



**youth and  
communities  
helping each other**

community-based organizations  
using service-learning as a strategy  
during out-of-school time

Sandra Naughton  
July 2000  
National Service Fellowship Program  
Corporation for National Service

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# preface

This research grew out of the author's first-hand experiences working with a community-based organization using service-learning to engage youth. As an AmeriCorps member and then staff member at the Cadre of Corps Environmental Education Program in San Luis Obispo, California, the author found a dearth of resources for community-based service-learning when the program shifted from providing school-based to out-of-school time service-learning activities. Staff at other community-based programs were experiencing the same lack of curriculum, manuals and technical assistance – even though they each knew a handful of community-based organizations using service-learning during non-school hours.

This need compelled the author to devote ten months to this fellowship project, which intends to compile and share the experience, wisdom and successes of community-based organizations using service-learning during out-of-school time. Hopefully the stories, practices and ideas within each program profile will inspire others to follow their example – and provide opportunities for youth and communities to help each other through service-learning.

# acknowledgements

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# table of contents

**definitions (PAGE i)**

**an intersection of three spheres (PAGE ii)**

**abstract (PAGE iii)**

**executive summary (PAGES iv-v)**

**chapter 1:** Out-of-School Time: The Need and Quality Considerations **(PAGES 1-6)**

**chapter 2:** Community-based Service-Learning: A Review of Literature **(PAGES 7-30)**

**chapter 3:** Filling the Out-of-School Time Need: Community-based Organizations Using Service-Learning as a Strategy **(PAGES 31-36)**

**chapter 4:** Profiles of Success Introduction **(PAGE 37)**

**A. Methodology for Identifying Programs to Survey and Profile (PAGES 38-40)**

**B. Survey Results: Trends of Community-Based Organizations and Youth Using Service-Learning During Out-of-School Time (PAGES 41-42)**

**C. Summary of Successful Practices for Community-based Organizations and Youth Using Service-Learning During Out-of-School Time (PAGES 43-45)**

**D. Index of Nine In-depth Program Profiles (PAGE 46)**

**E. Nine In-depth Program Profiles**

**1. Serving a community need: HEART of OKC**  
(Oklahoma City, OK) **(PAGES 47-56)**

**2. Identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives: Blackfeet Youth Initiative**  
(Browning, MT) **(PAGES 57-65)**

**3. Creating structured opportunities for reflection: Youth Service Opportunities Project**  
(New York, NY) **(PAGES 66-74)**

**4. Including youth voice and leadership: Youth Making a Change**  
(San Francisco, CA) **(PAGES 75-83)**

**5. Fostering civic responsibility: Students of Promise**  
(Rockingham County, NC) **(PAGES 84-92)**

**6. Evaluating the program and activities: Project YES**  
(Oakland, CA) **(PAGES 93-102)**

**7. Fostering positive human relationships: Discovery Leadership**  
(Minneapolis, MN) **(PAGES 103-112)**

**8. Building partnerships: Team Oakland**  
(Oakland, CA) **(PAGES 113-121)**

**9. Providing accessible places and times for activities: Treehouse Children's Museum**  
(Ogden, UT) **(PAGES 122-130)**

**F. Index of Eight Snapshot Program Profiles (PAGE 131)**

**G. Eight Snapshots of Community-Based Organizations Using Service-Learning as a Strategy during Out-of-School Time**

**1. YMCA Earth Service Corps (PAGES 132-135)**

**2. Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc.: ManaTEEN Club's Youth Service Learning Council (PAGES 136-138)**

**3. Girl Scouts of Central Maryland: Harvest for the Hungry (PAGES 139-140)**

**4. Sunshine Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls (PAGES 141-143)**

**5. Washtucna 4-H: Bridging the Gap of Isolation (PAGES 144-147)**

**6. City of Decatur Recreation and Community Services Department: The 3:00 Project (PAGES 148-150)**

**7. Ohio-West Virginia YMCA (PAGES 151-154)**

**8. East Bay Institute for Urban Arts: The Pathways Project (PAGES 155-158)**

**chapter 5:** Findings and Recommendations **(PAGES 158-161)**

**appendix A:** Successful Practices Checklist **(PAGES 162-163)**

**references (PAGES 164-168)**

## **tables**

<b>table I:</b>	Some Variables Which Can Apply to Service-Learning ( <b>PAGE 8</b> )
<b>table II:</b>	Looking for Common Threads: Table of Definitions for Service-Learning ( <b>PAGES 9-10</b> )
<b>table III:</b>	Differences Between Community-Based and School-Based Service-Learning ( <b>PAGE 12</b> )
<b>table IV:</b>	Forms of Community-Based Service-Learning ( <b>PAGES 14-15</b> )
<b>table V:</b>	A Service-Learning Typology ( <b>PAGE 18</b> )
<b>table VI:</b>	Types of Learning ( <b>PAGE 18</b> )
<b>table VII:</b>	Gardner's Multiple Intelligences ( <b>PAGE 22</b> )
<b>table VIII:</b>	Standards for Youth Voice ( <b>PAGES 23-24</b> )
<b>table IX:</b>	Categories of Youth Achievements Related to their Involvement in CBOs' Programs ( <b>PAGE 32</b> )

# definitions

**The following terms are used throughout this study in the following ways:**

**COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION (CBO):**

A public or private nonprofit organization, including religious entities and excluding state education agencies and school districts, that is engaged in meeting educational, environmental, public safety and other human needs. Examples include volunteer centers, faith-based groups, city libraries, nonprofit public health organizations, and county departments of parks and recreation.

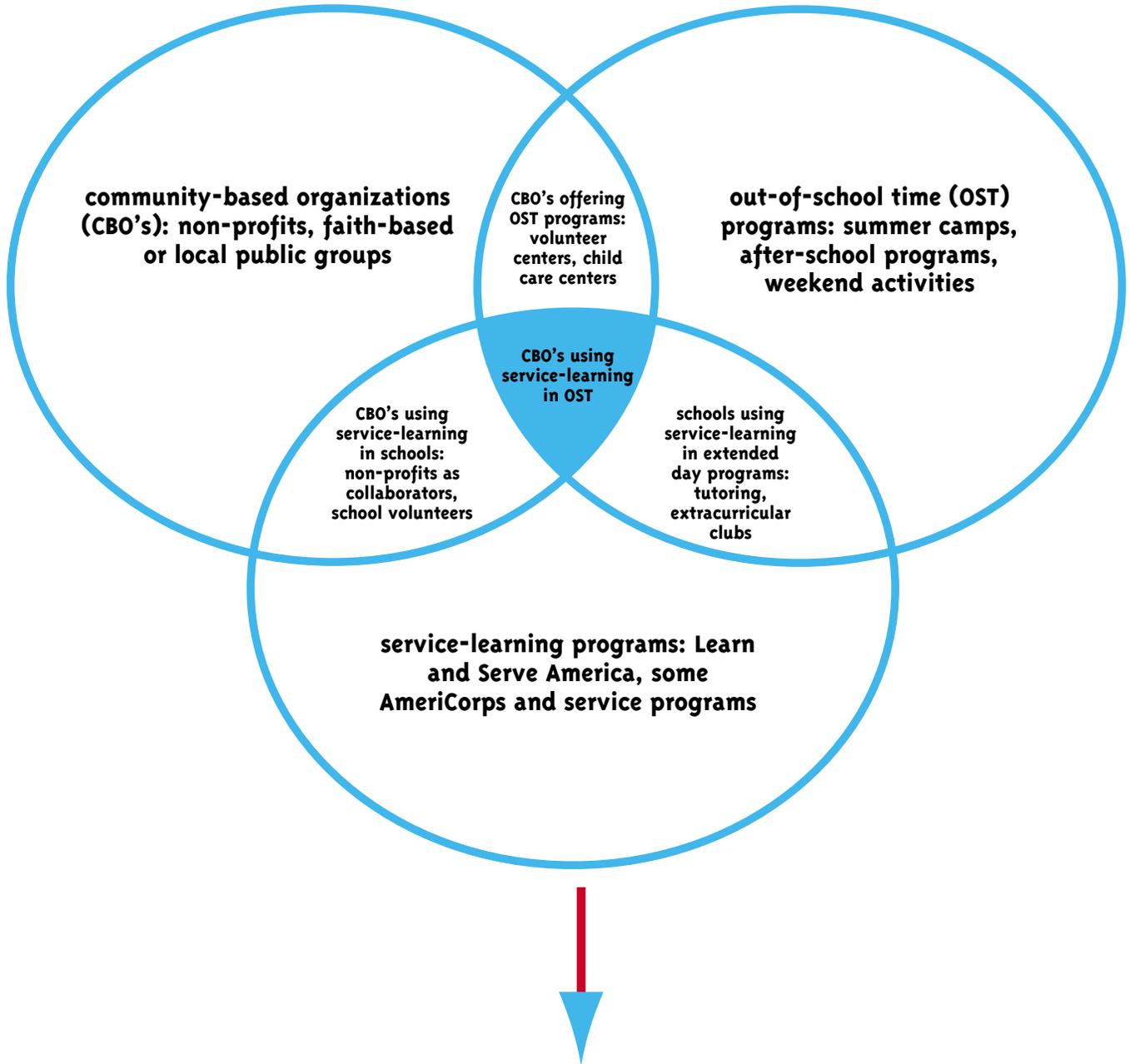
**SERVICE-LEARNING:**

A strategy combining community service that meets community needs, intentional learning objectives and structured opportunities for reflection. (See Chapter 2 for more details.)

**OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST):**

The hours when youth, ages 5 to 18, are not in school, including the hours before and after school, on weekends, and during school holidays and summers. (See Chapter 1 for more details.)

# an intersection of three spheres: community-based service-learning during out-of-school time



## service-learning can be:

- A PHILOSOPHY
- A PROGRAM MODEL
- A STRATEGY. . .FOR STAFF, NATIONAL SERVICE MEMBERS OR VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN SERVICE
- • A STRATEGY. . .FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN SERVICE

## **ABSTRACT**

# **youth and communities helping each other:**

## **COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS USING SERVICE-LEARNING AS A STRATEGY DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

### **the project**

Sandra Naughton's National Service Fellowship project focused on examining community-based organizations using service-learning as a strategy to engage youth, ages 5 to 18, during non-school hours. Naughton surveyed a diverse pool of community-based programs across the nation that use service-learning. Nine programs ranked highly for their use of quality practices – from both service-learning and out-of-school time research. Program staff, youth and volunteers were interviewed, program documents were reviewed, and site visits were conducted when possible to create nine profiles. Each program profile highlighted one of the nine practices identified for successful community-based service-learning during out-of-school time.

### **the findings**

Nine practices were found to be successful in most of the programs profiled. Each practice is discussed in a literature review of service-learning and research on quality out-of-school time programs. Nine in-depth program profiles demonstrate how community-based organizations implement each practice, and each profile highlights one practice in particular. The successful practices include: serving a community need; identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives; creating structured opportunities for reflection; including youth voice and leadership; fostering civic responsibility; evaluating the program and activities; building partnerships between youth, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate; fostering positive human relationships; and providing accessible times and places for activities.

Eight additional community-based organizations are briefly profiled to illustrate the diversity of organizations successfully using service-learning during non-school hours. In addition to these concrete examples, recommended resources for implementing successful practices are included.

### **applications**

The primary intent of this research is to offer community-based organizations ideas, suggestions and resources for improving or initiating programs for youth during out-of-school time. The profiled programs share many of their lessons learned, challenges and successes which provide more than a starting point for communities interested in following their example.

This project also documents the valuable work and positive impacts that community-based organizations contribute to their local communities. This information can help policy makers, funding sources and youth-related organizations further understand the significant role of community-based organizations in positive youth development and connecting youth to communities.

### **for more information**

Contact Sandra Naughton, P.O. Box 12314, San Luis Obispo, CA. Phone: (415) 430-2172 ext. 1274. Fax: (208) 279-3565. E-mail: sandranaughton@hotmail.com. Full project available on the Corporation for National Service web site at [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org).

# executive summary

## I. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This national study of community-based organizations using service-learning as a strategy focused on answering the following major questions:

- What types of community-based organizations are using service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time?
- How do various types of community-based organizations use service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time?
- What practices, from the service-learning and out-of-school time research, do community-based organizations use to successfully engage youth in service-learning activities during non-school hours?

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study uses program profiles to demonstrate community-based organizations' successful use of service-learning practices during out-of-school time. Across the nation a wide variety of community-based organizations, from nonprofit organizations to municipal agencies, demonstrate how a mix of organizations varying in demographics and resources successfully engage youth and communities in service-learning.

Since few instruments exist to specifically evaluate community-based organizations' service-learning activities during out-of-school time, this project relies primarily on programs' self-reported successes. Given these circumstances, this examination of programs aims to highlight strategies that individual programs deem as successful, unlike a comparative analysis of programs. Program directors completed surveys, evaluation and assessment documents were reviewed and program directors, staff and, in most cases, youth were interviewed about the effectiveness of strategies used by programs. Due to individuals' varying perceptions and definitions of success, the programs are not measured by the same standards. Rather, each program is considered successful in the terms defined and experienced by those involved with the program.

Community-based organizations were identified to be included in the study through national funding agencies, membership associations, and networks on the national, regional and local level (San Francisco, California), since no comprehensive database of programs was available. Programs identified as potentially involved in service-learning during non-school hours were sent surveys. A total of 193 surveys, of 461 mailed to program directors, were returned for a 42% return rate. These surveys indicated that 97 programs qualified for the study based on the following criteria: a) program at least one year old (established before fall 1998), b) program offered service-learning in out-of-school time to youth between the ages of 5 and 18, and c) program involved a community-based organization as a fiscal or administrative sponsor.

Qualifying programs were ranked according to their inclusion of service-learning and out-of-school time quality standards. Thirty-eight high-ranking programs were contacted to verify qualification for the study and willingness to participate. The nine programs profiled emerged as those most capable to provide information (both through interviews and program documents), and those representing geographic, programmatic and target audience diversity. In addition to surveys, an average of six interviews with program administrators, staff, youth and adult volunteers were conducted for each profiled program. Program documents, such as reports, public outreach and training materials, and site visits (when feasible) were also used to create the profiles.

These nine programs were examined for their use of the 15 service-learning practices outlined by the literature review (see Table II on pages 9 and 10) and the three out-of-school time quality stan-

dards identified by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (see pages 4–6). Nine practices were present in at least eight of the nine programs, and each program profile highlights one practice.

### **III. FINDINGS**

Community-based organizations can and are making valuable contributions to our youth and our communities. The organizations and the programs profiled in this study are transforming out-of-school time risks into opportunities by using service-learning, which is mutually beneficial for the youth involved and the communities served.

The types of community-based organizations making these contributions through service-learning activities in the non-school hours are mostly nonprofit organizations. These organizations, from conservation corps to children’s museums to youth development centers, incorporate service-learning and youth into their broader goals. Some local government agencies and faith-based groups also engage youth in such activities.

These community-based organizations use service-learning as a strategy in varying ways. Some programs plan service-learning activities monthly, in addition to their recreational, academic enrichment and other activities. Others use service-learning practices to enhance the youth volunteer components of their programs. Some programs adopt a service-learning philosophy that guides program design, staff management, daily implementation practices and most program activities.

Based on the programs analyzed, community-based organizations use nine practices to guide their efforts to success. These practices, documented in service-learning and out-of-school time research and identified as successful in the field by the programs profiled, are: serving a community need; identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives; creating structured opportunities for reflection; including youth voice and leadership; fostering civic responsibility; evaluating the program and activities; building partnerships between youth, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate; fostering positive human relationships; and providing accessible times and places for activities.

### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Given the successes of the programs included in this study, more community-based organizations should consider using service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time. By creating such programs and activities, communities and youth will benefit. The path for more community-based organizations to engage youth and communities through this strategy has already been charted. Organizations can apply the lessons learned and successful practices accumulated by the programs profiled in this study to guide their own local efforts.

The following are recommendations to support youth and communities helping each other through service-learning during non-school hours:

- Reconsider resources and support for existing youth programs, to effectively integrate service-learning, as well as other out-of-school time strategies, for a more holistic approach to youth programming.
- Integrate and increase resources for community-based organizations involved in service-learning both during out-of-school time and during the school day.
- Create more funding opportunities for out-of-school time programs, with service-learning as a possible strategy.

## **out-of-school time: THE NEED & CONSIDERATIONS FOR QUALITY PROGRAMMING**

When youth, ages 5 to 18, are not in school, they spend their time in many different ways. Some play sports, take art classes, have part-time jobs, play with friends or care for their siblings. Many youth, regardless of what they do, engage in these activities without adults present. Due to an increase in dual-income families, youth are spending more time alone in their non-school hours than in previous decades. Programs, ranging from school-age care centers to extracurricular clubs to summer camps, aim to provide youth with structured activities when they are not in school. Many of these programs use the phrase “out-of-school time” to describe the hours that youth are not in school, including hours before school, after school, on weekends, and during school holidays and summers.

Historically, out-of-school time programs began as recreational and arts activities in private schools before they became a mechanism for the federal government to create jobs during the Great Depression. During World War II the government’s support for such programs increased as women joined the workforce. When women returned to the home after the war, federal government support for programs dropped. The need for such programs increased dramatically in the 1970s when then number of children born, working mothers and single-parent families increased, while simultaneously the number of extended family members available to care for youth decreased (Seppanen et. al. 1993).

Presently out-of-school time programs are becoming necessary in most communities. Local, state and federal government agencies have been joined by foundations, corporations and community-based organizations to support such programs. The purpose of most out-of-school programs has evolved to include one or more of the following:

- to provide constructive, supervised activities for youth
- to provide caring relationships with adults and other youth
- to provide accessible safe places for youth (Corporation for National Service and NIOST 1997)

### **the need for out-of-school time programs**

Generally, American communities need more out-of-school time programs. Working families need structured and supervised activities for their children while parents work. Youth need positive environments to interact with others. Communities need more out-of-school programs to meet the changing demands of their citizens. Numerous reports, studies and research have illustrated several aspects of the current need for such programs:

#### **TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WORKING FAMILIES**

- Research indicates that there are approximately 8 million children ages 5 to 14 that spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis. This includes 4 million children between the ages of 5 and 12 and 4 million children ages 13 and 14. As youth grow older, the number of youth without supervision increases markedly (Miller 1999).
- More than 28 million children in the United States have parents who work outside the home, and 5 to 7 million of those youth come home from school on a daily basis and are without adult supervision (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 1998).

### **TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUTH**

- Children spend only 20 percent of their waking time in school, due to the fact that public schools meet for 6 hours per day on 180 days per year. This leaves 185 days and many hours each day when youth are not in school (The Future of Children 1999; Miller et. al. 1997).
- The average youth spends 900 hours a year in school and 1,500 hours a year watching television (Alter 1998). Adolescents spend 42% of their waking hours engaged in “discretionary activities such as watching television, playing or being outside (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1994b).

### **TO MEET THE NEED FOR MORE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS**

- According to a recent poll, 85% of registered voters believe it is difficult for parents to find after-school programs in their communities. Demand for school-based after-school programs exceeds the supply by a rate of approximately two to one (C.S. Mott Foundation 1999; U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 1998).
- The Government Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school time programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas (U.S. GAO/HEHS 1998).

## **risks youth face during out-of-school time**

Youth may be at risk in several ways if they are not engaged in structured, supervised activities during non-school hours. Youths’ school success may also be effected. Juvenile crime rates increase dramatically during after-school hours, in addition to instances of youth victimized by crime. Youth may miss opportunities to develop important social skills or engage in positive development opportunities. The following research outlines some of these risks:

### **NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON YOUTHS’ ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

- Children without adult supervision are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior and substance use. Children who spend more hours alone and begin self-care at younger ages have increased risk of “poor outcomes” (Dwyer, et. al. 1990; Pettit, et al.1997).

### **NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON YOUTHS’ MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING**

- “Latchkey” youth left home alone after school to care for themselves may experience loneliness, fear and worry, rather than develop more maturity, as many popular beliefs assume (Schwartz 1996).
- Watching television is the most frequent activity for youth during out-of-school time, with one in four 9-year-olds watching five or more hours a day. Watching television may increase aggressive behavior and desensitize youth to violence (Carnegie Corporation of New York 1996; Corporation for National Service and NIOST 1997).

### **YOUTH COMMITTING CRIME**

- The juvenile crime rate triples between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. (Fox and Newman 1997).

### **YOUTH VICTIMIZED BY CRIME AND ENGAGED IN RISKY BEHAVIOR**

- Children are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a non-family member between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1996).

## **risks can become opportunities with out-of-school time programs**

The risks outlined above can be reduced and transformed into opportunities for youth when out-of-school programs provide quality activities for youth. Such programs can help youth enhance their academic skills, build resilience to risky behavior, provide a safe and crime-free environment and encourage youth to develop positive self-image and intrapersonal skills. Research shows how risks can become opportunities in the following ways:

### **POSITIVE IMPACTS ON YOUTHS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

- Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative, learn conflict-resolution, develop an interest in recreational reading and receive better grades due to participation in quality after-school programs (Riley, et al., 1994; Schinke, Cole and Poulin, 1998; Pierce, Hamm, and Vandell 1999).
- In one study, children who attended an after-school program missed fewer days of school, had higher homework completion rates, more favorable school behavior, and higher test scores (Hamilton and Klein 1998).

### **POSITIVE IMPACTS ON YOUTHS' MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING**

- Research indicates that children who attend high quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades and conduct in school compared to their peers who do not participate in after-school programs (Baker and Witt 1996; Kahne, Nagaoka and Brown, 1999; Posner and Vandell, 1999).
- In an evaluation of eight out-of-school time program sites, 86% of youth ages 12 to 18 showed improvement in attitude and behavior and 72% showed improvement in social skills (Terao 1997).

### **REDUCING YOUTH COMMITTING CRIME**

- A study of 7 to 13-year-old urban youth involved in 4-H programs found more than 85% of youth said the program helped deter them from joining gangs (Fleming-McCormick and Tushnet 1996).
- Housing projects with on-site Boys and Girls Clubs in New York City showed a decrease in juvenile arrest rates by 13% and a decrease in drug activity rates by 22% than those housing projects without clubs, according to a study by Columbia University (Schinke, Orlandi and Cole 1992).

### **REDUCING YOUTH VICTIMIZED BY CRIME AND ENGAGED IN RISKY BEHAVIOR**

- The risk of youth becoming victims of crime dropped 44% once an after-school program was opened in a high-crime area of Baltimore, according to the Baltimore Police Department (Baltimore Police Department Division of Planning and Research 1998).
- Students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1996).

## **considerations for quality programs**

For out-of-school programs to be effective, positive experiences for youth, certain aspects of quality should be considered and implemented. These considerations for quality are based on the research and practice of out-of-school time professionals and organizations. A leading organization in quality assurance in such programs is the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA), which has created standards for evaluation and accreditation. NSACA published the *NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care*, a self-assessment system many school-age care programs have used to become accredited by. Although local and state standards and requirements for out-of-school programming vary across the nation, the standards set by NSACA can be applied to any out-of-school time program aiming for high quality.

Based on NSACA's standards, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) created a summary of quality considerations geared to programs that involve service or service-learning. Under a contract with the Corporation for National Service, NIOST adapted the standards of quality to national service programs, as outlined in its 1997 booklet *Service as a Strategy in Out-of-School Time: A How To Manual*. The updated version of this publication includes the following categories of quality for programs to consider.

