church and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries — one that Henkel says “is a totally different realm,” engaging both MBC and RMM as partners along with two other community-based organizations. Although not funded by the Bowne Foundation, HKFP intersects with Page Turners in creative and productive ways. Moreover, it points to a new stage in the growth of RMM and its relationship to its neighborhood community.

History of HKFP

In 2011, Alan Sherouse, Metro Baptist Church Pastor, and Tiffany Triplett Henkel had only recently begun participating in the Chelsea-West Side Neighborhood Network, a group of emergency food programs that includes both faith-based and non-faith community groups. As Henkel explains:

[Because of the gentrification in Hell’s Kitchen] . . . within a few blocks of us, we were seeing the affordable food options threatened. The Big Apple Meat Market and fresh vegetable stand both look threatened by new development. This is very much on our minds. . . . we’re looking for different ways

²⁹ All Tiffany Henkel quotes on page: Interview, December 6, 2011.

to meet these challenges. . . . Even if that threat wasn't happening locally, food challenges worldwide are at an all-time high.³⁰

Early on in their participation in the Network meetings, someone from Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) attended with a particular interest in rooftop gardening. As it happened, however, the roof at MCC was not structurally sound enough to support a garden. A light went on and, as Henkel says, "We thought, RMM has the space!" One thousand square feet of rooftop space, as it happens.

Soon, staff from three faith-based entities — Metro Baptist Church, Metropolitan Community Church of New York, and Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries — embarked on a joint grant-writing process to access funding for the project. Quickly realizing that they needed additional expertise, they met with the horticulturalist working at Clinton Housing Development Corporation, an early partner of MBC. The horticulturalist turned out to be a farmer as well and a great match for the project. So now four groups, including Clinton Housing, developed a proposal that gained funding from United Way of New York City's Seed Grant Fund.³¹ As of now, MBC is the main fiscal sponsor of the effort because the Hell's Kitchen Farm Project is not yet its own non-profit, although plans are in the making.

Work on the roof garden became a priority as the collective aimed to plant for the 2011 growing season. The members completed the plans, recruited volunteers for a bucket brigade to haul — bucket by bucket — seven metric tons of soil up to the MBC roof, transferred the soil to 50 kiddie wading pools to create planting beds, and planted, meeting their deadline.³² When the produce was harvested, it went to two food pantries in Hell's Kitchen — one at RMM and the other at Metropolitan Community Church.³³

The project has also "fed" RMM. When asked whether this was the first time RMM has engaged in such locally-based collaborative work, Henkel responds:

Yes, this is a big shift in the past few years. Our work is much more collaborative. We've always done well here, realizing the value of partnering. New York Cares [for volunteer Page Turner tutors], now Hell's Kitchen Farm Project. . . . Program-wise, we aren't doing anything different, but [through collaboration] the programs are able to meet more needs in different ways.

This collaboration is a major step for us. Besides the farm on our roof, we have connected people to a CSA [Community Supported Agriculture]. We've done a CSA in connection with a farm in Goshen, New York. That gives another option to provide fresh vegetables to people in this neighborhood. It has been a good year with challenges. (laughing) Ravenous pigeons can be a challenge for rooftop gardens — but the weather has been unseasonably warm this year, which has allowed us to harvest for longer.³⁴

Moreover, the garden has blossomed into another collaborative working to enrich the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. The RMM Composting Program looks to take organic waste from RMM and "partner organizations," including Bank Street Head Start West (housed at MBC), MBC, and the Hell's Kitchen Farm Project, and convert it into compost for its rooftop garden.³⁵ To this end, the Program garnered a 2012 *New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods* grant from the Citizens Committee for New

³⁰ Tiffany Henkel Interview, December 6, 2011.

³¹ "For 2010-2011, Seed Grant funds are targeted at urban farming initiatives in New York City. Funding can be used to transform unused or 'under-used' land to vital, food-producing spaces or to expand an existing urban farm. In either case, the urban farming initiative fit within the applicant's general scope of community services and assist in the expansion of community outreach services related to nutrition education and wellness." See: <http://www.cityfarmer.info/2010/11/18/united-way-of-new-york-city%E2%80%99s-seed-grants-for-urban-farming-for-2010-2011/>

³² See: <http://www.hellskitchenfarmproject.org/> Also see: *New York Daily News*, April 18, 2011 at: <http://www.hellskitchenfarmproject.org/images/news/hkfpdailynews4-18-12.pdf>

³³ In an interview on February 13, 2012, when asked how many are fed through the RMM Food Pantry, Henkel replies: "We have a lot more these days, unfortunately. . . . Prior to late 2008-09, we were averaging . . . providing food for 300 people [per month]. We've steadily moved toward an average of 500 people per month. For two months in 2011, we hit over 800. It's a bittersweet situation. We're grateful we are able to provide food for so many people, but nobody wants to be providing food for so many people through subsidized food programs."

³⁴ Tiffany Henkel Interview, December 6, 2011.

³⁵ See: <http://www.opengreenmap.org/greenmap/nyc-compost-green-map/rauschenbusch-metro-ministries-22376>

York City.³⁶ Moreover, RMM, with its neighborhood community in mind, has a bigger vision: “Our dreams for the future are to grow our composting capabilities to serve as a site where community members can bring their organic waste to compost.”³⁷

Page Turners and the Hell’s Kitchen Farm Project

In addition to the community-based working collaborative and RMM’s outreach for new models and venues for serving its community, the Farm Project also provides resources for RMM’s other efforts.

Michele Richardson has been quick both to see the Farm Project as a resource and to develop creative and productive intersections with Page Turners. Page Turners participants are tasting and learning the names of new foods, talking with each other and writing about favorite home dishes, and dreaming up and creating fantasy menus. “We have grown all kinds of things [in the roof garden],” says Alan Sherouse, MBC Pastor, “with particular success with kale, green beans, carrots, eggplants, tomatoes, hot peppers, lettuce, and herbs.”³⁸ In addition, a volunteer coordinator with the rooftop garden conducts nutrition workshops for Page Turners, engaging participants in discussions about eating habits and healthy diets as well as art projects around nutritional information, such as creating posters.

The rooftop garden itself holds still other discoveries for the Page Turners. United Way has funded child-safety railing for the roof, so, perhaps as early as Fall 2012, Page Turner children will be able to go up to see the garden and help with the harvesting of produce. And next gardening season, they will participate in the planting and tending as well.

As it is, Teen Center participants are already involved in the garden and hearing about new topics as well, such as sustainability and food justice.³⁹ “You can just see the energy,” Tiffany Henkel [says]. “They’re excited about growing and learning. Just putting their hands in dirt is a new experience.”⁴⁰

Metro Baptist Church’s Strategic Planning Process

In mid-February, 2012, the pastors put up a large poster in the main entrance to Metro Baptist Church. The large headline asks: ‘Where would you like to see your church five years from now?’ There are post-it notes so congregants and others who come into the Church can write and append their responses.⁴¹

We’ve gone through a lot of growth in a short amount of time — clients, staff, congregation, across the board growth. On top of that, the volatile economic climate and what that means for what people are asking of us. We can go in a lot of different directions, but what’s the most effective way to live out our mission? I’m really excited about these next few months. There’s a lot of energy, and when there’s a lot of energy there’s also the possibility of frustration, so it is an important time.⁴²

In 2011, Henkel and others at MBC began preparing for the next developmental phase of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries: a “strategic visioning and planning” process as a way for the congregation to think together about the work of RMM — and even more, to consider the role and practices of the Church and of RMM, two legally-separate but very intertwined entities. Henkel comments about the development of each entity:

That is another piece of this process, which is evaluating how we understand ourselves as both a church and a non-profit. This has been a weighty question for us. We had a 15th anniversary of our non-profit [on October 9, 2010] . . . but then, as we moved into the 16th year, we had a lot of questions about the link between the two — the church and the non-profit.⁴³

³⁶ See: <http://www.citizensnyc.org/programs/grants/nybn.attachment/2012-nybn-7577/2012%20NYBN%20Grantees.pdf>

³⁷ See: <http://www.opengreenmap.org/greenmap/nyc-compost-green-map/rauschenbusch-metro-ministries-22376>

³⁸ The Christian Post, “Church & Ministries,” June 29, 2012
<http://www.christianpost.com/news/new-york-city-church-grows-food-on-rooftop-73740/>

³⁹ <http://www.abpnews.com/ministry/congregations/item/7213-rooftop-farm-an-urban-oasis-in-nyc#>

⁴⁰ <http://www.abpnews.com/ministry/congregations/item/7213-rooftop-farm-an-urban-oasis-in-nyc#.T-4SevWqY1I>

⁴¹ Research Fieldnotes, February 13, 2012.

⁴² Tiffany Henkel Interview, December 6, 2011.

⁴³ Tiffany Henkel Interview, February 13, 2012.

In addition to clarity of direction, the effort aimed for “broad ownership” — “starting with the congregation because the congregation is the base of the non-profit” — of whatever developed regarding RMM’s direction and work.⁴⁴

By January 2012, the Church had engaged John Hewitt, a professional consultant and former pastor with experience working with church congregations and non-profits; he will help lead the strategic planning process. In addition, upon learning of the plan, Anne Lawrence, Bowne Program Officer, offered the assistance of Community Resource Exchange (CRE), a nonprofit management consulting firm that works with nonprofit organizations in New York City. As a result, MBC, John Hewitt, and Louisa Hackett of CRE worked together to devise and support the strategic planning process.

Overall, the process included a range of tasks and phases that built on each other, such as:

- Developing a 10-person Steering Committee to meet over an initial weekend with the pastors and the consultant to take “a wider view of things”
- Collecting survey data over two months to gain insight into the perspectives of the staff, volunteers, board members, clients of the different programs, and the congregation
- CRE collecting data about organizations that: have structural similarities to MBC/RMM (church/non-profit combinations); or offer similar services — in part, to help think about possible expansion of services as well as collaboration possibilities
- Holding a visioning day with the congregation
- Amassing and analyzing all findings to craft a practical plan for going forward.

On May 27, 2012, Metro Baptist Church released a list of “Strategic Initiatives,” the product of the strategic planning process. The list is divided into six (6) categories, including: “Ministries & Worship,” “Membership & Growth,” “Metro/RMM,” “Personnel,” “Building,” and “Financial”. The category “Metro/RMM” reads:

Metro/RMM

- Clarify and effectively communicate the functions, roles and vision inherent in the Metro/RMM relationship.
- Strengthen the functional Metro/RMM relationship through systems of communication, evaluation, education and engagement with the Metro congregation, staff, RMM board and wider communities.
- Maximize the potential for growth, engagement and development within the separate entities of Metro and RMM through the common relationship.⁴⁵

As a result of the extensive and intensive strategic planning process, MBC and RMM find they have *not* a list of answers to their questions, but, instead, something better: a broad road map that recognizes, articulates, and sanctions the work of exploring the questions and defining responses. It is a shared road map for continuing the efforts of the congregation, pastors, and staff together.

Metro Baptist Church, Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries and The Robert Bowne Foundation

The Robert Bowne Foundation has been a continuous funder of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries since its first grant in August 2001 to support the After School Homework Center. The Foundation has helped support the transformation of the Center into the Page Turners After School Program, with its focus on literacy in its many varied forms. Over time, Bowne has also helped: transform the library, develop organizational leadership, establish the directorship of the afterschool program as a paid position, and support the strategic planning process. Tiffany Triplett Henkel comments on this arc of developmental aid:

[B]efore Bowne, we never had a granter that said ‘we believe in this vision you have and the desire you have to meet needs in your community, and we’re going to invest in you.’

⁴⁴ Both quotes from Tiffany Henkel Interview, February 13, 2012.

⁴⁵ “Metro Baptist Church, Strategic Initiatives: Metro/RMM,” May 27, 2012.

. . . . For Bowne to come in and believe in what we were doing was crucial. It gave us a sense of identity and we saw that we do do a lot with a little, and can keep pushing ourselves to do more.

We were sort of like a teenager who needed a mentor. Bowne came in and mentored us in a way — they gave us money but provided us with way more than the financial support. They helped us clarify what we see, made connections, helped us network. In truth, it took us awhile to take the bait in the right way. In the beginning, we just wanted the money. . . . They have connected us to people and organizations who have helped in all kinds of ways, expanded what we do. I was part of a Leadership Development group with CRE [Community Resource Exchange]. Our Development Director has done the same thing with CRE. We've developed our library in different ways because of what Bowne has connected us to. It is hard to imagine what we would be if Bowne hadn't invested in us 10 years ago. They saw the potential that others didn't see.

Because of that, as Bowne phases out, we hate to lose them, but I don't know how we would have been able to do it if they had only given us the money. They've empowered us to go on beyond them. It's been invaluable. A lot of organizations and foundations, when they're gone you're back to square one — and that is not where we find ourselves now.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Tiffany Henkel Interview, December 6, 2011.

3

Youth Services at The Center, Queens Community House

The best thing about Queens Community House is that it's so inviting. It's inviting to everybody. There's no one we leave out — teenagers, little kids. It doesn't matter what race you are — it doesn't matter where you're from. We accept any and everybody.

— Sunny Asra, QCH Camp Assistant Director¹

Strengthening Neighborhoods. Inspiring Change.

— Queens Community House Tagline

Walking through the front doors of the Forest Hills Neighborhood Center² of the Queens Community House (QCH), the welcome to “any and everybody” is evident. The first thing one sees are tables with an assortment of magazines along with posted announcements and notices, all in a variety of languages: English, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese. A little further into the entrance hall, Sylvia sits at the front desk and greets every visitor warmly. Known as the unofficial “Mayor of Forest Hills,” she efficiently calls whoever is needed or directs the visitor to the right room or office. “My job,” she says with a smile, “means I know everyone!”

Everywhere there is both activity and a sense of relaxation and ease.

Beyond the reception desk, a handful of people have gathered — older adults, teenagers, and parents with children in strollers. Some are sitting and talking together. Others are scanning a crowded bulletin board, with lists of employment opportunities at the upcoming US Open Tennis Championship, a poster advertising the documentary “Over 90 and Loving It,” and news clippings about a recent rally at City Hall against funding cuts for social programs. Further down the hall, QCH staff members are making copies and tweaking arrangements for the day's activities. Overhead hangs a brightly colored Chinese dragon, souvenir of a recent community celebration.

In a game room on the left, older adults are sitting around a table, chatting and playing cards. And, to the right, ping pong players fill the large gymnasium/auditorium.

On every visit, the gym is in use, home to a broad range of activities. One morning, for example, a graceful older Chinese woman teaches a traditional Chinese fan dance to a group of women, many Chinese, but with a sprinkling

¹ Quote from video clip posted on the QCH website; see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epa3fVu0izl&list=UUiBdkseBYax7T6RqLleVzaw&index=8&feature=plcp>

² Over time, the Center has had a number of different names. “Forest Hills” refers to the fact that originally the organization's services focused on the Forest Hills neighborhood in which it is located. However, as the number and reach of its programs and services expanded to touch many neighborhoods in Queens, the organization took the name of its borough — Queens Community House — even as its central administrative offices remained housed in the original Forest Hills building. As of December, 2012, the official name of the Center is Forest Hills Neighborhood Center, emphasizing its relationship to and services for the neighborhood within which it is located, while the name of the larger organization remains Queens Community House. To avoid confusion, throughout the case study, we use the current name of Forest Hills Neighborhood Center — except in discussing specific historical periods — when referring to the locale where we conducted most of our fieldwork.

of non-Chinese who follow the instructions as they are translated into English. Late one afternoon, participants from the Summer Youth Employment Program meet after work to share and mull over their experiences. Another day, teen-aged girls prepare for a photography scavenger hunt in Central Park. And a regularly-scheduled Tai Chi class for seniors welcomes drop-ins from youth services staff and others who join for an energizing break. One evening, the gym is full of excited children and their families along with afterschool staff for the celebratory end-of-school-year dinner and talent show. On many other evenings, it is teenagers who fill the gym — for Irish step dancing, indoor soccer, and the three nights a week when QCH becomes the “Break Dancing Mecca of Queens.”³

History of Queens Community House

From the start, the explicit purpose of Queens Community House has been to bridge diversity.

The planned development, in the late 1960’s, of a low-income housing project on a former golf range in middle-class Forest Hills set off fears of changing neighborhoods, racial friction, and falling property values. To calm anxieties and growing opposition, Mayor John Lindsay assigned Mario Cuomo, then an up-and-coming lawyer, to mediate community tensions and move the housing project forward. In the end, a successful compromise proposal emerged that included smaller buildings, priority for existing community residents to get apartments, and set-aside apartments for seniors.

The Queens development was the first low-income public housing cooperative in the United States. And at its hub, stood a community house offering a range of services, not just to housing residents but to the larger neighborhood.⁴

Queens Community House, established in 1975 as Forest Hills Community House, operated as a settlement house, that is, as a neighborhood-based, intergenerational organization working to build a sense of community among and across all neighborhood residents.⁵ Since 1886, settlement houses in New York City have focused on building community, often following the practices and ethos of British social activists. “Building community” means working with “neighbors,” not “clients”; linking people together through shared interests and goals; and advocating together for community-based programs and services.⁶

Forest Hills Community House started out offering programs for children and seniors. Over time, it has grown into a multi-service organization that engages with and serves a variety of different, often overlapping, “communities” that are defined and self-defined variously by neighborhood, ethnicity, religion, age, and sexual orientation.

In 2007, Forest Hills Community House officially became Queens Community House (QCH) in recognition of the growing reach of its programs in community and school-based locations throughout the borough.⁷ Current QCH services include programs for older adults, senior centers, adult education, school-based counseling, afterschool and summer camp programs, outreach programs, immigration and housing services, intergenerational programs, Farmers Markets, and centers for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and queer-identified (LGBTQ) elders and youth.

Youth Services at Queens Community House

The history of QCH youth services reflects the staff’s ability to craft creative responses to changing expectations and levels of supports. When the Forest Hills Neighborhood Center first opened, youth services focused on providing safe educational spaces — such as a neighborhood early childhood center and after school program — where children could come together and participate in dance classes, homework help, puppetry, and a small tutoring program.

³ See, for example: “Jiggz’s Footwork Workshop at QCH” and “QCH Battle June 6” at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WORolBcdKkQ&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcuAflxRmCQ&feature=related>

<http://www.queenscommunityhouse.org/index.php/pressnewsawards-aboutmenu-12/20-news/280-learn-to-breakdance-this-spring.html>

⁴ See QCH Mission and History at: <http://www.queenscommunityhouse.org/index.php/missionhistory-aboutmenu-6.html>. A committee of 50 civic organizations, headed by the American Jewish Committee, proposed the community center that became Forest Hills Community House, later renamed Forest Hills Neighborhood Center as part of Queens Community House.

⁵ From its inception, Forest Hills Community House joined United Neighborhood Houses, a membership organization of settlement houses in New York City. See: <http://www.unhny.org/home.html>

⁶ See: <http://www.unhny.org/about/history>

⁷ See page 52 for a PDF map of QCH Program Sites.

In the early 1990s, two events deeply influenced QCH's afterschool practices: first, the founding of the Partnership for Afterschool Education (PASE); and second, support — both monetary and programmatic — from the Robert Bowne Foundation. In this new context, QCH began shifting its focus more thoroughly to providing children with engaging learning opportunities that, at their core, integrate literacy into a range of activities.

In 1983, with funding from New York City's Youth Bureau, QCH made its first foray into school-based programming, providing afterschool services for children two days a week. When federal funding for Out-of-School Time (OST) programming became available in 2001 from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers,⁸ QCH applied for and won \$1.2 million dollars to expand its school-based programs. With these funds, QCH developed a continuum of five literacy-rich afterschool programs serving children from kindergarten through high school within a high-need community in Jamaica, Queens.⁹

In 2003, New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)¹⁰ brought together service providers, the funding community, and city officials to develop a strategic vision for Out-of-School Time services in New York City. Queens Community House staff members, along with hundreds of others, including Robert Bowne Foundation representatives, participated on design teams for the city's new OST initiative. These teams aimed to design a more efficient and coordinated system of afterschool programs for the city's school-age children and youth.¹¹ Since 2005, DYCD's OST initiative has funded school-based afterschool programs throughout the city.¹²

More recently, with government funding stretched and focused on school-based OST programs, QCH has had to cut back staff, especially in its community-based sites. At the same time, QCH program directors have worked hard to minimize the impact of such cuts on program quality. Thus, for example, when funding for activity specialists dried up, site directors encouraged youth staff workers to adapt curricula and training modules previously developed by specialists. They aimed to craft new program activities — drawing on earlier efforts — in order to continue providing children with ways to: explore and develop their own interests; contribute to their communities; and gain academic skills along the way.

