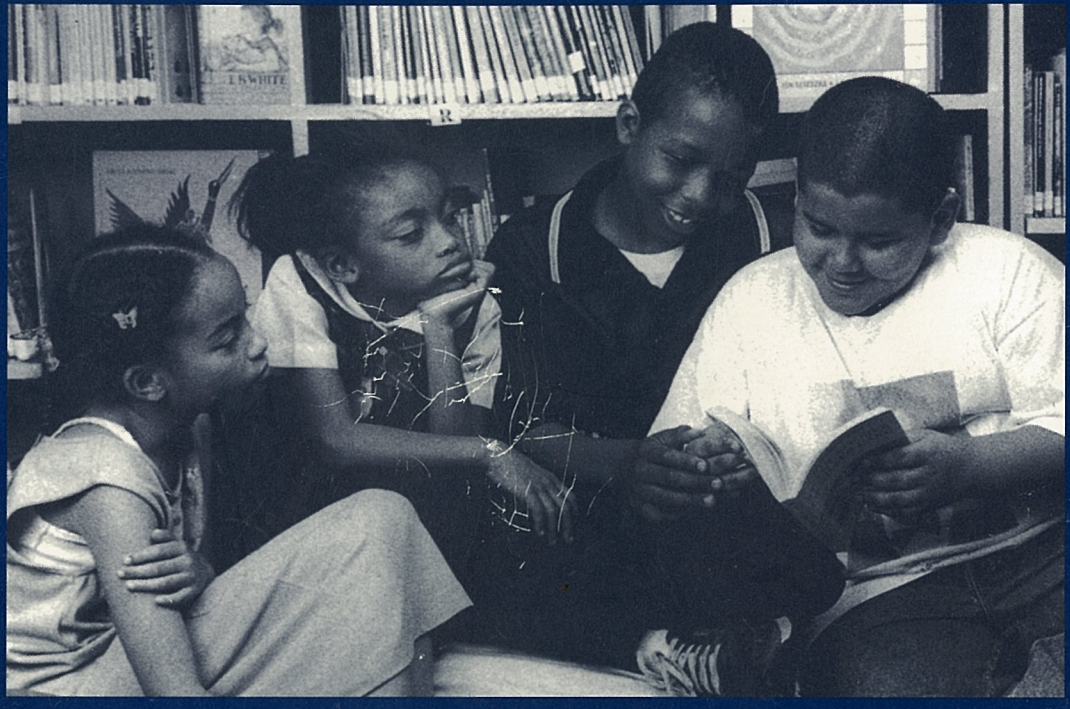
The Third Arena:

AFTERSCHOOL YOUTH LITERACY PROGRAMS



The Robert Bowne Foundation

345 HUDSON STREET ~ NEW YORK, NY 10014 ~ DECEMBER 1999

Community organizations and their programs constitute invaluable resources that can revitalize neighborhoods through partnerships with schools and families to support the education and healthy development of young [people].

MATTER OF TIME: RISK AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE NONSCHOOL HOURS,
THE CARNEGIE CORPORATION, 1992

THE ROBERT BOWNE FOUNDATION (RBF) IS A small philanthropy created by Bowne & Co., Inc., and members of the Stanley family, making grants since 1968 to New York City organizations that serve disadvantaged youth. Its first executive director, Dianne Kangisser, joined RBF in 1984 (after serving as director of Literacy Volunteers of New York City for more than a decade) and remained until the summer of 1999.

Since 1987, The Robert Bowne Foundation has concentrated its grantmaking on out-of-school programs in New York City that address — or wish to address — the issue of youth literacy. While these programs are playing an increasingly important role as education providers, the scope and quality of their offerings can be greatly improved.

RBF's current giving program focuses specifically on innovation in both new and existing youth programs: it funds groups that are willing to take risks and that aspire to make literacy education an integral part of their work. Through grants and technical assistance, the Foundation seeks to strengthen understanding of the theory underlying effective literacy education, to improve practice and to build programs' capacity to effect educational change.

Acknowledgements

ALTHOUGH IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE with certainty what impact our grantmaking has had so far, it is very clear that impacts on our grantmaking process have been effected by many sources, and I would like to acknowledge their contributions here.

To begin at home — without the support and trust of The Robert Bowne Foundation Board for the grantmaking program proposed by staff, this publication would have no story to tell. Rare is the Board that ignores the siren call of the sexy issue, focuses its grantmaking solely in one area and then stays the course through ups and downs, despite very gradual results; and, further, that understands the importance of technical assistance to buttress and enhance direct service grants. The Trustees' faith in me and in the value of afterschool education as provided by community-based organizations has been steadfast. We are in their debt. Their reward is a staff that has taken on the challenge of better educating our children and the children themselves who find pleasure and stimulation in learning.

In addition, I wish to acknowledge the following:

- The program and administrative staffs of afterschool programs, who surmount many daunting obstacles to teach and nourish our children;
- The former and current staffs of our technical assistance partners — The Institute for Literacy Studies, The Literacy Assistance Center, The Nonprofit Connection and the American Reading Council (which is no longer in existence) — who "invented" staff development for afterschool staff;

- The original steering committee of The Partnership for Afterschool Education and its current staff and volunteer committees;
- The Academy for Educational Development for its assistance in evaluating our efforts;
- My funder colleagues who contribute to afterschool programs and have given moral and financial support, encouragement and advice to our effort; and
- The increasing number of agencies, some direct service providers themselves, that are constantly working to build capacity in afterschool programs.

Finally, I want to thank Natalie Jaffe, who worked with me in writing the report; Brenda Paulucci, who burned the midnight oil with me on numerous occasions; Doug Bauer, our Treasurer, and the many other colleagues who took time to provide information, read successive drafts of the report and offer valuable suggestions.

Dianne Kangisser
The Robert Bowne Foundation

Executive Summary

THE TWO TRADITIONAL ARENAS IN WHICH CHILDREN are educated — school and family — are increasingly experiencing pressures that limit the basic developmental and educational supports children need, particularly in low-income inner-city and rural areas. Funding cuts in the public schools have eliminated most enrichments, and low-income working parents are finding themselves unable to provide the experiences that children require to become well-rounded, literate adults.

As a result, community-based organizations (CBOs) have come under increasing pressure to fill the educational needs of our children, in addition to the other developmental needs they have been long addressing. CBOs bring four major strengths to this formidable task.

First, they can offer creative activities for young people that have an energizing "feel" so different from what is possible during their long day at school. Second, afterschool programs offer unique opportunities to link meaningful literacy activities with recreation, sports, the arts and community service, in settings that value and empower the young people. Third, CBOs shape their services to the unique educational needs of their communities. And, fourth, CBO afterschool staffs have diverse backgrounds spanning a wide range of skills, experience and education, and are trained to be responsive to needs of parents, to serve as a bridge between them and the schools, and to connect with other community institutions for the benefit of their youth.

However, in order to respond to the pressure and fulfill their potential as the *third arena* in which children are educated, CBOs 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 impact.

Over the succeeding 11 years detailed in this report, the Foundation, with a host of allies, was the catalyst for creation of a new field of endeavor — community-based afterschool education — with its own best practices, standards, resources, and internal and external supports.

During its first phase of work, the Foundation pursued three broad goals: To help afterschool staffs improve their teaching practice; to build programs' capacity to effect educational change and set new directions; and to create networks that foster crossfertilization among afterschool practitioners.

As a result of these efforts, technical assistance organizations became expert in the special characteristics of afterschool education — growing in number from zero in 1987 to more than 50 today; pioneering afterschool practitioners emerged from their isolation to share their expertise, leading to the establishment of two groundbreaking peer networks; recognition grew that afterschool staff needed management support, time and funding to build both their own expertise and their agencies' educational programming; and the afterschool community got its own membership organization, the Partnership for After School Education (PASE).