### **QUALITY MEASURES**

- Positive human relationships: consistent and caring relationships between children and adults and between children and their peers
- Effective programming: constructive and well-planned schedules and activities that are tailored to the needs and interests of children, parents and all other stakeholders
- Appropriate environments: sufficient safe and clean space for indoor and outdoor activities, attractive and welcoming décor, adequate space, supplies and furnishings to support the program's activities
- Strong partnerships with children, families, schools, and communities: active relationships with all stakeholders in the program; input from families, schools and children on all aspects of the program; involvement of school staff, parents and community volunteers in running the program
- Effective staff and administration: committed and well-trained staff and volunteers, frequent and efficient staff meetings, sufficient funding, program policies that are understood and accepted by all stakeholders

Source: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2000. *Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Corporation for National Service. Forthcoming.

These five quality measures were present in the nine community-based organization programs examined in this study, although only three were examined in detail. The quality measure “Effective staff and administration,” was not analyzed due to its universal application to almost all programs, whether community-based or school-based, out-of-school time or in-school, for youth or adults. Effective administrative policies and capable staff are vital to all programs, and are therefore not unique factors to community-based service-learning programs, which are the focus of this study. Several elements related to program administration and staff are included in these program profiles, such as annual program budget, staff size and staff training in service-learning, but these details are intended to describe programs’ infrastructure, not their administrative practices. The quality measure, “Effective programming” was also not examined as a discrete practice of the profiled programs since this study focuses on one type of programming – service-learning. Instead, service-learning programming is analyzed in terms of six individual practices which are described in Chapter 2.

The three quality measures examined as individual practices within each profiled program are positive human relationships, appropriate environments and strong partnerships with children, families, schools and communities. Each of these quality standards is described in more detail below to provide insight into the practices analyzed in this study of nine community-based programs.

### **positive human relationships**

The quality of positive human relationships between those involved in out-of-school programs has been proven to be a critical factor of successful programs. These human relationships include those between youth and staff, among youth participants, among staff and between staff and parents or other community members.

Staff members play a large role in this aspect of quality, as indicated in a study by Deborah Vandell at University of Wisconsin, which found that the most important factor of quality in after-school programs is the youths’ interactions with program staff (Seligson 1997). Staff, as the primary supervisors of youth, become role models for how people should interact with each other. Staff should model positive interactions with youth, parents and other adults to demonstrate such relationships for youth (NIOST 1999). For staff to develop positive relationships with youth in the program, while also fulfill their programmatic duties such as planning, managing safety issues, etc., a high ratio of adults to youth is recommended. NSACA suggests an adult to youth ratio between 1:10 and 1:15 for youth ages 6 and older, and between 1:8 and 1:12 for groups that include youth

under the age of 6 (NSACA 1999). Such ratios help staff supervise a manageable group of youth and devote time to developing a positive relationship with each individual. Research has shown that as the ratio of youth to staff increase, staff had more negative interactions with youth (Rosenthal and Vendell In press).

Other human relationships should be positive in high quality programs. NSACA's standards suggest that youth show respect for one another, try to resolve differences, and cooperate in activities (NSACA 1999). Research supports opportunities for youth to socialize with others during out-of-school time, as evidence shows they are more well-adjusted and happier than those without such opportunities (Belle and Burr 1989). Similar positive interactions should be encouraged between program staff and parents or other adults. Parents and staff should converse respectfully and parents should be welcome and comfortable at program activities (NSACA 1999).

Given this research, the following questions addressing various aspects of positive human relationships are examined in this study's program profiles:

- How do staff interact with youth participants?
- What is the adult to youth ratio?
- How does the program foster positive relationships among youth and between staff and parents?

## **appropriate environments**

Out-of-school time programs should reside in safe, comfortable and accessible environments. Given that one of the general purposes of out-of-school programs is to provide places for youth where they are safe from crime, hazards and unnecessary risks, safety is a primary concern. Program settings should also be clean and healthy, with adequate heating, lighting and space to engage in activities safely (Schwendiman and Fager 1999).

Programs should provide environments that help youth feel comfortable. As NIOST states, "Children will be happier and better behaved in out-of-school programs if they find the environment to be comfortable, well-equipped and appropriate for the activities that are part of the program" (1999). Environments should be age-appropriate and reflect the interests of youth (NSACA 1999). For instance, high-school-age youth may find a youth center decorated with cartoon characters and stuffed animals condescending or foolish. They might feel more comfortable in an environment that reflects their favorite sports teams, musicians or other popular culture icons.

The most important factor is that programs be accessible, both in location and in the times activities are offered. Ideally, programs should be located in youths' neighborhoods and be accessible to all children and youth who want to participate (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 1998). Programs should reside in facilities that youth can get to on their own or through arranged transportation, whether public transportation, buses or carpools. Programs should be offered at times that suit the needs of youth and their families (NSACA 1999).

Given this research, the following questions addressing various aspects of appropriate environments are examined in the program profiles:

- What types of facilities are used for program activities?
- What is the schedule for program activities?
- How accessible are the places and times of activities?
- What type of time commitment is required of youth?

## **strong partnerships with children, families, schools and communities**

Out-of-school time programs should build active partnerships with the youth involved, families, schools and communities. High quality programs should respond to the needs of all community members, from youth to schools, since ideally programs are created as a community effort (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 1998). For programs to succeed, schools, families and communities must work together to share resources and design and operate programs (U.S. Department of Education, *Beyond Prevention Curricula*).

High quality programs urge families, schools and communities to donate time and talents, get involved in planning and promote awareness of youths' accomplishments and program activities. NIOST outlines the value of programs building partnerships with each group:

**YOUTH:** During their out-of-school hours, youth do not want programs they participate in to resemble school. They want to be in control of their time, choose their activities and have the freedom to interact or do things independently. Programs that involve youth in program planning and leadership opportunities encourage them to be more enthusiastic and engaged in the program.

**FAMILIES:** Since parents typically know the needs and preferences of their children, program staff can benefit from soliciting parents' input on program activities and policies. Additionally, parent participation in programs can enhance youths' perception of the program's credibility, positive family interaction and communication between program staff and parents.

**SCHOOLS:** Schools and out-of-school time programs that target the same youth can share resources, information and facilities to ensure youth develop intellectually, socially, mentally, physically and emotionally. Linking the learning that occurs in school to out-of-school time programs can enhance youths' understanding of academic knowledge, as well as its relevance in life.

**COMMUNITIES:** Communities have a stake in their youths' development. They can contribute to out-of-school time programs by providing volunteers, resources and information, and increasing the awareness of youths' needs and abilities (NIOST 1999).

Given this research, the following questions address various aspects of partnerships that are examined in this study's program profiles:

- Who are the program's partners?
- What do partners contribute to the program?
- What do partners gain from the program?
- How are partnerships formed?

# community-based service-learning: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## introduction

As family history sheds light on the characteristics of a person, community-based service-learning can best be understood by tracing its roots. In this sense this literature review will outline the origin of service-learning and its various definitions to clarify the meaning of the term. Service-learning's links to its relatives, such as community service and experiential education, will explain the foundations of this strategy. Then, exploring the similarities and differences between community-based and school-based service-learning will further clarify current applications of service-learning.

Once we understand how it evolved, we can begin to analyze the components that comprise service-learning. This section will review some literature addressing the six practices of service-learning included in this study to offer insight into why certain aspects were analyzed in the nine profiled programs. In conclusion, an overview of the benefits of service-learning provides a context for the motivation for such programming. This review of literature is intended to simply offer some background and context for the practices featured in the profiled programs. Hopefully, this overview will spur further investigation and research into these areas.

## roots of service-learning

Service-learning has been present in our society for decades, has taken several forms and been called various names. Experiential education, youth service, internships, youth development, community service, youth prevention and volunteerism represent only a handful of program types that incorporate all or some of the principles of service-learning.

Ralph Tyler, Hilda Taba, John Goodlad, David Berliner, Jean Piaget, and many others have been associated with the roots of service-learning. The foundation, or trunk, of the ever-growing tree of service-learning, American philosopher and educational theorist John Dewey, wrote *Experience and Education* in 1938 focusing on progressive education. Dewey viewed progressive education as learning through experience and taking advantage of present learning opportunities rather than attaining knowledge for future use (Bailey 1997). Although Dewey did not directly promote service experiences as a means for progressive education, many view his work as the building blocks for today's service-learning, such as student participation in forming learning objectives and the development of social skills in addition to academic growth (Kraft 1995).

From these roots, the concept and practice of service-learning was born. Like many broad-based ideas that intersect numerous schools of thought, service-learning has yet to be universally defined. *Research Agenda for Combining Service and Learning in the 1990s* points out a critical problem with adopting a single description:

Service-learning is both a program type and a philosophy of education. As a program type, service-learning includes myriad ways that students can perform meaningful service to their communities and to society while engaging in some form of reflection or study that is related to the service. As a philosophy of education, service-learning reflects the belief that education must be linked to social responsibility and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some meaningful way. (Giles, Honnet and Migliore, Ed. 1991)

Neither the service-learning philosophy nor the program type has been clearly and collectively defined by its followers. Even details such as whether or not a hyphen should separate the two words continue to be debated. Controversy over definitions merited a Delphi study in 1993, but as its author Robert Shumer states, "While there was consensus on some aspects, for the most part there is still disagreement on the details" (July 1993). Twenty-five service-learning practitioners and

researchers consulted for this Delphi study agreed on only one point unanimously – that service-learning falls into two categories: school-based and community-based. Beyond that distinction, the participants’ varying views on service-learning were captured in outlining 26 forms, or models, of service-learning and a continua with 29 different dichotomous variables describing the implementation and motivation for service-learning (see Table I). Shumer emphasizes that the continua and numerous forms derived from the study are dynamic and the service-learning concept is “still very much an amorphous concept which continues to resist rigid definitions and universal understanding”(July 1993).

<b>Table I.</b>	
<b>Some Variables Which Can Apply To Service-Learning</b>	
youth centered	↔ adult centered
voluntary	↔ required/mandatory
co-curricular	↔ curricular
not graded/evaluated	↔ graded/evaluated
intangible outcomes	↔ tangible outcomes
vocational	↔ academic
short-term	↔ long-term (sustained)
informal learning	↔ formal learning
internal incentives	↔ extrinsic incentives

*Source:* From Robert Shumer, 1993, July, *Describing Service-Learning: A Delphi Study*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

### **a common foundation for defining service-learning**

Although a universal, all-encompassing definition for service-learning has not been collectively agreed on, many national organizations have created definitions and lists of necessary elements. Through an analysis of eight such widely-used definitions and elements of high quality service-learning, both from community-based and school-based perspectives, only three elements were cited in every source. Based on this, the following three elements will form the foundation of the definition to be used in this study:

- **SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS**
- **IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
- **CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION**

These elements of service-learning transcend differences in context, resources, and personnel of service-learning practices, whether school-based or community-based. These are the only three elements of the fifteen drawn from the eight definitions, that are included in each source. See Table II on the next page for the complete definitions and how elements were categorized.

Using these three elements as the necessary foundation for describing an activity as service-learning does not undermine the importance of other elements such as youth voice and leadership, evaluation, fostering civic responsibility, recognition and others. Such additional elements incorporated into service-learning activities help maximize participants’ benefits. In addition, other standards of high quality programming, whether service-learning or not, can improve and strengthen service-learning. For example, including elements of celebration and safety may augment a program’s impact, but they are not defining characteristics or considerations of a service-learning program

The three necessary elements are described in more detail based on existing literature and studies (starting on page 17 of this chapter). These three elements also served as criteria for programs surveyed to qualify as service-learning. Based on the further examination of such qualifying programs, three additional elements were identified as important for community-based service-learning programs. These three elements, described in detail (starting on page 22 of this chapter), are: including youth voice and leadership, fostering civic responsibility and evaluating the program and activities.

**Table II. Looking For Common Threads: Table of Definitions for Service-Learning**

source of definitions and standards	serve a community need (Cited in all 8 sources)	identify and foster intentional learning objectives (Cited in all 8 sources)	provide structured opportunities for reflection (Cited in all 8 sources)	include youth voice and leadership (Cited in 4 sources)	provide structure for evaluating the program & activities (Cited in 5 sources)	build partnerships with school, community & parents, as appropriate (Cited in 5 sources)	link learning to academic or cognitive skills or curriculum (Cited in 5 sources)
<b>National and Community Service Act of 1993 - U.S. Code, Vol. 104,0-12700, Title 42, Section 12511, Chapter 23</b>	The term "service-learning" is defined as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary education, or community service program, and with the community.	as a method that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled.	as a method that provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.	V. Youth are involved in the planning.	VII. Effective service-learning integrates systematic formative and summative evaluation.	as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary education, or community service program, and with the community.	
<b>ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, 1995</b>	VI. The service students perform makes a meaningful contribution to the community.	I. Model service-learning provides concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills, to think critically, and to test new roles in an environment which encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.	II. Preparation and reflection are essential elements in service-learning.			VIII. Service-learning connects the school or sponsoring agency and its community in new and positive ways.	I. Effective service-learning efforts strengthen service and academic learning.
<b>Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning: A Special Wingspread Report, 1989</b>	1. An effective program engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.	3. An effective program articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.	2. An effective program provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.		8. An effective program includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.	6. An effective program matches service providers and service needs through changing circumstances.	
<b>Service Learning 2000 Center's Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning, 1998</b>	The service responds to an actual community need that is recognized by the community. The service is designed to achieve significant benefits for students and community.	Reflection establishes connections between students' service experiences and the academic curriculum. Reflection occurs before, during and after the service learning project.	Students participate actively in choosing and planning the service project; planning and implementing the reflection sessions, evaluation, and celebration; taking on roles and tasks that are appropriate to their age.		All partners, especially students, are involved in evaluating the service learning project. The evaluation seeks to measure progress toward the learning and service goals of the project.	The service learning project is a collaboration among as many of these partners as is feasible: students, parents, community-based organization staff, school administrators, teachers, and recipients of service. All partners benefit from the project and contribute to its planning.	The service informs the academic learning content, and the academic learning content informs the service. Life skills learned outside the classroom are integrated back into the classroom learning.
<b>National Youth Leadership Council's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, April 1998</b>	Element 4: Students are engaged in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community and have significant consequences for themselves and others.	Element 1: Effective service-learning establishes clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and involves students in the construction of their own knowledge.	Element 10: Student reflection takes place before, during and after service, uses multiple methods that encourage critical thinking, and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives.	Element 6: Effective service-learning seeks to maximize students' voice in selecting, designing, implementing and evaluating the service project.	Element 5: Effective service-learning employs formative and summative evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes.	Element 8: Effective service-learning promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaboration.	Element 1: Effective service-learning establishes clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and involves students in the construction of their own knowledge.
<b>Points of Light Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning, 1996</b>	1. Community Need/ 5. Action	2. Learning Objectives	6. Reflection	3. Youth Voice and Planning	7. Evaluation		
<b>National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, "Service-Learning Framework," 1992</b>	Action is the service itself and needs to meet certain criteria. It must be meaningful, have academic integrity, provide student ownership, be developmentally appropriate, and have adequate supervision	Preparation consists of the learning activities that take place prior to the service itself. Prior to the service experience, students must understand what is expected of them as well as what they expect from the service project.	Reflection enables students to critically think about their service experience.	Action is the service itself and needs to meet certain criteria. It must be meaningful, have academic integrity, provide student ownership, be developmentally appropriate, and have adequate supervision.		(Service) must be meaningful, have academic integrity, provide student ownership, be developmentally appropriate, and have adequate supervision	
<b>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999</b>	Service-learning must address real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time.	...must have clearly stated learning objectives.	...must assist students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized reflection or critical analysis/activities...				Service-learning must be organized in relation to an academic course or curriculum.

**Table II. Looking For Common Threads: Table of Definitions for Service-Learning (continued)**

source of definitions and standards	prepare participants for their involvement (cited in 3 sources)	recognize and celebrate achievements and efforts (cited in 3 sources)	strive for diversity among participants and methods (cited in 2 sources)	secure organizational support and commitment from sponsoring entities (cited in 2 sources)	commit appropriate amounts of time to service & learning efforts (cited in 2 sources)	foster civic responsibility, in terms of individual impact on the community, personal commitment to service, understanding of civic systems, or empathy for others (cited in 2 sources)	use age-appropriate service experiences (cited in 2 sources)	adequately supervise and provide adult guidance for youth (cited in 2 sources)
National and Community Service Act of 1993 - U.S. Code, Vol. 10, 401-12700, Title 42, Section 12511, Chapter 23								
ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, 1995	XI. Preservice training, orientation, and staff development that include the philosophy and methodology of service-learning best ensure that program quality and continuity are maintained.	V. Students' efforts are recognized by their peers and the community they serve.		IX. Service-learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of a school or sponsoring organization and its community.		The term 'service-learning' is defined as a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that helps foster civic responsibility.		X. Skilled adult guidance and supervision is essential to the success of service-learning.
Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning: A Special Wingspread Report, 1989	5. An effective program clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.		10. An effective program is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.	7. An effective program expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.	9. An effective program insures the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.			
Service Learning 2000 Center's Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning, 1998							The service is age-appropriate and well-organized.	
National Youth Leadership Council's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, April 1998	Element 9: Students are prepared for all aspects of their service work including a clear understanding of task and role, the skills and information required by the task, awareness of safety precautions, as well as knowledge and sensitivity about the people with whom they will be working.	Element 11: Multiple methods are designed to acknowledge, celebrate and further validate students' service work.	Element 7: Effective service-learning values diversity through its participants, its practice and its outcomes.					
Points of Light Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996		8. Celebration & Recognition						
National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, "Service-Learning Framework," 1992							(Service) must be meaningful, have academic integrity, provide student ownership, be developmentally appropriate, and have adequate supervision.	(Service) must be meaningful, have academic integrity, provide student ownership, be developmentally appropriate, and have adequate supervision.
U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999					Service-learning must address real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time.			

\*These components were only cited once, and thus were not included in the chart above: (a) NYLC, Element 3: in effective service-learning, assessment is used as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills; and standards; (b) Wingspread Report, 4. An effective program allows those with needs to define those needs.

## clarifying service-learning through comparison

### **SERVICE-LEARNING VERSUS COMMUNITY SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM**

Although many people speak of service-learning and community service in the same breath, these two terms are not interchangeable. The concepts are indeed related, but as in most family trees there are several roots and branches distinguishing one from the other. Some of the basic differences between the two involve intentionality, personal engagement and reciprocity.

#### **intentionality**

In both community service and service-learning, participants provide service that may offer some learning opportunities. For example, serving soup at a homeless shelter, as a community service project or part of a service-learning project, could expose youth to a portion of their community's population and its plight that they were unaware of before. In a service-learning project, serving soup would be just one aspect of a multiple-step process. Participants benefit from intentional learning activities such as planning the trip to the shelter, analyzing the social issues surrounding homelessness, and reflecting on what they observed, felt and experienced at the shelter. As one study states, "In volunteer service there is no explicit focus on the educational value to be gained through involvement in the particular projects. In the case of service-learning, the projects are designed, enacted, supervised, and evaluated with the educational benefits of the experiences as one of the consciously held goals" (Waterman 1997).

Service-learning requires intentional emphasis devoted to learning from the service, not just experiencing the service. As Lee Levison states, "Students are asked not only to feel, but to think" in programs that combine service and learning. By emphasizing the learning that is inherently involved in the service, youth can be empowered beyond their pity, fear or misunderstanding of others to understand the social problems that create such situations and how they can work toward better solutions. Levison states, "Going through the motions, just doing service without reflection and without knowledge, undermines the power of the people who serve to make changes in institutions, to make things better for people who are in need" (1990). Although such learning can occur in well-planned high quality community service projects, such outcomes are not typically intentional.

#### **personal engagement**

Another distinction between these two types of service is the degree to which participants develop a sense of personal investment and on-going interest in those they serve. Service-learning requires that participants be engaged not only in the service experience, but also with those they are serving (Radest 1993). On the other hand, community service usually focuses on completing a service, with less time and structured interaction planned for project participants and those they are serving. Community service participants may respond to those they serve on an emotional level, but typically do not develop relationships with these people as they would if they interacted with them repeatedly. By engaging in ongoing projects that bring the "servers" and the "served" together on a regular basis and in settings to foster meaningful interactions, service-learning participants develop a personal investment in the activities and the experience becomes more significant in their lives (Bailey 1997).

#### **reciprocity**

Service-learning also has an element of intentional reciprocity that is lacking in most community service activities. Usually community service emphasizes the charitable act of the provider, or the volunteer, in serving the recipient, or less fortunate person, which creates a one-way dynamic. Service-learning aims to make service experiences two-way interactions. Instead of the 'haves' and the 'have nots', service-learning attempts to equalize the focus on both parties emphasizing the learning that each party can offer the other (Bailey 1997).

## SERVICE-LEARNING VERSUS EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

All service-learning is a form of experiential education, but experiential education is not always service-learning, even if it occurs in a community service setting. The National Society for Experiential Education defines experiential education as “inductive, beginning with ‘raw’ experience that is processed through an intentional learning format and transformed into working, usable knowledge” (1998). There are several distinctions between experiential education and service-learning despite their shared roots and similar appearance. The underlying difference is the intention or motivation for each activity. As Andy Furco of University of California, Berkeley states, “Service-learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring” (1996). Experiential education’s primary intention is to increase the students’ learning.

## community-based versus school-based service-learning

Most researchers, practitioners and scholars agree on one thing about service-learning – there are two species, school-based and community-based. These two species are definitely related, although sometimes they each chose to discredit the other as a blood relation. Both types of service-learning encompass the core elements of service meeting community needs, intentional learning objectives and reflection, and community-based organizations and schools partner in many service-learning efforts. Table III highlights some of these differences, as seen through practitioners’ eyes.

**Table III.**

**Differences Between Community-Based and School-Based Service-Learning**

<b>School-Based</b>	<b>Community-Based</b>
May be on school grounds	Usually not on school grounds
Often directed by curriculum	Often directed by need
More systematic, rules, time parameters	More flexibility
Tied to curriculum	Not restricted to academic goals
Site based limitations	Greater range of participants
Evaluation based on grades	Evaluation based on other measures
Institutionalized	More grassroots
Legal and regulatory issues	Easier integration into operations
More resources and materials	
Sometimes required	
More diluted (part of a whole)	

*Source:* Lewis, Salas, Scherer and Ganger, 1999. *From Vision to Practice: Community-based Organization Service-Learning*. Proceedings from a pre-conference event at the National Service Learning Conference, 18-21 April, San Jose, CA.

Among these differences there are a few which greatly impact the way service-learning is used in either context. Generally, these major differences are:

- **RECRUITING AND RETAINING YOUTH:** Community-based service-learning usually does not have a captive audience as in a school setting.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFERENCES:** Community-based organizations usually have more flexible structures and policies than schools.
- **TYPES OF LEARNING OUTCOMES:** School-based service-learning is typically tied to academic learning and community-based programs focus on the type of learning most closely related to their mission (such as youth development, civic responsibility, or health awareness).

Of course, there are exceptions to every generality and often schools and community-based organizations work together in service-learning both in and outside of school. These differences,

however, impact the program design and implementation of service-learning and thus credit some discussion.

### **RECRUITING AND RETAINING YOUTH**

When community-based organizations provide service-learning activities for youth outside of schools, they are usually not dealing with a captive audience as in school-based programs. In this way, community-based organizations must take into consideration how to attract and retain youth participants for their service-learning efforts. Community-based service-learning must appeal to youth and to persuade them to participate during their own free time. Programs must devote time and effort to outreach, publicity and recruitment of youth participants. Programs will also compete with other out-of-school time activities, athletics, extracurricular groups, employment, homework and family, or household duties such as caring for other siblings. This may impact program design in terms of the frequency or time of year that a community-based program is offered to minimize competition. For example, a program may plan to allow each youth to participate on the day of the week of their choice to accommodate their schedules, or may suspend activity during football season due to historically low turn-outs for other activities during that time. Another potential barrier to youth participation is transportation to and from the service-learning activity. Participating in a community-based service-learning activity may present a challenge of getting to the activity if the site is not close to school, not accessible by a school buses or public transportation, and working parents are unable to transport youth.