In early 2012, Mayor Bloomberg proposed drastically reducing the number of childcare and afterschool slots allocated citywide, inadvertently providing QCH with an opportunity to engage in real world literacy. Staff members, children, and families sprang into action and advocated for their programs — writing letters, attending rallies, and communicating with political officials. Queens Community House's Pomonock Center afterschool program created and posted a video on the QCH website of children reading “letters to the Mayor,” explaining the importance and value of their afterschool programs. Program staff quoted a child's essay in the video's title: “*Please Mayor Bloomberg, Invest in Me.*”¹³ The city restored funding for the year.

Summer Camp 2010

When Afterschool Coordinator and Summer Camp Director Jennifer Buffa first arrived to work at Forest Hills Neighborhood Center in December of 2008, she brought the idea of a food-themed summer camp. She created and began implementing this curriculum in summer 2010, her second year of running a camp at the Center site. Working with her supervisor, Steve Pullano, QCH Director of Teen Outreach, she developed a curriculum infused with food, real-life literacy, math, science, and inquiry. Pullano brought to the mix his knowledge of the New York City Department of Education's content standards, as well as over three decades of experience as a master teacher and youth development supervisor.

⁸ Originally, the 21st Century Learning Center program was the only federal program dedicated to afterschool programs. In 2002, it became a component of the No Child Left Behind legislation administered by the States. For a history, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/21st_Century_Community_Learning_Center; for a description, see: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>

⁹ In 2008, QCH received an additional five-year 21st Century Learning Center grant.

¹⁰ In 1996, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) developed from the merger of the Department of Youth Services and the Community Development Agency.

¹¹ For a history of the New York City Out-of-School Time initiative, see: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/ost_introduction.shtml

¹² The current Department of Youth and Community Development Out-of-School Time program supports QCH's school-based OST programs; see: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/out_of_school_time.shtml

¹³ Video posted on QCH website. See: <http://www.queenscommunityhouse.org/index.php/pressnewsawards-aboutmenu-12/21-programs/283-check-out-pomonok-after-school-programs-latest-video.html>

Literacy Integrated into Community Life

Thirty-five children, ages 5-12 years, attend the seven-week Summer Camp held at QCH's Forest Hills Neighborhood Center. Together, children and staff spend the time actively engaged in reading recipes and menus, tasting foods, learning about food science, and talking and writing about visits to cooking schools and restaurant kitchens. On a typical day, the 5- and 6-year-olds in an "Edible Math" class figure the cost of a meal based on a simple menu, while 7- and 8-year-olds follow a recipe to make peanut butter sandwiches in a "Cooking Light" class. Meanwhile, in the oldest group's "Food Lab," children explore science by boiling water and eggs. They are discovering what happens when heat alters the speed of water molecules, transforming water from liquid to gas, and marveling over the resulting changes in the state of a boiled egg.

"Try It Tuesdays" challenge children to explore the unfamiliar in food, with staff offering sample tastes of items like edamame and goat cheese, things children might not encounter at home. One boy tentatively tries a small lump of goat cheese and finds — that he likes it! The rest of the day, he walks around announcing, "Goat cheese is awesome!"

Other children take on independent projects, recruiting assistance from peers, staff, and family. Thus, upon hearing that camp will culminate with a Camp Café to which family, friends, and QCH staff will be invited, Christian decides to build a model restaurant. His wooden model, the size of a doll house, includes a complete kitchen with a stove and refrigerator, and a dining area with tables and chairs. He is particularly proud of designing and stringing up electric light fixtures that actually work.

The Camp Café

Café day arrives! It's late August and summer camp is culminating with two servings at the Camp Café: for morning breakfast, children, ages 5-8, are serving; at mid-afternoon snack, the older children are up. All atwitter, a dozen summer campers turn a mundane classroom into the Camp Café. Their colorful signs beckon customers: "Camp Café Restaurant. Come here!" Bustling around, the children excitedly tell their teachers, "My Mom is coming!" and "We have to wait 20 minutes!?"

Over here, teen-aged summer youth workers help the children arrange two rows of tables that fill the room, making sure to leave enough space between the rows so the "workers" can navigate safely. Youth workers carefully set out vases filled with late summer flowers and tape labels with the servers' names to each end of the long tables.

Back there, children transform a table into a serving station and cashier's post, with a cash register at one end; hot and cold drinks at the other; and in the middle, a carefully arranged mix of muffins, bagels, and croissants.

Meanwhile, Christian busily sets up his model restaurant in one corner of the room, explaining all the while that his mother helped him build and furnish the model and Summer Camp Assistant Director Sunny Asra helped him figure out the electricity. Once the model is ready, he tests the lights. "Yes," he exclaims, "it works! I'll save the energy and wait to plug it in."

Now here come a small group of children bringing in a handful of origami cranes. Proud of their handiwork, Chanel and her friends select just the right color crane to add to the flower centerpieces on the dining tables.

In the meantime, the adults are excited as well. Several QCH staff members come to the door to ask: "Will there be a Café this morning?" "Yes," replies Jennifer Buffa, "it opens at 10:00." She then turns to her group, quiets everyone down, and brings them together – children, teachers, and youth workers — for a roll call and run-through of roles and tasks. The children quickly organize into their teams and go to their places while one of the teachers plays the role of customer. Buffa directs the rehearsal:

It is important to be quiet since a lot of people will be coming and you are already a lot of people. Let me go ahead and have the kitchen staff line up behind the long table and put your gloves on. Can I have my bus boy and bus girl here in this corner? Christian, take the hostess to the front. Raise your hand if you're on the server team. Make sure you've written your name on your server sheets. Sophia, you take this apron. Kayle will handle the register and the prices.

Suddenly it is 10:00, and already a line of people waits to enter. Christian greets each visitor with "Welcome to Camp Café," and then brings family and staff members to one or another table. One of the two young hosts gives each guest a hand-decorated, uniquely-designed menu, and a child server comes, complete with pad and pencil, to take orders. "My name is Jasmine. I am your server. Would you like to begin with a drink? What else would you like?"

All the practicing pays off. Each child knows her or his job and the morning goes smoothly. The “kitchen staff” puts together the orders for the “servers,” who carefully carry glasses of juice and plates of croissants, bagels, and muffins to parents, siblings, and QCH staff — Café patrons all. The Summer Camp’s teenaged staff is responsible for the jobs that are too dangerous for the younger children, such as handling hot beverages. A “manager” comes around to the tables to ask how customers are enjoying their breakfast, a “bus boy” clears the table, and the “cashier” takes payment and makes change. Parents with cameras take pictures of their proud children with camp staff. Everybody wants a photo of Sunny Asra when he arrives with his mother and is delightedly carrying his baby niece.

The long tables with many seats encourage interaction among family members and Community Center staff. However, no one can linger long. Because of the Café’s great popularity, the growing line of customers needs the space. Queens Community House staff members from throughout the agency are spending their morning break supporting the summer campers and engaging with the community by ordering breakfast at the Camp Café. On the way out of the building, Irene from Payroll stops her colleague from Transportation as he gets into the QCH van to go pick up the mail: “It’s so great that they do this. The kids are so serious about it.”

Organizational Culture

Jennifer Buffa had a first taste of the QCH organizational culture when she arrived to interview for her job. To her surprise and delight, she was interviewed by former program participants who are now college students and part-time youth workers, as well as by agency supervisors, each of whom had been part of QCH staff for at least 15 years. Buffa immediately recognized that QCH is an organization that respects and supports its employees and its youth — a sense that has only been reinforced in her work there. This was a great contrast to her previous experiences in the afterschool field, where staff turnover was on-going.

Buffa notes that supervisors go out of their way to make sure that staff members in one program know what is available in other programs. She enjoys being part of an organizational culture that treats everyone in the community as important, and is happy to be able to help the families of afterschool children find that perfect QCH program for Grandma and Grandpa.

Queens Community House also supports Buffa in taking advantage of a range of training opportunities. In addition to professional development offered by the QCH Youth Services Department, Buffa has attended sessions offered by the city’s Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) on such topics as online resources available to Out-of-School-Time programs, as well as those offered by the Bowne Foundation, the Partnership for After School Education (PASE), and The After School Corporation (TASC). In order to further her long-term goal to learn more about non-profit management, Buffa also takes advantage of in-house training offered by the QCH fiscal department.

Looking back, Buffa appreciates the opportunity she had, as a relatively new Program Coordinator, to design her own program:

I love it because I’ve been able to be creative with programming. With a supportive supervisor there are no hoops to go through when I have an idea or want to learn something new. I have support to start a newsletter or design an evaluation. Of course I need it approved, but I can get it started.¹⁴

Queens Community House and The Robert Bowne Foundation

When Queens Community House first approached the Bowne Foundation, it came with its inclusive, respectful culture in place. Its afterschool programs were providing families from many backgrounds with a safe neighborhood place where children were well-cared for and enjoyed themselves.

In addition to funding, the Foundation offered QCH both expertise and encouragement to strengthen the educational aspects of its programming by making literacy a central component of children’s activities, integrating program assessment, and developing a culture of ongoing reflection and improvement. As a result of its many years of association with Bowne, QCH has infused literacy into its programming and inquiry into its organizational culture, both discussed below.

¹⁴ Jennifer Buffa Interview, September 20, 2011.

Infusing Literacy into Programs

The Robert Bowne Foundation catalyzed the highlighting of literacy in QCH youth programs.¹⁵ Susan Matloff-Nieves, QCH Associate Executive Director for Youth Services, vividly recalls the very first time she met former Bowne Foundation Executive Director Dianne Kangisser.

I remember going to meet Dianne Kangisser at Bowne with Lew Harris, our former Executive Director, and Theresa [Greenberg, former QCH Assistant Director] in 1995. I was petrified because she was asking tough questions and we weren't doing any of the things she asked us about. But she told us to go visit several programs. One of them was the East Harlem Tutorial Program. I remember how impressed I was by seeing couches, comfortable places to read, attractive and homelike spaces.¹⁶

Thus began QCH staff's investigation into what it would mean to incorporate literacy into their afterschool programs. They researched program models, visited libraries, and undertook professional development.

A. Investigating Reading and Writing

Two continuing QCH staff members — Helena Ku, Director of School-Based Programs, and Dalys Castro, afterschool program site director at Newtown High School — were among those at the organization who signed up for an intensive seminar held at the Literacy Assistance Center in 1995. “Creative Literacy in After School Programs” (CLASP) seminar leaders Anne Lawrence and Pam Little encouraged participants to explore their own relationships to reading and writing, as well as reflect on *how* their discoveries might be used to engage young people in their own literacy. Although these monthly sessions took place nearly two decades ago, Helena Ku remembers the power of the experience:

We met in small groups, read articles, and developed a peer group. The program helped with our own literacy skills and got us to do writing. These are all key elements that seem so basic now, but they were exciting and new at the time. We came away with story ideas, prompts you can get people to respond to, and resources. We were able to order books as well. It really helped to strengthen the program.¹⁷

After receiving a Bowne grant in 1995, QCH program directors brought this way of studying literacy back to their own agency. As part of their program planning process, the youth services staff carved out the time to reflect on their own experiences with reading and writing, and to engage in what Matloff-Nieves calls “deep thinking” about the role of a community-based organization (CBO) in developing children's literacy. The staff came to understand that:

Literacy is not about the skills, rubrics, and learning the sound of ‘a’ and ‘b,’ but rather that it is about fun, love of books, and gaining an understanding of your place in the world. Bowne has given us a perspective, not a prescriptive, way to think about the work. They also helped us to understand a more complicated definition of what literacy is, as how you look at the world.¹⁸

This understanding gave QCH a framework for incorporating literacy into its afterschool programs — promoting reading and writing for self-expression and personal discovery. Staff sought academically-rigorous curricula and designed project activities that encourage children to develop their own interests, explore the world around them, and make their own choices.

B. Libraries and Literacy

Former Robert Bowne Foundation Executive Director Dianne Kangisser felt strongly that access to books was critical for children to develop a love of reading. She also believed that attractive and comfortable libraries invite children into the world of books and literacy. In 1996, Kangisser brought together: the directors of New Visions for Public Schools' Library

¹⁵ “Since 1987, the Robert Bowne Foundation has provided grants and technical assistance to New York City out-of-school-time programs that support the literacy development of children and youth. We define *literacy* as engagement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in order to better understand oneself, others, and the world.” See: http://www.robertbownefoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=55

¹⁶ Susan Matloff-Nieves Interview, July 21, 2011.

¹⁷ Helena Ku Interview, February 8, 2012.

¹⁸ Susan Matloff-Nieves Interview, December 22, 2011.

Power program, who were revitalizing elementary school libraries throughout New York City;¹⁹ the leadership of the recently formed Partnership for After School Education (PASE); PENCIL;²⁰ and the New York City School Volunteer Program.²¹ She hoped that these collaborators would open school libraries to children and families during the afterschool hours. The resulting “Library Project” fostered relationships between, on one hand, schools learning to use school libraries effectively during the school day and, on the other, community agencies operating afterschool programs in those same school buildings. It was then that Queens Community House and PS 86Q developed a lasting partnership.

The New Visions Library Power staff administered the project, encouraging school and afterschool program staffs to coordinate program planning and helping them extend the value of newly renovated school-based libraries into the afterschool hours. During afterschool, children could read for pleasure individually, in pairs, and in small groups, as well as select books to borrow, all within the welcoming library space. With help from QCH staff and volunteers, children also used the library for research, homework support, and curriculum-related, theme-based art-and-book projects. Thus, for example, one group of children explored Ancient Egypt and wrote a play about Cleopatra; another studied Native American tribes, transforming their findings into books and model villages.²²

The collaboration between PS 86Q and the QCH afterschool program became a model school/CBO partnership, seamlessly linking afterschool programming with the school day through the use of shared resources. Library Power highlighted the collaboration at its conferences, such as the one at St. John’s University in Queens in Spring 1999, attended by hundreds of school administrators and librarians. Susan Matloff-Nieves and PS 86 principal Anthony Iannuzzi spoke about ways the Bowne grant supported the growth of each program by allowing it to draw on the strengths of the other.

As a result, QCH management and afterschool program staff began serving as spokespersons for libraries and literacy programming, sharing — with both schools and community agencies — ways their children benefit when resources and activities are coordinated. Moreover, within QCH itself, staff established circulating libraries and literacy programming in its senior centers and adult education programs, as well as in its youth programs.²³

Queens Community House had first explored the role of libraries when it transformed what Matloff-Nieves referred to as an “ugly room with metal cabinets” into a well-stocked, comfortable lending library at its Forest Hills Neighborhood Center site. In the first year of Bowne funding, the Foundation helped the Center identify other resources for building the library, including the Astor and Charles Hayden foundations. Later, RBF funded QCH to purchase developmentally-appropriate, multi-cultural children’s literature for the library. Now, the library serves as a calmly productive hub within the community center. Throughout the day, people work at computer stations, have meetings, as well as browse the library resources to find just the right book to use with children or staff. A dedicated volunteer organizes and maintains the library collection, along with the libraries at 10 other QCH program sites.

Queens Community House drew on its expertise with libraries and literacy in its successful application for a 21st Century Learning Center Federal Grant,²⁴ and invited Anita Strauss, former Associate Director of New Visions’ Library Power program, to become director of the QCH 21st Century Learning Centers. The position attracted Strauss because QCH leadership had designed a comprehensive plan centering on literacy. The program’s strength, she felt, lay in the already-existing vibrant partnership between PS 86 and QCH as well as in the work of PS 86

¹⁹ Library Power was a ten-year national initiative of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund that started with a local New York City program in 1988. See “Findings from the National Evaluation of the Library Power Program,” p. 3 <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Libraries/Pages/Findings-From-the-National-Library-Power-Program.aspx> . Library Power reached more than 700 schools in 19 communities across the country and was responsible for improved school library collections, refurbished facilities, increased student usage, greater instructional collaboration between teachers and librarians, and expanded professional skills of librarians. The New York City Library Power Program was a program of New Visions for Public Schools (see: <http://www.newvisions.org>) from 1989-1999.

²⁰ PENCIL matches business volunteers with public school principals; see: <http://www.pencil.org/>

²¹ The New York City School Volunteer Program changed its name to Learning Leaders in 1999. <http://www.learningleaders.org/about/history/>

²² Anita Strauss E-Mail, September 10, 2012.

²³ See: <http://www.queenscommunityhouse.org> for a listing of components of each program. See, for example: “Lending Book and Video Library” as a “NORC” (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities) program; “open library access” activity at the JHS 190 Beacon Site; and “Book Club” at the Queens Center for Gay Seniors.

²⁴ Queens Community House’s federally funded three-year 21st Century Learning Center grant supported the creation of comprehensive afterschool programs built around the school library at five Queens schools, including Hillcrest High School, JHS 217, and three feeder elementary schools, including PS 86.

Principal Iannuzzi spearheading new collaborations among the five participating school principals. Strauss considers the schools collaboration part of Bowne's legacy.

Literacy and Community

As more government funding became available, QCH expanded its school-based programming, with Bowne targeting its support on QCH's community-based afterschool programs. Queens Community House and the Foundation agreed that, because school-based programs often come with constraints, it was important to keep community-based programs strong, thereby allowing the development and testing of new program ideas. In addition, QCH's Forest Hills Neighborhood Center's community roots along with its safe, supportive, and multi-generational environment help foster community collaborations to strengthen its literacy programming. For example:

- For a number of years, afterschool children have participated in a United Neighborhood Houses sponsored "Conservation Club," engaging in such hands-on activities as studying owl pellets and sand particles under a microscope, taking urban nature walks, journal writing, and developing a year-end project such as the "green magazine" on sustainability that Club members produced and distributed to parents in 2011.
- In 2007, QCH began working with Arts to Grow, which provides teaching artists and arts curricula to school and afterschool programs. That first year, children produced a play based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Proud Little Apple Blossom," creating their own sets and costume designs.
- In 2008, QCH staff received training and supplies for engaging children in hands-on science activities as part of a Bowne-funded collaboration with the New York Hall of Science. Through the program, Youth Worker Sunny Asra learned how to make doll houses complete with electricity — thereby enabling him to help Christian with his restaurant model for the 2011 Camp Café.

Such opportunities benefit children, who come to see and use reading and writing as tools for self-expression and for exploring their relationships to their neighborhood, city, and the natural world.

Anita Strauss, who upon her retirement joined the QCH board, credits Bowne for its role in infusing literacy throughout the agency:

I think the Bowne Foundation started the change in the philosophy that the Community House has incorporated into all its programs. The philosophy became to have literacy components in all their programs to develop a love of learning and a love of reading. There was a line between "Before Bowne" and "Bowne plus."²⁵

Infusing Inquiry into Organizational Culture

Bowne Foundation staff also supported the integration of evaluation and reflection into QCH program design and implementation. One intensive learning experience in particular, the Afterschool Matters Research Fellowship, has significantly influenced QCH organizational culture.

The Robert Bowne Foundation's Afterschool Matters Research Fellowship

In 2003, Susan Matloff-Nieves and Helena Ku became the first of four QCH youth services staff to participate in the Bowne-sponsored Afterschool Matters Research Fellowship. Sara Hill, then the Foundation's Director of Research, facilitated a seminar in which participants, as practitioner-researchers, looked to define and investigate a research question arising out of his or her work. The aim was to inform both the particular work as well as agency practice more generally.