The Foundation was the catalyst for creation of a new field of endeavor — community-based afterschool education — with its own best practices, standards, resources, and internal and external supports.

By 1992, as the field continued to evolve, the technical assistance organizations began to independently expand their efforts, generating interest as well as funding for their own projects. Over the next six years, they created a whole menu of staff development, technical assistance opportunities and resources for the field. Two new key training institutes were established to help practitioners incorporate reading and writing into their afterschool activities, and a professional collaborative was created for organizations that provide technical assistance and professional development services to afterschool education programs.

In 1997, in an attempt to accelerate the educational change process in afterschool programs, the Foundation launched an Initiative, *Re-Imagining the Afterschool Program*. This effort capitalized on the resources and services newly available to the field, and all that the Foundation had learned from its previous decade of grantmaking about how to support afterschool education. To this end, participating agencies are required to involve both administrative and program staff in all aspects of the Initiative, including initial staff development training, the development of a work plan for their educational programs, involvement with a peer mentor and/or technical assistance coach throughout the program year, and the creation of a process for evaluating their programs. In its evaluation of the Initiative's first year, the Academy for Educational Development indicates that it has promised to "create a network of programs and a critical mass of high-quality afterschool models that will contribute to the overall enrichment of afterschool programs citywide and nationally."

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CONCLUSIONS

Educationally enriched afterschool education has come a long way in New York City in the past 11 years. Fewer programs focus solely on homework help or drill in "academics" through decontextualized, rote, fill-in-the-blank exercises. More programs are challenging themselves to integrate literacy activities into their recreation/sports, arts and crafts, and community service programming, and are thus challenging the children to think, to communicate, to read and write for purposes relevant to their lives. Fifty technical assistance providers now are bringing their expertise to all aspects of afterschool education, and more than 500 afterschool programs demonstrate interest in improving their offerings.

The programs still have a long way to go, as do professionals in the emerging field of afterschool education. But we have learned *important lessons* during the first decade of work:

Community-based organizations and the community residents who work in them must be given the necessary human and financial resources, tools and technical support if they are to fill their role as primary providers of creative, quality afterschool literacy programming. The expertise of youth practitioners — those who work directly with young people (whether generalists or specialists in particular areas such as the arts) and those who train and supervise them — must be respected and valued equally with the expertise of traditional educators.

CBO staff know the children, youth and families of their communities and are therefore uniquely positioned to tailor their afterschool programming to the varied needs of the diverse neighborhoods in which they are located. Because they are also positioned to be flexible in their approaches to youth development, CBOs can also tailor their offerings to the diverse learning styles and psychosocial needs of individual youth — diversity that is seldom accommodated in school.

But afterschool programs need an organizational infrastructure that allows them to build on their cumulative strengths. In the face of limited resources, high turnover and ever-challenging community needs, CBOs must perceive themselves and be perceived by others as crucial education providers within their communities.

The expertise of professionals in pertinent fields such as adult literacy education, the arts and social work, can be instrumental in facilitating educational change in afterschool programs if they, too, are funded and supported. Intermediary organizations — such as child and youth development organizations, universities and community colleges, museums, public libraries, human resource groups — can play an important role in providing technical assistance in the areas of literacy education, youth development and program management to afterschool providers. They can assist with staff development, train trainers, make research findings accessible to youth practitioners, and work with practitioners to create communities of learners, both staff and youth.

In many cases, however, these professionals will need to educate themselves about CBOs and afterschool programs so as to broaden their expertise to encompass the new field of afterschool education. Like afterschool programs themselves, these intermediary organizations need funding and support to develop their capacities.

Networks are key to capacity building. Networking, both on a formal and informal basis, creates a synergy among providers, education professionals and funders that results in a dynamic enrichment of the field. In coming together, prgrams break through the barriers of isolation to share with each other successful strategies for common problems. The dual results are to create a vibrant, if informal, channel for the promulgation of best practices while providers receive affirmation of their own proficiencies as educators and program managers. Such networks further serve as forums to alert professional educators to the dynamic changes and needs often first addressed among community-based programs. And lastly, but not insignificantly, networking opportunities provide access to funders and other resources in an interactive environment which nurtures a greater spirit of cooperation, understanding and honest discourse.

Peer Assistance Teams, developed by the Partnership for After School Education, are ideal for agencies that require specific, rather than comprehensive, technical assistance. Teams comprise individual practitioners with expertise in literacy, youth leadership, arts and literature, and/or management/organizational capacity. Three four-member teams will start working with about 20 agencies starting in Fall 1999.

Increasingly, the field as a whole is *setting standards* for itself and helping individual programs achieve those standards. The Small Settlement House Collaborative, comprising ten of New York City's smallest settlement houses, has determined standards for themselves and is helping those farthest from meeting those standards to improve.

Increasingly, the field as a whole is setting standards for itself and helping individual programs achieve these standards.

A voice for the field, the journal *Afterschool Matters,* will begin publication soon, offering a national forum for everyone in the field to scrutinize their activities; engage in debate, introspection and learning; and raise public awareness of the urgent need for adequate programming for youth in the out-of-school hours.

The use of *participatory assessment* is beginning to play a wider role both in making the case that support of afterschool education produces lasting benefits for society, and in capacity-building within afterschool programs themselves. Commissioning a study by a professional research organization is a valuable, but expensive, way to go. "Participatory assessment" is a good alternative that involves teaching practitioners

to define and collect systematic data to guide them in improving their programs and in demonstrating to others that they play a vital role in promoting the healthy development of young people.

EXTENDING THE VISION

If afterschool programs are to be held accountable to their constituents for outcomes and improved performance, they must also have a say in what they will be accountable for.

Community-based organizations should become full partners in public education. Their role as primary providers needs to be acknowledged, supported and secured. As a first step, Third Arena organizations need a place at the table, with boards of education and parents, to help shape policies that will determine how children are educated. If afterschool programs are to be held accountable to their constituents, including funders, for outcomes and improved performance, they must also have a say in what they will be accountable for.

Community-based afterschool education organizations should receive tax-based support. Expectations for their services have risen, but without a concomitant rise in financial support. Monies from local, state and national projects are all too often earmarked for the public education entity. But in order for CBO-based literacy programs to attract and retain professional staff able to create quality programming, they must have a sustained and stable source of funds. Several U.S. communities have found solutions; more need encouragement and incentives to do the same.

Afterschool program staff should be broadly educated to meet the challenges of working with children, and should be credentialled. As the field continues to grow, it is the Foundation's hope that these staff will increasingly become grounded in both youth development and education; that the artificial separation between these two areas of expertise will gradually disappear; and that there will be more full-time opportunities for afterschool youth educators. To this end, we recommend that two- and four-year colleges consider offering programs leading to a credential for afterschool educators, and that state authorities consider authorizing such a credential.

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Foreword

NECESSITY, THEY SAY, IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION, and there is no necessity more urgent than the rearing of our children. Once upon a time, we didn't worry so much what our children did when they weren't in school: they played, did their homework, perhaps got into occasional trouble, and then grew up. Between school and home, we remember, there was merely a break time, a hiatus. We saw no need to invent solutions for what was not considered a problem.

Now, clearly, the world is a different place. Numerous studies and news stories underscore the risks children face when left unattended after school. As a result, researchers, policymakers and funders have begun to pay more attention to this area, and, in the process, have seen that *community-based organizations* have for years been quietly shepherding our children through the gap between school and home. 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.

New York City has a long tradition of community-based organizations — settlement houses, local chapters of national institutions, grassroots neighborhood centers — which serve the multiple and diverse needs of youth during the out-of-school hours. And New York City has an established history of both public and private support for these organizations. Hence, it was fertile ground in which to grow one foundation's vision of community-based organizations as the third major provider of literacy development for our children.