Programs must also address retention issues. Since students are generally choosing to voluntarily participate, community-based organizations need to ensure the activities meet the needs and expectations of participants. Community-based programs generally try to encourage consistent attendance at service-learning activities in the face of obstacles such as transportation, youths' changing interests, and youths' challenging developmental stages such as rebellion, peer pressure, and other significant forces affecting their behavior. Unlike a school-based program, youth can walk out of or not show up for a community-based program with no legal consequences.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFERENCES**

Another major difference between school-based and community-based service-learning is the more flexible structure and policies of community-based organizations. This difference is perhaps most striking between a local nonprofit organization or other community-based organization that is governed by a small group of people, and a public school which must adhere to state policies, curriculum standards and administrators and elected officials. For example, community-based organizations' using service-learning can create their schedule based on need and availability of youth rather than the confines of the school day schedule and class periods. This scheduling flexibility can translate into time for more traveling to various sites or more intense, all encompassing experiences such as a summer service camp. Community-based organizations are also not legally constrained by a particular curriculum or standards, as schools are. This flexibility permits community-based programs unlimited freedom and creativity to address issues and topics related to their mission and/or of interest to the youth. Other policies related to the structured nature of schools, such as liability insurance, staff time, and evaluation, may not be as flexible as those of community-based organizations in adapting to the needs of service-learning programs.

### **TYPES OF LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Perhaps the most popularly cited deviation between community-based and school-based service-learning is the type of learning that takes place. Although all types of learning fit with the service-learning model and typically co-exist, some practitioners and researchers have distinctly differing perspectives on the type of learning needed to qualify an activity as service-learning. Basically, school-based programs tend to focus more on academic learning while community-based programs focus on the type of learning most closely related to their mission.

Many school-based service-learning researchers and practitioners believe learning objectives must be clearly integrated into an academic curriculum. As Rahima C. Wade states, "Service-learning is

not an extracurricular activity; it is a pedagogical method in which service projects form the basis of learning opportunities.”(1997). Wade states that students learn academic skills and content when service is integrated in to the curriculum, and that such experiences can help motivate and add meaning to students’ academic learning. Bob Seidel of the Corporation for National Service agrees that in schools, service-learning should be “developed in relation to curriculum and that community partnerships tend to be built from the starting point of what the learning will be (1999).”

On the other hand, many in the community-based service-learning field rely on the service experience to dictate the learning. In community-based service-learning, the service is typically linked to the organization’s mission, which may or may not include academic education. Community-based organizations involved in service-learning usually include education of some form in their mission, from public outreach about a health issue to increasing literacy among third graders to engaging youth in environmental stewardship of local creeks. Rather than adopting an academic curriculum to guide the learning process, social issues, specific skills, competencies or goals are identified as desirable learning outcomes gained through the service-learning experience.

**A Perspective**

*“The biggest difference between school-based and community-based service-learning is the deliberate learning goals, since many community-based organizations call them and define them differently from schools, and the utilization of reflection, or evaluation to understand the result of the process.”*

– Cynthia Scherer of the Points of Light Foundation, 1999

Some scholars believe service-learning provides a bridge for these differing educational approaches to meet. Robert Shumer suggests a blending of the two, as necessitated by research, to be called “complete learning” which “recognizes the importance of mental and manual processes as necessary elements of general understanding and personal growth” (October 1993). This “blending” is supported by some research which indicates that service-learning has positive impacts on participants in many aspects, not just one. An evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Project Learn demonstrates how participants’ increased overall grade point averages in turn increased their motivation to participate in the after-school program and facilitated self-directed learning (Savage 1999). The 1998 Brandies University study on Learn and Serve America programs showed positive impacts on students in some academic subject areas, as well as on civic attitudes and volunteer activity (Melchoir 1998).

Given these inherent differences, community-based service-learning program models also usually look different from school-based program models. In Shumer’s Delphi study, eleven forms, or models, of school-based programs and fifteen forms of community-based programs were identified and defined using examples (July 1993). The school-based forms ranged from a community service class to a vocational education class to a service-hour graduation requirement. The fifteen forms of community-based service-learning programs are listed in Table IV:

**Table IV.  
Forms of Community-Based Service Learning**

- 1) Service program sponsored by a community organization or institution (which includes some type of formal or informal reflection) — *example: an after-school recreation program run by a community-based organization which uses high school youth to coach and supervise younger children’s activity.*
- 2) Specific courses — *example: Red Cross course in Basic Aid Training where youth initially receive instruction in basic first aid and then teach material to fourth graders in their community.*

Table IV continued on next page

- 3) Series of courses/programs — *example: series of courses/trainings offered through the Girl Scouts/Boy scouts in environmental studies where youth engage in community projects to apply their knowledge.*
- 4) Vocational programs where job training, skill development, and service are major goals — *example: Youth Employment Programs administered by municipal governments which place young people in service-related jobs.*
- 5) Programs for special populations — *example: 4-H programs where low-income youth receive training in developing community gardens (urban) or agricultural business projects (rural).*
- 6) Short term projects — *example: a special project, such as a food drive, where youth assist in planning and executing the entire effort.*
- 7) Clearinghouse — *example: Volunteer Center which both places young people in a variety of service opportunities and uses youth to research and coordinate participant placements.*
- 8) Career exploration — *example: programs such as the Explorer Scouts, where youth work with police departments to do service-related activities for purposes of occupational exploration.*
- 9) Compensatory service mandated by court system — *example: court imposed sentences where youth provide services and discuss learning with Probation Officers.*
- 10) Summer programs with service components — *example: park and conservation programs which place youth in local, state and national parks to do service work which include educational support.*
- 11) State service programs — *example: state literacy programs, such as those run by Literacy Volunteers of America, which provide older youth with training and support in providing literacy service to local communities.*
- 12) Conservation Corps — *example: municipally or locally administered program, such as the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which focuses on service and conservation, and provides educational support to participants.*
- 13) Specific event/crisis/problem — *example: Response to a specific crises or event, such as a tornado, earthquake, or other natural disaster through organizations such as the Red Cross. Youth are trained to provide appropriate response and receive support and guidance while serving. Training is short term.*
- 14) Youth community service advisory groups — *example: Youth United Way, where youth advise United Way agencies on youth needs and learn about volunteer structures in the community.*
- 15) National Service — *example: programs such as City Year where youth work year-round on urban problems.*

Source: Robert Shumer, July 1993. *Describing Service-Learning: A Delphi Study*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

## **necessary practice – serving community needs**

*"To leave the world a bit better, this is to have succeeded." – Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Although service is an essential element of service-learning, how and what service takes place varies in every situation. Certain aspects of the service deserve some consideration, such as how community and needs are defined, the type of service activity, and the longevity of the service activity. Each of these are discussed in further detail below, as well as the issue of stipended and paid service.

## **DEFINING COMMUNITY AND NEEDS**

The goals, participants, impacts and partnerships involved in service activities vary widely with each setting or context. All genuine service, however, ideally meets real community needs. The way people define “community” affects how they identify and address needs. Some people define “community” in terms of the neighborhood and its residents, to others it can mean all the employees at a company or the students at a school, and still others would insist it includes the entire planet. How community needs are defined and identified also varies among communities. Some people use surveys, focus groups, interviews with leaders and town hall meetings to determine community needs, while others depend on observations, the media or other organizations to identify needs. No one method is more appropriate than the next due to the unique nature of each community, both in definition and needs.

## **TYPES OF SERVICE**

Unlimited types of service exist. From mentoring to environmental work to community organizing, no one type of service performed in a community looks exactly like another. To facilitate discussion and organizing of service activities, Maryland’s State Board of Education identified three broad categories of service while establishing systems for managing the state’s mandated community service requirement for high school graduates. The agency distinguished these categories from one another based on the recipients of the service, how recipients are served and the type of learning the service providers gain. The categories are:

- Direct service is described as activities that “place students face-to-face in helping someone,” such as tutoring, mentoring, feeding the homeless or reading to the elderly.
- Indirect service is described as activities “performed ‘behind the scenes’ by channeling resources to alleviate a problem,” such as planting trees to restore a creek habitat, making care packages to send to a foreign country, or mapping the assets of a community for a task force. In this type of service, participants may not directly interact with the beneficiaries of their service or the benefits may be felt by an entire community.
- Advocacy is a type of service described as activities in which participants “lend their voices and talents to aid the disenfranchised or to correct perceived injustices,” such as making presentations, lobbying public bodies, or distributing literature for the purpose of some cause (Bhaerman, Cordell, and Gomez 1998).

## **LONGEVITY OF SERVICE**

A Brandeis University study suggests that youth with continued, rather than one-time participation in service-learning will be more likely to benefit from the experience, which this study found to be in the areas of civic attitudes, school engagement and reduction of risky behavior (arrest and teenage pregnancy) among middle school youth (Melchoir 1998). RPP International’s 1998 study of service-learning in California public schools mirrored similar findings, namely that “regular (weekly or bi-weekly) opportunities to conduct service” had positive impacts on participants (RPP 1998).

## **STIPENDED OR PAID SERVICE**

Debate surrounds this issue of stipended or paid service. Some organizations do not consider activities performed by a wage-earning employee to be service, even if the same activities are called service when performed by an unpaid volunteer. Others view stipends and wages for service providers as a means to ensure all segments of society have opportunities to serve -- not just those that can afford to donate their time. This debate involves numerous issues and implications, and has warranted research by organizations such as Youth Service America, Public/Private Ventures and others.

For the purposes of this study, paid and stipended service is included alongside voluntary service for several reasons related to the nature of community-based service-learning. First, whether paid or not, youth engaged in service-learning are meeting community needs. If a program retains its emphasis on meeting community needs, rather than completing activities as a means to fiscal

rewards, participants will be performing service. This type of framing of the service experience occurs often in national service programs, such as AmeriCorps, in which members are paid stipends or living allowances. Public/Private Ventures found this in its examination of programs using both paid and unpaid service providers working together. In a summary of preliminary findings, Public/Private ventures states, “The program is able to establish a culture in which all corpsmembers, regardless of their paid or unpaid status, understand that they are equally important to the successful achievement of project goals” (1998).

Secondly, youth are offered incentives to serve in most service-learning activities. Although the incentives and their impacts may vary, the practice of earning something through service-learning is not limited to those programs that offer wages or stipends. For the most part, students in school-based service-learning earn either grades, academic credit, conduct marks, or fulfillment of requirements (from graduation to discipline to access to benefits such as class trips or the honor roll). Such incentives may impact youths’ motivation to participate. Similarly, youth engaged in community-based service-learning may earn wages, stipends, T-shirts, transportation home, or food through their participation. Recognizing this existing practice, service-learning programs that offer youth wages or stipends for their participation will not be excluded based on that factor alone.

Lastly, many community-based programs, particularly those in urban areas and targeting older youth, say they need to offer wages or stipends to compete with the demand on youths’ non-school hours. Several urban programs profiled in this study say they offer such incentives to attract and retain a diverse group of urban youth, especially those youth from low-income areas. Some program directors say youths’ families often depend on their part-time wages, so their participation would not be possible without compensation. Others view such incentives as a way to expand youths’ perspectives on employment, showing them careers do not have to be separate from community work.

Given the research on service compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study’s profiles of community-based programs:

- How do the service activities meet community needs?
- What types of service activities are preformed?
- What is the length of the service experience?

## **necessary element – identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives**

*“Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself.” – Jean Piaget*

Although included in most definitions of service-learning, intentional learning objectives are a point of contention in the service-learning field. Most debate hovers over these three aspects of the intentional learning component:

- Developing a balance between service and learning
- Identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives
- Assessing the learning

### **DEVELOPING A BALANCE BETWEEN SERVICE AND LEARNING**

Robert Sigmon first categorized service-learning as a method of experiential education based on “reciprocal learning,” through which both the provider and the recipient of the service learned from the exchange. Sigmon later revised this definition using the topology below which illustrates a balance between learning goals and service outcomes as well as between the “givers” and “receivers” of the service (Furco 1996). When the balance is lost and more emphasis is placed on service the activity becomes more of a volunteerism or community service experience, and if more emphasis is placed on the learning it becomes more of an experiential education or field study activity.

**Table V.  
A Service and Learning Typology**

service-LEARNING:	learning goals primary, service outcomes secondary.
SERVICE-learning:	service outcomes primary, learning goals secondary.
service learning:	service and learning goals completely separate.
SERVICE-LEARNING:	service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants.

*Source: Sigmon, 1994.*

As Brad Lewis of the Department of Service-Learning at the Corporation for National Service points out, school-based service-learning typically emphasizes the learning aspect and community-based service-learning emphasizes the service aspect (1999). Both include each aspect, however this varying emphasis reflects the difference in each perspective's primary mission: schools are charged with educating our youth and community-based organizations are charged with developing and serving our communities. These primary missions do not exclude each other, in fact they complement each other in many cases, however they do influence each perspective's motivation and priorities.

Cynthia Scherer of Points of Light Foundation notes that for service-learning to be most beneficial for its participants, the emphasis on service and learning should be balanced. "Service-learning is just what it sounds like, service and learning," states Scherer. "At its most basic level, that is what it is, with both sides being equal. When one side is emphasized over the other, that's when things go wrong (1999)."

#### **IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

"Everything in life is a learning experience. Service is a part of life. So, one could say that all service is service-learning. The only question is how conscious we are of that. The point is to be thinking of the learning potential in every situation and to be intentional about making the most of that potential without compromising other goals. In order to be intentional about learning objectives we need to be thoughtful in the design of programs," states Bob Seidel (1999). Like many others in the field, Seidel points to identifying intentional learning objectives as critical in the success of service-learning programs. These identified objectives serve as a road map to a program's educational expectations, guiding the process to reach those expectations and acting as a tool for measuring when the destination is reached.

Most educational endeavors, from school to self-directed learning, contain some form of intentional learning objectives within their curriculum, standards or goals. These learning objectives can be specific and linked to academic subjects, such as learning the chemistry of creek water samples, or broad and focused on social skills, such as learning how to work cooperatively with others. All types of learning are valuable and can be fostered through service-learning. The Points of Light Foundation helps volunteer centers identify learning objectives by categorizing the types of learning according to the following table.

**Table VI.  
Types of Learning**

<b>INTELLECTUAL:</b>	critical thinking skills, problem solving, decision-making, knowledge about social issues, academic subjects, organizing and planning
<b>SOCIAL SKILLS:</b>	team work, leadership, communication, diversity awareness
<b>CITIZENSHIP:</b>	civic responsibility, individuals' role in community, government systems
<b>PERSONAL:</b>	values clarification, personal ability to contribute to community, self-esteem
<b>WORK/CAREER EXPOSURE:</b>	work ethic, job skills, exposure to career possibilities

*Source: Adapted from materials produced by Youth Outreach at the Points of Light Foundation, 1999.*

Although all service-learning programs should identify learning objectives, many practitioners often view this process as more problematic for community-based programs. As Scherer of Points of Light Foundation states, “Schools don’t have to think about learning objectives because they already have them -- they fit into their existing framework or standards set by the state or other governing body. Community-based organizations don't already have them, or at least not in the form of a learning objective, although many have program goals which can be the basis for learning objectives” (1999).

Learning objectives can come in many forms and from many contexts. No one type of learning objectives is more appropriate than the next. In some cases, community-based programs use school-based standards for their objectives, just as some school-based programs utilize community-based organizations’ objectives. Learning objectives need to be catered to each specific program or activity with the learning expectations, age-level and context considered. As Scherer states, “Learning objectives can be specific, like the ones school-based service-learning usually use, or they can be general like the ones community-based organizations use. The spectrum of broad to specific is needed, we just want people to think about them and have intentional learning objectives identified” (1999).

### **ASSESSING THE LEARNING**

If learning is a goal for participants involved in service-learning, measuring the success of the program must include assessing the learning as well as the service that occurs. Assessment of learning can be done using such traditional school-based methods as tests, scored assignments and grades. Community-based service-learning programs, however, typically do not rely on impacts on grades to measure progress toward learning objectives, unless those objectives are tied to the curriculum delivered in school. Many community-based programs also try to avoid creating a school-like environment with tests and written assignments for youth participants. As Laura Rogers of Close Up Foundation states, “We don’t encourage (assignments and testing) in community-based organizations because youth don't want to feel like they are in school. They might as well be in school if they are going to be graded. The assessment of the final product we use is, ‘Is this ready to be presented to the public?’ When it is, the youth get that recognition. The assessment comes from the product itself, not a formalized grading system” (1999).

Most community-based service-learning programs appear to use experiential education methods of assessment such as surveys, journals, demonstrations, interviews and observations. As Marilyn Cunningham, an experiential education specialist for twenty years, states, “Much like a transplanted heart, the experience-based learning model seemed always under threat of being rejected by the academic body. To avoid rejection, we had to ‘prove it’” (1996). Cunningham “proves” the educational gains of experience-based or service-learning experiences by utilizing assessment tools specifically designed to capture the learning in such a situation. Assessment tools incorporate the content, process and context of the experience while aiming to capture progress toward the predicted learning experience. Service-learning activities may result in unexpected learning outcomes due to the unlimited variables associated with learning in a community setting versus a controlled classroom setting (Shumer 1995). In this regard, several assessment tools with flexible applications are typically used in service-learning.

#### **A Perspective**

*“For learning objectives related to skill development, such as learning to take someone’s blood pressure, you can generally get a good sense of learning through the activity itself. For something less tangible, like social attitude development, formal surveys may be useful. But longer-term attitudinal and behavior changes are crucial and hard to measure.”*

– Bob Seidel of the Corporation for National Service, 1999

Although the definition of reflection may vary, most practitioners agree that reflection must be intentional and fostered to be truly effective. “I don't think you need a dividing line between formal and informal reflection. Is your reflection set up in relation to achieving your learning objectives? It is really part of the same intentionality that is important in creating learning objectives,” states Seidel of the Corporation for National Service. “You don't need a master's degree in education to do this but you do need to be intentional in planning” (1999).

Scherer of Points of Light Foundation states, “You can't just hope that learning will happen and that youth will reflect. You need to think about how to foster learning through reflection, whether it's in an informal discussion on the car ride home or a formal journal entry. Are there teachable moments? Yes. Can reflection be spontaneous? Yes. But you need to think about how you can help reflection happen and not just as a singular activity or time” (1999).

In addition to the content of reflection activities, other aspects of the implementing reflection should be considered. Some scholars recommend actively involving the recipients of the service as well as the providers of the service in reflection. Others urge facilitating participants to reexamine their initial reactions to the service after some amount of time, from a week to several months, to fully benefit. Although many methods and techniques exist for reflection, most scholars recommend paying attention to at least two factors: frequency and multiple formats.

### **FREQUENCY OF REFLECTION**

For participants to truly reflect on their service-learning experience, they should reflect before, during and after the service experience (Toole 1995). Before the experience or in preparation for it, participants should be reflecting and asking critical questions when they identify, plan and clarify their project. In addition to questioning and defending the chosen project, participants should be reflecting on their personal beliefs about the project, the societal issue it addresses and the project's intended beneficiaries. By taking inventory of participants' existing attitudes and values toward a particular project, the experience gains a personal frame of reference from which to measure change. By reflecting during the service-learning experience, participants will report and analyze their experiences by sharing observations, asking questions, tackling problems and discussing ideas. Perhaps most importantly, participants should evaluate, assess and contextualize their experiences after its completion. Reflecting in this structured manner will promote students' self-initiated knowledge about themselves and the world they live in (Toole 1995).

#### **A Perspective**

*“Often these moments (for reflection) occurred during car rides or walks to and from projects. The fashion in which these discussions developed contributed to the wide-ranging connections made between our work and the lives of the participants. Through this process the youth were encouraged to invest their full selves in the program and to look at service and those with whom they worked in a holistic light.”*

– Curtis Ogden, in *New Designs for Youth Development*, Fall 1999

### **MULTIPLE FORMATS OF REFLECTION**

With experiential education and service-learning's usual emphasis on holistic learning experiences, many believe the form of reflection should also embrace such an approach. Based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which states that intelligence is more related to one's capacity to solve problems and be productive in realistic, complex situations rather than isolated logical or linguistic tasks, reflection can be structured to appeal to the different ways people learn (1993). Gardner outlined seven areas of intelligence, which can be used to design reflection activities that appeal to all types of learners (see Table VII. below). Reflection can take various forms from writing exercises, discussions, art projects, dramatic performances, public presentations or

Given the research on learning compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study's profiles of community-based programs:

- Do programs balance their emphasis on service and learning activities?
- What types of learning objectives do programs identify and foster? How?
- How do programs assess the learning that occurs?

## **necessary element – creating structured opportunities for reflection**

*“The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and in human responsibility.”*

– Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel, addressing U.S. Congress in 1990

Participating in a service-learning activity does not guarantee a beneficial learning experience. Service-learning can expose participants to new concepts, procedures, events, people, experiences and places, but without processing the experience, no learning will occur. James and Pamela Toole, directors of the Compass Institute in Minnesota, state, “If students are going to learn from service, it will not be instant or effortless. They will be required to organize and construct their own understanding from the rich content embedded within these experiences” (1995). Reflection is cited as a critical element in Kolb’s experiential learning cycle, as reflection and observations from an experience are analyzed in conjunction with abstract concepts and beliefs to create a new understanding or behavior (Kolb 1984).

The benefits of reflection in service-learning activities may impact participants' academic and personal development, as well aid in program improvement. A study conducted by the Search Institute on YMCA Earth Service Corps, a club-based environmental service-learning program, showed that including reflection increases the levels of positive impact the program has on youth. The study states, “When asked to assess the extent to which they felt positively impacted by the program, youth who indicated their club regularly includes reflection as part of the program were found to respond up to 17% higher than those who indicated that reflection was not a regular component” (Search Institute 2000). Reflection may lead to practicing academic and social skills through written or verbal activities, understanding how to interpret and learn from real life experiences and exercise problem-solving and critical thinking skills. In terms of personal development, reflection activities may increase awareness of self, community and society, connect participants to peers, role models and community members, and empower participants to engage in social or civic activity. Reflection may also provide opportunities to examine improvements or expansions of the program itself.

While most service-learning practitioners and scholars recognize the value of reflection, how it is defined and used in service-learning varies. The Tooles define reflection as “the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from the service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs” (1995). According to this definition, reflection is more than looking back and recounting an experience. Reflection requires interpretation of information and observations, assessment of meaning, critical evaluation of results and creation of solutions or suggestions throughout the experience with the intention of connecting participants to a context broader than their experience. Richard Paul states that reflection needs to include critical analysis, so that youth are less likely to use their unprocessed experiences to affirm and rationalize their prejudices or judgements (1990). Lee Levison states that reflection should be linked to an examination of the broader social policies and societal context. He states, “Going through the motions, just doing service without reflection and without knowledge, undermines the power of people who serve to make changes in institutions, to make things better for people who are in need” (1990).

multi-media endeavors, and allowing participants to choose a form to use encourages them to excel in their individual strengths and communication styles (Gardner 1993).