Around the seminar conference table, participants read and argued over research and evaluation literature. Hill shared information about a wide variety of research methodologies for collecting quantitative and qualitative data, with a focus on ethnographic research. Fellows grappled with the task of identifying an appropriate question about their own work. They discovered that asking the right question is the most important step toward an inquiry that results in useful information for improving one's program. After each participant collected her/his own initial data, the seminar members together discussed their findings; then each person redefined her/his question and set out to collect more data.

²⁵ Anita Straus Interview, October 19, 2011.

Susan Matloff-Nieves decided to study a common QCH practice of hiring former program participants as youth workers. She conducted in-depth interviews and multiple observations of six QCH staff members who had participated in QCH programs for at least eight years prior to becoming QCH employees, as well as interviewed their supervisors. She also interviewed staff members from five afterschool programs in other agencies. Throughout, she explored the benefits of hiring former program participants, a practice originally born out of necessity when resources were insufficient to hire trained staff. She discovered that youth workers who were former participants were more likely to attain their personal, educational, and employment goals and to stay connected to their communities.

Calling the practice “Growing Our Own,” Matloff-Nieves articulated the components that made it successful,²⁶ leading QCH to formalize its systems for supervising and training young staff members. Moreover, the youth services department became more intentional about its practices when hiring former participants, for example: tailoring supervision of each young person as in an apprenticeship; offering extensive oral and written feedback, including, in some instances, having the young hire keep a journal; and providing formal training as the worker takes on more responsibilities.

Matloff-Nieves also brought her reflections to the QCH Executive Team. Chief Strategy Officer Dennis Redmond found it exciting to participate in discussions of the research while it was underway, and to begin to see the ramifications for youth development: “We had the practice, but Susan [Matloff-Nieves] was able to say, ‘This is what we do’ and describe the impact on staff and on program. She enabled us to see it as a concept.”²⁷

Helena Ku, currently QCH’s Director of School-Based Youth Development Centers, found the Fellowship helped her develop her own understanding of program evaluation: “What I learned was to appreciate the value of taking the time to really look at and assess your own program; and I came to understand how important evaluation is. . . . Since then, we have hired an evaluator for the afterschool programs.”²⁸ Karyn Bronson and Jennifer Fuqua, two other QCH staff members who participated in subsequent Fellowship Seminars, have since left the organization, Fuqua to pursue a doctorate in Urban Planning with a focus on the role of community-based organizations in urban education,²⁹ and Bronson to move to the West Coast, where she has continued working with youth.

For the 2009 issue of *Afterschool Matters*, Susan Matloff-Nieves collaborated with Fellowship Coordinator Sara L. Hill and Robert Bowne Foundation Executive Director Lena O. Townsend, to write an article about the value of practitioner research and inquiry for the out-of-school time field. In “Putting Our Questions at the Center: Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowships,”³⁰ Matloff-Nieves details ways that participation in the Fellowship have influenced QCH culture. The four staff member participants:

- Became more comfortable with the collection, use, and interpretation of multiple forms of data;
- Could make connections between daily practice and the research they were reading and conducting;
- Developed a common language and became rigorous in using it to articulate and analyze their findings; and
- Felt nurtured and valued by QCH, appreciated for their personal accomplishments, and advanced in their professional careers.

Based on a growing familiarity and ease with data, the QCH Youth Services department began to collect and analyze data regularly, often engaging youth in the process. Now, program administrators routinely employ surveys of students and parents and other evaluation tools to measure program quality and to support continuous improvement. Staff also gather and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to prepare comprehensive program reports as well as inform and strengthen testimony to public officials.

²⁶ See Susan Matloff-Nieves, “Growing Our Own: Former Participants as Staff in Afterschool Youth Development Programs,” *Afterschool Matters* #6, Spring 2007, p. 15ff

²⁷ Dennis Redmond Interview, February 8, 2012.

²⁸ Helena Ku Interview, February 8, 2012.

²⁹ See Jennifer Fuqua, “The Curtain Rises: How Community-Based Arts Contribute to Youth and Community Development” in *Afterschool Matters* Spring 2008, p. 34 ff.

³⁰ *Afterschool Matters* Spring 2009, “Putting Our Questions at the Center: Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowships,” p. 46 ff.

In addition, the Youth Services department has adapted aspects of the Fellowship Seminar for staff meetings, growth and development supports, and supervision. Managers often employ professional articles as launching points for discussions on key issues in the field and site directors use *Afterschool Matters* and other articles for site-based staff meetings. Steve Pullano maintains a professional library collection within the QCH library, with supervisors suggesting articles and books as tools to help program staff address their own questions. Thus, Jennifer Buffa finds that reading and discussing such books as *Conscious Classroom Management* and *In Defense of Children* help her staff develop creative ways to engage children.

Evaluation and Strategic Planning

Participation in the Fellowship Seminar provided Matloff-Nieves with the time and opportunity to further her own professional development as well as grasp new ways to develop program staff and participants. She experienced the value of taking time to research, evaluate, and reflect on practice, thereby influencing structures and processes within the department and agency.

Several years after completing the Fellowship, Matloff-Nieves approached RBF Program Officer Anne Lawrence, concerned that evaluations of the afterschool program were not producing meaningful or useful information. Lawrence told her to measure what is important to the program, suggesting that an “outside eye” to facilitate a consensus-building process with the staff might be helpful. As a result, consultant Heléne Clark worked with the staff, engaging them in a “Theory of Change” approach to identifying priorities for youth development outcomes.³¹ Staff surveyed parents, youth, and staff, the program’s primary stakeholders, and identified three overarching youth program goals:

- Engagement and retention in school
- Ability to make healthy choices and decisions
- Development of positive social relationships.

Subsequently, reflecting feedback from participants and parents, QCH staff added a fourth goal:

- Communications skills.

Staff members then developed an evaluation process for collecting and analyzing data on participant outcomes in these four areas. Such regularly available data allow management to craft creative responses to changing circumstances. For example, when QCH administrators faced difficult decisions because public funding cuts threatened to eliminate community-based programs, the immediate response was to collect data and examine them through the lens of agreed-upon long-term goals. Based on these data, the administrators decided to charge a participation fee for the center-based afterschool program for school-age children. At the same time, survey data on participant growth from three different perspectives — youth, parents, and staff — helped QCH secure supplementary funding from private sources, including the Robert Bowne Foundation, for program scholarships, as well as maintain the teen center-based programs free of charge.³²

In the meantime, Queens Community House Executive Director Irma Rodriguez initiated an agency-wide strategic planning process to ensure long-term stability. She assigned Dennis Redmond the role of QCH Chief Strategy Officer, charging him to work with the organization’s leadership, both board and staff, to strengthen organizational capacity. During spring 2012, QCH contracted with the Support Center for Nonprofit Management to develop a strategic plan designed to ensure long-term stability while, at the same time, sustaining a core program and strengthening services for community members of all ages.

The QCH Youth Services Department played a central role in such strategic planning. Given its expertise in data-based decision-making, the Department led the development of a QCH-wide process to track progress toward its goals. Youth Services staff created a departmental database that allows QCH to identify participants in one or more programs and then track, from year to year, their longitudinal gains (or losses) on such measures as school retention and promotion. Queensborough Community College is assisting with an expansion of the Youth

³¹ Queens Community House worked with evaluation consultant Heléne Clark of ActKnowledge, based at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. See: <http://www.actknowledge.org/>

³² Susan Matloff-Nieves, Written communication, December 3, 2012.

Services Department database.³³ This will allow the organization as a whole to link data collection to program by program analysis and to the organizational strategic plan.

Queens Community House Develops Potential

Growing Our Own, the title of Matloff-Nieves' research article, is also an apt description of how QCH operates. The QCH culture begins with openness to any and everyone, and then extends to helping each participant grow into her or his potential. Queens Community House programs nurture and challenge individual children, youth, and families to engage with the world, explore interests, and develop skills. Freddy Gonzalez is a good example. As Assistant Director of the QCH afterschool program at P.S. 86Q (Public School 86 Queens), part of his job is to support the development of youth workers. He grew up in the surrounding neighborhood and more, PS 86Q was his elementary school. He volunteered in the afterschool program while attending Hillcrest High School, just across the plaza from PS 86Q, and continued as a college student. When Yelena Baranovskaya, Director of the 21st Century Learning Center site at PS 86Q, was looking for part-time group leaders, Gonzalez — with his knowledge of the community, PS86Q, and its afterschool program — was an obvious choice.

And Baranovskaya and Gonzalez continue to staff the program which, like its parent agency, welcomes everyone. Displays of student work greet visitors, while a calendar announces students' theme-of-the-week. Parents, many newly arrived immigrants, perhaps overwhelmed by a New York City school with 1,000 children, are pleased and often relieved to be greeted by an afterschool youth worker who speaks their language — whether Bengali, Spanish, or French Creole. Gonzalez and the other youth workers encourage families to share their cultures with each other. Moreover, QCH staff note the significant achievement that families share sensitive and taboo information with site staff, including history of trauma, mental health needs, and family issues.

Each QCH site director has the flexibility to design program activities and staff support systems that reflect the needs of their participants and staff members. At PS 86Q, Baranovskaya consciously trains her youth workers to work with the large number of children with special needs who are fully integrated into the afterschool program. She expects the high school and college student staff members to get to know students as individuals, learn what is behind a child's behavior, and not simply label a child. She considers staff training an important investment in young staff while also encouraging them to bring their own interests, skills, and learning styles to the program. Thus, she asks a youth worker who is an accounting major to design arts & crafts and gym activities that can build mathematical intelligence. Commenting on the mutual support and learning of staff, she says: "We feed each other. I validate the staff's strengths and help them look for potential where more guidance is needed. They help each other. Initially I had to bring this idea. Now they take initiative to do things like find their own subs and take mutual responsibility."³⁴

"Growing Our Own" extends beyond staff development. Even in the youngest group, children share their interests and skills with each other. One late December afternoon, two third-grade girls have finished their New Year's "Goals and Dreams" essays and are playing a paper-and-pencil strategy game. The young Haitian points to her friend, saying, "We're playing a game from her country in Africa."³⁵

The program's Advisory Council brings together the school assistant principal, teachers, and nurse with afterschool staff and parents in an effort to link afterschool activities and the school curriculum. Moreover, as a way of developing children's leadership skills, fifth graders are on the Advisory Council, undertaking such responsibilities as introducing the program to new parents at the Open House and advising younger children on such issues as staying safe during Halloween trick-or-treating.

Baranovskaya is proud of the PS 86Q afterschool program's supportive culture: "Every place we go on a trip, to a museum for example, we get asked 'are you a special program for gifted kids?' and we say, 'Yes, we identify every child's interests and gifts.'"³⁶

³³ Queens Community House 2012 proposal to the Robert Bowne Foundation.

³⁴ Yelena Baranovskaya Interview, December 22, 2012.

³⁵ Fieldnotes, December 22, 2012.

³⁶ Yelena Baranovskaya Interview, December 22, 2012.

Each QCH afterschool site designs its programs around the community it serves and, in doing so, draws on the interests and skills of site staff. At the same time, site directors recognize that staff members are young and provide support through bi-weekly site-based staff meetings and supervision. The QCH Youth Services Department provides annual training on aspects of youth work, offering curricula and training modules based on a set of best practices. Site directors have flexibility to use and adapt these models when designing training, coaching, and mentoring to meet the needs of their staff.

Helena Ku, Director of School-based Youth Development Programs, supports site directors by bringing them together monthly to troubleshoot and discuss common issues. She is proud that her “youngest” site director has been with QCH for four years, and several have been in place for almost 20 years. She attributes staff stability to the shared commitment to a common vision, along with the flexibility to shape programs and curricula to the community being served.

Lasting Influences

Susan Matloff-Nieves is clear that funding has been a part — but only part — of the benefit of being a Robert Bowne Foundation grantee. She knows she can call on Bowne staff “for anything” and drew on Bowne grants to carve out time for her staff to reflect on practice.

Once you’re Bowne, you’re Bowne. Everybody here at QCH is on Anne’s list and we have had somebody attend every event unless it was full. Even if it is closed out, we get the materials. I can call Anne [Lawrence, RBF Program Officer] and Lena [Townsend, RBF Executive Director] for anything, to ask what to do with a problem. When a foundation is run by educators, they understand agencies. And it is a community, not just the people at Bowne, but the special relationships they have fostered among providers in the field. It’s a way of doing reflective practice through convenings by Bowne.³⁷

The Youth Services Department’s ethos and QCH agency policies convey the expectation that each staff member participates in professional development. In addition to in-house training, staff may attend Bowne-sponsored sessions, as well as others throughout the city, such as those offered by the Partnership for After School Education (PASE), The After-School Corporation (TASC), and New York City’s Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). QCH encourages staff to keep learning and growing — to infuse literacy and inquiry into programming and thereby serve children and youth even more effectively.

Such professional development opportunities are important for staff at all steps of their careers — from youth worker Freddy Gonzalez, to young program director Jennifer Buffa, to Associate Executive Director Susan Matloff-Nieves. Matloff-Nieves also appreciates an insight passed on by Bowne about the relationship between youth development at QCH and the larger field of out-of-school time work.

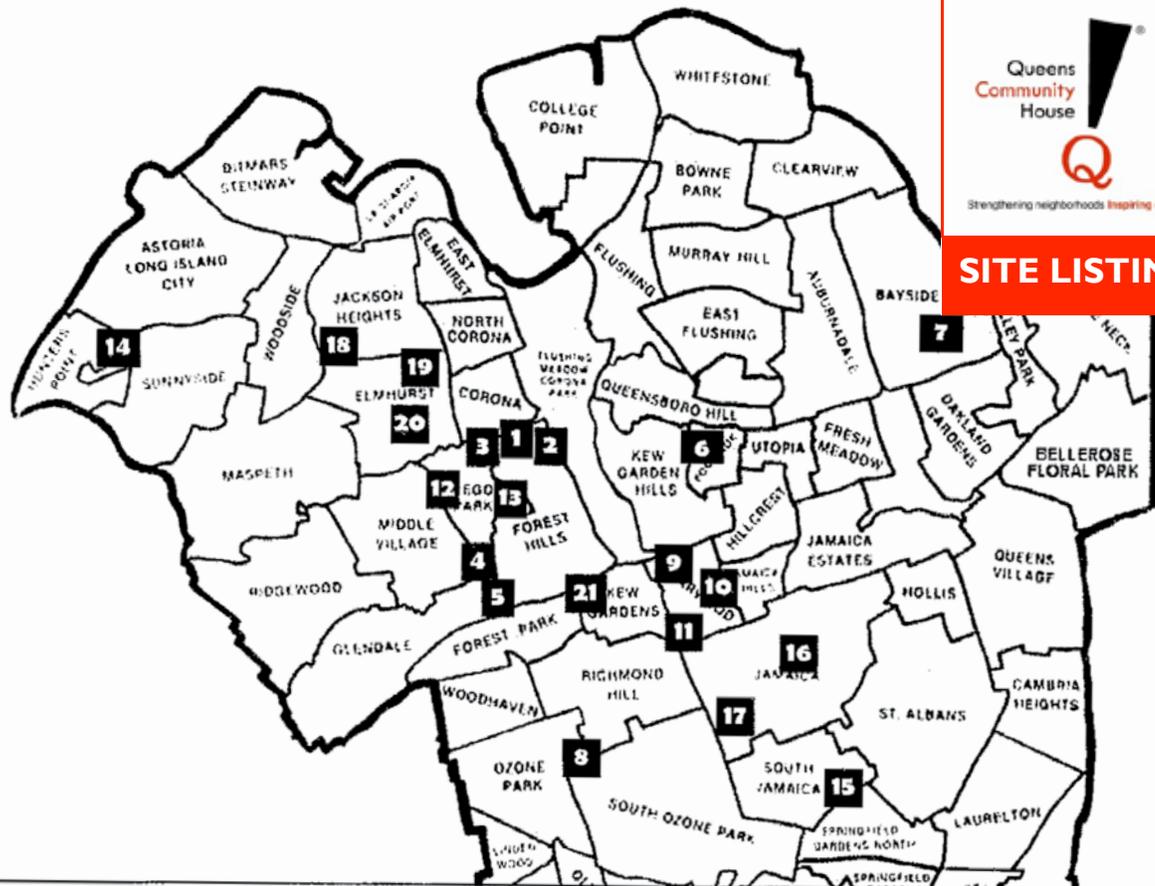
Sometimes we’ll be invited to do panels and asked to talk about what is unique about our program. It was Bowne that said, ‘Don’t look at unique, look at what is characteristic; this leads to building a field.’³⁸

³⁷ Susan Matloff-Nieves Interview, December 22, 2011.

³⁸ Susan Matloff-Nieves Interview, December 22, 2011.



SITE LISTING



FOREST HILLS
 1. 108-25 62nd Drive:
 Main Administrative Office
 Access For Young Women
 After-school Program
 Evening Teen Center
 Forest Hills Senior Center
 Hot Spots/Teen Outreach
 Housing & Homelessness Prevention
 Intergenerational Work-Study
 OPTIONS: College/Career Counseling
 Social Adult Day Services
 Summer Day Camp
 Youth Employment & Career Services

2. 110-01 62nd Drive:
 Queens Childcare Network
 Generation Q
 Senior Transportation/MOW

3. @ Forest Hills Co-operative,
 108-03 62 Drive:
 NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Comm.)

4. @JHS 190, 68-17 Austin St.:
 Beacon Program

5. 107-20 71st Road:
 Senior Case Management Services

FLUSHING
 6. @Pommonok Neighborhood Ctr.,
 67-09 Kissena Boulevard
 After-school/Teen Program
 Community Organizing
 Pommonok Senior Center
 Summer Camp

BAYSIDE
 7. @ Queensborough Comm. College
 222-05 56th Avenue
 CASP

OZONE PARK
 8. @John Adams HS,
 101-01 Rockaway Blvd.
 Young Adult Borough Center
 Learning to Work Program
 CASP

BRIARWOOD
 9. @JHS 217, 85-05 144 Street:
 After-school Program

10. @PS 86, 87-41 Parsons Blvd.:
 After-school Program

11. @PS 82, 88-02 144 Street:
 After-school Program

REGO PARK
 12. @ Lost Battalion Hall,
 93-29 Queens Blvd.:
 Rego Park Senior Center

13. @JHS 157, 64 Ave & 102 st:
 After School Program
 Hot Spots/Athletics
 Junior Gazette
 S.T.E.P.S. High School Transition

LONG ISLAND CITY
 14. @ LaGuardia Comm. College
 CASP

JAMAICA
 15. 156-10 Baisley Blvd
 VOYAGES South Transfer School
 Learning to Work Program

16. @Jamaica High School,
 167-01 Gothic Drive
 Youth Development Center/AIDP

17. @Jamaica Job Center,
 165-08 88th Ave.—Rm 217:
 Eviction Prevention Program

JACKSON HEIGHTS
 18. 74-09 37 Avenue
 Adult Education Services
 Immigration Program
 Community Organizing
 Access for Young Women
 Queens Center for Gay Seniors
 OPTIONS: College/Career Counseling

ELMHURST/CORONA
 19. 45-19 94th Street
 VOYAGES Transfer School
 Learning to Work Program

20. @Newtown High School,
 48-01 90th Street
 Youth Development Center/AIDP
 OPTIONS: College/Career Counseling
 Access for Young Women

KEW GARDENS
 21. Kew Gardens Community Ctr.
 80-02 Kew Gardens Rd., #202
 Kew Gardens Senior Center
 Queens Connection
 Community Technology Center
 Caregivers' Support Program
 Senior Case Management Services

4

Teen Reviewers and Critics (TRaC) Program of ArtsConnection

Friday evening, December 2, 2011, with milder than usual weather in New York City. High school students in the Dance section of the Teen Reviewers and Critics (TRaC) program are gathering outside the Joyce Theater's Dance Art New York (DANY) Studios at 38th Street and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan. They are awaiting others in the program and Christine Jowers, the Dance TRaC instructor. Inside the building are the 11 DANY Studios — all available to rent as rehearsal, audition, class, and workshop spaces. It is here that the Martha Graham Dance Company rehearses.