This document is a story of the evolution of afterschool education in New York City, an 11-year journey of collective invention, involvement and inquiry. In the spirit of sharing, we hope that the processes and strategies we used to develop afterschool staff, programs and their sponsoring agencies might inform others interested in the burgeoning field of afterschool education.

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

Introduction

A NEW ROLE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The traditional arenas in which children are educated — school and family — are increasingly experiencing pressures that limit basic developmental and educational supports for children, particularly in low-income inner-city and rural areas. Funding cuts in the public schools have eliminated most enrichments, and low-income working parents are finding themselves unable to provide the experiences that children require to become well-rounded, *literate* adults. As a result, community-based organizations (CBOs) have come under increased pressure to become the "third arena" for meeting the educational needs of our children, in addition to the other developmental needs they have long been addressing. *Of necessity, CBOs are becoming informal education providers.* And they can bring major strengths to this role:

- **First, afterschool education programs offer young people activities and instruction with a "feel" and energy that are entirely different from what is possible during the long day at school.** After six to eight hours at a desk, kids need recharging. They need to play sports, invent games, take dance or music lessons, build things and release energy. After school, in small groups and an informal environment, children receive more individual attention and guidance from adults, experience less pressure, and learn to cultivate diverse interests. Hence, youth programs in CBOs can provide a necessary alternative to the conventional classroom with its primary emphasis on academic learning, thereby nurturing a wide range of competencies (for instance, leadership skills, social relations and civic responsibility) to support the overall educational development of young people.

- **Second, community-based programs offer unique opportunities to link literacy with recreation, sports, the arts, and community service, hence providing meaningful and relevant literacy activities in settings that empower young people.** Experts on learning declare that to achieve literacy, young people need opportunities to use the written word *in a variety of contexts,* not just school — opportunities readily available in afterschool programs. Working on a community newsletter, creating holiday cards, corresponding with a pen pal, or selecting recipes for a cooking class — through

these *creative* opportunities to read and write, young people encounter and reflect upon new ideas and learn to express themselves and cooperate with others.

Third, community-based organizations shape their services to the unique educational needs of their communities. Traditionally, CBOs are attuned to community needs and are dedicated to serving them. For example, in neighborhoods where recent immigrants form a large percentage of the population, a CBO is likely to focus on helping participants achieve English proficiency. To this end, it may offer English language instruction for youth and/or counseling to help with acculturation. On the other hand, in a neighborhood with high unemployment rates, a CBO would be more likely to provide vocational training services and/or college prep courses for older teens.

And fourth, CBOs are more likely (than are traditional educational institutions) to hire staff with diverse backgrounds spanning a wide range of skills, experience and education. At their best, CBOs provide a combination of trained youth workers; social workers; specialists in education, the arts, science and technology; as well as volunteers from within and outside the community. Hence, youth are being offered a broad range of role models, both from their own and other racial and ethnic backgrounds; in essence, they are being educated for a 21st Century world of diversity and globalization. Further, afterschool program staff are often trained to be responsive to needs of parents as well as children, and frequently serve as a bridge between parents and the schools or other community institutions.

BARRIERS TO QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Despite these strengths, community-based organizations face formidable obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential as education providers. Inadequate, unpredictable funding is the most obvious one; public and private monies often expand and contract according to the political and economic climate. Further compounding the problem is the fact that many agencies fail to recognize the real potential of afterschool education and thus fail to make it a priority in their strategic plans. Consequently, they don't make the investments necessary to upgrade their educational services, and their afterschool programs remain resource-poor.

As a result, community-based afterschool programs generally offer low paying, part-time positions; experience high staff turnover; have insufficient training and staff development opportunities; and, hence, are unable to provide consistency in both the quality and focus of their educational programming.

SNAPSHOT #1

INTEGRATING HEALTH & LITERACY IN AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

"I want the lung!" shouts Shaqua, as the children take apart a plastic model of the human body for the *Me & My Health* project at the local afterschool program. During the course of the project, the young people learn how they catch colds and other viruses, and read the book *Teddy Bears Cure a Cold.* The children also have to keep a health journal, writing about ways they can avoid getting sick, and writing down family home remedies from interviews with family members or other caretakers. The final outcome of the project is a museum display, with children creating colorful posters and guides to health in addition to presenting their "findings" to parents, staff, and other children in the afterschool program.

THE ROBERT BOWNE FOUNDATION'S MISSION

To address these challenges, The Robert Bowne Foundation resolved to devote its entire grantmaking budget to building up the third arena. The Foundation developed a two-pronged approach: 1) creating strategies to help CBOs overcome barriers and move forward with their educational programming, and 2) seeding the creation of *lasting* resources for the field. Further, the Foundation adopted a very specific focus: youth literacy during the out-of-school hours.

Literacy warrants special attention, as it has become a major determinant of an individual's role in our society, both economic and social. And while many studies document the positive *developmental* effects of afterschool programs for youngsters, one potential contribution that has not been examined sufficiently or supported adequately is helping to create *literate children who can participate fully in 21st Century life.*

The Foundation defines literacy broadly[1], hence the programs it supports vary widely. It is the diversity and adaptability of CBOs that, in part, make these programs effective. Thus, the Foundation has chosen deliberately not to identify a single prototype afterschool education program. It does, however, want to see programs grow in terms of the depth of educational programming they offer young people. And while the focus and individual activities within programs may look different, quality programs will have certain characteristics in common.

The following elements have been identified by the Foundation as essential components of an effective afterschool education program[2]:

- **Philosophy of education:** Effective program leaders articulate the guiding principles that undergird and shape the educational content of the programs, consistent with the goals and mission of the agency.

- **Reading is promoted for enjoyment:** Staff convey their personal enthusiasm for reading and writing; they (including teen "assistants" or volunteers) read to children and discuss books with them.

- **Literacy is carried out within the program as a social activity:** Programs promote literacy by having students share their ideas, books, writing and art work with their peers as well as the larger community.

- **Use of a youth development model:** Program staff adopt a view that programming should focus on children's strengths rather than their weaknesses.

- **Use of educational approaches and content that are different from school:** Programs consciously create environments that are not school-like, in order to provide alternative routes to learning without the negative connotations many youth associate with school.

- **Ongoing staff development:** Staff engage in continual learning experiences, meet on a regular basis to plan program activities, and regularly assess achievement of program goals and objectives.

- **Rich educational resources are available in the program:** A library of good children's literature and other educational materials are housed in pleasant and comfortable surroundings that are inviting to children.

- **Parental involvement is promoted in the program:** Staff consult with parents about their children's development and contend with the challenge of parents' expectations, which may be at odds with the program's educational and youth development goals.

- **Use of alternative assessment of program impact:** Rather than rely on standardized skill assessments, staff use observations, portfolios of writing samples and interviews with parents to assess the impact of programming on young people.

In order for programs to achieve this vision of afterschool education, they needed much more than funds. Agency managers needed to be encouraged to value and support the process of educational change. Education professionals needed to be recruited to train and supervise staff, and to develop curriculum. Practitioners needed technical assistance and ongoing contact with their peers. And fires needed to be lit under funders, intermediary organizations and youth service providers to encourage the serious pursuit of quality afterschool education.

In 1987, this agenda became the mission of The Robert Bowne Foundation. Over the next 11 years, its grantmaking became a catalyst for building, from ground zero in New York City, a critical mass of technical assistance providers, leaders and youth practitioners knowledgeable about and willing to invest in educating children in the out-of-school hours.