**Table VII.  
Gardner's Multiple Intelligences**

1. Linguistic intelligence: capacity to use words effectively, whether orally or in writing.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence: capacity to use numbers effectively, to reason well, and to engage in inductive and deductive thinking/reasoning
3. Visual/spatial intelligence: sense of being able to visualize an object and ability to create internal mental images/pictures
4. Body-kinesthetic intelligence: awareness of physical movement and the knowings/wisdom of the body, and the ability to use one's hands to produce or transform things
5. Musical/rhythmic intelligence: ability to perceive, discriminate, transform, and express musical forms and a sensitivity to rhythm and beats
6. Interpersonal intelligence: capacity to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people
7. Intrapersonal intelligence: awareness of inner states of being, self-reflection, metacognition (i.e., thinking about thinking) and spiritual realities

*Source:* Howard, Gardner, 1993, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York: Basic Books.

Given the research on reflection compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study's profiles of community-based programs:

- Are opportunities for reflection structured into activities?
- How frequently does reflection occur?
- What types, or formats, of reflection activities are used?

## **important elements of community-based service-learning**

The three necessary elements described in the previous pages create the foundation for service-learning. Building on that foundation there are three additional elements that appear important for service-learning that occurs through community-based organizations. These three elements were identified through examining more than a dozen diverse programs through interviews, site visits and documents, as well as discussions with several knowledgeable people in the community-based service-learning field. The three additional elements are:

- Including youth voice and leadership
- Fostering civic responsibility
- Evaluating the program and activities

These three elements address the distinct goals, contexts and resources of community-based service-learning, as discussed in their descriptions below.

## **including youth voice and leadership**

*"Tell me and I will forget; show me and I will remember; involve me and I will understand."*  
– Chinese proverb

Youth voice, youth involvement and youth leadership are all terms used to describe the active participation and initiating efforts of young people involved in programs or activities. Often youth

voice is “youth choice,” or giving youth the opportunity to choose between prescribed activities. Ideally, youth voice is much more than a selection between choices. Youth voice and leadership can mean empowering youth to engage in all aspects of the program, from identifying learning objectives to leading reflection activities. Youth leadership complements youth voice by providing the opportunities, training and support necessary for leadership. Programs can include youth voice and leadership in any of the following ways:

- All activities primarily youth-led.
- Youth are involved in programmatic decision-making.
- Youth advisory board.
- Youth initiate, identify, plan projects.
- Youth participate and/or lead leadership or skill-building activities.

Youth voice and leadership in community-based service-learning is critical given the underlying goal to engage youth in their communities. Most youth view themselves as not connected to their communities and perceive that adults view them as problems (McLaughlin 1999). Opportunities for youth to function as equals with adults are minimal in our society. As Loring Leifer and Michael McLarney state in *Younger Voices, Stronger Choices*, “Opportunities to exercise personal freedom and social responsibility are determined by age rather than demonstration of competence and numerous legal restrictions limit the social contributions of youth. Therefore, regardless of individual abilities, children are often perceived as the incompetent possessions of adults who must manage them “for their own good” (1997). Due to this, community-based service-learning efforts need to offer youth positive and enticing projects that emphasize youth as resources for the community. Youth need to feel valued and as partners in after-school or weekend projects if they are going to choose to participate during their free time.

Research indicates the most effective way to engage youth is to give them ownership, choice and responsibility in an endeavor. Shumer states, “Such programs afford students the opportunity to become engaged in learning activities of their own making, helping them to achieve levels of involvement not ordinarily found in traditional school settings” (1995). As a 1991 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse and Prevention states,

Identifying the most essential elements for developing solid community prevention systems, empowerment is necessary at every level of society, from individuals to communities, to families. Target groups must be involved in and develop their own programs. If your target audience isn’t significantly involved in program planning and development – plan for failure (Leifer and McLarney 1997).

Numerous issues and details need to be considered to successfully implement positive youth voice and leadership activities. Various organizations offer suggestions for including or strengthening this type of practice into an existing or new program, such as those listed in Table VIII.

<p><b>Table VIII.</b> <b>Standards For Youth Voice</b></p> <p>There are six principles for “authentic youth involvement,” according to the YouthLEAD organization:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reach out to all young people.</li><li>2. Balance the distribution of power between young people and adults.</li><li>3. Create a safe environment in which all people feel valued to promote all levels of volunteerism.</li><li>4. Provide young people and adults with information, tools and support to work effectively with each other as partners.</li></ol>
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Table VIII continued on next page

5. Recognize that young people and adults have equally valuable, but different, perspectives to offer.
6. Establish positions of authority and responsibility for all young people that allows for decision-making on all issues and solutions.
7. Continually reflect upon the roles of young people and adults while recognizing their contributions and impact.

Source: Leifer, Loring and Michael McLarney, 1997. *Younger Voices, Stronger Choices: Promise Project's Guide to Forming Youth/Adult Partnerships*. Promise Project/YMCA of Greater Kansas City.

## **BENEFITS OF YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

Not only are youth more interested and invested in service-learning that incorporates youth voice and leadership, but participants benefit more from such experiences. The research shows that the degree to which students perceive themselves as having the freedom to develop and use their own ideas, make important decisions, and explore their own interests impacts their learning and development (Bhaerman, Cordell and Gomez 1998). Studies show that youth benefit from activities that allow them opportunities to work independently, set their own goals and participate in planning. The benefits youth gain from such features include enhanced problem-solving skills, increased senses of self-worth and more confidence in their abilities. Communities also benefit when youth have opportunities to gain leadership skills. Youth gain valuable experience and skills, from interpersonal communication to organizing, which can be applied to stewarding the community – both in the immediate and distant future.

Given the research on youth voice and leadership compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study's profiles of community-based programs:

- What types of structures are used to include youth voice and leadership?
- How do programs view the benefits of including youth voice and leadership?

## **fostering civic responsibility**

*"If America is to remain viable as a unified nation and as a democracy its young people must have a sense of civic responsibility, a sense of responsibility to and for the whole society."*

– John Chandler, keynote speaker at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, 1985

Generally, civic responsibility in terms of service-learning refers to the correlation made between the service experience and active citizenship. The phrase "civic responsibility" itself is interpreted in many ways, including concepts ranging from social responsibility to civics education. As a service-learning component, civic responsibility can encompass different elements, such as:

- Personal commitment to service and the community (Kahne and Westeimer 1996; William T. Grant commission on Work, Family and Citizenship 1998)
- Understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens (The Center for Democracy and Citizenship and The Youth Development Institute 1997; Kahne and Westeimer 1996)
- Understanding the individual's ability to impact the community (Berman 1990; Waterman 1997)
- Ability to care for others (Newman and Rutter 1983; Ogden 1999)

Community-based organizations are usually concerned with civic responsibility since it relates to people's perceptions of and actions for the community on some scale. Most community-based organizations try to involve community members and urge them to take action, whether that means a humane society seeking volunteers for educational programs or an environmental group asking residents to recycle their used motor oil.

Community-based organizations also desire active future generations and as the ten-year study *Community Counts* shows, youth active in community-based organizations are “more than two and a half times more likely to think it is ‘very important’ to do community service or volunteer”(McLaughlin 1999). For these reasons and motivations, community-based service-learning usually incorporates program elements to foster civic responsibility.

### **VARYING PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

There are many perspectives on what this civic responsibility component should look like and strive to achieve.

#### **personal commitment to service and the community**

Joseph Kahne and Joel Westeimer describe one form of civic responsibility as encompassing concepts of charity, the notion that citizens must give to others through time or resources to be active and productive citizens (1996). This concept is also embraced by the William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship which made recommendations to support service-learning as a means of improving society. The commission’s final recommendations state, “[If youth had service opportunities, they] would better appreciate that democracy involves a social compact in which society nurtures and cares for its young, and the young, in turn, care for the weak, the needy, the infirm, as well as the healthy and empowered members of society” (1988).

#### **understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens**

The Center for Democracy and Citizenship and the Youth Development Institute include concepts of respecting civil and human rights and recognizing the individual’s role in supporting such rights by participating in government and community processes (1998, 1997). Directly addressing this element in service-learning, Kahne and Westeimer draw distinctions between two types of social or civic responsibility: charity and change. Change appeals to the desire to achieve social reconstruction, similar to these other political concepts centered around citizens’ roles within government systems. Charity appeals to the next type of civic responsibility, as it appeals to a morality based on giving to fulfill civic duty (Kahne and Westeimer 1996).

#### **understanding the individual’s ability to impact the community**

Shelley Berman, former President of Educators for Social Responsibility, describes the civic responsibility in service-learning as understanding one’s own impact on the broader community. She states, “This kind of teaching, then, is simply about helping people recognize that their actions create not only their own future but of society as well. It is about helping them find their own meaningful ways to make a difference”(1990). Alan Waterman echoes this concept in his summary of the benefits service-learning, which includes the fostering of civic responsibility. He states, “Involving students in service to the community at a relatively early age is seen as a way for students to come to recognize that individual and collective action can make a difference in the quality of civic life” (Waterman 1997).

#### **ability to care for others**

Others perceive civic responsibility as developing human relationships based on a sense of universal reciprocity, or fostering understanding, acceptance and compassion for others. Again highlighting the difference between service-learning and community service, reciprocity means that all participants are giving and receiving, rather than one group helping another. This element of reciprocity emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility for the quality and preservation of human life (Newman and Rutter 1983). Along the same lines, the civic responsibility component in service-learning can be viewed as the approach to ensure that participants learn to respect others. As Curtis Ogden states, the crux of the experience is missed if we fail to see the humanity of those we are serving”(1999). Ogden

assures that this element of respect is not inherent in service, but needs attention and effort to foster such understanding. He cites an instance of hearing a young person state that homeless people are needed so that those serving them can learn from them to prove that service experiences in themselves do not automatically produce respect and understanding of humanity. Ogden states that “service learning must move into considerations of the bigger picture, taking action in a world that is interconnected. This means not simply treating someone’s hunger by feeding them but respecting their humanity and considering what we all share”( 1999).

### **WHERE CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY OCCURS IN THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROCESS**

Although civic responsibility is a theme that can be integrated into all components of service-learning, many scholars and practitioners emphasize its place in reflection. Concepts of civic responsibility may dominate the actual service activity, particularly in efforts focused on affecting social or political change such as students lobbying to alter school district policies to youth drafting legislation to address juvenile delinquency. This civic responsibility theme may also dominate the learning aspect of a program such as when youth become knowledgeable about the systems of government, how policies are changed or the historical context of a community issue. However, several service-learning experts believe civic responsibility or the individual’s role in service is a most critical topic for effective reflection. Seidel of the Corporation for National Service states, “There should be some kind of intentional reflection on the meaning of service or citizenship so that all service-learning has in common some consideration of what it means for citizens to take active responsibility for the quality of community life. It is so easy, if the focus is on an environmental project, for example, to focus on environmental learning and not on the lifelong commitment to service or active citizenship. The challenge is to do it in a way that is meaningfully integrated” (1999).

Fred Newmann makes the argument that experiences aiming to promote civic participation among youth will not be successful without reflection encompassing some considerations about the reality of such participation. Newmann states it is the educator’s responsibility to help youth not become inactive due to the complexity, morality and challenges of civic action. Educators should help youth critically analyze social and political issues while assuring them not to be demobilized by inquiry. Dialogue for discussion of personal values and morality should be encouraged to help youth understand their personal stances on issues. Discussions about efficacy, integrity and responsibility will help youth understand the complexity and consequences of civic action and minimize negative impacts they might experience (Newmann 1990).

#### **A Perspective**

*Part of the YMCA’s effort to infuse service-learning into its 2,300 organizations across the country is to highlight the development of citizenship. “We are trying to focus on citizenship as a learning objective. It has always been an underlying objective, but if we are taking the effort to connect youth to the community, then we are really making an effort to better citizenship.”*

– Tony Ganger of YMCA of the USA, 1999

Given the research on civic responsibility compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study’s profiles of community-based programs:

- What types of “civic responsibility” does the program foster?
- How do programs foster “civic responsibility”?

## evaluating the program and activities

*“Service-learning and evaluation are joined at the hip.”*

– Robert Shumer, 1997

Most service-learning practitioners and scholars view evaluation as a necessary part of the service-learning process. Evaluation is a systematic way that involves all stakeholders in analyzing the extent that a program or activity achieves its goals. Robert Shumer states that evaluation and service-learning are integrally related (1997). The evaluation process can promote theoretical and practical goals of service-learning such as enhancing participants’ sense of ownership of the program, and improving learning and service outcomes (Neal, Shumer and Gorak 1994). Evaluation is also used to document impacts and activities for funders, to help staff make programmatic decisions and to generate or sustain support for service-learning.

Shumer lists eight reasons why evaluation is a key component to implementing high quality service-learning programs:

- Students need to perform community assessments to determine program emphasis.
- Students need to evaluate impact of service activity on community.
- Students need to evaluate their own learning from the service activities.
- Instructors need to evaluate whether students are learning appropriate information, skills, and/or concepts from the activities.
- Program managers need to determine whether service-learning methods are utilizing effective instructional strategies.
- Community members need to determine the impact of the service on local improvement.
- School districts and state standards need to be assessed in terms of student learning.
- Funders and others who financially support service-learning need to determine whether or not to continue their support based on established criteria of the process (Shumer 1998).

As with any evolving field, community-based service-learning requires evaluation efforts to justify its existence and garner support in terms of funding, participation and credibility.

### DESIGNING A QUALITY EVALUATION

Some general guidelines for designing an evaluation are: a) define goals, b) clarify expectations, c) utilize information already collected, and d) document what is being done. Shumer offers more specific qualities to strive for in service-learning evaluation. “A well-planned evaluation provides information that will show the impact of a program on the students, teachers, and other participants; what components make a quality program; and whether or not a program is operating as it was designed to operate. With information such as this, service-learning can both improve and grow” (Shumer 1998). The Independent Sector recommends evaluation as an ongoing, integrated part of a program, rather than a practice outside and in addition to a program (Neal, Shumer and Gorak 1994).

Evaluating youth programs entails some special considerations, as Mary Sengstock and Melanie Hwalek point out. Due to the rapid developmental changes in children and youth, it is difficult to evaluate whether an observed change in youth results from the program or from natural development. Also, due to youth’s developmental changes, evaluation instruments need to be geared to each specific age group targeted, which can mean several age-appropriate instruments for a single program. Also, most youth programs strive for multiple goals, such as increased self-esteem, fostering a service ethic and exposure to career opportunities. Such multiple-goal programs need evaluations that capture progress toward each goal. Confidentiality and guardian consent are also issues to consider when evaluating youth programs (Sengstock and Hwalek 1999).

### TYPES OF EVALUATION

Many types of evaluation exist which can be used in service-learning programming. Evaluations can use qualitative or quantitative methods, depending on the nature of the program goals

addressed in the evaluation. The use of qualitative research methods are specifically recommended for service-learning because its outcomes are primarily qualitative, such as increased self-esteem, a better understanding of community issues, interest to be a self-directed learner, etc. (Neal, Shumer and Gorak 1994).

Beyond these two broad approaches to research, four major categories of evaluation for social service programs include: outcome-based or impact evaluation, which evaluates the end products or results of a program; performance monitoring, which analyzes an organization's internal systems; process evaluation, which focuses on the practices and operations of a program; and cost evaluation, which assesses cost-benefit relationships of a program (Harrell 1996).

Shumer, and others such as the Points of Light Foundation, National Youth and Leadership Council and Service Learning 2000 Center, view evaluation as more than simply a summative tool to gauge impact at the end of a project. "(Evaluation) does not sit reflectively at the end of the program; it is a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly process which improves the level of both service and learning"(Shumer 1997).

Given the research on evaluation compiled above, the following questions are addressed in this study's profiles of community-based programs:

- What types of evaluation do programs use?
- What do aspects of programming and impact do programs try to evaluate?

## **the benefits of service-learning**

Service-learning has been supported by numerous teachers, youth leaders and researchers as a powerful tool to engage youth in mutually beneficial service and learning activities. Youth can become more interested in the life-long learning process, further understand civic responsibility, use their skills and knowledge from school in practical ways, develop stronger social and communication skills, and gain experience as leaders and team members. Community-based organizations also benefit from the influx of new ideas and energy from youth, new partnerships with other groups and the fostering of a service ethic among its community members. Communities in general benefit from the engagement of all of its members, the service that is provided and the active participation in identifying and addressing community needs.

In addition to the plethora of personal accounts and success stories about service-learning that exist in documents, conversations and people's hearts, some hard research data also demonstrates the benefits of service-learning. As researcher Kay Bailey points out, few formal studies focus on the impact and benefits of service-learning in community-based settings exist (1997). Bailey's own research on youth involved in community-based organizations during the summer of 1997 and some studies completed by the Search Institute cannot compare to the numerous findings in the academic realm. However, due to schools typical partnering with agencies and community-based organizations to implement service-learning programs, some studies (such as those below) include both school-based and community-based programs.

### **BENEFITS TO YOUTH**

#### **civic responsibility**

- A study by Kay Bailey, a student at Louisiana State University, of 338 youth in grades 5 through 12 who completed a summer of service with a community-based organization indicated that service-learning experiences foster youth to continue their service to the community. In the study, 50% of youth stated they were "very likely" and 26% stated they were "likely" to serve in their community after their summer experience. Most youth (74%) also indicated they learned about community problems and most (73%) developed pride in their community (1997).

- The Brandeis University evaluation of Learn and Serve America Programs also showed positive, statistically significant impacts on three areas of civic attitudes: (1) acceptance of cultural diversity; (2) service leadership, which is defined as “the degree to which students feel they are aware of needs in a community, are able to develop and implement a service project, and are committed to service now and later in life;” and (3) civic attitudes, which is defined as “a measure that combines measures of service leadership, acceptance of diversity, and personal and social responsibility” (Melchoir 1998).
- In a recent Department of Education study of public high schools’ community service and service-learning opportunities, schools listed civic responsibility as their primary motives for encouraging student involvement in such activities. The top four reasons for encouraging students to participate in service-learning were “to help students become more active members of the community” (53%), “to increase student knowledge and understanding of the community” (51%), “to meet real community needs and/or foster relationships between the school and surrounding community” (48%), “to encourage student altruism or caring for others” (46%) (U.S. Department of Education 1999b).

### **academic/school performance**

- Daniel Conrad and Diane Hedin report that the strongest results in increased academic gains appears in peer tutoring and teaching younger youth; youths’ ability to solve problems increased among those involved in community service (1987, 1989).
- In the 1998 Brandeis University national evaluation of Learn and Serve America Programs, positive, statistically significant impacts were evident in school engagement and less significant yet positive impacts were made on participants’ educational attitudes (Melchoir 1998).

### **personal and social growth**

- Newmann and Rutter found that students in community service activities increased their sense of social competence in communicating with groups and persuading older people to take them seriously (1983).
- Luchs found that students involved in service-learning and other experiential education activities increased in positive attitudes toward others, and had higher self-esteem than those not involved in such activities (1981).

### **reducing/preventing risky behavior**

- In a 1992 survey, the Search Institute found that youth in grades six through twelve who participated in at least one hour of service a week are almost half as likely to participate in risky behavior (Billing and Kraft 1997).
- A Brandeis University study showed significant positive impacts on arrests and teenage pregnancy among middle school youth and a marginally significant impact on the participants collectively. “The fact that there was an impact on two risk measures for middle school students suggests that involvement in well-designed service-learning may play a role in reducing some risk behaviors among younger students” (Melchoir 1998).

## **BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES**

A statewide study of school-based service-learning programs in California showed:

- “Service-Learning fostered positive changes in community views of students and their schools. Positive changes in community perceptions of students and their schools promoted increased community involvement in and support for schools.”
- “Service-learning activities met real community needs and generated increased community demand for student service” (RRP International 1998).

In a Brandeis University study of Learn and Serve America programs:

- “97% of the agencies indicated that they would pay at least minimum wage for the work being done, and 96% reported that they would use participants from the program again.”

- “90% of the agencies indicated that the Learn and Serve participants had helped the agency improve their services to clients and the community, and 68% said the use of the participants had increased the agency’s capacity to take on new projects.”
- “56% said that participating in the program had produced new relationships with public schools.”
- “82% reported that the Learn and Serve program had helped to build a more positive attitude toward youth in the community” (Melchoir 1998).

## CHAPTER 3

# filling the out-of-school time need:

## COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS USING SERVICE-LEARNING AS A STRATEGY

*“The time has come to recognize community organizations committed to youth.”*

– Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, in *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Out-of-School Hours*, 1994

Given the need for out-of-school time programming, community-based organizations can address community needs by engaging youth in activities during the non-school hours. These organizations can further enhance their efforts and communities by using service-learning as a strategy for such out-of-school activities and programs. In this approach, youth are viewed as resources to the community by addressing needs through service projects and developing their civic responsibility for immediate and future efforts. At the same time, the community is viewed as a resource to youth by offering real, practical opportunities to apply new skills, interact with diverse groups and learn from others. When youth and community-based organizations join efforts during the non-school hours using service-learning, youth and communities are helping each other.

### why community-based organizations?

#### **CBOs HAVE EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS**

For some time, community-based organizations have been sponsoring, administering and supporting various out-of-school time activities for youth. For decades, national nonprofit organizations have offered local programs such as 4-H Councils, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, YMCAs, Camp Fire Councils, Boys and Girls Clubs and others. Numerous other community-based organizations, including faith-based groups, have provided structured activities for youth ranging from sewing classes to ministry clubs to environmental activist groups. More recently due to various legislative, policy and special interest efforts, public agencies have begun to offer structured youth programs during non-school hours such as city libraries, public schools, park and recreation departments, and police departments.

Despite this history and breadth of programs, few studies documenting the impact of such programs exist. More recent efforts have contributed to this research, demonstrating some of the positive impacts on youth that community-based organizations have witnessed for years. “A decade of research looking into the contributions of community youth-based organizations in challenging settings provides evidence that community – in the form of the organizations and activities it supports – can help youth beat the odds associated with gaps in institutional resources,” states Milbrey McLaughlin’s report on the role of communities in youth development (1999). For ten years, McLaughlin and her colleagues examined approximately 120 youth-based organizations from 34 different cities and spoke with more than 1,000 youth to discover what youth defined as “effective” community programs during non-school hours. McLaughlin states that the greatest finding from this study is “the compelling evidence from the experiences of these youth that CBOs can play a critical role in meeting the needs of today’s young people.” Community-based organizations offer a way for engaging youth that can significantly and positively impact youths’ skills, attitudes and experiences, according to the study.

McLaughlin’s study found that community youth-based organizations can contribute to youth achieving higher academic success, enhancing self-confidence and optimism and increasing their civic responsibility (see Table IX. on next page). Involvement in community-based programs help youth achieve more in school, see themselves more likely to graduate high school and go to college, and view themselves as able to achieve positive goals in the future. Participation also increas-

es their acknowledgement of the community’s role in their positive development and their intentions to help “give back” by providing similar opportunities for other youth. In addition to these results, following up with some youth researchers found the majority contacted a decade later were employed and engaged in their communities, with some owning their own businesses, some college graduates, and some parents. Many of these people, now in their 20s, point to community-based programs as critical in helping them achieve the successes they now experience. As McLaughlin states, “These CBOs provide community sanctuaries and supports that enable youth to imagine positive paths and embark on them. These community organizations are learning environments that boost the success of many youth in school, but just as important, teach youth many life skills – without which academic success would mean little” (1999).