When Jowers arrives, she provides context for the teens — all dance enthusiasts and many dance students themselves. “You are writing a preview,” she tells them, “of the Martha Graham Dance Company, now in rehearsal for dances to be performed in March of their 2012 season at the Joyce Theater,” adding:

It's a dilemma — how to keep a company running when the creative force dies. . . . You may have seen in the newspaper that Merce Cunningham's company is having its last performances. Merce decided in advance . . . to close down his company if he wasn't around to create new work. Martha Graham didn't want to think she would die, and she didn't care what happened to her pieces when she died. . . . So the company is trying to modernize her work. . . . The Graham Artistic Director Janet Eilber has asked new choreographers to do a variation on this famous dance of Martha Graham's called Lamentation — as a comment on history.

The group enters the building and climbs an exuberantly-painted stairway. There are several floors of studios, comfortable waiting areas, and Joyce Theatre posters everywhere. Jowers introduces Janet Eilber, who tells the 10 students:

. . . [you are] really going to see a rehearsal. Sometimes we invite people in to see an 'Open Rehearsal,' which is more like a performance. Right now, the dancers are reclaiming a dance that hasn't been performed for 25 years. They're using a silent film from the 1940s with Martha Graham, Erick Hawkins, and Merce Cunningham in the lead roles. The last time it was performed was in 1986 and they have a degraded film of that performance, but it has music. So, they're watching the silent version for the movement and putting it together with the music using the 1986 version. . . .

After heading up another set of stairs to the rehearsal studio, the TRaC group spreads out on the floor across the front of the studio, pads out, pens in hand, taking notes on the activity around them. Denise Vale, the Senior Artistic Associate and rehearsal director, is in a corner working on the music; in another corner, dancers around a TV/VCR watch sections of the dance and try out movements; in the other corners, the back-up dancers for the Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins roles are at work. Jowers explains “double-casting,” and hence, one person working on a solo in the middle of the room and another in a corner practicing the same dance. Passing by, Vale mentions that the soloists take the DVD home to practice.

Tadej Brdnik, a Principal Dancer and Manager of Special Projects for the Company, stops by to ask the students who they are — and then talks with Eilber and Jowers, explaining that the Company is developing the “Tablet Experience,” a means by which subscribers can access more in-depth information about the Company than is publicly available. He

wonders aloud whether some of the TRaC reviews along with student photographs can go up on the new site. Responding that she would need permission of the girls and their families, Jowers pauses, then says, “It may be possible.”

High 5 Tickets to the Arts

The **high five** is a celebratory hand gesture that occurs when two people simultaneously raise one hand, about head high, and push, slide or slap the flat of their palm and hand against the palm and flat hand of their partner. — Wikipedia

High 5, the organizational home of TRaC, has an only-in-New-York story behind its start.

The city of Broadway lights, world-renowned opera, dance, music, theatre, as well as active and celebrated off-Broadway and off-off-Broadway performance centers, let alone eminent settings for visual art, had no tradition of low-cost student tickets. This all changed when a New York City high school junior — Rebecca Neuwirth — spent time in Vienna where, among other experiences, she explored opera via student tickets. Once home, she planned to continue her arts learning, but discovered that student tickets did not exist. It was full-freight or nothing. Instead of swallowing her disappointment, Neuwirth wrote to Mayor David Dinkins and, pointing out the Austrian practice, asked what could be done in her hometown. As is sometimes the way of big-city bureaucracies, her letter landed on the desk of someone who knew someone at American Symphony Orchestra — and from there, settled in the hands of Eugene Carr, then Executive Director of the Orchestra.¹ Carr, known for his interest in reaching new audiences, gave Rebecca a desk for the summer to work on the challenge.

When a Carnegie Hall performance testing the concept of low-cost student tickets proved successful, Carr was able to interest *The New York Times* and TicketMaster, as well as various arts organizations, in the effort.² He also created a focus group of high-school students to help name the project. They responded with “High 5” — coupling the high-fiving gesture and a \$5.00 fee for a student ticket.

In the meantime, over at Bravo Television,³ Ada Ciniglio, future High 5 Executive Director, was busy compiling ideas for sponsorship packages in the arts for big television series.⁴ When she saw one of the *pro bono* High 5 ads run by *The New York Times*, she was immediately intrigued:

Bravo at the time didn’t have advertising, it had sponsorships. . . . With a sponsorship, there had to be marketing and visibility, and [student tickets] seemed like a great way to get that visibility. I thought it . . . would be great to have this program expanded to all over the country.⁵

Ciniglio met with Carr, who at their first meeting, she reports, “said I’d be the kind of person to run [High 5].”⁶ Shortly thereafter she wrote a successful proposal to the Citibank Foundation for initial funding to start the High 5 program. In 1995, Ciniglio took High 5, which had started as a volunteer project in 1993, and obtained 501 (c) (3) status for it as an independent non-profit. She moved the enterprise into an office at 1790 Broadway in Manhattan and energized the effort:

I met with the people at TicketMaster and we were on our way! . . . I went to five major places and they all signed on: . . . Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Public Theater, BAM [Brooklyn Academy of Music], New York City Ballet. We weren’t in any museums at that point. . . . [Then] Agnes Gund, who was Executive Director of MOMA [Museum of Modern Art], asked why we didn’t have museums. We said, ‘If MOMA signed up, we’d have the rest.’ So that’s what happened. MOMA signed up and then so did everybody else.⁷

¹ Eugene Carr served as Executive Director of the American Symphony Orchestra from 1991-1996. See <http://patrontechnology.com/about-crm/mission-history/>

² High 5 Tickets to the Arts, *High 5 Tickets to the Arts at Five* (New York, New York, 2000).

³ Bravo, an American cable television channel, began as a commercial-free premium channel in December 1980. By the mid-1990s, Bravo started adding corporate sponsorships. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bravo_TV

⁴ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication, received November 20, 2012, hereafter referred to as “Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.”

⁵ Ada Ciniglio, Interview with Ada Ciniglio and Stacey Engels, April 20, 2012, hereafter referred to as “Interview Ciniglio and Engels.”

⁶ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.

⁷ Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels. The \$5.00 TRaC ticket for a museum covers entrance fees for two teens.

When asked why these organizations would be willing to give away tickets, she responds, “Their primary motive was to develop younger people as audiences. People genuinely wanted that.” The vision was one of a seamless, win-win fit: High 5 as a vehicle whereby arts organizations’ desire for new audiences energizes the vision of “a world in which . . . the arts . . . ultimately become a rich and enduring part of [young people’s] lives.”⁸

There was, however, one sector of the arts world that initially held out:

I felt very strongly . . . that tickets had to be donated. We never paid for tickets. . . . The biggest hurdle for us was that Broadway wasn’t interested. They had TDF [Theatre Development Fund⁹] and didn’t want to give away anything. They wanted some money *from* us¹⁰

Later, Ciniglio adds: “. . . we knew it was going to be impossible to raise enough money to support purchasing tickets. We needed the funds to promote and market to teens, and to eventually offer education programs that supplemented and illuminated their arts experiences.”¹¹

Providing Tickets for Teens

High 5 asked organizations to donate a minimum of 10 seats for a performance, and, says Ciniglio, “. . . they *always* have 10 unsold seats. . . . the basic idea is that once a seat doesn’t sell, it’s worthless.”¹² With High 5 voucher in hand, a student arrives at the box office and gets an unsold seat. “That could mean that the student wasn’t always relegated to a second balcony seat. They could be sitting next to someone in the orchestra who had paid for a seat.”

Beginning in 1995, Ciniglio led and nurtured High 5 for 12 years, including an initial student review effort — an early precursor of High 5’s Teen Reviewers and Critics program, which began in 2002.¹³ As she shaped High 5, she created a few guidelines for using the tickets. Students could bring an adult since at times that was the only way a teen could go out at night — “but there *had* to be a teen.”¹⁴ The biggest problem, she says, “was people trying to get in on the \$5 tickets who weren’t eligible.” Another question revolved around “adult content,” with High 5 deciding not to act as a censor, but to handle all offered tickets, although at times indicating content that might concern some viewers.

A striking aspect of High 5’s early development in “the days of the telephone message machine”¹⁵ revolved around “building a brand and a business.” Among other things, this entailed developing a mailing list of students, teachers, and parents; selling the tickets, initially through Ticketmaster outlets throughout the city “by clerks . . . we had to educate . . . about their new student customers,” and gathering “inventory from literally hundreds of arts organizations who had never had teens in their audiences.” Ciniglio says “. . . all I ended up doing was operations. . . . It was operationally very intensive,” especially in the pre-internet era. Three times a year, she and her staff compiled printed catalogues listing available student tickets and distributed “about 20,000” copies, mainly by mail, to school libraries and the three NYC public library systems. This required ticket confirmations well in advance of printing the catalogue. Ciniglio ruefully recalls that the catalogue was always out of date by the time it appeared — including, at times, attempted *retraction* of tickets when a show hit it big.¹⁶

⁸ Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

⁹ The Theatre Development Fund was established in 1968 to help support New York theatres. “TDF’s twofold mission is to identify and provide support, including financial assistance, to theatrical works of artistic merit and to encourage and enable diverse audiences to attend live theatre and dance in all their venues.” See the TDF website: http://www.tdf.org/TDF_ServicePage.aspx?id=85&%20do=v

¹⁰ Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

¹¹ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.

¹² All quotes in paragraph: Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

¹³ As High 5 grew, so did its staff, including, over time, an Administrative Manager, Marketing Manager and Assistant Manager, Director of Development and a Support Person, and a Financial Manager, as well as from one-three interns whose salaries came from various corporate sponsorships.

¹⁴ All quotes in paragraph: Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

¹⁵ All quotes in paragraph: Ada Ciniglio, Interview Ciniglio and Engels or Written communication.

¹⁶ Over time, High 5 developed relationships with particular teachers across New York City, Long Island, New Rochelle, and into New Jersey who wanted to expose their students to the arts — greatly facilitating distribution of information.

TRaC: Teen Reviewers and Critics

By 1999, High 5 staff were encouraging students to write reviews of events they attended and then publishing the reviews in the next edition of the catalogue of offerings. Stacey Engels, who joined the effort as a consultant in 2000, later says, “Self-starting students would write reviews,”¹⁷ an assessment that Ciniglio echoes, adding that the process was “Sporadic, catch as catch can, whoever had the self initiative to write.” As limited as the review process was at that point, Ciniglio valued it because “student voices, critical voices would be important for our other goals: teens would trust teen voices more than [they would] any critic.” Engels agrees, adding: “That and literacy. The big picture of teens participating in the cultural world of New York. And literally, also developing critical literacy, developing the ability to write opinions and to gain literacy skills.”

These perspectives laid the groundwork for taking the informal review process and launching the next step for High 5: creation of the Teen Reviewers and Critics (TRaC) Program.¹⁸ Ultimately, it was widespread internet use — and the creativity and energy to tap into it — that opened up the possibility of radically changing the program’s operational mechanics as well as offering new ways for it to grow.

Early TRaC

In late 2001, with the promise of matching funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), Ciniglio began developing TRaC, reaching out to potential funders, including the Robert Bowne Foundation. The DCA grant came through in mid-2002. Engels, newly back from Europe, re-joined the effort, taking on the role of High 5 After-School/Education Director to implement and manage the new initiative, “which was to be a formally-developed extension of the Student Reviewers program we had in place.”¹⁹ That same year, the Bowne Foundation funded High 5 to support implementation of the TRaC program. In her award letter, RBF Executive Director Lena Townsend offered kudos and encouragement: “As people who are passionate about literacy and about the arts, we are happy to see the kinds of connections you’ve made between them.”²⁰

The eight-week pilot session, in Fall 2002, was Multi TRaC,²¹ a continuing offering now called Multi-Arts that provides forays into a mix of arts venues. The 21 teen participants attended programs from the worlds of music, theater, dance, and visual arts. For this initial effort, participants were largely high school juniors and seniors, all selected on the basis of teacher recommendations and writing samples.²² Students came from New York City and New Jersey, with half the participants speakers of English as a second language. Meeting in the library of Americans for the Arts,²³ the program integrated:

- Four arts experiences, including performances and art exhibits
- Four analytic workshops during which participants read and discussed reviews by professional art critics as well as studied elements of writing structure
- Four guest speakers: Ben Brantley of *The New York Times*, clarinetist Don Byron, Linda Winer, Theatre Critic of *Newsday*, and David White of Dance Theatre Workshop
- Writing, editing, and rewriting two reviews each, with the option to write a third.

¹⁷ All quotes in paragraph from Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

¹⁸ The program is widely known and referred to simply as TRaC.

¹⁹ Stacey Engels, Written communication, November 18, 2012.

²⁰ Lena Townsend, Award Letter addressed to Ada Ciniglio, May 15, 2002.

²¹ Stacey Engels comments that “we always spelled MultiTRaC as one word” Later the title became Multi TRaC, and now is Multi-Arts. “Multi TRaC” is used throughout the case study to avoid confusion.

²² Later, outreach regularly included sophomores as well. At times, freshmen have participated, but in general, TRaC instructors have found that older students can better take advantage of the program. In addition, as Engels explains, “Because it was a free program taking people out of the realm of the familiar, we thought if a student didn’t have the initiative to seek out a teacher to sponsor them, they wouldn’t stick with it. It was built in as a requirement that they would stick to the eight weeks. We worried about attrition.” Ciniglio adds: “People warned us that if it were free and [students] didn’t get credits, what was the commitment?” For legal reasons, participants also needed written parental permission to be out at night. Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

²³ A non-profit organization that works to advance the arts and arts education; see: <http://www.artsusa.org/>

The strong response to the inaugural run excited both Ciniglio and Engels, who developed ideas to strengthen and expand the program, including:

- Adding visits backstage and inside arts venues, including rehearsal studios, performance spaces, and rehearsals, as well as interviews with technical staff
- Presenting guest speakers from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences
- Providing more in-class writing workshops and tickets to mainstream performances — both in response to students' suggestions.

This final bullet underlines High 5's practice of setting both challenges and opportunities. Students themselves sensed this duality, asking for more writing support *as well as* demands and for deeper traditional context *as well as* the avant-garde. TRaC staff elaborated the latter point:

After the first session, the students requested that they be taken to more mainstream events in addition to experimental work. The staff thought this suggestion was important because for teens who have not previously been exposed to many arts events, it is difficult to review an experimental work without ever having seen the more mainstream or classical works.²⁴

Clearly, TRaC was both igniting and satisfying needs and interests.

TRaC at Three

Given students' strong response to the initial offering, High 5 staff began discussing an expansion to include single discipline programs — possibly dance, theater, music, visual arts, and poetry/spoken word — as well as continuing Multi TRaC, now recast as a taster menu. The first new program was Dance TRaC, building on the interest of the Dance Theatre Workshop (DTW): “. . . [DTW staff] were very aware of how they were impacted by the cuts in dance — not just production but the critical response to dance was slashed more than anything else. [David Sheingold] really believed reaching a new generation of critics could help turn that around.”²⁵

By 2005, TRaC was partnering with ArtTable in visual arts and Carnegie Hall in music, as well as Dance Theatre Workshop. Since the program's start in Fall 2002, it had sponsored Multi TRaC, Dance TRaC, Fast TRaC for high school students already writing at a college or professional level, as well as an intensive 10 day Film TRaC in partnership with the South African Film Festival, with screenings in a variety of venues around the city. Ciniglio and Engels also began the Open House event to publicize TRaC to potential participants, teachers, and funders — an event that continues today.

Dance TRaC at a Rehearsal of the Martha Graham Dance Company (continued)

At the point of the TRaC visit to the Martha Graham Dance Company's rehearsal, the dancers had been working for five days on reconstructing the dance Every Soul is a Circus, part of the company's The Inner Landscape season. About an hour into the rehearsal, Denise Vale asks the dancers to run through what they have so far. It is the first run-through — even Janet Eilber hasn't seen what now amounts to 14 minutes of the dance. Turning to her group, Christine Jowers tells the TRaC students how special it is to see the first run-through of a good portion of a dance.

Following the run-through, the dancers get back to work on a group section — and Eilber asks Blakely White-McGuire, who had just performed the Martha Graham role in the run-through, to join the TRaC students for an interview.

The students along with Jowers gather in an open space in the corridor, and very shortly, White-McGuire and Eilber join them. At first, the students are quiet, a bit shy, so Eilber and Jowers start things off; soon White-McGuire is talking about growing up in a small Louisiana town and her early classes at Graham:

I had never heard of Martha Graham but the Graham Ensemble, the second or junior company, toured and I was so excited about it. I researched and when I got old enough, I came to New York City. . . . Carol Fried was my first Graham teacher. . . . Carol was a great teacher. She told us to practice lifting our stomachs while we are walking, everywhere [we] go. I thought that was a great idea.

²⁴ Quoted in the Robert Bowne Foundation Mid-Year Report, February 3, 2003.

²⁵ Stacey Engels, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

Before long, TRaC participants are jumping into the conversation.

*How do you feel while you're dancing? You look like you enjoy it.
I really enjoy it. And it's scary. I have a tender side in a hard shell. . . . Inside I feel a lot of different things.*

*What is it like learning choreography? Is it one-shot or does it take a long time?
It's a layered process. What I do is write everything out. I watch the videos, then make scenarios — monologues/
dialogues before I learn the music. I really study the video. The more I watch the black-and-white video of Martha
and Erick and Merce, the funnier it gets. It takes time.*

*Is everything from the old version in the 1940s or do you put in any new moves?
No changes. Not in the moves. The energy and the musicality might change. Martha Graham, Erick Hawkins, Merce
Cunningham were all so unique. You can't copy what they did; I have to transpose it to myself. Same steps though.*

*Here, Eilber adds: The interpretations and the bodies are different. Same steps. But dancers have gotten more elastic
and stronger since then. . . . Martha lived to the age of 96 and she loved incorporating the stronger dancers into her
old pieces. Holding onto the emotional theme while making use of the greater facility.*

*How do you think it will turn out? Are you excited? Worried?
I feel it will be a hit, welcomed because it is so different. Refreshing even though 1940s and classic modern dance
vocabulary. It's so humorous. . . . It's wonderful to be cheeky. And it's unusual for our repertoire.*

After the TRaC participants go out, Jowers turns to thank Eilber: “I think it's weird to only see performances. It's important to see a rehearsal and understand what goes into the performance. . . . It's so difficult to condense dance history, but meeting real people, having guests, bring it alive.”

Changing Hands at TRaC

In 2000, High 5 Tickets to the Arts celebrated its fifth anniversary and “passing the 25,000 ticket mark” with the publication of *High 5 at Five*, a history of its development. Shortly thereafter, the new century became a time of change for the program.

In 2005, with High 5 established and TRaC gaining its feet, Stacey Engels left to focus more time on her own writing. That year, in recognition of her contribution to after school education in New York City, she received the Partnership for After School Education's (PASE) 2005 PASEsetter Award Honorable Mention. A year later, in 2006, Ada Ciniglio reduced her time at High 5 and then, in 2007, left her position as Executive Director, although she remained on the High 5 Board of Directors and continues today on the ArtsConnection Board.²⁶ The Arts and Business Council of New York, in 2006, awarded Ciniglio its Encore Award for Arts Management Excellence in recognition of her work in the worlds of the arts and arts education.²⁷

Colin Delaney, also a playwright, continued as High 5 Program Manager, taking care of all the ins-and-outs of soliciting, advertising, selling, and distributing the arts tickets to requesting teens as well as organizing tickets for the growing TRaC programs.

In September, 2005, Eric Ost, a writer himself, joined the High 5 staff as the second director of TRaC. A New Jersey native, Ost began his college career at Rutgers University and then transferred to Temple University. Two sets of college experiences helped develop his interests and shape his career trajectory. First, at Temple, he gained a sense of both hands-on and theoretical knowledge of teaching — tutoring freshmen in English and writing, as well as tutoring in an honors literature course. Then, as a senior, his classroom studies in philosophy, history, and English — as well as a sense of the relationship of first-hand experience to learning — suddenly came alive through a study abroad program in Rome:

²⁶ In 2010, High 5 Tickets to the Arts and Teen Critics and Reviewers (TRaC) moved to ArtsConnection.