TOTAL NUMBERS ARE hard to come by, but the U.S. Department of Education in 1998 estimated that among the 28 million school-age children of working parents, at least five million come home each day to an empty house. Facts on crime are, unfortunately, more readily available: more than half of juvenile crime is committed between the hours of 2 and 8 PM, most in the hour immediately following release from school (the National Center for Juvenile Justice, 1997).

1 The Robert Bowne Foundation uses the following definition of literacy: "Using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." Kirsch and Jungelut: *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults.* Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1986, Pf.3.

2 These elements are drawn from *Portraits of Youth Programs: Education After School,* by Azi Ellowitch, Karen Griswold, Melanie Hammer, Deborah Shelton, Lena O. Townsend and Marcie Wolfe. (Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, The City University of New York, 1991), and *Participatory Assessment in After-School Programs,* by Alexandra Weinbaum. (Academy for Educational Development, New York City, March 1996.)

Phase One: Developing the Third Arena, 1987-97

In 1987, The Robert Bowne Foundation adopted three ambitious goals:

- to help afterschool practitioners improve their teaching practices,
- to build programs' capacity to create educational change, and
- to develop networks that bring afterschool practitioners together.

To accomplish these goals, the Foundation gradually increased its total grantmaking budget — from $275,000 to $1 million annually — and *allocated a full 25% of that budget to developing technical assistance services for afterschool programs.*

The Foundation also turned to educators conversant with innovative and successful educational approaches to teaching reading and writing, but it quickly discovered that *none were knowledgeable about developing afterschool practitioners.* That, therefore, became the Foundation's first priority: to develop the capacity of these professionals to provide technical assistance to afterschool program staff.

THE KEY PLAYERS — INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

The Foundation's first task was getting technical assistance organizations interested in and knowledgeable about afterschool education. To jump-start the process, it funded the following organizations to educate themselves about educating children in the third arena:

- **The Institute for Literacy Studies (ILS)** at Lehman College of the City University of New York, whose experience had been largely with the professional development of school teachers and adult educators;

- **The Literacy Assistance Center (LAC),** whose expertise was in the professional development of adult basic education teachers; and

- **The American Reading Council,** which provided technical assistance on the teaching of reading through literature (closed in 1992).

Growing recognition of the importance of management involvement in enriched programming led to the enlistment of a fourth TA provider:

- **The Nonprofit Connection** (formerly called Brooklyn In Touch), which provided management technical assistance to staff of community-based organizations.

These groups were established and respected organizations, had experience providing on-site technical assistance in related fields, and were teacher trainers *par excellence.* Together with the Foundation, they evolved their own expertise, shared strategies for helping program providers, and wrestled with the many issues affecting this emerging field — starting with the Foundation's goals of improving teaching practices, building program capacity and developing networks.

IN PURSUIT OF THE FOUNDATION'S GOALS

Improving Teaching Practices

Every professional field has a structure for delivering staff development. Yet, virtually no opportunities existed for afterschool education.

For afterschool practitioners, staff development was particularly important as they were generally youth workers with social service or recreation backgrounds. Typically, they lacked the background and experience to articulate a vision, educational philosophy and focus for their programs — all of which are a necessary foundation for program content. Therefore, as could be expected, they often fell back on the *least* creative and effective approaches to literacy instruction, such as drill sheets and workbook exercises. Furthermore, they were often poorly paid and tended to operate in isolation.

In an effort to surmount these difficulties, some agencies would hire public school teachers, on the assumption that they can bring professional standards and experience to the program, *thus eliminating the need for staff development.* But many of these teachers offer children the same type of education they are receiving and perhaps not benefiting from in school, and few are likely to be community residents with ties and commitments to neighborhood life.

It is The Robert Bowne Foundation's belief that community-based organizations should remain true to their mission, responding to the specific needs of their communities. For this reason, the Foundation encouraged programs to either seek teachers from the community who embrace the opportunity to adapt their teaching styles to a different environment, or, better yet, invest in training local residents. Even if they lack the requisite educational background, credentials or professional experience, these individuals — for instance, college graduates who want to "give back" to their community, mothers of children who attend the afterschool program, or school paraprofessionals who have relationships with the children — can be invaluable resources. These are often the very people with a special feel for

SNAPSHOT #2

INTEGRATING SPORTS & LITERACY IN AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

It's Monday, and young people group around Coach who passes out written instructions for the rules of the game of soccer. They take a few minutes to read silently, then one of the youngsters volunteers to read the instructions out loud. The group discusses the game rules, then they get organized and begin to play. They practice and play on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday and Friday, participants work on math skills by figuring out the scoring system and compiling game statistics. They also select books from the on-site library and read about athletes or the history of sports. Towards the end of the year, participants work on a sports newsletter where they write articles about their experiences learning and playing the game, write a book review, conduct e-mail interviews with famous athletes, and work on the newsletter layout on a computer publishing program.

the participating youth and their needs. They are also the people with ties and commitments to neighborhood life. They have good instincts for this work, but need to develop strengths in reading and writing — *not only to teach and integrate literacy training into other afterschool activities, but to model for the children the habits of reading and writing themselves.*

This challenge — of developing both the community-resident staff and the young people at the same time — led the Foundation to certain choices about the staff training it developed and funded. Ultimately, the result was a combination of on-site technical assistance and off-site group workshops.

On-site Technical Assistance was especially valuable because it was ongoing and took place within the context of the program, addressing such issues as creating and using a library of children's literature; integrating literature into arts and recreation programs; and moving beyond homework help as the sole educational activity. The goal of on-site technical assistance was to involve program staff in intensive, experiential staff development experiences in literacy education, with the belief that in this way, staff would more likely embrace change. However, this kind of assistance was labor-intensive and, hence, expensive, and, as a result only a small number of agencies could benefit.

As the number of requests for this kind of training kept increasing, the Foundation needed a way to accommodate afterschool staff from more than one agency at a time. This led to the development of group workshops.

The First Group Workshop was designed to help prospective grantees think about literacy in new ways. One particularly potent exercise led practitioners to examine their own childhood literacy experiences and identify key elements that had significance in their development as a reader or writer. This activity never failed to elicit extraordinary and emotional responses full of simple common sense. No participants ever spoke about workbook exercises or drill sheets as an incentive to reading or writing. What they warmly recollected was a beloved adult reading to them; a teacher who took an uncritical interest in their stabs at writing poetry; travel to other worlds through books; a hunger for learning that was fueled by someone or something and allowed full expression.

The next step was to help practitioners draw conclusions from this activity that they could apply to their afterschool programming. This enabled them to conceptualize and construct supportive literacy practices for young people in a variety of ways, for instance by providing access to a library of good children's literature, free time for reading, encouragement of personal expression and so on.

In the early stages of Phase One, The Robert Bowne Foundation required each of its grantees to receive technical assistance (on-site or in group workshops), but many program staff found it difficult — they had too little time and support from their agencies to benefit from such assistance. This predicament led the Foundation to broaden its efforts to include capacity-building and management training.

Building Capacity

Educational change cannot occur without administrative support. Without buy-in from top management — and the concomitant institutional commitment to put the necessary resources and structures in place to support and sustain change — program staff could not achieve their program quality goals.

However, agency managers, particularly in the smaller, emerging organizations, sometimes lacked the very skills needed to support change — skills such as:

- fundraising,
- board development,

- goal-building through strategic planning, and
- general staff development.

These organizational skills came to be recognized as the necessary "glue" in supporting and sustaining programmatic change. Without these skills, efforts to implement educational change were uncoordinated, fragmented and short-lived.

As with staff development training, the Foundation devised two capacity-building strategies — to work with individual agencies and with groups of agencies. The exchange of ideas in the group workshops led to a third capacity-building strategy — peer learning.

Customized, On-site Assistance was provided by The Nonprofit Connection. Its consultants would conduct an initial assessment to identify the areas in an agency that needed improvements, propose a work plan detailing specific strategies and interventions to address the program's needs, and then follow up in on-site meetings with staff and administration to implement the approved plan of action. This assistance was most effective when paired with group workshops.