<p><b>TABLE IX.</b>  <b>Categories of Youth Achievements related to their Involvement in CBOs’ Programs:</b></p> <p><b>ACADEMIC</b>          Compared to statistics about American youth generally, those in the study were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26% more likely to report receiving recognition for good grades</li> <li>• 20% more likely to rate their chances of graduating from high school as “very high”</li> <li>• 20% more likely to rate the likelihood of going to college as “very high”</li> </ul> <p><b>SELF-CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM</b>          Compared to statistics about American youth generally, those in the study were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significantly more likely to report feeling good about themselves</li> <li>• significantly more likely to indicate high levels of self-efficacy</li> <li>• 8% more likely to “strongly agree” that they are persons of worth; those with high levels of participation in CBOs were almost 15% more likely to view themselves as worthy persons</li> <li>• significantly more likely to report higher levels of personal agency and effectiveness</li> <li>• those with high levels of participation in community service as part of CBO programs are twice as likely to “strongly agree” that they feel positively about themselves and nearly two and a half times more likely to “strongly disagree” that they lack enough control over their lives</li> </ul> <p><b>CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY</b>          Compared to statistics about American youth generally, those in the study were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more than two and a half times more likely to think it is “very important” to do community service or to volunteer</li> <li>• those with high levels of participation in community service as part of CBO programs, are eight times more likely to respond that it is very important to get involved with the community</li> </ul> <p>Source: Milbrey McLaughlin, 1999, <i>Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development</i>. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.</p>
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While McLaughlin’s research encompassed a broad spectrum of community-based organizations, previous research on specifically youth-serving community organizations has produced evidence of positive youth development. A 1999 study of Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s after-school and summer academic enrichment program for low-achieving students, Project Learn, showed an 11 % increase in its participants’ overall grade point average and the fostering of participants as self-directed learners (Savage 1999). The RespecTeen’s *Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth* report states that on average, 46% of youth view involvement in some forms of structured activity, through a religious group, community-based organization or school, for at least 2 hours a week as a “community strength.” In addition, in the “least healthy” communities, only 39% of youth viewed this factor as a strength, while 55% of youth in the “healthiest” communities saw this as a strength. Dr.

Dale Blyth of the Search Institute, who prepared the report for RespecTeen, interpreted this statistically significant difference (as well as that found between three other identified strengths) to mean that “healthy communities are most distinguished by their ability to provide and involve young people in meaningful experiences,” such as structured activities (Blyth 1991).

### **CBOS HAVE QUALITIES SUITED FOR SUCH PROGRAMS**

Many community-based organizations encompass the flexibility, partnerships, community support, and drive to engage youth in their mission, making them ideal sponsors of out-of-school time programs. Community-based organizations often possess flexibility in terms of programming and staffing. Such organizations are designed to mold to community needs and are usually not bound by many public policies and regulations, unlike schools, and some national, state and local government agencies. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development stresses the value of community-based organizations’ partners by stating, “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 adolescents” (1994). Since community-based organizations are in the business of meeting community needs, such organizations are usually well-rooted in their community and able to draw on support from community members. This broad and locally-based infrastructure can be advantageous to building relationships, garnering support and bridging segment of the community for non-school activities. As Jeff Claus and Curtis Ogden state, “Community-based organizations often occupy positions in their communities that allow them a unique perspective and a capacity for guiding youth in community exploration, critical reflection, and the pursuit of community/social change” (1999). Finally, many community-based organizations feel they need to engage youth in their efforts in order to have sustainable and inclusive benefits. As Karen Pittman points out, all development – not just of youth, but also of economies, of communities and of civic action – is dependent on the involvement of youth (1996). She suggest that youth should be involved in all organizations that affect them, ranging from schools to city planning commissions to community-based organizations. Out-of-school activities and programs offer organizations a way to actively engage youth in their mission, both immediately and potentially in the future.

In addition to these qualities innate in most community-based organizations, the abundant number and variety of community-based organizations in communities across the nation also makes them prime vehicles for engaging youth in out-of-school time. Not every youth enjoys playing sports. Not every child feels safe or comfortable enough at school to stay there past dismissal. Not every teenager’s family can afford ballet or music lessons. But most communities have some form of a community-based organization that could engage youth in activities during non-school hours. The options are numerous when all community-based organizations in a community are considered – such as non-profit organizations, faith-based groups, local government agencies, service organizations, and other groups. Community-based organizations vary in their missions, size, staff, philosophy and programs, offering youth choices among a medley of options. McLaughlin’s study of community-based programs found that no one program type will suit youth, and that youth benefit from the ability to choose a program that appeals to them. She calls this feature of community-based groups “a necessary strength,” and states, “Opportunities for youth of different tastes, talents, and peer affiliations make up a menu of learning from which youth can choose” (1999).

The notion that this history of successful community-based youth programs and the described qualities of community-based groups illustrates the ability of community-based organizations to fulfill the need for youth programs during out-of-school time is not new. In 1994 the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development concluded, “The potential of community-based, extended school-day programs to meet the needs of American youth is yet unrealized and of great current interest” (1994). However, what is new is community-based organizations’ more prevalent appearance in the realm of out-of-school time programming, armed with service-learning as a strategy for engaging youth.

## **why are community-based organizations using service-learning as a strategy to engage youth during non-school hours?**

Community-based organizations may choose to use service-learning as a strategy for engaging youth during the non-school hours due to the following factors discussed below:

- Today's youth want to be engaged and connected to others, not occupied
- Public education is not satisfying communities
- To prevent youth from risky behavior
- To meet community needs

### **TODAY'S YOUTH WANT TO BE ENGAGED AND CONNECTED TO OTHERS, NOT OCCUPIED**

The youth of the current generations are very different from those who grew up only decades ago. Technology advances, modern family configurations and mobility, working parents, and changing demographics are not the only factors that distinguish today's youth from those of yesterday. As Patricia Hersch describes in her book *A Tribe Apart*, which traces the struggles adolescents face in daily life, "The most stunning change for adolescents today is their aloneness" (1998). Hersch describes the struggles, challenges and victories of these adolescents developing into young adults alone – isolated from their families, their communities and often their peers as a separate "tribe." Citing several supporting studies and research efforts, she asserts that such separation is not just a problem for families, but for communities. "The effects go beyond issues of rules and discipline to the idea exchanges between generations that do not occur, the conversations not held, the guidance and role modeling not taking place, the wisdom and traditions no longer filtering down inevitably" (1998). This unprecedented aloneness contributes to youths' need for engagement with others and their communities, rather than to be occupied during their non-school hours.

Many traditional youth programs, such as recreational activities or day care camps, that aim to keep youth occupied while they are not in school do not appear to be satisfying today's youth. These programs may have other goals, from academic enrichment to physical fitness, but they are traditionally designed to provide youth with activities, rather than to empower youth to be involved in determining their use of out-of-school time. This traditional motivation for such programs is still prevalent today, as illustrated in the U.S. Department of Education's *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids* publication which states, "First and foremost, after-school programs keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble" (1998). Although safety is, of course, a valuable motivation for out-of-school time programming, such a focus perpetuates the notion that youth need to be served or are the recipients of programming. This perspective on youth appears to be contributing to the failure of many traditional out-of-school programs to satisfy today's youth. Many youth are voting with their feet, as McLaughlin states, "Youth's unwillingness to get involved in the usual offerings bears witness to the low return on more conventional strategies" (1999). Youth Making A Change, a youth leadership program in San Francisco, uncovered evidence of youth programming failing to meet youths' needs in its 1997 survey of youth services and programs offered in the urban area. This youth-led evaluation also found that most programs were not participant-driven (Y-MAC 1997). This, among, other shortcomings, led the researchers to conclude that "many centers seem accountable to no one for providing services that match youth needs or ensuring that programming is of high quality."

Service-learning, as a youth development strategy, aims to bridge the gap between youth and others in their communities. In fact, many service-learning initiatives spur from this sense that "current U.S. society offers youth few opportunities to experience societal connectedness and social responsibility" (Youniss and Yates 1997). Stereotypes about youth as wild, out of control and problem creators can be broken down when communities witness the positive contributions youth can make through service-learning activities. In the same way, youth can enhance their perception of adults by working with them on such activities (Schine 1999).

Service-learning also capitalizes on youths' ability to take action and need to connect with their communities. According to the Prudential Youth Survey of more than 1,000 high school students in 1995, 95% of the teens said it is important to be involved in the community through volunteering time to community efforts (The Wirthlin Group 1995). This statement combined with six in ten students also saying the solutions to community problems lie in individual action rather than government action, seems to acknowledge the ability and need to view youth as resources in addressing community needs. As a U.S. Department of Education publication states, "By offering youth opportunities to help their peers, schools, and communities, alternative activity programs can communicate to youth that they are valued resources, can help them connect to society, and encourage pro-social behavior. By providing youth with an opportunity to connect with other people and to a larger purpose, these programs also help the community see the value of supporting young people, rather than simply seeing them as a problem" (U.S. Department of Education, *Beyond Prevention Curricula*).

It is also important to look at youth as resources, not only in terms of the community needs they can fulfill through service, but their own development that occurs through the service-learning process. As Curtis Ogden states, service-learning needs to "go beyond service" (1999). Without consciousness and reflective analysis of service, service-learning will not change our communities because it will not change our youth. As Ogden says, "Our emphasis should not only be on producing helpers but also on developing critical and creative thinkers and listeners" (1999). This balance of youth development and service can lead to social change by building strong, community-minded youth.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION IS NOT SATISFYING COMMUNITIES**

U.S. public education has failed to satisfy the general public over the past few decades. Numerous criticisms and reform efforts have flooded public opinion on education since *A Nation at Risk*, the 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, stated that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (1983). Statistics from many organizations have documented the problems facing public schools and the impacts experienced by students. U.S. students rank very low when compared to students in other industrialized nations, and our nation's dropout rate is one of the highest among industrialized nations (The Center for Strategic and International Studies 1992).

This inability of public schools to prepare our nation's youth with strong academic skills supports the use of service-learning in out-of-school time programs. Service-learning can provide valuable opportunities for youth to enhance their academic capabilities, as well as increase the skills, traits and motivation that contributes to higher academic success (see benefits on page 28).

In addition to offering needed academic types of learning, community-based programs using service-learning can provide opportunities for youth to gain life skills – from social competencies to job skills to an understanding of self and one's role in society. Based on more than two years of analyzing research, Honig, Kahne and McLaughlin state that youth organizations offer important learning for youth, beyond their tutoring and other academic enrichment activities. These scholars state that "by providing high quality youth development opportunities, (youth organizations) build in youth a broad range of academic and nonacademic competencies that youth need to succeed in school" (1999). In her call for schools and community-based organizations to collaborate in educating our youth, Della Hughes also validates that the learning that occurs in community-based programs during out-of-school time is needed. She states that the traditional view that in- and out-of school activities are unconnected is wrong and has fostered "false dichotomies" between the two activities such as that "between learning and fun." Hughes argues for more holistic experiences for youth with both schools and community-based organizations contributing. She says, "From John Dewey on, growing research and practice show that youth, if they are to be effective citizens in a democratic society, require a holistic education that prepares them cognitively, affectively, and socially" (1999).

The learning and development potential of service-learning has helped it enter many classrooms across the nation, sometimes giving people the false impression that it is solely an education reform method. Community-based programs using service-learning know it can be used effectively outside schools, and can produce different but equally worthy results. Based on Curtis Ogden's experience coordinating a program in New York for several years, Ogden describes the trend of shifting service-learning efforts into classrooms to the exclusion of community-based programs as "risky business." He warns problems such as "accountability structures, state curriculum mandates, insurance regulations, scheduling and faculty time" may alter youths' experiences when programs are moved to schools. Ogden asserts that service-learning has been introduced in many schools as a "carrot, to make the classroom more interesting, rather than a tool for social change. Community-based organizations often occupy positions in their communities that give them a unique ability to guide young people in a more holistic manner" (Ogden, 1999b). As Ogden also points out, validating the value of community-based service-learning does not reduce the importance of school-based efforts, nor exclude effective partnerships between school-based and community-based programs. However, these two types of programs are distinct.

### **TO PREVENT YOUTH FROM RISKY BEHAVIOR**

Out-of-school time programs have often been created to provide safe, supervised places for youth as a way to prevent juvenile delinquency and youth as victims of crime (see page 3). Community-based programs using service-learning can go a step beyond removing youth from such risks by helping them build the skills and competencies to alter their choice-making and involvement in risk-related behavior. Dr. Peter Benson of the Search Institute, states in a report for RespecTeen, "Students who engage in helping behavior on a weekly basis are shown in this study to be less likely than non-helpers to report risky behaviors." He also concludes that "promoting pro-social behavior is as important as preventing antisocial or health-comprising behavior," and that "pro-social behavior" may actually reduce risky choices (Benson 1991). Service-learning, which focuses on helping others and developing the youth involved, can help youth avoid risks throughout their lifetime, rather than until the after-school facility closes each day.

### **TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS**

Community-based organizations are charged with meeting the needs of the communities they serve. Most community-based organizations rely on community members to provide input on activities, initiatives and projects to ensure that the organization is indeed addressing the needs of those in the community. Most organizations also rely on volunteers from the community to guide, contribute and assist in implementing activities, both to complete tasks and to foster active citizenship. Community-based organizations can use service-learning as a way to involve youth in these ways. Youth can bolster the volunteer force and provide valuable perspectives on various activities and community issues.

## **what are the keys to success for CBOs using service-learning during out-of-school time?**

No checklist, set of standards, or cook-book recipe exists for creating a high quality community-based program to engage youth during out-of-school hours. There does exist many examples of success and stories of inspiration from community-based programs, which composes the majority of this publication (see pages 38–158 ). The programs included identify themselves as "successful" in terms of their individual communities, unique organizations and groups of youth participants. Although each program also identified inclusion of at least eight of the nine successful practices resulting from this research, their true measures of success lie in their ability to address local needs and utilize local resources – in particular, their youth.

## CHAPTER 4 INTRODUCTION

# profiles of success

This chapter focuses on examining the real-life applications of the research compiled through profiles of successful programs. The chapter will include the following:

- A.** Methodology for Identifying Programs to Survey and Profile
- B.** Survey Results: Trends of Community-based Organizations Using Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time Programs
- C.** Summary of Successful Practices for Community-based Organizations and Youth Using Service-Learning During Out-of-School Time
- D.** Index of Nine In-depth Program Profiles
- E.** Nine In-depth Program Profiles
  - Serving community needs: *HEART of OKC* (Oklahoma City, OK)
  - Identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives: Blackfeet Youth Initiative (Browning, MT)
  - Creating structured opportunities for reflection: Youth Service Opportunities Project (New York, NY)
  - Including youth voice and leadership: Youth Making a Change (San Francisco, CA)
  - Fostering civic responsibility: Students of Promise (Rockingham County, NC)
  - Evaluating the program and activities: Project YES (Oakland, CA)
  - Fostering positive human relationships: Discovery Leadership (Minneapolis, MN)
  - Building partnerships between youth, staff, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate: Team Oakland (Oakland, CA)
  - Providing accessible places and times for activities: Treehouse Children’s Museum (Ogden, UT)
- F.** Index of Eight Snapshot Program Profiles to Demonstrate the Diversity of Community-based Organizations Successfully Using Service-Learning
- G.** Eight Snapshot Program Profiles
  - YMCA Earth Service Corps
  - Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc.: ManaTEEN Club’s Youth Service Learning Council
  - Girl Scouts of Central Maryland: Harvest for the Hungry
  - Sunshine Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls
  - Washtucna 4-H: Bridging the Gap of Isolation
  - City of Decatur Recreation and Community Services Department: The 3:00 Project
  - Ohio-West Virginia YMCA
  - East Bay Institute for Urban Arts: The Pathways Project

## methodology for identifying programs to survey and profile

This national study of community-based organizations using service-learning as a strategy focused on answering the following major questions:

- What types of community-based organizations are using service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time?
- How do various types of community-based organizations use service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time?
- What practices, from the service-learning and out-of-school time research, do community-based programs use to successfully engage youth in service-learning activities during out-of-school time?

This study used a national scope to increase the demographic diversity of programs examined, in addition to including a wide variety of types of community-based organizations involved in service-learning. This study aims to demonstrate how a diverse mix of organizations with varying demographics and resources have engaged youth and communities in service-learning.

Since few instruments exist to specifically evaluate community-based organizations' service-learning activities during out-of-school time, this study relied primarily on programs' self-reported successes. Given these circumstances, this study uses program profiles to highlight the practices that individual programs deem as successful, unlike a comparative analysis of programs. Program directors completed surveys, evaluation and assessment documents were reviewed and program directors, staff and, in most cases, youth were interviewed about the effectiveness of practices used by programs. Due to individuals' varying perceptions and definitions of success, the programs are not measured by the same standards. Rather, each program is considered successful in the terms defined and experienced by those involved with the program.

The process for identifying community-based organizations using service-learning during out-of-school time included these steps:

1. identifying organizations that may include service-learning in non-school youth programs
2. surveying programs that may fit study qualifications
3. ranking qualifying programs and categorizing them by type of sponsoring community-based organization
4. contacting program directors, or equivalent staff, of high-ranking programs for an interview
5. reviewing program documents, interviewing program staff, youth and volunteers, as available, and visiting program sites when possible

The pool of community-based organizations surveyed was not representative of all such organizations involved in service-learning during out-of-school time. No comprehensive database of such organizations was available, so instead several national, statewide and regional organizations associated with service-learning, out-of-school time activities, youth development, youth service and other related fields were asked to identify programs that may fit the study's criteria. Obstacles that may have excluded some organizations from the pool of programs include: a) language barriers due to some organizations not identifying themselves as involved in "service-learning," "service" or "learning," despite their use of service-learning practices; b) program staffs' large workload and time constraints which excluded them from returning surveys or scheduling an interview; and c) programs' unwillingness to share practices and program information with the author.

The criteria for a program to qualify in the study was:

- a. Program must be at least one year old (established before fall 1998).
- b. Program offered service-learning in out-of-school time to youth between the ages of 5 and 18.
- c. Program involved a community-based organization as a fiscal or administrative sponsor.

The following are the groups that responded to the researcher’s request and the types of programs they identified as possibly qualifying for the study:

**NATIONAL POOL**

- Corporation for National Service’s AmeriCorps\*State/National, AmeriCorps\*National Direct, and AmeriCorps\*VISTA grantees involved in service-learning
- Points of Light Foundation’s affiliated volunteer centers involved in service-learning
- YMCA of the USA’s branches involved in service-learning
- Camp Fire for Boys and Girls’ councils involved in service-learning
- Girl Scouts of the USA’s councils involved in service-learning
- National 4-H Council’s Bridging the Gap of Isolation grantees using service-learning
- National Dropout Prevention Center grantees involved in service-learning
- Earth Force’s community-based programs
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service affiliates involved in youth service
- Science and Technology Centers Youth ALIVE! grantees involved in service-learning

**STATE POOL**

- state commissions and grant-making entities administering Community-Based Learn and Serve America grants
- Youth Service California’s YouthCAN fellows’ projects
- Maryland Service Funding Collaborative community-based grantees

**REGIONAL POOL: SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

- Community Network for Youth Development’s participants at trainings focused on incorporating learning components in youth programs

A total of 193 surveys, of 461 mailed to program directors, were returned for a 42% return rate. These surveys indicated that 97 programs qualified for the study. Qualifying programs were rated on their responses and 50 programs scored equal to or higher than the average score. Five programs devoting 25% or less of their efforts to out-of-school activities and/or using service-learning less than weekly were removed from the study. The remaining 45 programs were categorized by the type of sponsoring organizations, due to the goal of demonstrating the various types of community organizations using service-learning. The highest ranking programs in each category (non-profit organizations, local or state government agencies, faith-based groups, tribal organizations) were contacted.

<b>CATEGORIES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>QUANTITY</b>
non-profit organizations	39
local or state government agencies	3
faith-based groups	2
tribal organizations	1

A total of 38 programs were contacted to verify qualification for the study and willingness to participate in the study. The nine programs profiled emerged as those most capable to provide information (both through interviews and program documents), and those representing geographic, programmatic and target audience diversity. In addition to surveys, an average of six interviews with program administrators, staff, youth and adult volunteers were conducted for each profiled

program. Program documents, such as reports, public outreach and training materials, and site visits were also used (when feasible) to create the profiles.

These nine programs were profiled to discover which of the service-learning practices and out-of-school time quality standards they shared. Each program was examined to identify its use of fifteen service-learning practices, derived from the eight definitions used in Table II (see pages 9–10). The three out-of-school time quality standards identified by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, listed on page 4, were also used. Each program selected to be profiled used at least eight of the following nine practices, and each excelled in one practice as listed below:

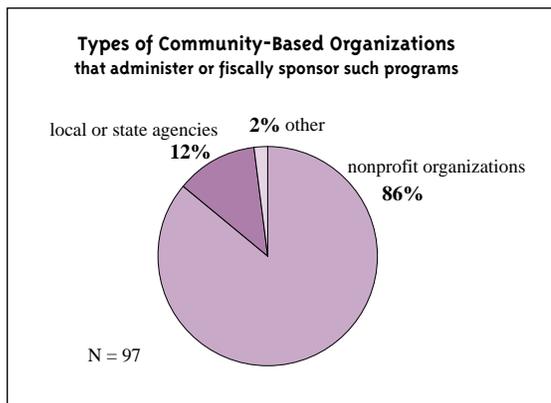
- Serving a community need: *HEART of OKC* (Oklahoma City, OK)
- Identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives: Blackfeet Youth Initiative (Browning, MT)
- Creating structured opportunities for reflection: Youth Service Opportunities Project (New York, NY)
- Including youth voice and leadership: Youth Making a Change (San Francisco, CA)
- Fostering civic responsibility: Students of Promise (Rockingham County, NC)
- Evaluating the program and activities: Project YES (Oakland, CA)
- Fostering positive human relationships: Discovery Leadership (Minneapolis, MN)
- Building partnerships between youth, staff, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate: Team Oakland (Oakland, CA)
- Providing accessible places and times for activities: Treehouse Children's Museum (Ogden, UT)

# survey results:

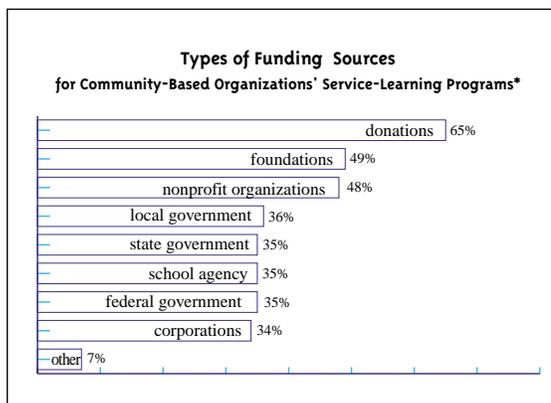
## TRENDS OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS USING SERVICE-LEARNING IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

A survey was mailed to 461 programs across the nation for this study. From that pool of youth programs, 193 programs responded for a 42% response rate. A total of 97 programs met all of the study's criteria. The following trends are based on the self-reported data from those 97 programs.

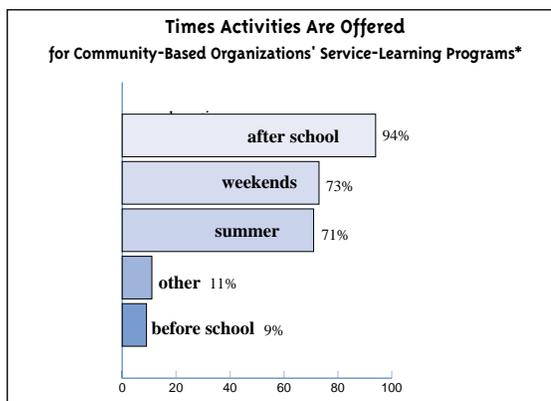
### community-based organization demographics



- Nonprofit organizations are the most common type of community-based organizations to sponsor youth programs using service-learning during out-of-school time.
- Most programs are offered in urban and rural areas (55% urban, 41% rural, 12% suburban).



- Most programs depend on donations and grants for funding; most programs depend on several local and non-local sources of funding.