²⁷ Ada Ciniglio has played many roles in the arts and arts education, including: Director of a Rockefeller Foundation museum educators fellowship program at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Director of Development at The Drawing Center; Visiting Assistant Professor, Arts and Cultural Management, School of Art and Design of Pratt Institute; Treasurer of the Board and member of the Executive Committee of ArtTable.

. . . it was the first time that history and art history were woven together. . . there we were in Rome, with art all around us; I got a sense of art, literature, history all together. . . For one break, I got the idea to follow Caravaggio[s travels] and I went to Southern Italy and then into Sicily. It was a great experience, and out of that I wanted to live in New York City — to be in such a rich culture.²⁸

After graduation, Ost returned to New Jersey and worked in various education-related positions, including: school counselor and writing coach at the Writing Center in West Philadelphia; substitute high school teacher in New Jersey; and paraprofessional in special education. “Through all this experience,” he says, “I really got to see that there have to be different ways for young people to learn.”²⁹ At the same time, he was circulating his resume in New York City, where he still wanted to live. He says, with a laugh at his younger self: “Someone told me to look at ‘non-profits,’ and I had *no* idea what they were or what they did.”

Through a family friend, however, Ost heard about an opening at a non-profit: the TRaC position at High 5. He interviewed with Ciniglio, was hired as TRaC Director of Education and Outreach, and started work immediately. He recalls moving into New York City on September 3, starting work on September 7, and being “told that the open house for the program was the next week.”³⁰ Engels stayed on to support Ost through his initial TRaC weeks and remained available afterward, touching base periodically.

Still, once on his own and in the midst of the managerial whirlwind, Ost found himself the only person in the organization with specific programmatic responsibility — at a time when TRaC was a strapping yet relatively young and still-developing endeavor. Ost recalls his early days as a time of feeling his way, encountering tasks with no experience of his own to draw on and little in-house guidance for translating into action the programmatic materials at hand. Looking back on those first days, he recalls his early apprehensions:

. . . I was supposed to be doing all these things: recruiting kids to the program, getting instructors . . . I had no idea how to recruit kids and had no connections with schools. I had no arts connections that I could tap for recruiting instructors. . . I had no idea about what I was supposed to do — and there was no one to ask.³¹

Beyond the pressures of that initial period, however, he discovered three pivotal sources of support: the Robert Bowne Foundation; the continuing TRaC instructors who had been brought on by Ciniglio and Engels; and the arts organizations themselves that were contributing tickets to High 5. Each helped enrich and broaden ways of thinking about, developing, and implementing TRaC.

Developing TRaC

Working with TRaC Instructors

From the start, Ost says, one of his most important supports and creative partners at TRaC has been the group of instructors — initially those that Ciniglio and Engels had brought on, and continuing as he hired new instructors. Each instructor is grounded in the focus art of her/his particular TRaC session and participates in that art world in some capacity. Ost singles out one in particular: Brian McCormick, a member of the initial (2003) cohort of instructors, leading Dance TRaC, and who, about 2010, moved to Multi TRaC. McCormick is an ongoing link to TRaC’s start and an invaluable participant in its growth. For Ost, the first group of instructors brought experience with the various arts as well as knowledge of TRaC. Perhaps more to the point, they were and are keen to stimulate students’ exploration of the various facets of arts worlds. Together with Ost, they formed “a “team” of collaborators, thought-partners, and staunch arts practitioners and enthusiasts.

Moreover, as the need arose, it became apparent that TRaC instructors knew others in the arts, and if one was leaving or a new TRaC developed, it was the instructors who brought in new teachers. Thus, the group that Ciniglio and Engels initially hired has been the font of later generations of instructors.

²⁸ Eric Ost Interview, August 31, 2011, hereafter referred to as “Eric Ost Interview.”

²⁹ All quotes in paragraph: Eric Ost Interview.

³⁰ Eric Ost Interview.

³¹ Eric Ost Interview.

Working with Participating Arts Organizations

At the outset, Ost grasped little interactive relationship between High 5 (the ticket side) and TRaC (the program side) except that the program “was a way to use some of [the tickets].”³² Quickly, however, his perceptions changed as he began working with the arts organizations already engaged through donating tickets to and working with High 5. Over time, such relationships had developed further as opportunities arose for them to link more deeply with TRaC, resulting in a solid base of organizations that had moved beyond ticket-provision to contributing substantially to TRaC programming. Ost says:

The programming mainly happened with people at the arts organizations that High 5 worked with — at Carnegie [Hall] with the music person or at Dance Theatre Workshop or with a group for women artists — ArtTable — for visual arts. There was no room at High 5 for TRaC to have meetings so we met at Dance Theatre Workshop; or we got help from Carnegie developing the Music TRaC, suggestions about programs that would be good for kids or help with finding guest speakers, [plus] housing in their space.³³

Beyond tickets, then, such art organizations were providing TRaC with expertise, connections, imagination, space, entree into particular areas of the arts world. Perhaps most importantly, staff at these organizations became stimulating interlocutors with and supporters of the program because, as Ciniglio predicted, they saw TRaC as a means to a desired end, namely the development of young arts enthusiasts. These relationships continue today. Simultaneously, the process of working with TRaC became an intellectual boon for the energetic young man with a thirst for the arts. He recalls:

I was recruiting [students] and getting support from the High 5 network of arts programs . . . [from people] like Hollis [Headrick] at Carnegie [Hall], the Guggenheim [Museum] and Sharon Vatsky, David Sheingold [at Dance Theatre Workshop] to see what was happening in dance. . . . I was 25 years old then — and I was going in and talking with established people in their field Figuring out what I was doing and building the program.³⁴

Ost discovered in practice a deep mutuality between TRaC and the arts organizations, with both aiming to expose high school students to the arts. On the one side, an aim to engage teens as a step in fostering and expanding a knowledgeable, involved audience for the arts. On the other, broadening teens’ experiential and learning horizons, not only of the arts but in critical literacy. TRaC provided a venue for the involved arts organizations to interact with adventurous, interested teens, many of whom wanted to contribute — through their reviews — to shaping the arts experiences of their peers.

The Robert Bowne Foundation and TRaC

At the same time, High 5 had no internal professional development resources to help support Ost across a range of programmatic aspects, including: basic program development and management; participant recruitment and engagement; inter-relationships with schools and teachers. Despite the link to arts organizations and the budding TRaC sessions in place, High 5 continued primarily as a venue for soliciting, obtaining, and distributing arts tickets to interested teens. There was no cluster of *program* colleagues at High 5 with whom Ost could regularly brainstorm and problem-solve.

Through support visit conversations with and encouragement from Anne Lawrence, the Bowne Foundation Program Officer, Ost learned about the Foundation’s professional development offerings — in particular, its action research group.³⁵ Lawrence’s sharing of information with grantees is a Bowne practice we have seen often during support visits and other interactions between grantee staff and herself: a light-touch mention of a specific professional development offering that might be of benefit for the staff person and the program. Moreover, in addition to particular professional development learning/practices, Bowne staff recognize the value of cross-program interaction and the different kinds of support that such colleagues can provide each other.

That first year with TRaC, Ost took part in the Bowne-supported action research group, led by Suzanne Marten of Center for Educational Options. Here, with a group of program colleagues — all current or former Bowne grantees — he found support and ideas for his TRaC work. In many ways, he says, he enacted his own action research *on* the group itself. He recalls:

³² Eric Ost Interview.

³³ Eric Ost Interview.

³⁴ Eric Ost Interview.

³⁵ Stacey Engels had also drawn on Bowne’s Action Research Group for two years while at TRaC; see page 65 below.

Anne [Lawrence, Bowne Program Officer] was really great. Within a year, I was part of the Bowne action research group — and got critical support there. We [High 5] were under-resourced and I was running this program — and I used the [action research] group as a support group. I'd ask, 'How do you do this?' 'What about evaluation?' I had no idea. 'Do you have kids who drop out? How do you deal with that?' 'What do I change about the program?' I remember a guy from Outward Bound — and Sister Brenda who was from a community-based afterschool program based in a religious organization. The group was so helpful to me — I asked them about *everything*.³⁶

In addition to action research, Ost engaged in Bowne-sponsored evaluation seminars with Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D. He recalls receiving very practical information about ways to think about and integrate evaluation measures at the start of a particular set of program sessions, thereby allowing for a grounded, useful evaluation at the end. Thus, for example, he used a student questionnaire to capture early expectations of participants and another at the end to get outcomes, focusing on program aims as well as on anticipated factors that initially attracted participants. In addition, he attended “most Bowne networking events around a range of topics.”³⁷

Throughout this period, he says, there was ongoing “back and forth dialogue with Anne [Lawrence].”³⁸ Grounded in these months-long discussions, as well as interaction with other program people and the continuing brainstorming with TRaC instructors, Ost learned about the ins and outs of managing and evaluating a nonprofit program as well as ways to think about, develop, and deepen its substantive offerings. He explored ways to interact with schools and teachers and, at the same time, the efficacy of different approaches to working with youth. Although he also tried other professional development venues, these were often disappointing forays. He recalls, for example, beginning “to pursue arts education fields; I went to the *Face to Face Arts Conference* [part of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable] but it was mostly about teaching-artists in schools and how to write contracts.”

It was access to the experiences of others working in non-profits and in the afterschool field that provided the deepest and most practical assistance.

Six years later, Ost continues to recognize that: “Up to now, Bowne has been my major PD [professional development] access.”³⁹ Moreover, not only has he used such lessons in program development, he also continues to draw upon them in supporting instructors who join TRaC. These individuals are largely selected for their connections to and experience in the art world and often do not bring extensive, if any, teaching experience. In Ost's debrief meeting with instructors after the Fall 2011 term, one can see him translating the collegial support, as well as lessons, that he received through Bowne into support for others.⁴⁰ Thus, one instructor says to Ost:

Thank you so much, Eric. Because until you took the time to say, 'Do you have a lesson plan?' I was floundering. . . . I didn't understand the depth of this. . . . You took me by the hand and said, 'Show me the lesson plan by Tuesday.' It was so helpful. You were so patient. . . . Teaching is . . . deeply humbling.

To which Ost responds: “You have to be on. The exhausting days are challenging. . . . And then there are the days you soar, you read the feedback from the kids and you know you're connecting.”

Later in the discussion, he brings together comments of other participants, saying:

You're asking: what is the role of the writing in the workshop? I think the goal is for them to utilize writing to help them understand and process. That happens in exercises like the mistranslated poem or the haiku responses. If it's only two reviews, that's okay. The point is to be utilizing words to translate their ideas. . . .

³⁶ Eric Ost Interview.

³⁷ Eric Ost Phone Interview, November 21, 2012, hereafter referred to as “Eric Ost Phone Interview”.

³⁸ All quotes in paragraph from: Eric Ost Interview.

³⁹ Eric Ost Interview.

⁴⁰ All quotes from Fieldnotes, TRaC Instructors Wrap-Up Meeting, December 21, 2011

I think the goal is to have them see writing as a powerful tool in thinking about the [art] work they see. They need to turn in at least one review to be published. That is a leverage; it is a critics program. But they are beginners and the goal is for them to use the language.

An instructor adds:

I think the edits really did help them. The feedback, line edits, when I asked them, ‘What do you mean here?’ . . . They dreaded getting them [back], but every time . . . they came back with something better. . . . One effective thing that happened was the time [Eric] came in and they paired up and read each others’ papers and spoke about what was missing, what they didn’t understand, what they thought was great. It was lively. They were comfortable with each other by then. And because it was one-on-one, they could be honest.

Another extends the discussion, saying: “I feel we did accomplish an understanding of the difference between a reviewer and a critic. Anybody can do a review. A critic needs to know something or do research. They learned that difference by the reading they did.”

Growing TRaC

During that first fall, in 2005, Ost’s absorption in TRaC and in New York City merged. He recalls:

In the Fall, I was going to all the [TRaC] events — I was seeing New York City and the arts. Then, where I lived, I took the F train to come in [to the office] and I decided that I’d get off at every stop and explore the neighborhood to get a sense of the city. . . . So here I was, living in New York City and learning about experiencing art. . . . I was doing what I said I wanted to.⁴¹

This engaged immersion fed into the development of TRaC. When he started working at High 5, there were three TRaC sessions in place: Visual Arts, Dance, and Multi TRaC (now titled Multi-Arts). In planning for the following round of Spring 2006, Ost was ready to expand, building on Multi TRaC units previously developed by Ciniglio and Engels. He says, “I started the Music TRaC, so then we had Visual, Dance, Multi, and Music TRaCs.”⁴² He adds, “The first summer [in 2006] was a blast — and the program took on a life of its own. By the spring, kids were clamoring to join.” By 2007, six options, including Theatre TRaC and Film TRaC, were offered, a roster that continues today.⁴³

High 5’s website includes *TRaC FAQs*, a column in Q and A format that includes the following:

Which TRaC is right for me?

Well, that depends on you! Many times painters will take Visual Arts TRaC and musicians will take Music TRaC, as you’d expect. However, some of the most rewarding experiences (as we’ve heard from TRaC grads) have occurred when people venture into uncharted territory. We encourage people to experiment. Try the class you know the least about. No matter what you choose, you are guaranteed to go somewhere and see something you’ve never seen before.⁴⁴

Like getting off the F train and exploring the neighborhood.

TRaC as Art Going/Art Critics Cohort

As Ost dove into working with TRaC, he began to see opportunities to extend the three-year-old program in new ways. Even at the program’s then young age, based on the efforts of Ciniglio and Engels, the essential linking of tickets and support for students’ exploration of art worlds had been established, relationships with many art institutions had been nurtured and built, and teens from around the city and beyond were participating in TRaC sessions.

⁴¹ Eric Ost Interview.

⁴² All quotes in paragraph from: Eric Ost Interview.

⁴³ Music and Theatre were part of TRaC from the start as units in Multi TRaC. Film also appeared early in TRaC with Engels’ 10 day Film TRaC in partnership with the South African Film Festival (see above, page 57). Ost developed these into regular, single focus TRaC offerings.

⁴⁴ See: <http://www.highfivetix.org/asp/buzz/TRaC_faq.aspx>

At the same time, Ost felt that opportunities to link participants together as a cohort were as yet largely untapped. Moreover, although participants were to write arts reviews from the start, there were few incentives to do so. In part, as pointed out by a TRaC instructor who has worked with the program from that period and continues today: “There was not so much focus on writing early on, and even if the kids wrote reviews, there was no place to publish them”⁴⁵ Into this mix, Ost brought his experience in education, working with young people of varying capabilities in classroom and workshop environments, his personally revelatory experience in Italy — and his ability to tap into the uses of the internet and social media. He also, as the TRaC instructor continues, injected “the program with a lot of energy.” Moreover, Ost’s previous efforts to foster literacy, writing skills, and the individual interests of young people came into compelling interaction with Bowne’s focus on literacy and the potential of afterschool. Of his beginning work with TRaC, Ost says:

I wanted to add an education component and tie it to the tickets. . . . if [the teen participants] were writing about [the shows], then there was an educational component. I saw it as an opportunity to think in-depth about the arts and to meet each other, all doing the same things. This was the seeding for what to do with [TRaC].

There was an opportunity to make a choice about writing about the arts, about criticism, and talking about it — to develop an arts-going philosophy; to do real, in-depth arts-going by writing reviews. I could envision going online, meeting with a larger community — what social media eventually made possible. . . .

I thought about how to get kids engaged and see themselves as part of a larger group — not just something that they came to every once in awhile⁴⁶

Over time, Ost expanded the range of program offerings, all infused by a view of TRaC’s potential to foster participants’ exploratory spirit, sense of community, and literate, critical sensibility in approaching the arts as well as their own writing. Ost worked to:

- Create online media, including:
 - An online weekly newsletter where selected TRaC and Freelancer reviews are published and sent to “thousands of New Yorkers”
 - *The High 5 Review*, the online newspaper that publishes each TRaC participant’s strongest review effort; Brian McCormick, the long-time TRaC instructor quoted earlier, says, “By having *High 5 Review*, there was a change in emphasis [in the program] — there was a reward for writing reviews.”
- Formalize and expand the Freelancers Corps, open to 13 to 18 year olds (including those not yet in high school and therefore not eligible to join TRaC as well as those not wanting to do TRaC) who commit to attending at least one art event per month and submitting at least one 200-400 word review every two months. Participants can get two free tickets to any event on the High 5 Events Calendar. As Ost advertises:

Attention teen writers! WE WANT YOU to join the High 5 FREELANCERS CORPS!
. . . . Our goal is to be *the* premiere place for teen writing on the arts. . . . That means we want to cover *EVERYTHING*: film, museums, theater, dance, performance, music. Any of it and all of it.⁴⁷

- Develop structures and practices to bring TRaC participants together, such as:
 - An All-TRaC kick-off party, bringing together current participants across all the TRaCs
 - Cross-TRaC events for different TRaC sections, such as an outing for Visual and Multi TRaCs
 - Establish giving two tickets to any requesting TRaC participant to any High 5 event, the extra ticket “to bring family or introduce a friend to the arts — to evangelize the arts; to get participants to as many arts events as they want throughout the TRaC term and to allow them to bring other people in their lives into their experiences”⁴⁸
 - Online invitations to TRaC participants to investigate one-off art happenings and pop-up events
 - End-of-semester celebration with a TRaC Finale for participants that takes place in an arts venue and includes

⁴⁵ Brian McCormick Interview, December 10, 2012.

⁴⁶ Eric Ost Interview.

⁴⁷ See <http://www.high5review.org/opportunities/freelancer-corps>

⁴⁸ Eric Ost Phone Interview.

- TRaC participants, their family members, and friends
 - Ciniglio and Engels created the Open House as a way to introduce TRaC to potential participants, teachers, and funders; Ost refashioned the event as a more informal, teen-run affair that aimed both to recruit new participants and be a “place for alumni to reconnect”⁴⁹
 - Monthly “Friday Film Night” — movie and pizza — at the Sony Wonder Lab, open to *all* high schools students, including, of course, current and past TRaC participants. Ost sees these events as a way to: (1) make High 5 tickets available for free to help connect teens to “a distinct arts-going High 5 experience”⁵⁰ and (2) help build “. . . a ‘club house’ type atmosphere to help [participants] connect to the experience”⁵¹
- Offer two free tickets to all desired High 5 offerings to each completing TRaC participant until he/she is 19 years old
- Establish summer 2-day workshops — one meeting to attend an art event and the second to meet as a group to discuss the event and their reviews (a taste of the full TRaC experience) — a new opportunity that one instructor calls “awesome, a great addition to the program,” drawing in new students who are “so bored with nothing to do over the summer, and who often come to the program in the fall”⁵²
- Moreover, proposing that “kids in afterschool art groups can start clubs at their schools. Think about how to take back what they do in TRaC — it’s not just about what they do here.”⁵³

Building on the groundwork of Ciniglio and Engels, Ost says, “Now the program has a structure, a place, concrete community connections to each other.”⁵⁴

Overview of TRaC Program Structure

The following from TRaC FAQs provides a to-the-point and inclusive description of the structure and content of the 10 week TRaC program today. Each TRaC program has a limit of 12 participants, a total of 72 slots across the six programs per term. Program instructors come from the world of the arts and are all “working writers, critics, artists and art lovers.”⁵⁵ This piece by Ost, as the one above — reflect his ability to employ the internet to communicate with a teen audience:

What do you do in TRaC?

Over ten weeks, participants travel together to see at least SEVEN hand-picked shows and exhibitions at different venues, in different boroughs and neighborhoods. You’ll meet professional artists, playwrights, musicians, writers and critics, and hear how they live, think and work. You’ll write about what you see/hear/experience. In weekly workshops, you’ll learn the language of each art discipline, debate your tastes with peers, chat with visiting artists, and write and workshop 300 - 500 word reviews. Your best work will be published in High 5’s online newspaper, *The High 5 Review*, and may be featured in our weekly email newsletter, which goes out to thousands of New Yorkers. In addition, Teen Reviewers and Critics also get their pick of shows on the High 5 event calendar. That is, a pair of tickets, *FREE*, whenever you want them, up until your 19th birthday. It’s the gift that keeps on giving....⁵⁶

TRaC as Social Circle/Social Support

Beyond the draw of supported forays into and writing about the arts, the coming together of participants, each out of his or her daily routine, to explore often unknown worlds with new colleagues provides, in itself, incentives and rewards. Perhaps especially so for teens who are struggling to define themselves and/or have what others might see as quirky interests.