Group Workshops (also designed by The Nonprofit Connection) helped management create an environment conducive to educational change. In addition, The Nonprofit Connection developed a series of workshops requiring the participation of management *teams* including, for instance, the Executive Director, Associate Director and a Board member.

This four-session workshop series, called "Strategies for Change," taught techniques for project planning, for handling resistance to educational change, and for developing an afterschool staff team. It also offered opportunities for managers to exchange experiences and seek advice from their peers. Managers were further encouraged to support their staff by allocating paid time for them to meet, to plan, and to attend additional trainings; by increasing staff salaries; and so on.

Peer Learning opportunities were, at first, informally facilitated by encouraging agency staff to visit sites that were implementing creative literacy programming. The idea was that their learning, from both the on-site assistance and group workshops, would be reinforced by seeing other staff model effective educational and management practices. "Host sites" were recruited for this purpose and began welcoming visitors, allowing them to observe and talk informally with both program participants and staff about the enriched literacy content of their programs.

The excitement generated by peers and technical assistance providers learning together and sharing ideas led the Foundation to cultivate what would become the next evolutionary step for the field — formal peer networks.

Building Bridges through Networks

Afterschool staff and professionals benefit greatly from regular contact with each other, both for purposes of their own learning and for developing ever more effective afterschool literacy programming. Networking creates a synergy among providers, education professionals and funders, resulting in new ways of thinking, viewing programs and supporting lasting educational change.

More importantly, in coming together, program staff break through the barriers of isolation. With the development of formal networks, afterschool practitioners were drawn out of their marginal status to join together as professionals, *as afterschool educators.*

Two key entities emerging at the forefront of this movement were the Professional Development Group (PDG) and the Partnership for After School Education (PASE).

The Birth of the Professional Development Group signified an extraordinary leap for the field, providing a unique forum for afterschool practitioners to join together with technical assistance providers. Supported solely by The Robert Bowne Foundation, the Professional Development Group enabled practitioners and technical assistance providers alike to share their experiences and expertise, and to enhance their professional development as educators, youth programming experts and staff development specialists.

In addition, the Professional Development Group sponsored a series of extremely popular workshops that effectively galvanized professionals and practitioners around issues

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP WORKSHOPS

- *Homework Help: Are We Helping?*
- *Using Multicultural Material with Youth: Perspectives on Coming of Age*
- *Transforming Physical Space in After-School Programs: How to Make the Most of Your Setting*
- *Hear Me Write!* (a two-part workshop on student-centered writing)
- *What Are Kids Learning?: Assessing Change in Reading & Writing in After School Programs*
- *Tools for Learning: Study Strategies for After School Programs*

of community-based education, creating an open dialogue about the needs of the field.

This group continues to meet monthly as it has for the past 12 years, and its members are now taking an active role in writing for publication about their experiences in the afterschool arena.

The Partnership for After School Education originated from a concept paper commissioned by the Foundation in 1992, exploring the need for a professional organization for the field of afterschool education.[3] To determine the feasibility of this idea, the Foundation convened a group of practitioners from established youth agencies and technical assistance providers. Together, they began mapping the territory of this new organization, which, they quickly came to believe, would break program isolation, promote best practices and allow agencies to share their resources and expertise. This founding group comprised the Steering Committee of what became, in 1994, the Partnership for After School Education (PASE).

The response from practitioners to the services provided by this new entity was immediate and enthusiastic, with large turnouts at meetings of program staff eager to learn and share, committees spontaneously springing up, and informal networking among groups previously unknown to each other.

By 1998, the Partnership had received its 501(c)(3) status, had a board of directors, an executive director, full-time professional staff, and offices in Manhattan. Now a vital and growing professional association, its constituency includes afterschool staff, administrators, education specialists and technical assistance providers. Its participant list currently exceeds 500, and attendance at its quarterly meetings and annual conference continues to swell.

The Partnership for After School Education is now at the forefront of the field, actively engaging its participants in identifying excellence in education, articulating delivery needs, and advocating for systemic improvements and increased visibility for the third arena.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

As a result of the Foundation's efforts in this first decade, practitioners were becoming increasingly more sophisticated; similarly, intermediary organizations were becoming more expert in the special characteristics of afterschool programming.

The intermediary organizations took the next step and began to *independently* expand their services — generating both interest as well as funding for their own projects. The result was the initiation of exciting new staff development projects designed to help youth practitioners develop expertise in educational theory and instructional strategies; most significantly, these programs rallied *private funding to support their efforts.*

The following programs are examples of a full menu of technical assistance opportunities and resources for the third arena, designed to support lasting improvements in educational practices.

The Youth Practitioners Institute was created by the Institute for Literacy Studies to help youth practitioners integrate reading, writing and other literacy skills into their offerings, in ways that are meaningful and appropriate for young people.

The Youth Practitioners Institute's for-credit workshop series eventually evolved into a year-long seminar for selected practitioners. Supported by 12 philanthropies representing a broad range of corporations and private foundations, the seminar provided on-site assistance to practitioners in developing curriculum designed to meet the specific needs and varied learning styles of their children.

In order to deepen practitioners' knowledge even further, the Institute is currently

YOUTH PRACTITIONERS' INSTITUTE WORKSHOPS

During its three years of operation, the YPI offered six 16-hour theme-based literacy workshop series to practitioners from 61 afterschool programs in all five New York City boroughs:

- *Literature for Children and Young Adults: Bringing It to Life* modeled hands-on activities developed around children's literature;
- *Literacy Through Action: Learning While Doing* focused on how to implement youth-generated projects;
- *Write, Don't Fight!* developed the theme of conflict resolution;
- *Reading through Multicultural Eyes* aimed to broaden participants' views about differences and other key issues related to multiculturalism; and
- *On Exhibit: The Reader's Response to Literature* explored basing arts projects on children's literature.

3 *Creating a Network of Afterschool Education Programs: Recommendations from a Planning Process,* by Michelle Cahill, Youth Development Institute, 1992.

planning a 30-week for-credit course in Fall 1999 on the fundamentals of literacy development. This kind of course is typically offered only to college students enrolled in early childhood/elementary education studies; now, it will be available to youth practitioners.

The Clearinghouse at the Literacy Assistance Center is a unique and comprehensive resource for youth educators. It includes a comprehensive library of professional books on youth, youth literacy and young adult literature; an array of materials for new readers; and educational videos, computer software, professional journals and curricula. Importantly, it also offers instructors and program managers the opportunity to work with youth literacy specialists to improve their program practices, establish children's libraries, and create curriculum for their programs.

The Center has also established a two-year professional development initiative that trains afterschool staff to use "project-based instruction" with their children (for example, creating an aquarium, exploring African American history in New York City or participating in a home-spun "Oprah Book Club"). A range of public and private funding supports both of these programs.

The New York Youth Education Support Network is a professional network for technical assistance providers that work with afterschool education programs. Initiated in 1996 by the Institute for Literacy Studies and The Literacy Assistance Center (after more than a year of Foundation-funded planning), it gives technical assistance providers the ongoing opportunity to learn from and with each other.

The Network, now funded by many foundations, continues to hold monthly "inquiry" meetings to examine work underway in supporting educational change in community youth programs, and convenes a round-table four times a year to recruit, support and learn from a wide range of technical assistance providers.

With the independent expansion of services, afterschool education began to coalesce. Receiving broad public and private support, the field began to generate its own momentum, actively engaging its participants in articulating delivery needs, setting standards and even identifying excellence in education. Having helped to launch and guide the field toward independence, the Foundation was now able to return to its original, creative role in building better individual afterschool programs.