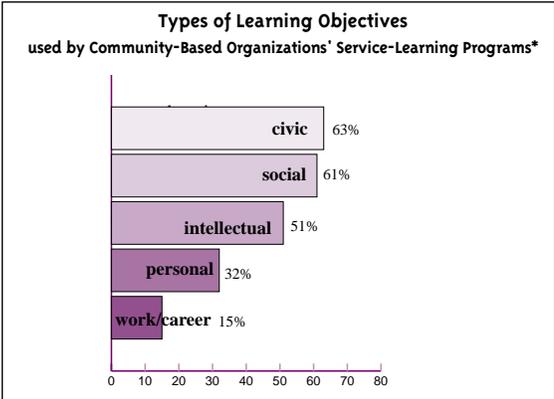


- More programs target older youth, especially high-school-age youth.
- Programs' target age group\*
- |                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| high school (ages 14-18)     | 71% |
| junior high (ages 10-13)     | 67% |
| middle/elementary (ages 5-9) | 41% |

- Most programs operate during several out-of-school time periods; almost all programs operate after school and most during weekends and summers.

\*respondents could select more than one response

# service-learning practices



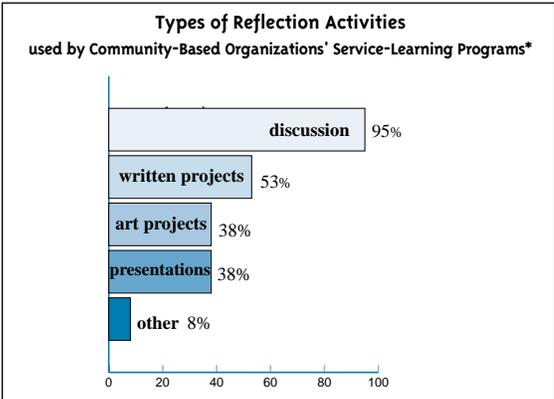
- Most programs try to convey civic and social types of learning.
- The majority of programs use service-learning at least once a week (37% use it daily, 18% use it two to three times a week, and 24% use it weekly).

- Most programs (85%) do not target one issue area for service activities.

Issue areas targeted by programs\*

education	77%
human needs	76%
environment	67%
public safety	25%

- Youth surveys are the most frequently (41%) used method of assessing youth learning.



- Most programs use several different types of activities for reflection; most programs use discussion for reflection.

- Reflection occurs most frequently after the service experience and occurs sometimes before or during the service experience.

- Most programs operating during out-of school time also offer activities during school time (65%) and partner with schools frequently.

\*respondents could select more than one response

## summary of successful practices FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS & YOUTH USING SERVICE-LEARNING DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

Much like painting, creating community-based service-learning activities for and with youth is a process. For an artist, the foundation is a sketch that becomes a painting as color is added. Three necessities are required to create a sketch – paper, a pencil and a subject. For CBOs, the foundation is service-learning that becomes a way for communities and youth to help each other. Three necessities are required for service-learning – service, learning and reflection. The sketch becomes a painting as layers of color are added, in the same way adding successful practices enhances service-learning a community-based youth program. Like art, each community-based service-learning activity is unique. However, ultimately we are all striving to create a masterpiece that appeals to our audience, compliments our setting, maximizes our resources and inspires others.



**A PAINTING** = community-based service-learning during out-of-school time (OST)

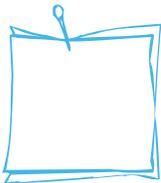
**PENCIL SKETCH ON PAPER** = necessary service-learning practices

**WARM COLORS** = community-based service-learning practices

**COOL COLORS** = out-of-school time practices

Youth working with nine community-based organizations successfully used at least eight of the following nine practices in creating service-learning activities after school, on weekends and during school breaks.

### sketching the foundation of a painting: NECESSARY SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICES & EXAMPLES



**THE PAPER:** Serving a community need.

Youth and staff identify community needs and assets, as well as possible ways to address needs. From the beginning, in *HEART of OKC's* Youth and Community project in Oklahoma adult and youth task forces surveyed and interviewed adults and youth to assess the needs of youth in the neighborhood. Participants assess needs each year to determine new service activities.



**THE SUBJECT:** Identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives.

Create a process for staff and youth to identify intentional learning objectives and tools to help those objectives guide activities. The Blackfeet Youth Initiative program in Montana trains and provides time for staff and youth volunteers to use a lesson plan framework to identify the learning objectives of each service-learning activity.



**THE PENCIL:** Creating structured opportunities for reflection.

Use various types of reflection structured into activities before, during and after service experiences. In New York, the Youth Services Opportunities Project uses reflection before service activities to assess youths' existing attitudes toward the hungry and homeless, during service to help them process their service experiences, and after to apply their experiences to their lives. The program uses written, oral, visual, group and individual activities to appeal to different styles of processing.

## adding warm hues of color: COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING PRACTICES AND EXAMPLES



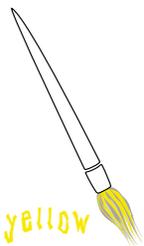
**RED:** Including youth voice and leadership.

Embrace and wholly support youth voice and leadership. The Youth Making A Change program in California places most decision-making power in the hands of youth participants, with guidance, support and training from adult staff. Youth interview and hire their members, enforce group norms, identify projects to work on, and plan and facilitate meetings.



**ORANGE:** Fostering civic responsibility.

Foster participants' sense of civic responsibility by helping them analyze the impact of their individual service, emphasizing civic responsibility in learning objectives and creating an appropriate length of time for service. In the Students of Promise program in North Carolina, staff and youth help each other identify how they individually affect the youth they mentor by sharing mentees' academic improvement reports and discussing changes in the mentees' attitudes and behaviors. In training sessions for youth volunteers, speakers discuss civic responsibility. Youth volunteers commit to serve twice a month or more, which allows service to be an ongoing activity in their lives without excluding time for other responsibilities and interests.



**YELLOW:** Evaluating the program and activities.

Create an evaluation plan to improve the program design and assess the impact of service-learning activities. A California program, Project YES, uses an outside evaluator to capture the program's positive impacts on youth. The evaluation uses information from youth, staff and schools, and helps guide the program's structure, as well as document its benefits.

## adding cold hues of color: OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PRACTICES AND EXAMPLES



**GREEN:** Fostering positive human relationships.

Help foster meaningful relationships among youth, staff and others by clarifying roles and responsibilities, providing modeling and guidance on appropriate ways to interact, and maintaining a high adult-youth ratio. In Minnesota, the Discovery Leadership program holds an orientation for adult volunteers and provides a facilitator for each group to guide the activities and remind youth and volunteers of their roles. A high adult-youth ratio adds support and opportunities for more meaningful interaction between youth and adults. In New York City, the Youth Services Opportunities Project uses program staff and adult volunteers to provide small group experiences that can cater to one-on-one discussions and ample contact with adult leaders.



**BLUE:** Building partnerships between youth, staff, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate.

Approach potential partners with opportunities to meet their goals through mutual collaboration. In California, the Team Oakland program identifies common threads in its mission and those of the numerous organizations it partners with, identifying how collaboration can meet each group's goals.

Collaborate and build partnerships with other groups with sustainability in mind. The Youth Making A Change program in California identifies potential collaborators in the initial stages of each effort and begins planning for sustainability for each project.



**VIOLET:** Providing accessible places and times for activities.

Create an easily accessible environment for activities that evokes a sense of ownership among youth. The Treehouse Children’s Museum in Utah asks youth for ideas and assistance in creating new exhibits and decorations, which helps the environment reflect the interests of youth. Create a schedule that accounts for the demands on youth and allows them to be involved for more than one year. In North Carolina, the Students of Promise program allows youth to create their own schedule within a time frame, so they can plan around extracurricular activities, jobs, homework and other duties. The program also recruits sophomore and juniors so they can be involved for consecutive years.

## index of in-depth program profiles

community-based organization	Heart of OKC	Blackfeet Youth Initiative (BYI)	Youth Services Opportunity Project	Youth Making a Change (Y-MAC)	Students of Promise	Project YES	Discovery Leadership	Team Oakland	Treehouse Children's Museum
<b>highlight</b>	service meets community needs	intentional learning objectives	opportunities for reflection	youth voice and leadership	fosters civic responsibility	evaluation	meaningful human relationships	partnerships	accessible places & times
<b>location</b>	urban	rural	urban	urban	rural	urban	urban	urban	urban/suburban
<b>ages</b>	8 to adult	10-12; 14-18	12 to adults	14-17	14-18	5-18	9-14	15-25	8-18
<b>times program offered:</b> (before school) (during school) (after school) (weekends) (holidays) (summer)	•after school •weekends •holidays •summer	•after school •weekends •summer	•before school •during school •after school •weekends •holidays •summer	•after school •weekends •holidays •summer	•after school	•after school •weekends •summer	•after school •weekends •summer	•after school •weekends •summer	•during school •after school •weekends •holidays •summer
<b>frequency of service-learning activities</b>	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities	almost all activities
<b>primary service type:</b> (human needs) (education) (environment) (public safety)	•human needs	•education	•human needs	•human needs	•education	•environment	•human needs	•environment	•education
<b>CBO type</b>	youth development, prevention	youth development, tribal government	faith-based organization	youth development	county agency	conservation corps, youth development	youth development	city agency, youth employment	nonprofit museum
<b>year began using service-learning</b>	1996	1996	1983	1991	1998	1989	1995	1994	1992
<b>annual number of youth involved</b>	3,000	20-30 after school, 150 summer	1,300	165	145	1,200	112	120	350
<b>program staff size</b>	1	11-17	23	4	13	15	5	3	2
<b>annual budget</b>	\$7,000	\$205,000	\$368,000	\$100,000	\$14,397	\$850,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$30,000

**PROFILE |**

# servicing community needs

*“Step by step, we changed the way the whole community looks at youth and now they focus more on youth activities. . . I don’t work for the community. I work with them. They support whatever we believe or whatever we plan.”*

– Dong Bui, Community Coordinator for *HEART of OKC* Project

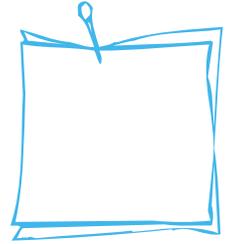
**Youth and Community Partnership: This neighborhood-based series of service-learning activities were developed by the *HEART of OKC* (Healthy, Empowered And Responsible Teens of Oklahoma City)**

Based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma serving the neighborhood surrounding Northwest 23rd Street & North Classen Boulevard.

<b>AGES</b>	8 to adults
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	at least 3,000 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school, weekends, school holidays, summers
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	The mission of the <i>HEART of OKC</i> Project is to change the community’s perception of youth in central Oklahoma city neighborhoods from a deficit-focus to an “asset-building” focus that promotes positive youth development as an overarching prevention strategy, in school and community settings. The Youth and Community Partnership activities serve the overall mission by promoting one of the <i>HEART of OKC’s</i> key assets, <i>Service to Others</i> .

**PROGRAM SUMMARY** Youth plan and implement activities that build the “9 Key Assets for a Healthy Teen,” as identified by youth and adults on task forces and youth focus groups. One of these key assets, *Service to Others*, caused the project to focus on service-learning as a prevention strategy. Through a neighborhood task force, youth work with community leaders to identify the changing needs of the community and design projects and programs that address those needs.

**SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION** *Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA)* is a statewide, non-profit, advocacy organization working to improve the lives of children and youth. The *HEART of OKC* is a project of OICA, that works with youth and adults in diverse, high needs inner city neighborhoods to identify prevention programs and promote youth development by creating partnerships among youth, parents, schools and community organizations. The service-learning project in the 23rd Street & Classen Boulevard neighborhood is just one activity of the *HEART of OKC*.



## human needs

**PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- urban
- elementary school
- middle school
- high school
- after school
- weekends
- school holidays
- summer
- youth development
- prevention
- established 1996

servicing community needs

## program background

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED** 1996

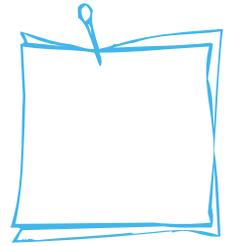
**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1997

**STAFF SIZE** community coordinator (F.T.), with many responsibilities in addition to service-learning activities; and many volunteers

**STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING** Staff attend National Service-Learning Conferences, Search Institute conferences, and other youth development trainings.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$7,000 in grant funding, in addition to many in-kind donations

**FUNDING SOURCES** competitive Learn and Serve America grant through the Oklahoma State Department of Education; in-kind contributions and organizational support from *HEART of OKC* Project; numerous financial and in-kind contributions provided by a variety of community groups, ranging from local businesses to a neighborhood newspaper



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Organizing cultural events — *example: Youth performed a traditional Vietnamese dance and hosted a Q/A session for faculty in a school district with a significant Vietnamese student population.*
- Facilitating parent-adolescent communication
- Providing youth leadership and personal enhancement opportunities
- Tutoring and mentoring younger youth
- Helping the elderly

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: academic achievement, aspiration for college
- Social: leadership development, team work, intergenerational relationships, awareness and respect for culture/heritage — *example: Youth learn some of the differences between Asian and American cultures, such as differing concepts of “citizenship.”*
- Civic: to serve others, youth as assets for solving community problems
- Personal: good health, planning and organization

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Videotape service activities as a discussion starter — *example: Staff show youth a videotape of their service activities and use it to prompt discussion of the experience.*
- Surveys through e-mail — *example: Staff send e-mail messages after a service activity asking questions such as, “What do you think the community should plan for you and other youth in the future?”*
- Impromptu discussion, discussion planned by staff, writing an essay reflecting on the whole year, written surveys/evaluations, interviews

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

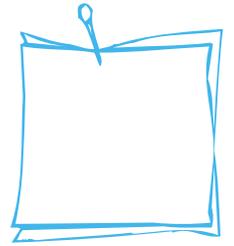
- Youth serve on an advisory board.
- Youth interview and survey other youth to assess community needs.
- Youth initiate, plan and organize various projects with guidance from adults.

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program fosters personal commitment to service and to the community through service projects and community needs assessment activities.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Two process evaluations are conducted, one by the Learn and Serve office of the Oklahoma State Department of Education and one by the Health Promotion Sciences Department at the College of Public Health, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Since many activities revolve around single events or short-term activities, in-depth outcome evaluation measures are not appropriate, says staff. The following types of evaluation tools are



used: youth surveys (What are the problems in the community? What specific assets are important for you to develop? What community resources are available for you?); parent surveys (What do parents think about the youth? What are parents' needs? What do youth need from the community?); and progress logs documenting the planning and implementation of activities.

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

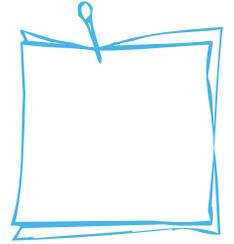
School district, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, local businesses, local newspaper, a church, a community college, youth service organizations, a faith-based nonprofit organization, state department of education's bi-lingual education department, Learn and Serve America, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 35 to 1.
- Youth work in teams and with adults on projects.

### **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — various places such as schools, churches, parks, meeting rooms at youth service organizations, Boy Scouts, faith-based groups and other such spaces
- Schedule — varies depending on project
- Youth time commitment — varies from activity to activity; from large, one-time events to on-going involvement



## how the program started

In late 1995, the *HEART of OKC* was selected as one of 13 community-based youth development/teen pregnancy prevention projects funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as part of a special national prevention initiative. During the first two years, the *HEART of OKC* conducted a needs and assets assessment in several neighborhoods where the teen birth rate was the highest and the racial and ethnic diversity was the greatest, including the 23rd Street and Classen Boulevard area, which has one of the highest concentrations of Vietnamese.

Two task forces were created in the neighborhood by the Community Coordinator Dong Bui – one for youth and one for adults. Bui explains that these groups could not meet as one, due to cultural considerations. “In the beginning I had to separate youth and adults because in my tradition, youth cannot say something they don’t like in front of adults. So, I knew if I put them together, the youth would not say anything,” says Bui. The *HEART of OKC* project also conducted 21 youth focus groups in the central city, including four in the 23rd Street and Classen Boulevard neighborhood, to identify what youth viewed as problems and assets in the community. The task force members also conducted interviews with community leaders and surveyed residents. After the needs assessment information was collected, the youth and adults identified the “9 Key Assets for a Healthy Teen,” along with specific program interventions. (See assets to the right).

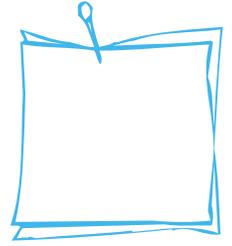
## narrative description

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Northwest 23rd Street & Classen Boulevard neighborhood received a large influx of Vietnamese immigrants, many of who arrived as refugees. Each new wave of immigrants faced similar challenges in adapting to their new country and assimilating into Oklahoma City life. Over the decades, families became “Americanized,” their children were born in the United States, and thus had limited knowledge of their parents’ homeland – Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia.

Despite shared ethnic roots, newly arrived immigrants and the Asian Americans who had settled earlier had to work on accepting and understanding each other beyond their differences in language, lifestyle and attitudes. This was particularly a struggle for the youth, which were brought together in school all day, in addition to sharing their neighborhoods. They had the same cultural heritage, but very different life experiences. A few of the youth had escaped from their country with their families, after spending time in communist prison camps. Others were born in the United States and only had experience living in a democratic society.

“These two groups of students didn’t associate together,” says Community Coordinator Dong Bui. “Some students said, ‘They don’t understand us because they only speak Vietnamese.’ And the others said the same thing but because they only speak English. But then they began to talk to each other and learn from each other.”

The *HEART of OKC* bridged the gap between these two groups by creating language classes that would mutually benefit them. During the school year, the Asian American youth tutored the Vietnamese-born youth in English. Then in the summer, two-hour classes were held Sunday afternoons in a local church for the Vietnamese-born youth to tutor the Asian American youth in Vietnamese. The newly arrived youth gained some skills needed to navigate their new home, and the natives learned more about their cultural heritage and a way to improve communication with their elders.



## 9 KEY ASSETS FOR A HEALTHY TEEN

- aspirations for the future
- constructive use of time
- respect for culture
- skills for meaningful employment
- decision-making skills to promote good health
- healthy family communication
- positive peer role model
- positive relationships with non-parent adults
- SERVICE TO OTHERS

— RESULTS OF THE *HEART OF OKC* PROJECT TASK FORCE

## how it works

The 25-member task force, now composed of youth and adults together, meets monthly to gauge the changing needs of the community and assess what services and programs are needed by youth and their families. The group uses surveys, with youth members distributing them to youth and the adult members giving them to parents, to identify the changing needs in the community.

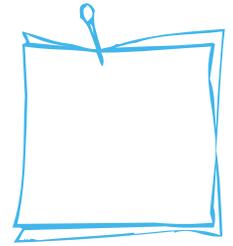
Most of the activities the group works on take several months of planning, for which the youth take most of the responsibility. For example, Mai Le, a former participant, scheduled, planned, publicized and implemented a self-defense workshop targeted for Vietnamese girls. Organizing the summer workshop, which was led by a youth in the group who knew Kung Fu, taught Le many lessons. "I learned how to build relationship skills, how to organize events, build my own self-esteem and how to get involved," says the 19-year-old now attending Oklahoma City Community College.

Due to the project's focus on a neighborhood with the highest concentration of Asian Americans in the city, most of its activities involve learning opportunities about culture, from planning annual cultural events such as the Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebration to helping coordinate an Asian Health Festival at the local college. Since most participants are bi-lingual, the project also serves as an educational resource for many organizations. One summer participants performed traditional dances and delivered a presentation on the Vietnamese culture for a group of new teachers in the school district. Participants have also assisted the health department in installing fire alarms in elderly residents' homes, translating to clarify the communication of fire hazards and providing other volunteers with a brief background on Vietnamese social norms.

Working with a predominantly immigrant community, the program also focuses on the issues that impact youth and families who are adjusting to life in a new country and society. Improving communication between youth and parents is an ongoing need, so the project has hosted workshops and written articles to increase dialogue about issues facing youth, such as health risks (teen pregnancy, etc.) and the importance of school. These parent-child communication efforts allow youth and parents to talk and learn about issues in a positive, supportive setting. "The parents can say anything about what they think about the youth growing up in this country, and the youth can say anything about what they think are conflicts with their parents," says Community Coordinator Dong Bui.

Many of the youth-adult problems stem from the two groups being raised in very different environments. As Le says, "The youth in Vietnam always listen to their parents. In America, sometimes you have to say no to your parents because you don't agree with them. They don't understand that."

The program has also coordinated a monthly youth section entitled "Trang Ban Tre" in the Vietnamese-language *Oklahoma Viet Bao* newspaper. This two-page section offers youth an opportunity to pose questions to others and for responses to be shared with all. For example, in the August 1999 issue, community members wrote in response to a question concerning whether a Vietnamese youth bound for college should live on campus or not. The youth's parents were against the idea of campus housing for fear that it would "corrupt" their child. The *HEART of OKC* plans to expand this activity, by having youth design, write and illustrate a booklet on youth, health, education and community issues that the youth identify as needing a more open forum for discussion.



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In addition to its focus on cultural understanding, many of the activities address intergenerational relationships. One 18-year-old task force member, Oahn Pham, says participating in the program has taught her how to communicate and better understand people older and younger than herself. “I taught last summer in a 21st Century Community Learning Center and had a lot of elementary students in my class. I didn’t know how to deal with them, but once I got to know them, I could reach them,” says the freshman at University of Oklahoma, who joined the program two years ago. Many youth tutor younger students in math, English or computers and lead activities such as tae-kwan-do and judo classes, traditional dance and chess at the summer program. “Also, working with elders at different activities gets me to understand their viewpoint on Vietnamese youth issues – and even helps me understand my own grandparents better,” says Pham.

Last year the program integrated senior citizens into their youth activities by co-hosting an internet workshop for elders on Make Difference Day in October. Several organizations joined in the event at Oklahoma City Community College, where youth and students used their Vietnamese language skills to set up e-mail accounts for the seniors and show them how to “surf the net” for sites related to health, Vietnamese culture, cooking and medical information. “When we had the internet workshop we could see three generations right there – the parents, the grandparents and the youth. We had three generations sitting down at one computer,” says Bui. “The youth learned that working with the elderly is fun. Before they thought the elderly were so old, that they don’t want to know about anything, that they don’t understand the youth. And then after working with them they are laughing together and the elderly invited them to lunch.”

Kim Doan, 15, said participating in the internet workshop helped her see the value of some of her classes in school. “I learned all about computers in school, so then at the workshop I could help the elderly learn about it, too,” she says. “That’s just one example of how I use what I learn to help in service projects.”

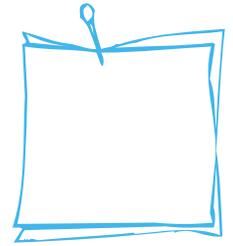
The project’s service-learning activities also include working with other ethnic communities throughout the year at events such as Christmas in April, OKC Beautiful Clean Up Day, and Habitat for Humanity house-building projects. These opportunities allow the participants to learn about different cultures and the similar struggles immigrant communities face in their adjustment to life in America.

Some youth participants, depending on scholarship funds, attend a summer leadership camp sponsored by the Vietnamese Culture & Science Association, with workshops such as *Becoming a Leader*, *Assimilation vs. Integration*, *Problem Solving*, and *Vietnamese Culture* offered. The *HEART of OKC* Project helped develop the agenda for this leadership program.

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- Cumulatively, the *HEART of OKC* project has tracked changes on community leaders’ perception of youth, the visibility of youth at major community events, and opportunities for youth leadership development that is linked with the service-learning experiences. Examples would include an increase in the number of youth involved in the planning and implementation of community events, an increase in the number of youth who are asked to participate as an integral part of major community events and programs, and an increase in the number of adults who attend youth-planned activities, programs, and workshops.