Stacey Engels, the founding director of TRaC who continues to work with teens in an afterschool program, observes:

⁴⁹ Eric Ost, Phone Interview.

⁵⁰ Eric Ost, Phone Interview.

⁵¹ Eric Ost Interview.

⁵² Brian McCormick Interview, December 10, 2012.

⁵³ Eric Ost Interview.

⁵⁴ Eric Ost Interview.

⁵⁵ See: <<http://www.highfivetix.org/Aspx/Buzz/TeenPrograms.aspx>>

⁵⁶ See: http://www.highfivetix.org/asp/buzz/TRaC_faqs.aspx

It really is one of the most electric things You get into, no matter how different kids are in your school, you get into a groove. You put kids together who would never cross each other's paths to be together for a couple of months and to share ideas and see art together. I really think it is such a paradoxical time in one's life. The need for independence is as powerful as the need for a peer group. This offered an alternative peer group. . . . There is something deadening about the [school] identity that can be imposed on you. . . .

Afterschool is an important place to try things out. You get into the same repetitive grooves in school or in your family. In something like TRaC, you are seeing new communities, new parts of the city, new people.⁵⁷

In addition to providing an opening out into different worlds, such experiences can provide a place to open up and explore the world that one inhabits every day. Thus, during a Multi TRaC session, a discussion of a recently seen play becomes the venue for students to talk about social stereotypes and taken-for-granted assumptions. One student — quiet at the start — begins talking about his attendance at a private school where, he tells his TRaC mates, everyone assumes his family has money because he is there — and no one knows that he is there on a scholarship.⁵⁸

During the Fall 2011 debrief, one of the instructors also refers to this moment:

. . . . All those stereotypes about rich kids, we got to talk about them because of *How Much Is Enough* [an audience-participation production], which raised questions about values . . . someone had asked someone in the show a controversial question. . . . 'How can you tell someone is rich?' and the answer was about race. . . . it opened up . . . assumptions kids had about where they are from, what school[s] they attend]. . . . They had known each other but this got them to *know* each other.⁵⁹

The two founders — Ciniglio and Engels — are, in fact, adamant that TRaC belongs in afterschool, despite pressure to put the program into the school day. Engels comments:

The students in TRaC are getting *out* of their turf and thinking of the whole city as their turf and communicating across generations and neighborhoods. You bring something like that into schools and you lose 60 percent of its value.⁶⁰

At the same time, High 5 and TRaC constituencies raise questions for some staff, questions that may very well occur in other voluntary programs as well. TRaC draws males and females, students from a broad range of schools, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, as well as from different areas of New York City, Long Island, and New Jersey. Despite outreach efforts, however, Engels recalls her frustration in realizing that TRaC was not reaching teens from all across New York City's broad population spectrum.

While developing TRaC, Engels participated in a Bowne-sponsored action research seminar led by Suzanne Marten of the Center for Educational Options with Pam Little of the Literacy Assistance Center. "We [participants] brought our challenges to the table, broke it down, and wrote about it Having time to ponder problems and write about it was very important."⁶¹ Through this process, Engels came to recognize that, although participation in TRaC is totally free, with the program providing all event tickets gratis, most TRaC teens arrive having had at least some exposure to the arts, enough to feel comfortable in such environments as well as with critiquing and exploring pieces and performances. "[T]hose who hadn't had [such] opportunities tended to embrace them far less." She later adds:

Pam [Little] and Suzanne [Marten] had everything to do with keeping my spirits up and continually helping me redirect because I was just getting my eyes opened to the realities of economic and educational disparities in NYC and I felt incredibly guilty that I couldn't do more about what seemed to be the 'natural selection' and the high ratio of more affluent students, no matter how much outreach we did in 'at risk' schools.⁶²

⁵⁷ Stacey Engels, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

⁵⁸ Fieldnotes, Multi TRaC session, December 2, 2011.

⁵⁹ Fieldnotes, TRaC Instructors Wrap-Up Meeting, December 21, 2011.

⁶⁰ Stacey Engels, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

⁶¹ All quotes in paragraph from: Stacey Engels, Interview Ciniglio and Engels.

⁶² Stacey Engels, Written communication, November 18, 2012.

In a separate conversation, Ost reflects on his introduction to TRaC and initial understanding of its participants, perceptions that are akin to those of Engels:

The program caters to the most talented, top kids; kids with means; kids with parents who are flexible and let them go out to events — and it still does. I thought, ‘These are advanced kids from private schools; it’s not the job I thought I had.’⁶³

Over time, however, as Ost worked with the program, he saw that “it’s *not* just them . . . they’re just a small piece of the pie — just as it is in New York City.”⁶⁴

During the instructors debriefing meeting with Ost in late 2011, it is clear to everyone that the range of participants is far more nuanced and complex than on initial view. Each participant has made a choice to be in the program. Many come to be with others who enjoy a particular art form, while others are explorers, looking to make forays into new arenas with similarly-adventurous teens. Still others see themselves as loners, out-of-step with their high school colleagues. One instructor says of a recent TRaC group, “This was a group of ‘freaks and geeks,’ who self-defined as weird kids. They kept saying how awesome [it was] that they all thought they were going to be *the* weird kid, and they were *all* weird kids.” When another mentions having a number of participants with Asperger syndrome, Ost responds that a participant with Asperger’s came, enjoyed TRaC, and had gotten the word out. Participants also come from a range of school types, including public, private, and home-school settings.

Later in the debriefing, Ost points to another reason why afterschool offers so much potential to teens: “That’s the special thing about the program. It’s not *just* that kids are from all over the city, from different backgrounds. . . . But you end up having everybody that is interested in being there — for exploring. They’ve all applied to be in an afterschool writing program. It’s not like school.”⁶⁵

In 2011 and again in 2012, the efforts of Ciniglio, Engels, Ost, TRaC instructors, Colin Delaney, TRaC participants, and engaged teachers and parents were nationally recognized. The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities along with its cultural partners — the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services — named TRaC as one of “50 exceptional programs across the country for their work in presenting rich arts and humanities learning opportunities to young people.”⁶⁶

Transitioning High 5 and TRaC **Summer 2007 – Summer 2011**

Although TRaC was thriving programmatically under Ost, High 5 Tickets to the Arts was somewhat “rudderless” during 2006-2007 as a search for a new Executive Director was ongoing, led by High 5 Board member Ada Ciniglio. In summer 2007, Tim Cynova, former Executive Director of The David Parsons Dance Company, came on as High 5 Executive Director, remaining for about a year. It was a time of financial difficulties and the organization was in fund-raising mode. Ost recalls:

When [Tim Cynova resigned], we were engaged in fund raising — you’ll remember that time, with all the trouble at Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers — who were our funders — and the economy tanked. We had no money.⁶⁷

The staff had been trimmed drastically, and Cynova’s departure left High 5 and TRaC combined with only four program staff, including the two Program Managers (Ost for TRaC and Colin Delaney for High 5).⁶⁸ With the Executive Director’s salary freed up, there was some cushion, but in the late fall, the staff had to go on furlough.

⁶³ Eric Ost Interview.

⁶⁴ Eric Ost, Phone interview.

⁶⁵ Eric Ost, Instructor Debrief Meeting, December 21, 2011.

⁶⁶ See: < <http://www.nahyp.org/blog/2012-national-arts-and-humanities-youth-program-award-finalists/>>

⁶⁷ Eric Ost Interview.

⁶⁸ In 2008, there had been 13 High 5 staff members across the entire organization, including TRaC and part-time staff.

They began a four-day work week, although, of course, as one recalls, “the amount of work wasn’t cut, but we were doing it in four days.” Furlough status lasted 32 months, from November 2008 to June 2011.

Throughout the transition, a committee of the High 5 Board, headed by Ada Ciniglio, searched for both “a merger partner and the transition funding that was essential to continuing our operation in the period before the actual legal merger could take place.”⁶⁹ During this time, Ciniglio stayed in touch with Lena Townsend, Executive Director at Bowne, to discuss possible partners and also to ensure continuation of the Robert Bowne Foundation’s support, a critical point in all negotiations and planning for the future.⁷⁰

Eventually, two possible partners were identified: ArtsConnections and Young Audiences. Of the two, there were strong considerations in favor of ArtsConnection, including the fact that funders for High 5 and ArtsConnections did *not* overlap and the programs differ significantly, in part because ArtsConnections programming was at the time largely school-based, primarily in elementary schools.⁷¹

Negotiations began in late Spring 2009. While High 5 continued “to pay [its] own way during the transition period,”⁷² Ciniglio and others on the Board worked to settle some financial issues as a requirement of the merger. The Robert Bowne Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs provided guarantees that they would continue their funding to TRaC. Citibank, one of High 5 funders, forgave part of a loan, with the balance paid by High 5. The Paley Foundation allowed the program to terminate its lease, “removing a tremendous financial burden.”⁷³ Moreover, with only a few staff remaining with High 5, there were no redundancies with staff at ArtsConnection.

At the same time and of equal importance, High 5 and the TRaC programs had continued intact because Ost, Delaney, and the others had kept everything running. During the furlough period, five TRaC programs continued; as Ost reports, “The kids didn’t know that High 5 almost didn’t exist because we ran it.” He recalls:

We were in transition from June 2009 and then the offices finally merged in 2010⁷⁴. . . . When we came to ArtsConnection, we were true orphans. . . . In May/June 2010, the paper finally came through. It took a full year to make it official. On June 14, 2010, we moved to ArtsConnection. Even as it was, we had to . . . get through all this legal work ending the 501[c][3] for High 5 We packed up the truck and finally moved from the East Side. I drove the truck. . . . We got here and ArtsConnection was really sunny.⁷⁵

In talking about the merger and its impact on TRaC, Ost uses his 2011 annual review as an example:

It’s a different environment In my yearly review, we were talking about how to institutionalize TRaC — how to create an across the board curriculum; what are the goals for the next three years; how to develop a strategy and fundraise for it.⁷⁶

Ciniglio and Engels had envisioned and started TRaC. Ost furthered the program, putting the writing of reviews on solid ground and working to foster and institutionalize both a sense of community among the teen participants and, with the use of social media, a way of spurring teens’ writing of reviews and sharing the work of TRaC with

⁶⁹ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication. She adds: “High 5 continued during the transition period because a Board member, Alfred Szymanski, took on the role of liaison between Board and staff and because I continued unpaid to work with the financial manager (who functioned as general manager) and the development manager to deal with the financial issues.”

⁷⁰ Ada Ciniglio says: “I personally went back to a series of funders with whom I had had established relationships, and made personal appeals for their support. I really had an overwhelming response — including that of Bowne. Without that transition funding, High 5 would not have survived.” Written communication.

⁷¹ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.

⁷² Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.

⁷³ Ada Ciniglio, Written communication.

⁷⁴ The furlough status continued through June 2011, because, Ost reports, ArtsConnection was on furlough when High 5 joined.

⁷⁵ Eric Ost Interview.

⁷⁶ Eric Ost Interview.

a broad audience. Now, High 5 and TRaC were moving into a new phase. Ost points to the felt difference in being part of a large, well-established organization with, for example, a Director of Education overseeing TRaC program management, a development unit undertaking TRaC grantwriting responsibilities, the availability of a program manager with 30 years experience working with schools and arts. Reflecting on the recent past, he says, "It's just so incredible for me — I've been used to so many demands. I used to have to write the grants for TRaC when we were at High 5 and on furlough; now I just explain what we need and it goes to development."⁷⁷

Then he adds: "We still get grants from Bowne Bowne would fund at the size we were and not ask for expansion plans. . . . Bowne was about how to *deepen* the program and not dilute it."⁷⁸

There is a postscript to this story. In Fall 2012, after seven years with TRaC, Eric Ost is moving on; he will be attending Hunter College full-time for a Master's Degree in Education. He leaves having strengthened the TRaC program and with robust experience and learning under his own belt.

Dance TRaC Meeting: Writing a Preview of the Martha Graham Dance Company (continued)

A week after the visit to the Martha Graham Dance Company, Dance TRaC is meeting at New York Live Arts in Manhattan. Christine Jowers waits in the lobby for the group to arrive so they can all go up to their classroom together. Jowers came to Dance TRaC based on her deep and multi-faceted interaction with dance and with writing about dance. She "has toured the USA, UK, and Caribbean as a performer, choreographer and teacher"⁷⁹ In 1997, she created Christine Jowers/Moving Arts Projects, a non-profit company that includes both performance and the provision of movement workshops.⁸⁰ In 2007, she was the founding editor of The Dance Enthusiast, a "web magazine".

We have created a platform that encourages writers, moving artists (both students and professionals) and audience members to participate, sharing their stories and experiences of the dance world with text and imagery so that the ideas and discussions of dance live on beyond the stage.⁸¹

The "Audience Reviews" site opens:

*Welcome to The Dance Enthusiast's NEW Audience Review Section. The Dance Enthusiast is committed to communication about our art form. Join the conversation and shape a dance world worth talking about. Help Artists. Express Yourself. Argue. Agree. Be Honest. Be Constructive. Be Anonymous or Make Your Name Here. **Share Your Audience Review**⁸²*

The TRaC meeting this afternoon will include discussions of students' draft previews of the Martha Graham rehearsal.⁸³ The drafts are passed out, then Jowers opens by commenting: "I see a noticeable, real improvement in how people are communicating. I see improved use of words, more creative and varied." Each student reads her draft aloud,⁸⁴ followed by feedback and comments by Jowers and the other participants. Clearly the students are familiar with the joint feedback-conversation: comments are direct, constructive, specific, and at times aimed at problem-solving. Jowers adds specific pointers: Be sure to include the name of the company and of the dance. If you quote someone, "you need to say exactly what they said You also want to credit Janet Eilber if you're quoting her." Finally: "Don't say it my way, write it your own way"; and "I don't want to go over the punctuation."⁸⁵

After the first reader, Jowers says:

⁷⁷ Eric Ost Interview.

⁷⁸ Eric Ost Interview.

⁷⁹ See: <http://movingartsprojects.org/bio.htm>

⁸⁰ See: <http://movingartsprojects.org/company.htm>

⁸¹ See: <http://www.dance-enthusiast.com/about>

⁸² See: <http://www.dance-enthusiast.com/enthusiasts/reviews>

⁸³ Each TRaC participant is asked to submit his/her favorite review for publication in the online *The High 5 Review*.

⁸⁴ This term, Dance TRaC included one male student but he did not attend the Graham rehearsal and therefore could not write a preview, although he participated during the follow-up meeting.

⁸⁵ All quotes from this Dance TRaC session are taken from field notes, December 09, 2011.

I'd like you to figure out, and everybody help me, what are the things that are exciting, crucial, that you like in this piece. Circle them. What are the facts that interest you? . . . I think of a paper like a performance. If you were going to make a dance, this has a lot of ideas in it, and you need to figure out what is important. [She enumerates many details that she likes, then adds] . . . but there are so many things. What meant a lot to you about that day? If you're going to do a personal story, make me feel what was important to you.

Then Jowers calls for Shaina's haiku.

*Laughing, Comedy
Dancers are actors on stage
Complete Perfection
Ambrosial Moves
Stuck in the moment of awe
Bodies grace the floor
Video dictates
Only five days in progress,
Yet captivating

But a rehearsal
We were allowed a peek at
A secret movement.
Pointe, Flex, Ronde de jamb
Music resonating ears
We watched a story*

When the reading is finished, Jowers comments: "I liked this a lot," and then gives suggestions: give more information to the reader, "you want to be friendly to them and at least tell them where and when they are going to be performing." Add the name of the company and the date; "that you are a student and got to observe a rehearsal . . . explain Dance TRaC If you were going to do this as a final offering for a newspaper, I would do all these things. I personally like haikus a lot. One phrase I like is 'ambrosial moves.'"

The next student up, Ada, reads her "The Reconstruction of Martha Graham Every Soul is a Circus: The Preview"⁸⁶

*The reconstruction
Of the circus soul has come
The magic begins
The empress enters,
Here it comes, her circus
The crowd is dazzled . . .
He loves me so much,
But I search for someone else
How can I decide?*

What awaits you is a journey. . . will you dare to take it?? . . .

Jowers responds: "I have to say, I really like this. There are things I would change, but I really like it. . . . I like how you made the haikus fit together into a preview. I would suggest that whatever piece you send in [for posting], you send this too."

Tatiana reads her review, a part of which is quoted below.

*“. . . Fast forward, rewind, pause, that position. . . no wait go back a little tiny . . . bit . . . more THERE okay stop!”
Dancers present work called Every Soul is a Circus that was created by Martha Graham 47 years ago and can be seen fresh and modern today! The dancers acknowledge a single TV set with eyes of concentration and prepare*

⁸⁶ Published on *The High 5 Review*: See <http://www.high5review.org/archives/author/ada-miranda>

until what they've studied for the past week on a video tape matches what will soon come to life on stage this season 2011–2012 . . . Martha Graham hoped to incorporate flirtatious and humorous themes to not only create personality but show that this is truly as a New York Times article quotes 'an arena of everyday life.' . . . Blakely White McGuire takes on the character of a complete different person and shares in an interview how she manages— 'Well I approach the choreography from a character viewpoint of what are her emotions, her intentions. . . .'"

Jowers comments, "I think this is a very good piece," and students jump in, one saying: "If I wasn't there I could get a feel of what it was like. I feel she got straight to the point, used good words and lots of good details."

The students, with Jowers, review the writing tips they've been discussing: Don't be redundant; Make a list of your points and then review your piece to make sure you've covered what you want; Organize the information so your audience can follow it; Keep it short and sweet; Sequence; Don't cut the poetry, just decide when you're going to be direct and when you're not going to be direct and why . . . Remember you're talking to somebody, not just your personal, poetic response.

Eric Ost has just come in to remind everyone about sending him a review to post on The High 5 Review.⁸⁷

Jowers, with her The Dance Enthusiast editor hat on, asks: "Are you ready? Do you have the piece in your head that you're going to send me on Tuesday and I'm going to edit, and then you're going to send to Eric?"

Ost adds: "And I'm going to publish and not edit at all."

⁸⁷ NYC arts coverage by the High 5 Review Freelancers Corps and the Teen Reviewers and Critics Program at <http://www.high5review.org/>

5

Arts & Literacy Program of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services

Hilario Villafana walks on stage in the IS 291 [Middle School 291] auditorium in Bushwick, Brooklyn, during a performance in August 2011. A young man in his early twenties, Hilario is a Homework Warrior for the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services Arts & Literacy Program, focused on helping children with their schoolwork. This summer, however, he is trying something new: engaging a group of 5- and 6-year old “Elves” in an integrated arts project, the kind of project usually led by the program’s Teaching Artists.

Villafana explains that the “Elves” have been making masks and investigating the sounds of different instruments in a project to develop joy. “We’ve made music!” With that, six masked players (four children and two staff) pick up drumsticks. When the music track starts — and with intent focus — they begin beating a rhythm on the wooden table. Gradually, rhythm takes over. The music stops, leaving only the call and response drumming led by Villafana — until the children’s powerful performance calls forth a cheer from the audience.

Coalition for Hispanic Family Services (CHFS): “Building Strong Communities One Family At A Time”¹

In the 1980s, an alarming number of children across many New York City communities entered the city’s foster care system, the result of growing economic instability as well as the spread of crack cocaine and AIDS. Although the ultimate aim of foster care is to reunite families, the pressure to find “safe” foster homes often leads to children being placed outside their own neighborhoods.