Phase Two: Sustaining Educational Change 1997-

A NEW INITIATIVE—RE-IMAGINING THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Drawing on a base of resources that now existed for the field, including technical assistance providers, skilled practitioners, a variety of quality programs and interested funders — as well as its own experiences over the previous ten years — the Foundation designed a pilot project: *Re-Imagining the Afterschool Program* (see appendix A for more information).

The Initiative reconfigured elements of the Foundation's grantmaking program in exciting new ways, enabling the Foundation to continue to expand resources for the field and work toward its goals through a variety of creative collaborations.

To this end, the Partnership for After School Education (an agency that hadn't even existed four years earlier!) was selected as the Foundation's major partner, working with key technical assistance providers (see appendix B), and a group of New York City funders that invest in youth education.[4]

The goal of the Initiative is to accelerate and sustain educational change in a select group of afterschool programs, thus far through a combination of the following:

- Staff development,
- Technical assistance in literacy development, management and assessment,
- Multi-year funding, and
- Participatory evaluation.

Key components of the Initiative:

Initial, Up-Front Training is required for all Initiative grantees. Staff developers concentrate on literacy education practices within a *youth development framework;* the focus is a hands-on, how-to approach to literacy. This allows practitioners to more readily apply their learning to programs as well as to:

- Reconceptualize afterschool education as an important opportunity to engage students in active learning beyond homework help;
- Learn about activities that address the particular needs and interests of young people and staff in afterschool settings; and
- Explore the role of youth development research and practices in enhancing afterschool education.

4 Initiative support has been provided by: The Pinkerton Foundation, The Louis Calder Foundation, The Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation, The Vincent Astor Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, the Chase Manhattan Corporation, and the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation.

This intensive training approach, designed and led by staff from partner technical assistance organizations, is consistent with the Foundations goal of improving teaching practices.

Management Training is a critical component of the Initiative, as educational change cannot happen without the support of an agency's management. This buy-in is crucial to creating an environment in which staff can learn and grow professionally.

With that in mind, the Partnership for After School Education created and conducts a year-long Management Development Training Series. Its purpose is to strengthen management skills while validating and supporting the important work done by providers each day. Through workshops in different areas (including program development, fund development and internal controls) managers have an opportunity to share ideas, explore new management skills and discuss common issues. The Management Training Series also helps participants align their agencies' new or expanded literacy programs with the organization as a whole.

Peer Mentoring is a unique form of technical assistance designed to expose grantees to new programmatic and managerial approaches. The Partnership for After School Education developed and spearheads an innovative system for peer mentoring called the Intervisitation Model.

In this model, an agency experienced in sustaining a quality educational program assists an agency less experienced in undertaking a process of educational change for an entire year. The Partnership, mentor and mentee agencies all work together to reflect on the process and to tailor and adapt assistance to the particular needs of the mentee agency. Through intensive consultation and an exchange of site visits with their mentor, mentee agencies are exposed to key elements of the mentor agency's afterschool program, including:

- curriculum development,
- teaching practices,
- program philosophy, and
- management.

Participatory Evaluation is a form of evaluation that brings together seasoned evaluators with experienced program staff to design, conduct and use the results of program evaluation. Its methods serve to:

- Reflect practitioners' underlying assumptions and questions about their programs, and
- Contribute to practitioners' knowledge about and pleasure in their work.

SNAPSHOT #3

INTEGRATING SOCIAL ACTION & LITERACY IN AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Several children group around a piece of fabric they are measuring for a sleeping bag they are in the process of constructing. One child sits and writes letters of good wishes that she will later place into toiletry kits tucked into the sleeping bags. Two other young people scan a map, determining how to reach a homeless shelter where they are going to drop their latest load of youth-constructed sleeping bags. The project is one out of several social action programs at the afterschool center. Young people determine the critical issues in their community, and then plan how to address the issue. While social action is the goal, literacy and other opportunities to learn flow naturally from the projects. Besides the math, map reading and writing activities mentioned above, youth have kept logs to reflect on their experiences, have written and submitted proposals for funding one of their projects, and have kept inventory for a local food pantry.

However, evaluators that were both familiar with the participatory evaluation approach and experienced in the needs of community-based organizations were hard to find. To this end, the Foundation funded the development of a *Participatory Evaluation Institute.*

The Institute was an exciting venture, serving to both recruit and train professional evaluators in the participatory evaluation methodologies, and then to provide them with direct experience as evaluation "coaches" for grantees in the *Re-Imagining the Afterschool Program Initiative.*

The Academy for Educational Development concluded that in its first year the Initiative was able to "successfully provide grantees with the language, rationale, and support to reconceptualize afterschool education — to 're-imagine' it as an enriched educational setting with a focus on the literacy development of young people." The Foundation intends to integrate successful aspects of the Initiative into its regular grantmaking program.

A Look to the Future

Afterschool education has come a long way in New York City in the past 11 years:

- Fewer programs focus solely on homework help or drill in "academics" through decontextualized, rote, fill-in-the-blank exercises.
- More programs are challenging themselves to integrate literacy activities into their recreation/sports, arts and crafts, and community service programming, and are thus challenging the children to think, to communicate, to read and write for purposes relevant to their lives.
- Over 50 technical assistance providers now have expertise in some or all aspects of afterschool literacy education.
- More than 500 afterschool programs demonstrate interest in improving their offerings, through involvement with the Partnership for After School Education.

But the Foundation's mission — to move afterschool programs from "step-child" status to full partnership with schools and parents — is far from complete. If there is to be lasting progress, afterschool education needs to be viewed and supported (by funders, government, policy makers, etc.) as a field *with its own best practices, standards, resources and internal and external supports.* And community-based organizations must continue to address the host of challenges that remain.

Therefore, it is the Foundation's hope that those interested in supporting this *nascent* field learn from our experiences, and that of other stakeholders; acknowledge and support promising efforts led by practitioners; and subscribe to a vision of excellence for afterschool education.

LESSONS LEARNED

Community-based organizations (CBOs) and the staff who work in them need to be given more human and financial resources, tools and technical support if they are to fullfill their role as primary providers of creative, quality afterschool literacy programming. *The expertise of youth practitioners — those who work directly with young people (whether generalists or specialists in particular areas such as the arts) and those who train and supervise them — must be respected and valued equally with that of traditional educators.*

CBO staff know the children, youth and families of their communities and are therefore uniquely positioned to tailor their afterschool programming to the varied needs of the diverse neighborhoods in which they are located. Because they are also positioned to be flexible in their approaches to youth development, CBOs can also tailor their offerings to the diverse learning styles and psychosocial needs of individual youth — diversity that is seldom accommodated in school.

But afterschool programs need an organizational infrastructure that sustains them and allows them to build on their cumulative strengths. In the face of limited resources, high staff turnover and ever-challenging community needs, community-based afterschool programs need to perceive themselves and be perceived by others as crucial education providers within their communities.

The expertise of professionals from related fields, such as adult literacy education, the arts and social work, can be instrumental in facilitating educational change in afterschool programs, *if they too are properly funded and supported.* *Intermediary organizations — such as child and youth development organizations, universities and community colleges, museums, public libraries, human resource groups — can continue to play a vital role in:*

- providing technical assistance to afterschool program staff,
- assisting with staff development,
- training trainers,
- making research findings accessible to youth practitioners, and
- working with practitioners to create communities of learners, both staff and youth.

In many cases, however, these professionals will need to educate themselves about community-based organizations and afterschool programs so as to broaden their expertise to encompass the new field of afterschool education. Most importantly, like afterschool programs themselves, these intermediary organizations need funding and support to develop their capacities.