## LEARNING

- Outcomes such as an increase in the number of youth who assume visible leadership roles in planning and implementing service-learning activities throughout the community were demonstrated.

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“Service not only helps the community, but also benefits me as well. Through my involvement in service I have been an example for younger generations. It helps me in my self-confidence and I know lots more about teamwork. Also, helping with the traditional cultural events helps me keep my culture alive.”*

– Kim Doan, 15-year-old participant

*“Our biggest success is the way the adults look at the youth. Youth are not just a problem, they are our assets if we give them opportunities. Before, in my community, the youth thought the community was just for adults, not for them. Everything was planned by adults because people thought the youth were too young and didn’t know much. Adults thought they were the ones who needed to tell youth what to do. And now the adults have changed.”*

– Dong Bui, community coordinator

## what makes this program effective

- **PROGRAM STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY COMMUNITY NEEDS AND POSSIBLE WAYS TO ADDRESS NEEDS**

At the outset, adult and youth task forces surveyed and interviewed adults and youth to assess the needs of youth in the neighborhood.

These task forces created goals, or assets in youth, to work toward and guide the planning of activities. Youth and adults involved continue to assess needs regularly to gauge changing needs and direct activities.

- **ADDRESS AND INCORPORATE THE COMMUNITY’S ATTITUDES TOWARD YOUTH**

Knowing that the community viewed youth as problems or a population to serve, the program developed strategies to emphasize the assets of youth and how the community can foster those assets. The program framed its goals in terms of youth assets, hosted youth-adult communication workshops to initiate dialogue and break down barriers between the two groups, and publicized youths’ abilities and accomplishments to the community.

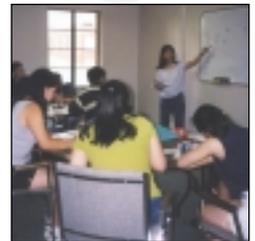
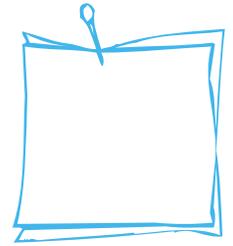
- **BUILDING ON PAST SUCCESSES TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE**

Community Coordinator Dong Bui says it took a long time to win the trust of parents and other adults in the community. “Before (the adults) were always really afraid that youth would pick up bad habits of Americans (by participating in the program which seemed foreign to them). But they are wrong,” says Bui. “They’ve learned something good.” Bui says the program builds on the positive, visible outcomes and its growing reputation, which helps garner support from the community and ease parents’ fears.

## challenges

- **INVOLVING A CONSTANTLY CHANGING COMMUNITY**

Each time the community gains new residents, it faces the same challenges it did when it started. “The Vietnamese people have always been divided, so when they come here they are always suspicious of others. It is very hard



for them to trust. They don't like to get involved, they just want to go work and put food on the table," says Community Coordinator Dong Bui about each wave of newcomers. To overcome this obstacle, the program continues outreach efforts focusing on previous program successes both parents and youth have experienced.

## contact information

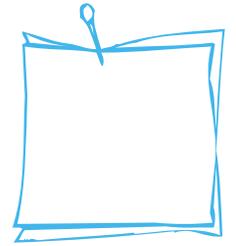
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(The following *HEART of OKC* Project staff contributed to this profile: Dong Bui, Community Coordinator; LaDonna Marshall, Community Liaison; and Sharon Rodine, Project Director.)

## applying lessons learned

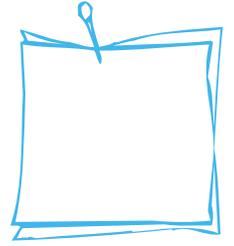
### HOW TO SERVE A COMMUNITY NEED

- *Envision the groups to be involved in the project or program.* Try to invite a diverse representation of stakeholders from the community. Consider age, ethnicity, geographical location and gender in terms of diversity. In the *HEART of OKC* project, youth and adults from the neighborhood, including community leaders and organizations, were included.
- *Take into account any clashes, uncomfortable feelings or cultural conflicts this diverse group might have.* Decide how the process can be inclusive while effectively representing all stakeholders. For instance, some Vietnamese youth feel uncomfortable complaining about circumstances in front of their elders. Due to this, the *HEART of OKC* organized two groups, one for youth and one for adults, so that all participants can contribute freely and without consequence.
- *The group should decide how to identify the needs of the community.* Take into consideration time, resource and manpower constraints. In *HEART of OKC*, task forces meetings were used with youth separated by age and gender to help youth feel comfortable addressing community problem and needs. Interviews with community leaders were used to get a broader scope of issues. Surveys were used to reach individuals outside organized groups.
- *Compile the needs identified in a way that fosters action.* *HEART of OKC's* task force pulled nine assets in youth from the needs identified as goals for the community to work on building.
- *Take action.* The task force in Oklahoma City applied for various funding opportunities and began implementing projects and activities.
- *Continually re-assess the needs of the community and adjust actions accordingly.* The *HEART of OKC* task force surveys the community at least once a year to identify new or changing needs and develops projects to reflect those needs.



## additional resources

- *Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose* by Barbara Lewis, Free Spirit Publishing. Available at (800) 735-7323.
- *The YMCA Service-Learning Guide: A Tool for Enriching the Member, the Participant, the YMCA and the Community* by YMCA of the USA, 2000. The Appendices contains step-by-step community resource mapping and project planning activities.
- Do Something Foundation at [www.do something.org](http://www.do something.org).



**PROFILE 2**

# identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives

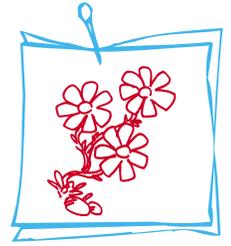
*“The lesson plans give everyone a better idea of what is supposed to happen. They help you think of the details and the motivation behind the activity all the way through it. It makes it easier to get the idea across to youth – whatever it is, from safety to cultural heritage.”*

– Buffy Hourigan, BYI counselor

## **Blackfeet Youth Initiative**

based in Browning, Montana serving the reservation population of about 8,600

<b>AGES</b>	10 to 12 and 14 to 18
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	20 to 30 in the after-school program and in the summer program; 150 in summer volunteer activities annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school, weekends, summer
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% – 100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROJECT</b>	To break down stereotypes and differences between Native Americans and non-Native Americans by building up youth leaders in service to the Blackfeet reservation.
<b>PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>	High school-age youth and national service members serve as mentors to help fourth- to sixth-grade youth plan after-school and summer service-learning activities. The youth identify community needs in each session and then work with mentors to create lesson plans incorporating learning, service and reflection. Mentors lead from four to ten youth divided into “society” groups through these activities, which revolve around the themes of leadership, prevention and culture.
<b>SPONSORING COMMUNITY-</b>	<i>Blackfeet Tribe</i>



## **education**

### **PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- rural
- elementary school
- middle school
- high school
- after school
- weekends
- summer
- youth development
- tribal government
- established 1996

intentional learning objectives

**BASED ORGANIZATION**

**program background**

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED** 1996

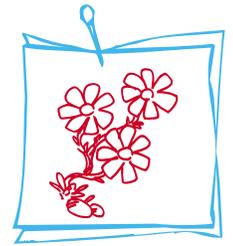
**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1997

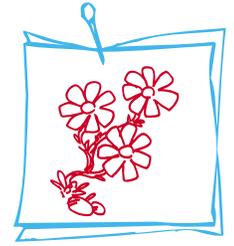
**STAFF SIZE** director (F.T.), community coordinator (F.T.), AmeriCorps Leader (F.T.), 2 America’s Promise Fellows (F.T.), 6 to 12 AmeriCorps members depending on season (P.T.)

**STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING** Senior staff train new staff in service-learning basics, reflection activities, how to write lesson plans and other related topics. The program has received training and technical assistance in service-learning through various grants.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$170,000 for the after-school program; \$35,000 for the summer program

**FUNDING SOURCES** foundations, nonprofit organizations, corporations, local government, donations, school agency, a Community-Based Learn and Serve America grant through the Close Up Foundation, AmeriCorps members (Education Award only), an AmeriCorps





## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Increasing awareness of Native American culture — *example: Youth created and painted a mural on the wall of a tribal office building that depicted symbols and scenes related to the Blackfeet culture.*
- Visiting with the elderly
- Beautifying the community through landscaping, removing litter and creating public art
- Promoting drug and alcohol abuse prevention

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: writing skills
- Social: leadership, public speaking, teamwork
- Citizenship: how to give back to the community
- Personal: anti-drug and alcohol awareness, cultural heritage — *example: Youth learn how their Native American identity and home affects their perspective on society, land use and other cultures.*

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Reflection games — *example: Youth throw a ball around and each person tells the group something they learned from the service project.*
- Question and answer sessions, writing newspaper articles about activities, group discussion, before and after drawings of projects, posters depicting what has been learned

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

- Youth serve on an advisory board.
- Youth identify needs, plan and organize various projects with guidance from adults.
- Youth counselors receive training in areas such as *Service, Role Models for Youth, Personal Development, Culture, and Professional Development.*

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

The program fosters a personal commitment to service and to the community through service projects. It also fosters an understanding of an individual's impact on the community by relating service to cultural pride and the well-being of the tribal community.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Staff evaluate the program and its impacts based on youth and parent feedback through surveys, as well as staff and national service members' observations. "We make sure we document everything we do, not only in terms of

hours of volunteers and service, but also in terms of learning, so the youth and the members are evaluated from a bunch of different perspectives,” says Program Director Susie Margolin.

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

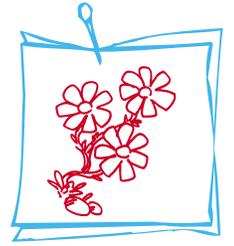
school district, Boys & Girls Club in Browning, immersion language school, participants’ families, echoing green, Americorps\*Education Award program, AmeriCorps\*Promise Fellows program, AmeriCorps\*Leaders program, the Close Up Foundation

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 6 to 1.
- Youth work in “society” groups, which allows them to connect with a small number of peers and a young adult counselor.

### **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — local elementary school and a community facility in a neighboring community
- Schedule — 3:35 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, with



monthly Saturday service projects during the school year; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday during the summer

- Youth time commitment — after-school program runs in two semesters for 8 weeks each; one summer camp in Browning from June to August, one summer camp in neighboring community for two weeks

## how the program started

In 1996, Susie Margolin, now director of BYI, and some community members started a summer camp program for fourth through sixth graders by generating volunteers and donations for the effort. “We were trying to create a cross-cultural program to meet a couple of needs: First, to bring together Indian and non-Indian young people because the history in our community is full of church groups coming in, doing service, taking their pictures and leaving. For our kids to learn about leadership, they had to go to Outward Bound or some outside program. Secondly, there was no summer camp,” says Margolin.

After the first summer, the program called Blackfeet Youth Initiative, received year-round funding from Youth Service America and echoing green, in addition to several AmeriCorps\*Education Award members for the following summer. After the summer of 1997, the program became a placement site for the Blackfeet Health and Safety Corps (an AmeriCorps program), which allowed the program to provide Saturday activities throughout the school year.

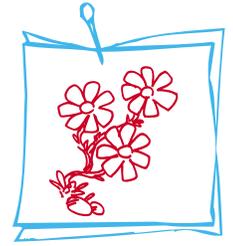
The program continued to grow and the next year the corpsmembers and a Learn and Serve America grant through the Close Up Foundation helped launch the after-school program. “That grant enabled us to hire a community coordinator and really switch our focus from community service to service-learning. Before our AmeriCorps members and mentors would create the themes for the kids and kids would do service. The grant through Close Up Foundation trained our staff, provided us with resources and enabled us to run an after-school program,” says Margolin.

Starting in fall 1999, the program used AmeriCorps\*Promise Fellows, an AmeriCorps\*Leader and AmeriCorps\*Education Award members to serve in the after-school and summer programs. Planning to expand further, the program submitted a proposal for full-time year-round AmeriCorps members.

## narrative description

The Blackfeet Reservation spans 1.5 million acres in northwest Montana, much of which is within the boundaries of Glacier National Park. The reservation is home to about 7,500 enrolled members of the Blackfeet Tribe and about 1,500 whites and other Native Americans. Schools, a Boys and Girls Club, a community pool and a youth center are some of the few structured positive resources for youth. Limited community service opportunities existed – until BYI was established. “There was no community service activities for kids when I was growing up,” says Carla Oscar, a life-long resident of the reservation and BYI former counselor. “There is still no other program that teaches youth to be community citizens and to take responsibility for their actions.”

Oscar says some programs have tried to deal with cross-cultural, service and community connection missions similar to those of BYI, but none have endured. “It is BYI that teaches youth what it means to be responsible in the community and shows them that their skills can be used for improving the community,” says Oscar



who first served as a Blackfeet Health and Safety Corps AmeriCorps member placed at BYI's after-school program in 1998-99. Oscar, an enrolled member of the tribe, now serves on BYI's Advisory Board while she pursues a graduate degree. "BYI is different from a lot of programs we have seen here," says Oscar. "It lasts a whole year, which really allows the youth involved to open up and to start really respecting one another. I saw the difference it made to the youth when they realized that (BYI) was not going away – that we were going to take an active part in their life."

Since it started, BYI has involved 30 to 50 youth in its on-going programs each year. These numbers may pale in comparison to other youth programs BYI competes with for funding, says Program Director Susie Margolin, but that does not concern her. "You just can't measure us against programs on the East Coast or anywhere else outside Indian Country. Service is so new to our community and it is such a different community culturally," says the Massachusetts native, who has lived in Browning since 1995. "What our kids do is a big deal and we need to be measured against their standards."

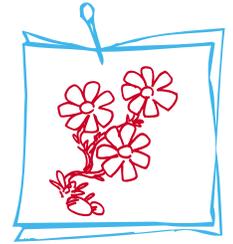
## how it works

BYI provides youth with cross-cultural experiences focusing on improving the reservation community through service-learning activities. Local fourth through sixth graders are mentored by high school-age youth, both from the community and from locations across the country, who serve as counselors. Those counselors that are 17 years of age or older and complete 900 hours of service are AmeriCorps members and are eligible for education awards. The middle school youth identify needs in their community they want to address and the counselors work in teams (one Native American and one non-Native American) to create lesson plans that address the identified community needs. In teams, or "societies," of four to ten youth, the cross-age and cross-cultural groups work through the learning, planning, service and reflection activities outlined in the lesson plans.

"The program is all about the kids making the decisions about what to do," says Tony Wagner, BYI's community coordinator. "We asked the kids to identify some needs in the community that they would like to work on. Then we try to get the kids to understand they not only learn in school, but that there are other things that are just as important in the world that they need to know. We are teaching these kids leadership skills and how to be a part of their community in a positive way."

Both the after-school and summer programs focus on three major themes which comprise the program's ever-growing and homemade curriculum entitled, "Leadership, Prevention and Culture." In previous years, BYI focused on providing community service, recreational and academic enrichment opportunities for youth. Community service was a separate component of the curriculum and youth were not as involved in the entire process. "In the past, we created lesson plans in five subjects with community service as one of those. Our mentors designed it for kids with the kids as recipients," says Wagner. In the current model, the high school and fourth- to sixth-grade youth have a larger role in the process. "At the end, the ultimate goal is to do community service projects through a service-learning process. From the beginning to the end they are always learning and they get to do the service at the end," says Wagner, whose children participate in the program.

Program Director Susie Margolin sees this as a natural progression. "Everything we do fits under the overarching themes of culture, prevention and leadership. We



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want the youth to be proud of who they are; prevention in terms of knowing how to say, 'No;' and leaders in sense of leadership styles and goal setting. We didn't separate out service, because service is the umbrella," says Margolin. "Any service can teach those three core issues, which is really what BYI is about – creating strong healthy, proud youth who want to make a difference."

With these intentions, BYI has created a system to help its teenage and young adult counselors reach the same goals. In addition to a week-long orientation training, BYI staff train counselors to write lesson plans for each activity. Prospective counselors are even sent examples of lesson plans and asked to write a mock one as part of their application to the program. After their initial training, counselors work in teams of two (one Native and one Non-Native American) to write the lesson plans which help them gear activities to the program's goals and the needs identified by the youth. Lesson plans include the goal of the activity, an outline of the step-by-step procedure, an example of the activity's desired outcome, needed supplies and reflection or concluding exercises. "The lesson plans give everyone a better idea of what is supposed to happen," says Buffy Hourigan, a counselor returning for her second summer camp with BYI. "They help you think of the details and the motivation behind the activity all the way through it. It makes it easier to get the idea across to the youth – whatever it is, from health and safety to cultural heritage."

Hourigan, a California native, explains that counselors use each Monday to write lesson plans in teams of two and then each team presents their lesson plan to the entire group. Throughout the week, counselors use the lesson plans they have created, as well as those created by others. One of Hourigan's favorite lesson plans from last year addressed the youths' desire to serve the elderly members of the community. Hourigan and a fellow counselor wrote a lesson plan for writing and producing a puppet show for a senior citizen home and the youths' grandparents. Through the activity the youth learned how to write a script, how to create puppets and how to interact with their elders through the activities planned for the two performances. "I remember one young boy from that activity, in particular," says Hourigan. "His grandparents were so proud of him, he had a huge smile on his face all day."

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*"BYI offers youth a relationship with a positive adult role model and a chance to do something positive in the community and get noticed for it. It deals with the negative parts of the community, such as alcoholism and drug use, in a positive way by pushing people to notice these issues and make a difference in people's lives."*

— Carla Oscar, BYI Advisory Board Member

*"BYI builds community leaders that will be a service to Browning now and in the future."*

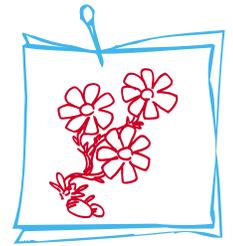
— Buffy Hourigan, BYI counselor

*"BYI is known in the community as the community service organization. People see us as the program that helps youth give back, not taking them out to play ball. We are working to develop their own skills and fulfill community needs."*

— Susie Margolin, BYI program director

## what makes this program effective

- **COUNSELORS AND STAFF ARE TRAINED TO USE A TOOL TO IDENTIFY AND FOSTER INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**



Staff train counselors to use a simple lesson plan format to map out activities for the younger youth. During orientation, lesson plans are explained and practiced. Old lesson plans are kept in a resource file for counselors and staff members provide assistance for creating and implementing them. Lesson plans are written by counselors to balance the interests and community needs identified by youth, as well as the goals of the program.

- **FOCUS ON QUALITY INTERACTION FOR YOUTH, NOT QUANTITY OF YOUTH REACHED**

“We see big corps and other types of programs, but that is not what we are about. Our kids are at different points in their lives, so sometimes they need us and sometimes they don’t. We let them know we will be here when they are ready. We focus on kids that we can make a quality difference with, not serving hundreds of kids,” says Program Director Susie Margolin.

## challenges

- **DIFFICULT TO FOSTER VOLUNTEERISM IN AN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED COMMUNITY**

“It is hard for local youth to volunteer. They expect compensation,” says Susie Margolin. “We have a 50 to 75 percent unemployment rate on the reservation, so money matters. We thought offering education awards would be an adequate incentive, but it is not money in someone’s pocket.” The program has applied for an AmeriCorps grant which would help provide a living stipend for members, as well as the education award.

## recommended resources

- *Intergroup Relations in the United States: Seven Promising Practices*, edited by Allison Smith and Sarita Ahuja, 1999, New York: The National Conference for Community and Justice. (Chapter One of this publication features BYI.)

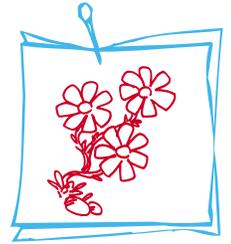
## contact information

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(406) 338-2748

## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO IDENTIFY AND FOSTER INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- *Create a “road map” to help staff and leaders guide youth to identified learning goals.* BYI counselors use a lesson plan form to outline their activities and to link each step to learning objectives. During the program, counselors can refer to the lesson plan to ensure they are on track and helping the youth learn about the identified objectives.
- *Try to balance the emphasis on service and learning, so that each informs and*

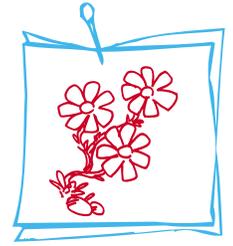


*strengthens the other.* Help youth focus on the process involved in planning and executing the project, as well as the intended result of the project. BYI counselors point out new skills and learning to youth as they go through each step of an activity.

- *Identify the different types of learning that can occur from the process of planning, doing and reflecting on the service.* BYI uses lesson plans to outline all of the steps or activities for a certain project to help them link each step to possible learning outcomes. Think of learning objectives in basic categories, such as intellectual (academics, issue areas), social (teamwork, communication), civic (active citizenship, roles of government and citizens), personal (goal setting, building positive character traits), and career/work (job skills, work ethic).
- *Find a way to document the learning that occurs.* Possible assessment tools are pre- and post-surveys asking youth about their attitudes and understanding, rating presentations to groups on topics, or demonstrating new skills. BYI uses several assessment methods, including counselors' observations of youth to gain a broad perspective on the learning.

### **additional resources**

- For curriculum ideas — The National Service Learning Clearinghouse lists various curriculum sources and suggestions in the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) page of their website's Resources section. Available at [www.nicsl.jaws.umn.edu](http://www.nicsl.jaws.umn.edu).
- For assessment ideas — *Service-Learning and Assessment: A Field Guide for Teachers* by the National Service-Learning and Assessment Study Group, October 1999. Available at [www.nicsl.jaws.umn.edu](http://www.nicsl.jaws.umn.edu) in pdf format.
- For program design considerations — "Project Learn: Making the After-school Hours Work for Boys & Girls Club Members" by Carter Savage, in *New Designs for Youth Development*, Fall 1999 issue. Available at [www.newdesigns.org/ND\\_99Fall/savage.html](http://www.newdesigns.org/ND_99Fall/savage.html)



**PROFILE 3**

# creating structured opportunities for reflection

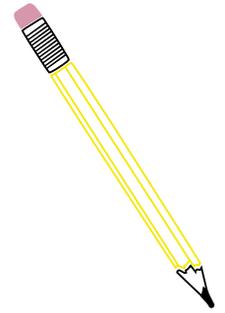
*“When you are in a soup kitchen serving spaghetti onto a tray and people are not saying thank you, it’s hard to realize what you are doing is helping. If you don’t take time to think about what it all means, it won’t stay with you or benefit you.”*

– Daniel Hart, AmeriCorps\*VISTA member with YSOP

## Youth Service Opportunities Project

based in New York City, New York serving the city with a population of 7.3 million and several visiting groups

<b>AGES</b>	12 to adults
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	1,300 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	before school, during school, after school, weekends, school holidays, summers
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	50%-75% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	To engage high school and college students in community service for hunger and homeless people.
<b>PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>	High school and college students work at various social services agency sites dealing with hunger and homelessness, with educational and reflection activities lead by YSOP staff throughout the experience. Most activities are one-time intensive overnight work camps with a group of youth from a school or faith-based organization. YSOP also leads several on-going service-learning activities at local high schools, addressing similar issues related to people living in poverty.
<b>SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION</b>	<i>Youth Service Opportunities Project (YSOP)</i> is a Quaker nonprofit organization aimed at engaging high school and college students in community service for hunger and homeless people.