Denise Rosario, a social worker born and raised in “El Barrio” (East Harlem, New York City), became concerned that placing Latino children outside of their communities meant children were separated from their language, culture, and schools, as well as from their families. Rosario and other child welfare professionals from The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families came together to address the issue, believing that traditional Hispanic values could offer a solution — values emphasizing collective responsibility, mutual aid, and economic support among extended family networks.²

Initially aiming to keep foster children within Latino communities and reuniting them as soon as possible with their original families, the group, under Rosario’s leadership, established the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services (CHFS), an independent not-for-profit organization. At the time, Hispanic families were among the poorest New Yorkers³ and often faced additional stresses of recent immigration, language barriers, and poor health. But, Rosario and her colleagues had seen the resilience and strength of these families. They believed that an organization providing foster care and other services in Spanish as well as English, hiring community residents, incorporating

¹ Tagline, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services website home page: <http://www.hispanicfamilyservicesny.org>

² See, for example: “Bridging the Cultural Divide: Building a Continuum of Support for Latino Families, 2007,” Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. <http://www.chcfinc.org/policy/BridgingtheCulturalDivide.pdf> p iii: “Latino families are resilient, resourceful, and the bedrock of Latino culture and communities. Overall, Latino families continue to remain strong in large part due to Latino cultural norms which include extended family networks, a tradition of mutual aid and economic support among family members.”

³ Ibid, p. 2, with a footnote to U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey: “Latino children are poorer than any other group in New York City, accounting for 39% of children living in poverty, as compared to 15% of white children and 30% of African American children.”

Latino arts and culture into programming, and training staff to know the culture of those being served, would better aid the Latino community.⁴

In 1990, Al Vann, a New York State Assemblyman from Brooklyn, sponsored a discretionary allocation enabling the Coalition to open a community-based foster care program for Hispanic children in Bushwick. Over the years, the program has expanded to provide a full range of health, mental health, and family support services in and beyond Bushwick to Williamsburg and East New York in Brooklyn as well as to Ridgewood, Corona, and, in 2012–13, Jackson Heights in Queens.

The organization's mission — to “empower children, youth and families with opportunities for success and self-reliance while reinforcing their sense of cultural and self-identity” through a “holistic, culturally competent, family based approach” — undergirds all of its programs.⁵

The Arts & Literacy After School and Summer Program (A&L)

In 1993, the Coalition's search for funding brought it to the Robin Hood Foundation⁶ which then advocated “wrap around” services for foster care families, including afterschool programs. With the funding, CHFS hired John Paul Gonzalez to design an out-of-school time program for children in foster care. Rosario and Gonzalez, whose background was in music and theater, saw the arts as a powerful means of self-expression, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. Gonzalez piloted an arts-oriented summer camp in 1993 and then, with the Community School District Superintendent, arranged to open an afterschool program at PS 86K (Elementary School 86) in District 32 in Bushwick.

One Sunday morning in mid-1993, visual artist Laura Paris was looking through want ads for a job. She spotted the Coalition's ad for staff and was intrigued. Recently back from Spain where she had taught English, Paris was thinking it was time to move on from the complications of life as an artist, perhaps to do something “important” such as social work. Among the advertised CHFS positions was an “Arts Specialist” who speaks Spanish. That, she knew immediately, was the job for her.

When she was hired, Gonzalez provided two instructions: make art and recruit children for an afterschool program at PS 86. Paris went ahead — despite objections from a politically-connected Latch Key program in the school — vigorously recruiting 9- and 10-year-olds for the afterschool arts program. Fifty children, ages 7–12, showed up, including a number in foster care. After reducing the number to a “manageable” 30 children, Paris began. Instinctively, she engaged them in making art — bringing literacy into the process. She had great faith in children's ability to communicate when given the chance in a supportive environment as well as in the potential of art projects to create openings for self-expression. Early on, she integrated literacy by inviting children to create plays and write descriptions on their drawings. While recognizing the children's brightness, she was overwhelmed by their many needs. One boy, for example, did not yet know the alphabet. Still, she accepted the challenge, knowing that she had to find a way for children to have fun and experience success.

Initially, the Robin Hood Foundation was the sole funder of A&L. In 1995, Dianne Kangisser, then Executive Director of the Robert Bowne Foundation, visited A&L when CHFS applied for Bowne support. While appreciating the program's grasp of the importance of literacy, she also saw that the staff needed support to realize its vision. Bowne awarded a small grant for a literacy educator and, in her award letter, Kangisser urged the staff to look at the work of other community-based programs:

It is obvious that you have a vision of a literacy rich environment which allows youngsters to develop as creative readers and writers. The problem is the gap between the vision you hold and the reality I observed. It is a daunting task to operate a quality afterschool program in a public school setting. Therefore, I would urge [Gonzalez] and his staff to visit other agencies that are trying to meet that challenge. I would start with Project Reach Youth in Brooklyn. Call me for details.⁷

⁴ Ibid, “Cultural Competency Indicators” chart, p. 11.

⁵ See: <http://www.hispanicfamilyservicesny.org/about-us> See also, CHFS foster care “Child permanency values and beliefs” at: <http://www.hispanicfamilyservicesny.org/foster-boarding-home/>

⁶ See: www.robinhood.org

⁷ November 17, 1995, grant award letter from Dianne Kangisser, Executive Director, The Robert Bowne Foundation, to Denise Rosario, Executive Director, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services.

She also encouraged A&L staff to attend Bowne-sponsored staff development sessions as well as participate in Partnership for Afterschool Education (PASE) offerings.

Arts & Literacy staff embarked on its learning process by attending the Creative Literacy in After School Programs (CLASP) seminar series at the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC). Paris felt CLASP confirmed her instinctive understanding that art and literacy can be effectively integrated to provide tools for children to express themselves and interact with the world around them. She recalls her “revelation” when Anne Lawrence — then at LAC and since 2002, Bowne Program Officer — talked about “invented spelling.” Paris found it exciting that children could express their creative ideas *first* and shape them *later* into coherent, comprehensible messages. This seemed very much like making art — experimenting with visual images in order to communicate something personally meaningful.

In addition, each CLASP participant engaged in a project to improve an aspect of his or her program. Paris focused on involving parents and community members, aligning the afterschool program with the Coalition’s priorities. She experimented with and compared the effectiveness of such practices as meeting separately with English and Spanish speakers versus holding a single meeting with translation.

On their part, both Lawrence and Kangisser were impressed by how quickly Paris and other A&L staff took literacy practices to heart, adapting what they were learning to engage children in projects that integrate arts and literacy. As a result, in year two, Bowne increased its grant amount to the program.

In 1998, John Paul Gonzalez left CHFS and Laura Paris became Director of the Arts & Literacy Program. Under her leadership, A&L continued hiring teaching artists who approach their work with children as they approach their work as artists — imagining, creating, innovating, taking risks.⁸ A&L staff members pursue learning opportunities, and many have taken advantage of Bowne-supported technical assistance and professional development initiatives. Over time, the program has become a model to the field of out-of-school time education for children.⁹

A Multi-Faceted Integrated Arts & Literacy Program

Arts & Literacy has developed into a multi-faceted integrated arts and literacy program as well as expanded to additional school sites in Bushwick as well as to the Corona, Elmhurst, and, in 2012-13, Jackson Heights neighborhoods in Queens. The program operates in economically-stressed areas where elementary schools struggle with low reading scores and students need support to achieve. To help meet such needs, A&L components are designed to: develop children’s expressive voices, both individual and communal; strengthen children’s literacy and academic skills in collaboration with host schools; and help families access needed services, while recognizing and building on the strengths of families and communities. Through its multiple, integrated components, the program engages children, parents, and other family members in a celebration of art and literacy.

Family Art Night at PS 377

Five o’clock one early November, 2011, evening. Preparations are underway for Family Art Night at the A&L afterschool program at PS 377 (Elementary School 377) in Bushwick. Tonight, 100 children, ages 5 to 12, will present dance and visual art projects that they have been working on for six weeks. Soon, the auditorium will fill with mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, and sisters! Arts & Literacy engages parents as full participants, implementing the commitment of the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services to see children as members of families and larger communities.

The audience is starting to arrive. A&L Art Therapy Supervisor Gabriela Ortiz greets parents by name at the auditorium door. She volunteered to translate tonight because she loves the event. Moreover, such events are good ways to catch up with families — and there’s always a lot to catch up with!

⁸ For a chart of 2012-2013 staff positions, see the Appendix, page 83 below.

⁹ See, for example:

- A&L described as a model program in “The Role of the After School Program in Children’s Literacy Development,” 2002, by Julie Spielberger and Robert Halpern, funded by Wallace-Readers Digest Funds.
- The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities in 2004 selected A&L as one of its “Coming UP Taller” Award winners, citing the program’s “unique approach to arts education [that] brings together youth development, literacy building, cultural studies, and community building that serves as a model for other programs.”
- CHFS’s A&L was one of five programs meeting such criteria as high quality afterschool programs and high levels of organizational effectiveness for Phase II of Dr. Kim Sabo-Flores’ five-year RBF funded study: *A Dynamic Framework for Understanding the Complex Work of Quality Out-of-School Time Programs*, 2009.

Ortiz knows the families because she supervises the A&L parent leader and the art therapy graduate student intern at each A&L site. Her interns set the tone of the relationship between the program and families through the hour-long intake interview with each child's family. The parent leader follows up on referrals, assists families with advocacy, ensures that events and materials are translated, and works with Ortiz to plan family activities.

With her cross-site perspective, Ortiz understands just how different one school community is from the next. At PS 92 in Corona, Queens, for example, the afterschool program serves new immigrants from Mexico and Ecuador, families who welcome help in navigating the unfamiliar customs and expectations that come with being in a new school in a new country. Here at PS 377, families who have lived in the United States for several generations tend to be more reluctant to ask for assistance. But tonight they open up when Ortiz tells them how eager she is to see their children perform, explaining, often with tears in her eyes, how hard the children have worked preparing for Family Art Night.

A mother with baby-in-arms is anxiously looking for site director Tamara Williams and the parent sign-in sheet. The mother knows from her intake interview that families are expected to attend Family Art Night and is concerned that, because of recent absences, her daughter might lose her spot in the coveted program. After reassuring the parent, Williams guides her to teaching artist Katherine Jernejec so the two of them can sort out the situation.

Williams then spots the custodian and stops to thank him for going out of his way to prepare the building tonight. An important part of the site director's job is to build relationships within the school community. Williams has found that keeping the school custodian and guards, as well as the administration and faculty, informed and involved in program activities eases the challenging process of navigating shared spaces – school classrooms, supply closets, cafeteria, auditorium, and grounds.

Supporting Youth Development

On the stage, three A&L youth workers (a “Homework Warrior” and two teens — an apprentice and a student intern from Bushwick High School) are gathering a group of very excited 7-10 year-olds into a circle and leading writing and drawing exercises to help focus their creative energy. After only a few months with the program, the teens have learned, through the program's weekly training and supervision, ways to use art activities to channel children's energy into creative projects.

They have also learned to take into account children's social and emotional needs, as well as the importance of supporting families. Two boys interrupt their exercises to make special requests. One worries that his mother has the wrong time and wants to call her to make sure she is coming. The other sees his mom arrive and wants to give her a hug. Both boys gain permission but are urged to hurry back.

Integrating Literacy and Children's Art Projects

Earlier that afternoon, teaching artist Katherine Jernejec and the student apprentices had transformed three auditorium walls into a gallery for the display of student art work. Jernejec has been working with two classes on a project involving large drawings of fantastical creatures on brown butcher paper. She planned the six-week project to incorporate literacy using the program's lesson guide template that, for example, asks the artist to list the vocabulary words that students will learn through the project. During weekly supervision, Jernejec reviews her lesson plans with Tamara Williams, who helps her think about additional ways to integrate reading, writing, and oral language into art activities.

Six weeks ago, Jernejec began the project by reading aloud a science fiction story about a robot. The children then designed their own robots, complete with pets and personalities. Tonight's exhibit includes each child's “life-sized” robot drawing, along with a smaller preparatory robot design, a robot pet, and a piece of original writing mounted on construction paper to introduce the robot characters.

My robot likes vegetables.
She loves lipstick and she has pretty hair.
Sometimes her hair goes flying everywhere.
And she always likes to go places like outerspace.
She likes outerspace more than earth.

Amber Ortiz

There will be a formal gallery walk after the performance, but families can't wait, searching out their children's work almost as soon as they enter the auditorium.

Building Community – In Two Languages

By 5:30, the house is “sold-out.” And not by luck. The enthusiastic overflow crowd is the result of community building, another A&L focus. Some parents volunteered to make reminder phone calls; others prepared food for the children’s post-performance meal. Children and staff invited members of the PS 377 and larger Bushwick communities, A&L staff from other sites, and former A&L students. The event is a time for neighbors to chat with each other and for some grassroots community organizing.

Families sit together, often with small children on laps, and there are almost as many fathers as mothers. Students sit by class at the front of the auditorium, 100 children dressed in freshly-laundered solid colored tops and pants or skirts; girls with hair pulled back by barrettes, adding a rainbow of colors.

Site Director Tamara Williams takes the stage to welcome the audience in English, with Gabriela Ortiz extending the welcome in Spanish. The first order of business is to thank those parents who helped with the event; the second, to urge everyone to “call your city councilman, we still need support.”

Celebrating Children’s Art Work

Finally, the performance begins! Dance teachers Michele Torino Hower and Williams introduce their classes — the youngest, 5- and 6-years-old, the oldest 11 and 12. Over the past six weeks, they have all learned a range of creative ways to use their bodies to express what they feel inside — as individuals and as group members.

Several students from the Dragonsaurus class of 9- and 10-year-olds introduce their Integrity Project: “We’ve learned vocabulary words like ‘respect’ and ‘trust.’ We’ve written essays about the people who inspire us. We’ve made up poses and movements to communicate our ideas non-verbally.” When the children read their essays, the audience responds enthusiastically, especially to the four who read from the stage in Spanish. The presentation ends with an energetic dance comprised of the poses and movements each child composed to depict the important people in their lives, creating a theatrical portrait of the community. Students capture the essence of their characters through gesture, body language, and music. The audience, sensing the children’s pride in their community, are caught up in the rhythms of the children’s dance animating the stage.

Next, visual art teacher Katherine Jernejec introduces the Mermaids/Mermen and Squid classes, the artists who drew the robots — and the children take the stage with a “robot walk.” Several children read essays describing their process, while Gabriela Ortiz translates the explanations into Spanish:

- We learned about the Surrealist movement. It is art based on imagination and dreams.
- We studied Salvador Dali. He used images, had a crazy mustache, and posed funny. He played a game called Exquisite Corpse with his friends, and we played it too.
- We made Alien Robots that are life-sized — first we did the head, then the arms and shoulders, then the legs and feet, and then a pet.

The children lead the audience on a gallery walk for a close-up look at drawings and writing. Parents stop to read the captions and take pictures of proud children with their work. Throughout the year, the A&L children have opportunities to share their artwork as they develop expertise, during Family Art Nights, annual Community Street Festivals, and in an A&L anthology.

Experiencing Family Art Activities

When the children return to their classrooms for a post-performance party, the rest of the crowd moves into the cafeteria for a family art workshop. Parents, youngsters too young for A&L, and older children, many former A&L participants, will engage in an art project. Past workshops have focused on such themes as Family Journals, Reading without Text, Telenovelas and Puppets, and What is Art?

Newspapers, scissors, and rolls of tape cover the cafeteria tables. Dance teacher Michele Torino Hower and Tamara Williams encourage families to sit with people they don’t know. After a brief introduction, Gabriela Ortiz gives the assignment in English and in Spanish: each table will make a joint sculpture with only the materials on the table — and without talking.

Everyone seems to know just what to do, setting to work, laughing and engaging together. When a timer goes off after seven minutes, Ortiz announces two minutes for table talk. She then invites a presentation of the creations. One after another, each table shows off its creation: a snowman, dream house, mask, airplanes, a fountain. Families have explored an inexpensive, fun exercise: making a simple sculpture together.

Thirty minutes later, the gathering winds to a close. Williams and Ortiz end the workshop, reminding parents that activities like paper sculpture come in handy when it's raining and "there's a lot of energy inside your house. All you need is newspaper." The evening has run less than two hours.

Program staff created a seamless, well-paced set of activities, offering a full taste of Arts & Literacy in a way that made the program's components and complexity accessible to all. Throughout and brightly visible was the growing confidence of their children — and their joy of self-expression.

Beginning with Artists

Denise Rosario's decision to hire *artists* — instead of experienced educators — to do art projects with children has shaped the program's methodology, making staff training a priority. In addition, when piloting the Summer Camp, John Paul Gonzalez's decision to define "part-time" as 21 hours/week, whether for a teaching artist or college student assistant, meant the organization committed to a hiring policy with long-term staffing impact. The figure — 21 hours/week — is the number that triggers employee benefits. The policy attracted — and continues to attract — such artists as site director and dancer Tamara Williams. Prior to A&L, Williams had never seen a part-time dancer's job with benefits and did not believe it until her interview. As a teaching artist, she spent 16 hours/week with children and the remaining hours honing her craft as literacy educator, attending weekly staff meetings, preparing lesson plans, and debriefing with her supervisors.

Just as important, the program respects Williams' work as a professional dancer, heightening her sense that teaching artists contribute to children's growth. After becoming an A&L site director and full-time employee, she spent January 2010 in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, studying Afro-Brazilian dance and culture:

When I returned, I was able to teach the children in the program what I had learned, the different dances, Capoeira, and some Portuguese. The kids were very excited to learn about a new culture and they're more intrigued about other countries now. If I had been working for another organization . . . I would not have been able to go on that trip. And I'm not the only one. Jodi [Connelly, site director, PS 123] is just back from doing an art project in Ireland.¹⁰

In addition to her A&L work, Williams founded her own dance company, Tamara LaDonna Moving Spirits, Inc. In June 2012, when her company of African American women premiered *Morning Honeysuckle, Sunday's Greed*, half a dozen A&L colleagues came to support her.

All current full-time A&L managers — Paris, Wilhoit, and the site directors — first worked as program teaching artists. Each brings an individual approach to creating art and applies it to teaching children. Paris describes the A&L culture, shaped by artists, as "a Petri dish for trying things out."

The Robert Bowne Foundation and the CHFS Arts & Literacy Program

The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services came to the Bowne Foundation with a vision of a holistic, multi-cultural arts curriculum aimed at building on children's interests and strengths. The Foundation offered professional supports and resources that helped transform the vision into reality. Paris credits Bowne with making a crucial difference: supporting the staff to develop an innovative approach to integrated arts education.

This program could easily have ended up a traditional afterschool program. It was the fact that the Robert Bowne Foundation liked what we were doing and gave us a sense of direction, gave us new ideas, and never asked us to do test prep. The money came with a vision that supported staff ideas about programming.¹¹

Bowne provided three types of support that shaped the direction of the Arts & Literacy Program:

- Professional development to strengthen the program's literacy component
- Tools for ongoing assessment, reflection, and inquiry
- Technical assistance to develop organizational structures conducive to managing a reflective learning community.

¹⁰ Tamara Williams Interview, October 27, 2011.

¹¹ Laura Paris Interview, June 28, 2011.

Support for Literacy

Arts & Literacy personnel have participated in Bowne-supported professional development almost every year since 1995, engaging with such topics as classroom management, inquiry methodology, multi-cultural curricula, team teaching, and technology in education. They have worked with a range of technical assistance providers, including the Literacy Assistance Center, Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College, Partnership for Afterschool Education, Brooklyn Children's Museum, and Center for Educational Options. As a result, A&L staff have integrated literacy and the arts, developed a repertoire of teaching strategies, and created vital tools for academic support, such as libraries and tutoring tool kits. More recently, they enriched the program through Julia Palmer Library Development grants and Hot Topics in Literacy seminars.

Just before snack time, Tamara Williams walks into the PS 377 cafeteria and approaches a young boy sitting at a long table reading a book. She wants to see how he is doing after having what the teaching artist called "a meltdown" in the classroom. The boy looks up, saying that reading One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish helped him calm down — and then jumps up to show-off the program's mobile cart library nestled in a slightly-indented cubby section of the cafeteria.