Networks are essential in facilitating sustained, quality educational programs for young people. They provide invaluable opportunities to integrate staff development, enhance programs and build capacity. *Afterschool staff are often isolated and insulated — though they have much to learn from* and *teach each other, technical assistance providers and foundation staff. They should be given opportunities for mutual exchange and support.*

Networking, both on a formal and informal basis, creates a synergy among youth-serving providers, education professionals and funders that results in a dynamic enrichment of the field. In coming together, program staff break through the barriers of isolation to share with each other successful strategies for common problems. Moreover, networks provide channels for the promulgation of best practices while practitioners

receive affirmation of their own proficiencies as youth educators and program managers.

Networks also serve as forums to alert professional educators to the dynamic changes and needs often first addressed by community-based programs. And lastly, but not insignificantly, networking opportunities provide access to funders and other resources in an interactive environment that nurtures a greater spirit of cooperation, understanding and honest discourse.

PROMISING PRACTICES

New developments on the horizon hold great promise for supporting the third arena in the next millennium. *Led largely by practitioners,* these efforts will continue to increase the professionalism of the field, creating additional resources, networks and supports:

Peer Assistance Teams. Developed by the Partnership for After School Education, Peer Assistance Teams, (an outgrowth of the Peer Mentoring component of the *Re-Imagining the Afterschool Program* Initiative) are ideal for agencies that require specific, rather than comprehensive technical assistance. Initially, there will be three, four-member teams, each with expertise in the following areas identified by practitioners as priorities:

- Literacy,
- Youth Leadership,
- Arts and Literature, and
- Management/Organizational Capacity.

The teams will consist of individual practitioners with expertise in one or more of the above disciplines. The Partnership will recruit, select, train and dispatch team members to about 20 agencies starting in Fall 1999. Peer team members must, of course, have support, especially regarding the time commitment from their agency, and will receive a stipend for their services.

Standards for the Field. Increasingly, the field as a whole is setting standards for itself, and helping individual programs achieve those standards. One example is the Small Settlement House Collaborative.

In 1993, ten of New York City's smallest settlement houses formed themselves into a peer support group to help members strengthen their services to children and families. The ten agencies determined standards for themselves (see appendix C), and then divided into three groups on the basis of how close they were to meeting the standards, the stronger ones helping the weaker ones to progress.

In 1997, the Collaborative launched an initiative, The After School Education Program, to raise funds and establish standards for enhancing afterschool education for each agency's five- to thirteen-year-olds. By the following year, the Collaborative had raised two-thirds of its million-dollar budget for the effort. It has since enabled each of the member agencies to make substantial progress toward meeting the Initiative's objectives by hiring a "professional literacy developer." This individual now assists member agencies in increasing the quality and quantity of the literacy content of their programming — particularly through staff development training and parental involvement.

A Voice for the Field — *Afterschool Matters.* Much of the credit for progress in the afterschool literacy field is due to cross-fertilization — interaction among all the actors and dialogue concerning practice, philosophy and evaluation. Until recently, however, there was little in the way of an afterschool literature that spoke directly to afterschool educators. The impulse now is to broaden that dialogue beyond New York City to provide a forum for everyone in the field to scrutinize their activities; engage in spirited debate, introspection and learning; and to raise public awareness of the increasingly urgent need for adequate programming for youth in the out-of-school hours.

In Fall 1997, the directors of two New York City-based agencies assembled an editorial committee and began to work on a proposed journal for the field, *Afterschool Matters.* The journal is designed to create a forum for dialogue on research, philosophies and practices in the field of out-of-school education. The call for papers covers practice, theory and the intersection of the two, and will

TWO RIGOROUS RESEARCH studies by the National Institute on Out of School Time at Wellesley College, and the Society for Research in Child Development at the University of Wisconsin document the positive effects of quality afterschool programs for low-income youngsters. The latter study (by Jill K. Posner and Deborah Lowe Vandell, 1994) compared four types of afterschool activities for children: quality formal programs, "mother care," on their own and with informal adult supervision. The research found that the *children in formal programs spent more time in academic and enrichment activities with peers and adults, and that this time correlated exactly with their academic conduct, grades, peer relations and emotional adjustment.*

SNAPSHOT #4

INTEGRATING VOCATIONAL TRAINING & LITERACY IN AN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

Older youth would come into the community-based organization's small library after school, put their heads down on the desks, and go to sleep. One smart program director realized that if she tapped into the teenagers' need to engage in meaningful activities, perhaps something career-oriented, she would be able to support their literacy development and academic advancement in high school and beyond. She devised a librarian apprenticeship, where selected youth participated in a library science program. In this program, youth learned library software and records maintenance, conducted searches for books and resources, sent out computerized notices for overdue books, and learned how to do "book talks" to interest younger children in reading. As part of the book talk, apprentices had to read a great deal of children's literature and develop their public speaking abilities. At the end of the year, several apprentices applied for summer jobs at the local public library!

promote both qualitative and quantitative research generated by both academics and practitioners. In addition to papers, the journal will include short essays by front-line practitioners, book reviews and announcements of research opportunities, special projects and conferences. The first issue will be available soon.

Evaluation as Capacity-Building. It is just not enough to say to policymakers, funders and the public that afterschool educators work hard, care about children and help them on their way to becoming productive workers, parents and citizens. And while evidence from research is becoming available, more is needed to make the case that support of afterschool education produces lasting benefits for society and is thus worthy of investment.

Commissioning a study by a professional research organization is one way to do that, but such an approach is expensive. And while it gives a program's staff valuable feedback, it does not train them to become involved in an ongoing assessment process themselves. An approach is needed that combines technical assistance with evaluation.

An important step forward, therefore, is "participatory assessment," a process that was introduced to The Robert Bowne Foundation by the Academy for Educational Development after several years of the strategy's use in city-funded youth programs. In using participatory assessment, practitioners learn how to define and collect systematic data to guide them in continuing to improve their programs, and to confirm their conviction — and demonstrate it to others — that they play a vital role in promoting the healthy development of young people.

As mentioned previously, in Summer 1998, the Foundation conducted an Institute to train a cadre of professional evaluators to become "evaluation coaches," each able to work with a group of agency staff to measure the outcomes of their afterschool programs. In Fall 1998, as part of the *Re-Imagining the Afterschool Program* pilot, these coaches began working closely with staff from seven grantee agencies to design, conduct and use the results of program evaluation.

As the process continues, a body of data on cross-program outcomes will be developed to serve as indicators to policymakers and funders that afterschool programs affect youth in important ways.

In a similar vein, as part of its General Support Grant Initiative, the Charles Hayden Foundation contracted with Human Services Solutions to provide evaluation-related technical assistance to the 19 agencies to which Hayden has made three-year grants to strengthen programming and stabilize financing. The purpose of the technical assistance component is to build grantees' own internal capacity to self-assess and to produce data useful to each agency's strategic planning and ongoing management processes.

EXTENDING THE VISION

From the base of support that has been built, we must now push forward to address a series of vital questions: Who will lead and shape the field? What should be its future direction? Where are its allies? The following ideas may hold some answers, and provide additional support to this developing field:

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Should be Full Partners in Public Education. Shared practices and coordination of inschool and afterschool activities will enhance the educational achievement of children. Ideally, education for children from 8 AM to 6 PM

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF Education's *Safe and Smart: Making the Afterschool Hours Work for Kids,* reports that in New York City Housing projects with Boys and Girls Clubs on site, not only were juvenile arrest rates and drug activity lower than in other projects, but Club participants also showed better achievement in math, reading and other subjects; improved school attendance and reduced dropout rates; development of new skills and interests; higher aspirations for the future; improved behavior in school; and better social skills.

should be seamless, regardless of the number of providers involved. Yet that is rarely the case. While there are a few notable projects specifically designed to encourage positive school-CBO relations[5], in our experience, most CBOs that operate afterschool programs in school buildings have minimal interaction with school staff. Here is a lost opportunity for professional cross-fertilization that would benefit children — teachers and afterschool staff building collaborative relationships and working together to meet students' needs.