He is justly proud of the library — children were intimately involved in all aspects of its creation. A 2011 Julia Palmer Library Development Grant from Bowne helped fund the library resources and engaged two A&L site directors, Williams and Stephanie Dhulos of 51st Academy, in a series of library development sessions. These broadened Williams' perception of what a library could be, including ways children can help build and structure their libraries. After that, she invited PS 377 A&L children to clean and decorate two junky rolling carts, their artwork brightening the casings of the compact carts.

Children also selected, organized, and color-coded the books and videos with stickers. Fifth-graders even went on a field trip to Barnes & Noble to purchase the books they had selected. Student class librarians are responsible for checking out and returning books for their 2nd - 5th grade classmates. Apprentice youth workers use a modified system for K - 1st graders, bringing well-organized bins of books into classrooms so children can easily check-out, take home, and return their library books.

The Bowne Foundation promotes libraries as an essential resource for literacy programming. Since A&L programs meet in borrowed classroom spaces, one challenge has been establishing its own distinctive, literacy-rich environments. Ever since Dianne Kangisser's initial grant, the Foundation has helped A&L develop creative solutions to the challenges of partnering with schools.

Williams has additional plans for the A&L library at PS 377:

We're expanding our library beyond the carts into a larger space with benches and seating — to attract the kids to the library space and to be excited about reading. From that same seed planted by the Bowne Foundation, you have, for example, the little boy . . . who was having behavior issues . . . using a book to refocus. . . . students who can't afford books in their home having the library as a resource. And with this school struggling with reading scores, the library is there to help kids succeed and to enjoy reading.¹²

Although only two A&L site directors participated directly in the library professional development, other sites benefited as well. Harold Lehmann, PS 116 site director and teaching artist, used books to inspire such theater projects as adapting *Aesops Fables* as a play. However, he was concerned about children mishandling their library books. After Williams and Dhulos shared their training insights, he put student librarians in charge of his site's mobile cart library and involved children in creating rules about handling and shelving books. Once in charge, children's respect for the library and books has grown.

Then Lehmann and Destiny Rodriguez, a Homework Warrior at PS 116, participated in the Bowne-supported *Hot Topics in Literacy* seminar series that culminated in May 2012. As part of the effort, seminar leader Suzanne Marten met with them on-site at PS 116. They wanted advice as they planned workshops for their A&L colleagues to share such techniques as book-making, which they had tried with great success with their students. But more, they wanted to convey information beyond specific activities. Lehmann tells Marten:

What I have loved so much about your workshops is that it is about the questions and getting people excited, rather than worksheets and projects to take and try. What is successful about Arts & Literacy is that it is about connecting with passions, and this connected well with the Hot Topics approach.¹³

¹² Tamara Williams Interview, October 27, 2011.

¹³ Quotes from field notes from site visit to PS 116, May 3, 2012.

He and Rodriguez begin talking about the series lessons they want to convey to the rest of the A&L staff. Lehmann had been struck by a piece of literacy theory: readers use three cueing systems to grasp written text.¹⁴ Assessing children's use of the cueing systems would allow A&L staff to assist struggling readers more effectively. But, he explains, teaching artists "come in with passion for their art . . . not the skills to teach literacy" — and homework warriors and apprentices are new to literacy too. The management team was "blown away," he says, when he described how deciphering a story composed only of consonants indicates whether a reader is able to use all of the cueing systems to comprehend text. Lehmann encourages Rodriguez to talk about her adaptation of the "fill in the missing vowels" seminar activity as a game to play with non-English speaking parents, demonstrating how it could be fun to help their children with homework.

Marten encourages them to select activities and texts for each staff workshop that would resonate with the particular group, and to engage each member of the group in discovering his or her own reading and writing strategies. "Reading and writing," she reminds them, "is all about what you do when you get stuck. A lot of times, kids don't realize that, but adults don't know that sometimes either."

Support for Inquiry and Reflection

The Bowne Foundation's second major area of influence on A&L is the focus on inquiry and reflection, including: participatory evaluation, action research, and strategic planning.

Participatory Evaluation

Bowne first introduced A&L to participatory evaluation in 2000, pairing the program with a Participatory Evaluation Coach. Later, some A&L staff completed several phases of Bowne's Participatory Evaluation Institutes led by Kim Sabo-Flores, Ph.D., and Anita Baker.¹⁵ Anne Lawrence explains Bowne's support for integrating evaluation into literacy programs in a 2006 Literacy Assistance Center newsletter:

An evaluation process woven into a program's everyday life gives all stakeholders, especially staff and participants, input into program design. It helps practitioners understand what they are accountable for. It gives participants continuous feedback on their progress. Finally, evaluation gives everyone involved a sense of what is working — and what is not.¹⁶

A&L staff have incorporated participatory evaluation processes into all program aspects, from planning to instruction. Teaching artists use student portfolios to review evidence of progress toward program outcomes and reflect on the effectiveness of instructional practices. Staff monitor and assess program impact through such tools as surveys, focus groups, attendance data, report cards, socio-behavioral data, and logs of contact with families.

Everyone connected to the program — students, family members, school personnel, program staff — participates in some aspect of data collection. By integrating data collection into its day-to-day functioning, A&L routinely provides opportunities for staff to reflect on what they are doing and learning, and bases its decisions on input from those involved. Thus, when a 2006 New York City Department of Youth and Community Development contract required increased hours of service, A&L followed its common practice: surveying parents to learn what they wanted. Parents requested a full-day program on school-closing days, including a martial arts component; A&L revised its DYCD contract accordingly.

Action Research

When Assistant Director Wilhoit first came to A&L, there were only eight program staff. The atmosphere was

¹⁴ The cueing systems are: Grapho-phonics (sound-letter correspondence); Language structure (grammar or syntax); and Meaning (semantics). An efficient reader employs all systems. By assessing which system[s] a student uses, one can more effectively target assistance for a struggling reader.

¹⁵ See July 19, 2007, power point presentation to the Robert Bowne Foundation Board: "Evaluation of Participatory Evaluation Institute." Arts & Literacy was one of 14 agencies completing more than one phase of such institutes. Reported participation outcomes include: completion of program evaluation plans and reports at or above the level of graduate students; personal growth; increase in program quality in terms of activities, communications, and staff development; after one year, there was: continued use of evaluation tools, integration of evaluation into everyday practices, and improved internal and external communications.

¹⁶ Anne Lawrence, "How Are We Doing? Using Evaluation to Inform Program Decisions," March 2006 issue of *Literacy Update*, Literacy Assistance Center newsletter.

warm, supportive, and inclusive, with everyone engaged in all program discussions and decision-making. Director Paris met weekly with the full staff and reviewed every lesson plan. Then came 2006, the year of “big expansion,” and things changed, resulting in increasingly low staff morale. Teaching artists were rotating, changing schools every six weeks. Meetings were so large that many no longer engaged in the seemingly endless discussions dominated by small issues like snow days.

Dispirited, Wilhoit asked herself, “*What is going on? When I first started, everyone was super invested — and now it’s scattered, with not as much investment or loyalty.*”

In 2006, Wilhoit brought her question to a Bowne sponsored Action Research Seminar led by Suzanne Marten. There, she learned an inquiry process, framed her question for research, and investigated by interviewing her colleagues, asking how they felt and what could be done. “They said it was confusing for school staff when we rotated [given] all the nuances at the school, like relationships with school guards and other staff. It was a struggle for managers, too, that the teams changed all the time.”¹⁷ She presented her interview data to the Seminar and then to her A&L supervisors, who agreed to try some changes. These began with food at staff meetings, moved to holding team meetings within full staff meetings, and eventually to making all meetings, staff assignments, and supervision *site specific*. Wilhoit says:

When we stopped rotating people among the sites, it was better for families and children, but also for the schools and managers. Now people are at the same site for the whole year. When there are 25 people in the room you can fall asleep. When there are only five, you are forced to speak up. The planning and site supervision makes each site a mini-Arts & Literacy, and it’s like it was at the beginning

The structural changes — facilitated by Wilhoit’s research — boosted staff morale and created an atmosphere that allows A&L to grow and remain effective. By the 2011-12 school year, there were 75 A&L staff, including apprentices, and further expansion in the planning. Although the full staff has outgrown the home base conference room, the new meeting structure keeps everyone informed and feeling part of a common enterprise. Moreover, A&L continues to evolve, the result of such practices as participatory evaluation and action research. This is a reflective learning community, constantly responding to changing conditions.

Strategic Planning

Arts & Literacy has also taken advantage of Bowne-supported management development and strategic planning assistance from such providers as Community Resource Exchange (CRE) and Columbia University’s Institute for Non-Profit Management (INM). As part of its strategic-planning and decision-making processes, A&L regularly solicits opinions and ideas from participants, staff, parents, colleagues, teachers, and funders. In 2007, for example, CHFS decided to expand beyond its North Brooklyn neighborhoods, which were beginning to gentrify, and into Queens. The first Queens site, PS 92, is in Corona, a Latino community. But Queens is a borough of diverse immigrant groups, and the second site, 51st Academy in Elmhurst, serves a primarily Chinese and South Asian community. The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, founded to support Hispanic children and families, thought long and hard about whether and how to make this move.

To guide the expansion, A&L management drew on its insights into the meaning of a culturally competent agency and recognized that parent services and materials had to be available in parents’ own language. Hence, a Chinese speaking art therapist and Chinese-language materials became part of the program. Moreover, acknowledging that language is but one aspect of community culture, A&L hired some staff from the community. Funding proposals listed a new program goal: to provide cultural competency training for staff within the context of an Asian immigrant culture and community.

Once again, in 2012, with the assistance of CRE consultant Louisa Hackett, supported by Bowne, the A&L staff thought about opportunities for program expansion. A planning team engaged in a strategic planning process whereby they developed a plan for expanding infrastructure, staffing, and some new program directions — arts & literacy programming for a middle school site and including STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics).

¹⁷ Melissa Wilhoit interview, October 6, 2011. At the time of this interview, Wilhoit’s title was “Assistant Director.” In 2012-2013 she became “Borough Director” for Brooklyn A&L sites.

Managing a Reflective Learning Community

The third area of Bowne influence follows and supports the previous two. Drawing on its experience with participatory evaluation, action research, and strategic planning, A&L has established management structures that promote internal reflection, collegial sharing, organizational strategic planning, and collaborative decision-making. As Assistant Director Wilhoit says:

I'm constantly thinking about what we could do better. Everybody assesses themselves and the work. It's part of the practice of the program, even if [some A&L] teachers weren't here when we did the work on evaluation with Bowne. It is part of every thing we do."¹⁸

Staff regularly have opportunities to reflect on their work, review data, share insights and challenges, ask for feedback, and suggest changes. Management structures that promote such reflection include: weekly site-based staff meetings; staff supervision; weekly youth worker (apprentices, interns) training; weekly management team meetings; and genre-specific teaching artists meetings (dancers, visual artists, and so forth) to elicit area-specific feedback on lesson plans.

In addition, there are weekly managers meetings that include Director Paris, Assistant Director Wilhoit, the art therapy supervisor, and all site directors. Managers also go on annual planning retreats where they evaluate program structure, staff positions, and hiring/training practices. As a result, they are ready to respond as communities gentrify, government funding opportunities expand and contract, and rules and regulations change.

Evaluating Staffing Patterns: Establishing a Career Ladder

In a continually-evolving organization, A&L management is constantly re-evaluating staff roles, hiring procedures, and training. Moreover, the management team has begun to establish a career ladder, partly with an eye to developing staffing practices conducive to program growth. Thus, for example, Paris and Wilhoit began noticing that those teaching artists who participate in inquiry and reflection processes become the most successful new site directors. The insight, Wilhoit explains, has influenced the way they now think about hiring new teaching artists:

We did once hire [a site director] from outside and it didn't work out. The program is unique. If you teach in the program, you have a sense of the core values and the philosophy. And you can supervise because you can empathize with the teachers. We're realizing that we want to think about, right away while we're hiring, whether we could see a potential teaching artist stepping into the management team. Because, as we get bigger, there are more holes to fill.¹⁹

Now, new staff positions are designed by assessing needs, testing a response, and evaluating results. Thus, in 2010, as part of an intensive training on helping children tackle homework, a group of classroom assistants underwent a visioning process about their role. As a result, the assistant position was re-titled "Homework Warrior," and redefined to include partnering with children's school teachers as a way of ensuring that children's academic needs are addressed. Moreover, when the management team noted that many of the most successful Homework Warriors had been apprentices, a new qualification for apprentice was added: the potential for becoming a Homework Warrior.

Arts & Literacy program leadership also noticed that a few Homework Warriors, such as Hilario Villafina, who led his own integrated arts project during Summer Camp 2011, were undertaking new responsibilities. As a result, Director Paris has opened to rethinking staff roles and qualifications:

This summer is challenging my thought that only teaching artists can do this work. The junior staff has absorbed the idea of interdisciplinary art projects and integrating literacy. Maybe they just need exposure to strong teaching artists. We are at a place where we can think about strategically moving and planning our model.²⁰

Bringing such reflections to the 2012 strategic planning process, Paris aimed to stimulate deep discussion of goals, expansion opportunities, and implications for staff roles and training.

¹⁸ Melissa Wilhoit Interview, October 6, 2011.

¹⁹ Wilhoit Interview

²⁰ Laura Paris Conversation, August 16, 2011.

Training and Support

When CHFS opted to hire artists to lead the afterschool program, they committed to preparing and supporting teaching artists to become integrated arts and literacy educators. Training and support are important for each of the other staff positions as well. Management solicits input in thinking through the necessary training and support each time a new position is created.²¹ As a result, weekly hands-on training for apprentices includes topics they need for their job, such as classroom management and literacy skills, but also more personal skills such as writing resumes, applying for college, obtaining scholarships and grants, and grassroots organizing. Apprentices also have access to art therapy interns who, in addition to serving the children and their families, work with youth workers to help address their social and emotional needs in ways consistent with the program.

The management team plans several weeks of intensive training in early September for Homework Warriors and teaching artists. Such training also aids the development of site directors. Each experienced manager is responsible for one or more training sessions, with agenda topics that will support their own development. Each presenter plans, and then rehearses with colleagues, his/her sessions to ensure that they model instructional strategies that teaching artists and Homework Warriors can use with children and families. As Assistant Director Wilhoit says, “We talk about training being interactive, breaking into groups, not talking at people. Like what we’d do with kids.”²²

A September Thursday during the intensive training period.²³ Twelve Homework Warriors from five sites have been meeting together every afternoon for a full week on such topics as facilitating academic projects, working with apprentices, classroom rituals, parent workshops, and student assessment.

In this hour, Tamara Williams is leading a session on communicating with school staff, engaging each participant by drawing out responses and helping them recognize and name what they know from their own experiences. She begins by asking for some challenges that Homework Warriors faced the previous year in communicating with teachers. Jermaine describes feeling belittled when a teacher tells him that he is not a real teacher. Crystal depicts another who did not want to talk to her about the needs of a particular child. After discussing communications strategies, Williams invites participants to role play interactions between teachers and Homework Warriors. Playing the part of a teacher, Hilario challenges: “Your program is all fun and games.” Kimberly answers, using a strategy of staying grounded while validating the other person’s perceptions: “We do play games, but they’re educational and we try to make learning fun.” Williams encourages shy participants to volunteer for subsequent role plays by reminding them of one of their responsibilities. “This is good practice for presenting in front of people. You have a parent presentation you have to make soon.”

By hour’s end, Williams has posted wall charts throughout the room listing effective communications strategies and every participant has actively shared experiences and ideas, as well as acted out the role of a teacher, student, or Homework Warrior. They have all practiced and learned strategies designed to support productive partnerships between the program and host schools.

Connecting with the Field

Arts & Literacy has found that another component of managing a reflective learning community is connecting with colleagues working in the field of out-of-school time youth education. Bowne facilitates such relationships through, among other venues, structured networking meetings that bring together out-of-school time program staff to share experiences and insights. As Paris reported in the 2012 Bowne grantee questionnaire: “The Networking Meetings help the staff feel part of a larger community.”

Networking sessions have also provided opportunities for A&L to partner with Bowne in its support for grantees and the field. Thus, Paris and other A&L staff collaborated with professional development provider Suzanne Marten and Anne Lawrence in leading networking meetings on family involvement in October 2011 and again in March 2012. For the October session, Paris, Lawrence, and Marten decided to also introduce strategic planning tools. During the session, Paris first discussed the history and evolution of family involvement with A&L as a working example, encouraging participants to consider how they might develop such engagement in their own programs. Participants then met in small groups and, with strategic planning guides created for the session, went step-by-step

²¹ Over time, new roles have included: art therapy interns, Homework Warriors, apprentices, student interns, Site Directors, site coordinator assistants, and borough directors.

²² Melissa Wilhoit Interview, October 6, 2011.

²³ All quotes from field notes taken during the training session, September 15, 2011.

through a method of planning and assessing their own program activities.²⁴

Paris considers the opportunity to collaborate with Lawrence and Marten another example of Bowne's ongoing professional development support. During a debriefing discussion, the three collaborators reviewed participant evaluations and discussed what worked and what changes would be more effective next time. Paris says, "I thought the process of developing this was really great. We began with such an ambitious idea and it was amazing to see how you took these ephemeral ideas and made them into such concrete documents."²⁵ She now uses planning and debriefing processes modeled on her work with Bowne when she and A&L colleagues plan agendas for management meetings, trainings, and retreats.

Arts & Literacy: Constantly Evolving

Looking back, the A&L staff have always appreciated the accessibility of Bowne Foundation personnel. Ever since the 1990s, Paris and her staff have been comfortable asking questions, big and small, knowing that support is a call away. Whether it is thinking through strategies to engage children in the world, requesting articles for a management meeting, or asking for a reference to someone who has successfully diversified program funding sources, Paris knows she can call RBF Program Officer Anne Lawrence or Executive Director Lena Townsend for assistance.

When Laura Paris tells the story of the evolution of the Arts & Literacy program, she talks about the gifts left behind — from John Paul Gonzalez, first A&L director and the one who insisted on benefits for part-time staff, to an early assistant who passed out small amounts of paint and supplies so children would use, rather than spill, them. She invites all staff members to bring their own gifts — their personal interests and goals — to continue building the program into the future. And she always recalls what the Robert Bowne Foundation has given: "I want people to remember what has inspired us. And I've been inspired by Anne [Lawrence, Robert Bowne Foundation Program Officer]."²⁶

²⁴ Planning documents entitled "Strategies for Improving Family Involvement" guided participants through: (a) assessing current activities and identifying key program values and components as well as (b) outlining steps for creating a plan, including: identifying and meeting with stakeholders; preparing an event, activity, product (who, what, when, where); implementing the plan; and getting feedback from stakeholders.

²⁵ Fieldnotes, October 12, 2012.

²⁶ Laura Paris Interview, June 28, 2011.

APPENDIX

Arts & Literacy Program Staff Positions – as of September, 2012

Position Title	FT/PT	Responsibilities	Background
DIRECTOR*	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Responsible for Overall Program •Supervises Management Team 	
BOROUGH DIRECTOR* (2)	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Supervise Site Directors •One Brooklyn, One Queens Based 	Former Teaching Artists
PROGRAM ASSISTANT (2)	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •One Brooklyn, One Queens Based 	
ART THERAPY SUPERVISOR* (2)	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Supervise Art Therapy Interns and Parent Leader •One Brooklyn, One Queens Based 	Certified Art Therapist
PARENT LIAISON/ CASEWORKER	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Referrals •Advocacy •Family Events 	
SITE DIRECTOR* (5 IN 2011; 7 IN 2012)	FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Collaborate with School •Supervision of Site Staff 	Former Teaching Artists
TEACHING ARTIST (18)	21 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Art Project Period 	Artists
HOMEWORK WARRIOR (18)	21 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Academic Period 	College Students, often former Apprentices
APPRENTICE	15 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Follow a group of children and Assist both Art Project + Academic Periods 	HS or College Students, Usually from the Community
ART THERAPY INTERN (13)	16 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Serve Children, Families, and Apprentices at Two (2) Sites 	Graduate Art Therapy Students
INTERN	10 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tutor, under Homework Warrior Supervision 	Bushwick HS Students through St. Nick's Alliance

*Members of Arts & Literacy Management Team