As a first step, third arena organizations need an equal place at the table, alongside boards of education and parents, to help shape policies that will determine how children are educated. If afterschool programs are to be held accountable to their constituents, including funders, for outcomes and improved performance, they must also have a say in what they will be accountable for.

Tax-Based Support Should be Expanded. Community-based youth-serving organizations live a precarious existence. Yet, in order for them to attract and retain professional staff able to create quality programming, they must have a sustained and stable source of funds. A few communities in the U.S. have come up with a solution to this problem. Local taxpayers voluntarily levy a tax on themselves to pay for programs for their children, acknowledging that what happens in the out-of-school hours is as important for youth development as what happens in school. More communities need encouragement and incentives to do this.

As a first step in that direction, for example, small pools of funds could be set up by public and/or private sources in each community to help afterschool programs purchase a library of good children's literature, pay for their afterschool staff's training or conference-attendance costs, and so on.

In addition, state governments should consider committing a portion of their budgets to neighborhood-based afterschool programs, to ensure that lower-income communities are not penalized. *Afterschool programs should become an entitlement like public education.*

Credentialing for Afterschool Educators Should be Made Available. Afterschool program staff need to be broadly educated to meet the challenges of working with children. As the field continues to grow, it is the Foundation's hope that staff will increasingly become grounded in both youth development and education; that the artificial separation between the two areas of expertise will gradually disappear; and that there will be more full-time, career opportunities for afterschool youth educators. A few two- and four-year colleges currently offer programs that can lead to a credential for afterschool educators — similar to that for public school teachers. Others need to move in that direction.

5 Beacons are school-based community programs, which provide a range of social, academic and recreational services to youth and families. The Beacons initiative began in 1991 with 10 centers (there are now 80, with national replication underway) and is funded by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development. That same year, the Fund for the City of New York created the Youth Development Institute (YDI), which provides the Beacons with technical and other assistance, and, through YDI's Networks for Youth Development, generates peer technical assistance to make youth development theory part of program practices.

Appendix A

RE-IMAGINING THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM INITIATIVE

How the Initiative Addresses Key Afterschool Program Needs

KEY PROGRAM NEEDS	INITIATIVE STRATEGIES
A. Staff Needs	**A. Provide Staff Development Training**
1. Staff often do not know how to create substantive educational programming.	1. Initial training combines youth development and best practices in literacy education.
2. Staff, often part time, lack time to plan programs.	2. a. Pay staff to attend training. b. Pay staff for planning time.
3. Front-line staff often do not get support for making program changes.	3. Require managers/supervisors to attend training sessions.
4. Staff are isolated.	4. Create a supportive learning community for staff members from many different programs.
B. Fragile Agency Infrastructure	**B. Strengthen Infrastructure**
1. Management issues may hinder implementation of educational programming.	1. a. Require administrative staff to attend training sessions on management issues such as board and fund development. b. Provide ongoing management technical assistance.
2. Lack of funding continuity hinders implementation.	2. a. Encourage diversification of funding. b. Introduce agencies to private funders.
C. Support for Implementation of Educational Change	**C. Provide Ongoing Support**
1. Peer support is key to staff development.	1. Participate in peer mentor component sponsored by PASE.
2. Post-implementation support is also critical.	2. a. Offer ongoing management and literacy technical assistance. b. Encourage PASE membership.
D. Assessing Outcomes Programs need to determine measurable outcomes and develop assessment tools to obtain data.	**D. Provide Evaluation Concepts and Tools** a. Have evaluation professionals train program staff to assess outcomes. b. Have peer mentors share their assessment strategies with staff.

Appendix B

RESOURCE AGENCIES

Institute for Literacy Studies
Lehman College/City University of New York
250 Bedford Park Blvd. West
Bronx, New York 10468-1589
t-(718) 960-8758
f-(718) 960-8054

Literacy Assistance Center
84 William St. — 14th Floor
New York, NY 10038
t-(212) 803-3300
f-(212) 785-3685

The Nonprofit Connection
One Hanson Place – Suite 2504
Brooklyn, NY 11234
t-(718) 230-3200
f-(718) 399-3428

The Youth Development Institute
Fund for the City of New York
121 Sixth Avenue – 6th Floor
New York, NY 10013
t-(212) 925-6675
f-(212) 925-5675

Partnership for After School Education
120 Broadway — Suite 3048
New York, NY 10271
t-(212) 571-2664
f-(212) 571-2676

Appendix C

SMALL SETTLEMENT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Standards for Afterschool Literacy Programming Established by the Small Settlement Collaborative

- Each agency must offer at least two of the following programs: reading enhancement, math development, written and oral communication skills, career awareness, or homework assistance;
- Each agency must also offer at least two of the following programs: arts and crafts, computer literacy, dance, music, or cultural enrichment;
- Programs must operate at least three hours a day, three to five days a week;
- Programs must serve at least 45 youth and maintain an 80 percent daily attendance rate;
- Each program must have an After School Education Program Coordinator, on duty at least 20 hours a week;
- Coordinators must have a BA degree or equivalent experience. Program tutors must have two years of college or equivalent experience and have a background check, or three references;
- Volunteers/mentors must be recruited;
- Staff/pupil ratios must not exceed 1:15 adult/child ratios must not exceed 1:8;
- Qualified instructors must be hired for computers, dance, arts and crafts, and music;
- Salary and facilities requirements must be met;
- The following expectations must be met for each child/young person: pre/post assessments, maintenance of activity logs, periodic review of school progress, in-house evidence of growth and achievement, participation in at least two performances a year, at least two parent/staff conferences a year, and implementation of a formal intake procedure and daily sign-in.

Appendix D

ROBERT BOWNE FOUNDATION FUNDED PUBLICATIONS

Prior to 1991, a literature search had found no publications devoted to instructional practices in afterschool settings. Therefore, integral to the unfolding of the field-building process were the development and dissemination of a number of publications, commissioned or funded by The Robert Bowne Foundation, which have served as "primers" for the field. They are:

- **Youth Education in Community-Based Programs: An Annotated Bibliography** (1999)
An excellent, up-to-date bibliography covering a broad range of pertinent subject areas including staff development, program design and evaluation.

- **School's out, kids in: Developing an education-based after-school program** (1997) New York: Brooklyn Children's Museum.
This is a valuable guide for developing an afterschool curriculum based on themes. The guide presents a rationale for using themes, how to develop themes that build upon young people's interests and provides activities and project ideas for themes such as "Family Objects," "Build a Neighborhood" and "Water in Motion." The guide also suggests ways afterschool programs can use museums for field trips and as resources in program development.

- Hill, S., Ingalls, S., Lawrence, A., Shevin, J. and Townsend, L. (1995) **Supporting Community Learning: A Staff Development Guide for After School Youth Education Programs.** New York: Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, CUNY.
A collection of staff development workshops designed for youth practitioners in afterschool programs. The workshops cover topics such as Reading, Study Strategies, Integrating Literacy and the Arts and Assessment. Narratives by workshop facilitators describe how workshops were developed, and describe actual workshop activities with youth educators. Includes resources and bibliographies.

- Ellowitch, A., Grisworld, K., Hammer, M., Shelton, D., Townsend, L. and Wolfe, M. (1991). **Portraits of Youth Programs, Education After School,** New York: Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, CUNY.
Descriptions of exemplary afterschool youth programs that incorporate literacy into their afterschool education activities.

- **Reading, Writing and Reviewing: Helpers Promoting Reading.** (1989) New York: National Helpers Network.
A guide to teaching teens how to choose appropriate materials to read aloud to younger children.