## human needs

### PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:

- urban
- high school
- before school
- during school
- after school
- weekends
- school holidays
- summer
- faith-based organization
- established 1983

structured opportunities for reflection

## **program background**

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED** 1983

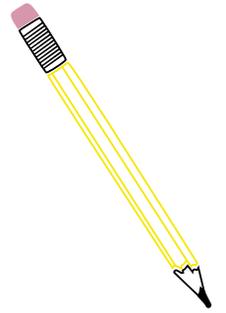
**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED  
USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1983

**STAFF SIZE** executive director (F.T.), program director (F.T.), associate program director (F.T.), 16 work camp counselors (P.T.), 4 AmeriCorps\*VISTA members (F.T.)

**STAFF TRAINING IN  
SERVICE-LEARNING** Senior staff train new staff, as well as provide training and technical assistance in service-learning to other national and regional programs. Staff attend National Service Learning Conferences, regional workshops and events.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$368,000

**FUNDING SOURCES** foundations, corporations, donations, state government, local government, schools, religious organizations, AmeriCorps\*VISTA



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Helping homeless and hungry people — *example: Youth serve meals and socialize with people at homeless shelters or drop-in centers.*
- Working with economically disadvantaged people
- Tutoring and mentoring peers

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: oral and written expression skills, issues of hunger and homelessness — *example: Youth learn about contributing factors to poverty in urban America and the government policies created to address homeless and poverty-stricken people.*
- Social: teamwork, working with others, communication
- Civic: foster service ethic, caring for others, civic engagement, problems of democracy
- Personal: depending on groups involved, some religious tenets tied to service are included as individual group's objectives

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

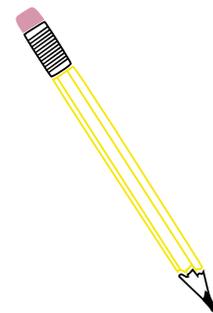
- Short written responses to questions — *example: Before the service experience, staff ask youth to write how they felt the last time they saw a homeless person. After the service, staff ask them to write a response to the same question.*
- Guided visualization, impromptu discussion, discussion planned by staff, discussions with service teams, individual quiet reflection on readings by staff

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- Program furthers youths' understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens through discussion of hunger and homelessness in the nation.
- Program fosters personal commitment to service and the community through youths' personal contact with needy people.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Staff use a combination of surveys, phone interviews and written assessments to evaluate the program continually. Each youth service team writes an assessment of the social services agency they were placed with, capturing information such as how many people were served, the quality of the on-site orientation, and overall satisfaction. Staff sends a questionnaire to the guardians of all youth participants a week after the work camp asking how they think the experience impacted the youth. Staff also interview the lead organizer of each youth group via the telephone after the work camp to assess if expectations were met. Staff also complete an evaluation of each work camp they facilitate.



### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

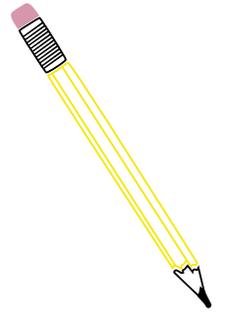
AmeriCorps\*VISTA, agencies catering to hunger and homelessness issues, public schools, service-learning networks, religious consortiums and organizations

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 6 to 1.
- Youth work in small groups with an adult.
- Youth are exposed to community members.

### **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — YSOP office building, social services agencies, homeless shelters, schools
- Schedule — most workcamps begin on an afternoon and end 24 hours later; on-going projects vary but typically meet after school or during an elective period during school
- Youth time commitment — varies by activity, from overnight to on-going throughout the school year



## how the program started

The project grew out of the founders' concern that opportunities for youth to have short-term, hands-on community service experiences were dwindling. "When I was in college in the '60s I had opportunities to engage in hands-on community service through Quaker weekend work camps in Boston. Years later in New York there were similar types of programs, but by the early 1980s those opportunities had dried up," says Ed Doty, YSOP co-founder and executive director. Doty says increasing interest among independent schools on community service also contributed to his interest in starting the organization. "I felt social service agencies were not taking advantage of this fervor and discussion of the idea of getting people involved in their communities," says Doty.

YSOP began exploring this growing interest by holding several conferences on community service in schools and service-learning concepts, trying to link schools and social agencies. "Each of these conferences was increasingly accepted by school authorities. We could see (the interest) increasing before our eyes, and we decided it was no longer necessary for us to hold these conferences, so we focused on actual projects we had started doing earlier."

## narrative description

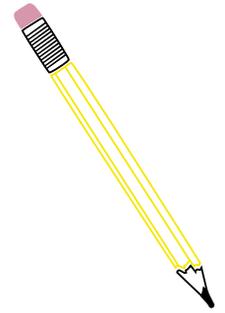
Twenty-five people sat in the meeting room, listening to the man standing before them. The group, mostly teenagers, were slightly worn out from their drive from upstate New York to the "Big Apple." The man was explaining the schedule for the next 24 hours and handing out blue T-shirts with YSOP's logo. After the orientation, he pointed to the Quaker meeting house where the group could leave their sleeping bags, and before they knew it the group was headed out to the door to the school's cafeteria to cook a meal for the homeless and hungry invited guests.

Once in the cafeteria, the group was introduced and given an overview of their duties for the evening. Elderly homeless people stood in line, as the teens in blue T-shirts scuttled around the kitchen to help serve the hot meal. Once the line for food shortened, the teens began to socialize with the guests – hesitant at first.

A few hours later, the teens sat in a quiet room listening to a social worker who works with homeless clients explain what can cause people to lose their homes. The group discussed the social factors that contribute to homelessness and what they learned from the shelter guests earlier that night. After the discussion, the group departed for their temporary accommodations for the night.

The next day the group split into teams to serve at various agency sites, from soup kitchens to drop-in centers. At the end of a long day helping others, the group reunited with YSOP staff for some final reflection activities.

This intense overnight experience in close proximity with those being served helps youth understand more about those they are helping. "One of the most common remarks we hear after the youth's first dinner with the homeless is, "They were just people like me. What happened to them, could happen to me,"" says AmeriCorps\*VISTA member Daniel Hart. "The youth realize [homelessness] is not about statistics, it is about people -- people that had bad luck, took a wrong turn, or had a hard time. They see how they are no different from homeless people in a lot of ways."



**“. . . I realized that an unreflected experience does not necessarily produce much of anything.”**

**– Ed Doty, co-founder and executive director of YSOP**

structured opportunities for reflection

## how it works

YSOP offers several programs focusing on working with people living in poverty. Whether organizing opportunities for youth to serve in soup kitchens, coordinating service-learning efforts at high schools with low-income students or helping communities in poverty deal with issues of racism or lack of open space, YSOP deals with neglected and impoverished people. “We try to put a human face on these important social issues,” says Executive Director Ed Doty.

The organization’s predominate program is the overnight work camps, which offer an intensive 24-hour experience learning about poverty issues, serving those in poverty and reflecting on poverty. Different groups, from schools to faith-based organizations, register and pay a fee to attend a work camp, typically on a Thursday afternoon through Friday, or Friday through Saturday. Groups usually include about 30 youth and several accompanying adults.

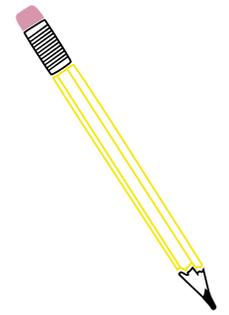
In addition to the overnight work camps, YSOP offers longer work camps, school field trips and ongoing programs at local high schools. During winter, spring and summer breaks, YSOP offers week-long work camps for high school and college students. YSOP also coordinates service experiences during the school day as field trips. AmeriCorps\*Vista members placed with YSOP serve at local high schools organizing service and leadership groups both during and after school. For example, at Washington Irving High School, where most of the students are from low-income homes, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members help seniors on a leadership team coordinate a math tutoring program for freshman during lunch, before and after school and on weekends. Another high school group works on organizing service experiences in the surrounding neighborhood for the rest of the school’s students.

“YSOP’s hope is for youth to say, ‘I’d like to do more [service].’ We hope their experiences with us are seeds for them to grow from,” says Daniel Hart, an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member with YSOP. “We have one person who works in our office who used to come to many of our workcamps as a student and the issues became important enough to him to work full-time on them now that he’s an adult.”

All of YSOP’s programs share an emphasis on reflection. “Throughout the programs, reflective activities are varied so that people with different interests find something that fits them – writing exercises, large and small group sharing, some quiet reflective activity, hearing a question and answers with a speaker,” says Doty.

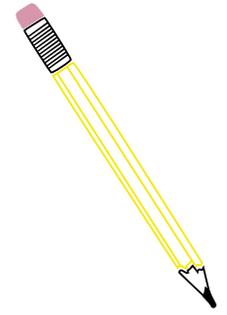
Reflection helps the youth contextualize their service experience and explore issues of justice, compassion and even political action. “It is much harder to get people to focus on the causes of poverty or to be raising questions like ‘Why do we have poverty in America?’ or ‘Why do we have hungry and homeless people?’” says Doty. “Our approach is to try to get youth to raise questions, not to supply them with our answers. Our program does not have a particular political agenda, such as getting rid of welfare to work. We don’t want any feeling of indoctrination.” Reflection activities help youth develop their own answers to such questions, based on their personal experiences dealing with the issues.

Reflection is also structured into various points throughout the programs. For example, at the start of the work camps, the youth and adult volunteers are asked to write how they felt the last time they saw a homeless person, or a similar statement that “self consciously marks where they are at the beginning of the work-camp,” says Doty. At the end of the work camp, these statements are returned to them and they are asked to respond to the same question, illustrating how the serv-



**“Throughout the programs, reflective activities are varied so that people with different interests find something that fits them – writing exercises, large and small group sharing, some quiet reflective activity, hearing a question and answers with a speaker,”**

**– Ed Doty, co-founder and executive director of YSOP**



ice experience affected their attitudes. Participants are also asked to write a personal service challenge, something they would like to achieve in the next month. The challenges are mailed to them about a month after the work camp to remind them of the experience and the commitment they made. Throughout the work camp, YSOP staff leads reflection activities to help participants personalize their experience. Reflection activities range from guided visualizations of what it is like to be a mentally ill homeless person to quiet time alone to ponder questions posed by a staff person.

“From the very beginning we used the term reflection as a part of our work. For a while I thought we invented the term,” says Doty in a joking tone, “but then I realized [John] Dewey in the ‘20s was talking about reflection.” Doty says he first realized the value of reflection in youth service experiences during a conversation with a mother whose son was doing service work on the Mexican American border. “Her son was thoroughly engaged in this work, but there was no reflective component going on. It dawned on me in this conversation with this woman that there was no way of predicting or indicating how this experience was affecting this young person. Was he assuming all Mexican immigrants were illegal and deserved to be rounded up? Or was he assuming they were all wrongly oppressed? I realized that an un-reflected experience does not necessarily produce much of anything.” This realization caused Doty and staff to include a strong reflective component in their efforts, experimenting with techniques and approaches to ensure the activities planned reached all varieties of participants.

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- 120,033 hungry/homeless served in 1999
- 1,700 volunteers involved; 1,300 high school students, 100 college students, 300 adults
- 70 overnight work camps in 1999

## program impacts beyond the numbers

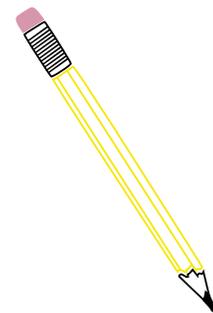
*“The service by youth in YSOP makes the hungry and homeless people aware that there are people out there who care about them, who care about other people. It also makes people realize there are young people out there who are taking the time to think about more than themselves.”*

– Daniel Hart, AmeriCorps\*VISTA member

## what makes this program effective

### • VARIOUS TYPES OF REFLECTION STRUCTURED INTO ACTIVITIES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER SERVICE EXPERIENCES

“We have opportunities before and after each activity for youth to anticipate and digest what they are doing. There are lots of opportunities, it’s not just one - write an essay. It is a little bit of this and a little bit of that,” says Executive Director Ed Doty. An AmeriCorps\* VISTA member says reflection throughout the experience helps youth process their present actions and apply them to future action. “When you are in a soup kitchen serving spaghetti onto a tray and people are not saying thank you, it’s hard to realize what you are doing is helping,” says Daniel Hart. “If you don’t take time to think about what it all means, it won’t stay with you or benefit you.”



- **PROGRAM DESIGN SUITS THE NEEDS OF THOSE SEEKING SHORT-TERM, YET INTENSIVE SERVICE EXPERIENCES**

“Our program is very adaptable to the current mood in America. Right now many schools and parents want their kids to do community service, but they really don’t want them working every Thursday afternoon because they have SAT prep and dance and tutoring, etc. So, this kind of intensive experience really fits the mood of America – you can do service, but you can also focus on chemistry,” says Ed Doty, executive director. YSOP also designs their overnight workcamps as an entry point for young people to be exposed to service, in the hopes that they will realize its value and incorporate service into their lives. “We hope that their service experience becomes important enough to them that it sticks and draws them into service after they work with us,” says Daniel Hart, an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member with YSOP.

- **COMMITTED LONG-TERM STAFF WHO BELIEVE IN THE VISION AND KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM**

“I’d like to believe people could take the same formula for this program and apply it somewhere else,” says Executive Director Ed Doty, “but they would need a certain breadth of knowledge and long-term commitment to make it work.” Doty has worked for the program since he founded it 18 years ago, and the program director has been on staff for ten years. The organizational roots, history of successes and failures, relationships with partner agencies and understanding of the program vision that these two staff members have due to their long-term involvement contribute heavily to most aspects of the program’s strengths.

## challenges

- **DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM’S ACTIVITIES OUTWEIGHS ITS CAPACITY**

The program receives more requests for activities than its current staff and facility can accommodate. The program has expanded to meet this rising demand, jumping from involving 800 people in 1998 to 1,700 people in 1999. Program staff is trying to plan ways to expand their programmatic offerings, perhaps expanding geographically.

- **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES ARE IMPACTED BY GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

Due to the fact that changes in government policy can greatly impact hungry and homeless people, as well as the agencies that serve them, YSOP tries to create a sustainable network of partnerships with programs. “We aren’t wedded to one particular work site or one building,” says Executive Director Ed Doty. “We can’t be.”

## contact information

Ed Doty, Executive Director  
Youth Service Opportunities Project  
15 Rutherford Place  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 598-0973  
ysopnyc@aol.com

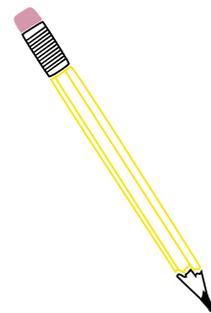
## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO PROVIDE STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- *Engage participants in reflection before, during and after the service experience.* Before YSOP activities, participants take inventory of their existing attitudes toward homelessness so the service has a personal frame of reference. By reflecting during the experience, participants ask questions, tackle problems, and discuss ideas to clarify their learning from the service. After the service experience, participants can evaluate, assess and contextualize their experiences in terms of their personal beliefs and broader social issues.
- *Structure reflection to appeal to the different ways people learn.* YSOP uses several different types of reflection to appeal to individuals' communication and learning styles. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences states that people learn in different ways based on their different natural areas of intelligence (1993). Some people express themselves best and learn best through writing, others through speaking, others through art, etc. Participants will excel if allowed to choose a form of reflection that encourages their individual strengths and learning styles.
- *Use reflection activities that suit the particular interests of the youth involved.* YSOP tries to align reflection activities with each individual group's objectives or expectations for the service experience. For school clubs trying to strengthen their identity and teamwork, reflection activities may include more emphasis on how serving cooperative impacted the experience. For faith-based groups, more focus may be placed on how service influenced spiritual beliefs or benefits individuals intrinsically.
- *Involve youth in the planning and implementation of reflection activities.* Youth can lead activities and help highlight topics or questions that can be addressed through reflection. Some programs include youth in the planning of activities or provide opportunities for them to lead impromptu discussions among their peers. Groups of youth can also choose from a menu of reflection activities to decide how they want to process their experiences.

### additional resources

- *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection: Student Voice and Reflections* by Janet Eyler, Dwight Giles, Jr., and Angela Schmiede. Available at the National Service Learning Clearinghouse at (800) 808-7378 or [www.umn.edu/~serve](http://www.umn.edu/~serve).
- *Reflection: The Key To Service-Learning* by National Center for Service-Learning in Early Adolescence, 1991.
- *Building Citizens: A Critical Reflection and Discussion Guide for Community Service Participants* by Margo Shea, 1998.



## PROFILE 4

# including youth voice and leadership

*"Youth have an idea and then they are able to go after it. . . I think seeing that things can really happen like that helps them become leaders. . . They realize they really can change things."*

– Dickson Lam, AmeriCorps member serving at Y-MAC

### Youth Making A Change (Y-MAC)

based in San Francisco, California serving the city with a population of 745,000

<b>AGES</b>	14 to 17
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	15 Y-MAC members and about 150 youth volunteers generated annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school, weekends, school holidays, summer
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% – 100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	Y-MAC is a youth leadership program tailored to meet the self-determined needs of young people; to recognize and respond to their diverse backgrounds and experiences; to give adolescents opportunities to develop their leadership skills while earning money; and to promote youth as resources to their communities, to policy makers, and to the media.

#### PROGRAM SUMMARY

Fifteen youth serve in the program for at least four hours a week, and they are paid an hourly minimum wage. The youth select their own projects, which all deal with increasing representation and opportunities for youth. Youth work in teams and meet weekly as a group to check in with each other and staff, reflect on the past week's activities and plan for upcoming meetings and activities.

#### SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

*Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth* is a non-profit organization that aims to serve as the voice for children in San Francisco, with the goal to make the city a place where ample resources are available to children and their families, where children's needs come first, and where families thrive.

*San Francisco AmeriCorps Collaborative* is a national service program, managed by a volunteer center and youth service organizations that place AmeriCorps members with various schools and community-based organizations (see next page).



## human needs

### PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:

- urban
- high school
- after school
- weekends
- school holidays
- summer
- youth development
- established 1991

youth voice and leadership

## program background

<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1991
<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	1991
<b>STAFF SIZE</b>	development director (F.T.), program coordinator (F.T.), 2 AmeriCorps members (F.T.)
<b>STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	AmeriCorps members receive about 40 hours of training from their AmeriCorps program staff on project-based service-learning.
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	\$100,000
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>	foundations, city agencies, donations, nonprofit organizations, 2 AmeriCorps members through the San Francisco AmeriCorps Collaborative

## national service partner: SAN FRANCISCO AMERICORPS COLLABORATIVE

**Sponsoring Community-Based Organizations:** Volunteer Center of San Francisco, San Francisco Urban Service Project, Linking San Francisco, San Francisco Unified School District

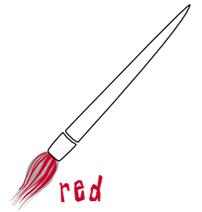
<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1993
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	12,000 youth annually
<b>NUMBER OF CORPSMEMBERS</b>	42

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

The collaborative is composed of three teams: the school-based service-learning, the community involvement team and the child development team. Within each of the teams, members are paired up and assigned to a host site. All AmeriCorps members focus on youth-development activities at these sites. Training and evaluations are centrally organized, in addition to some large-scale service projects and other initiatives. "Youth empowerment is the main focus of what AmeriCorps members do," says Bettina Mok, the collaborative's program director. "Our objective is to get more youth involved in their communities and allow (AmeriCorps) members to learn from the process of creating such opportunities for youth."

### HOW Y-MAC FITS IN

Two AmeriCorps members from the collaborative are placed at Y-MAC, where they split their time working on service-learning and community involvement projects.



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Creating positive opportunities for youth — *example: Youth submit a proposal to the city department of recreation and parks to start a youth-run youth center in an area with few services for youth.*
- Advocating for youth issues and representation of youth in decisions that impact them
- Increasing public awareness of youth issues

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: how to facilitate meetings, identify community stakeholders, community mapping
- Social: diversity awareness, publicity, public speaking, teamwork
- Civic: current social and political issues, government systems — *example: Youth research how they can change the school district's selection of high school history textbooks.*

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Group retreats — *example: A 3-day retreat in the middle and end of the school year to discuss projects, recognize achievements, identify allies, and plan for improvement.*
- Weekly check-ins — *example: At Monday meetings time is given to each person to report progress they have made, commitments they fulfilled and other pressing issues.*

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

- Youth lead almost all activities (most program decisions are made with input from or by youth).

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program fosters personal commitment to service and to the community and a further understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens through advocacy and grassroots projects.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

AmeriCorps members record their achievements and milestones working with youth, in terms of the numbers of youth involved, volunteers generated, and organizational partnerships formed. Member supervisors also use a rubric to gauge the strength of partnerships formed at mid-year and end of the year, as well as a focus group for members at the end of the year.



**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

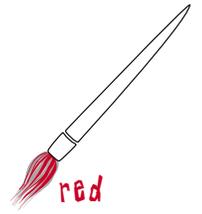
youth participants, staff, AmeriCorps\*State/National, youth-serving organizations, schools, media, policy-makers, community-based organizations

**FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 15 to 3.
- Youth work in teams and as partners on projects.
- The program's small size allows for one-on-one relationships to develop among youth, AmeriCorps members and staff.

**PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — Coleman Advocates for Youth and Children office and various other meeting and event locations
- Schedule — weekly meeting Monday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and time after school, on weekends and in the summer determined by youth
- Youth time commitment — at least 4 hours per week, with a maximum of 10 hours per week



## narrative description

Fourteen people sat around the conference tables in the downtown church's meeting space. The facilitator called the meeting to order and the group's secretary passed out copies of the day's agenda. A binder full of previous meeting notes rested on the table. The evening's tasks included designing the general floorplan for the new youth center, determining a budget for youth programming and facility expenses, and creating an outreach campaign to involve more youth and youth-serving organizations in the effort. Within five minutes the room was alive with animated discussion, problem solving and idea brainstorming.

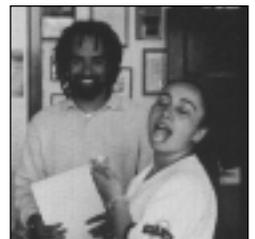
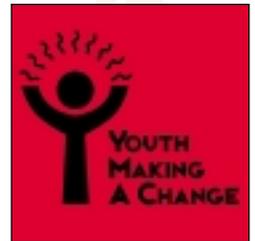
Committees broke out to tackle specific tasks, culminating the two-hour meeting with reports back from each committee. The floorplan committee had sketched an impressive layout including a youth-run café, office-spaces for youth organizations, a stage, and a possible darkroom. The programming committee created an exhaustive list of ways to use the allocated funds from art classes to tutoring sessions to janitorial and other facility expenses. The outreach committee listed target organizations and schools to include, as well as the process for recruiting members for the center's youth board. It was business as usual for this group which had been meeting every other week for numerous months to plan the new youth center from ground up.

Business as usual – for a group of dedicated and empowered teenagers. The eight teenagers organizing and leading this meeting were youth members of Y-MAC, or Y-MACers. They have been leading the effort to create a safe, accessible Youth Space in San Francisco for youth-led services, youth-serving organizations, youth educational and recreational resources in one location. This project began in 1995 as a loose concept of some Y-MACers who have since graduated from the program. Through the continued planning and advocacy of Y-MAC, funds from the city park and recreation department and a leased building from the city have been secured. The facility is scheduled to open in fall 2000, possibly offering youth art, dance, writing and other special interest classes, a photo development lab, a computer lab, and a youth-run café, just to name a few of the options discussed.

Youth lead biweekly meetings and establish committees to plan how the space should be used, how to manage funds, how to create a board of directors, what the architect should be directed to work on and any other detail involved in the creation of Youth Space. The youth record their meetings and keep files, dating back to the concept's inception, to build on the ideas and work of the youth involved before them.

## how it works

Y-MAC is a leadership council of diverse youth that learn advocacy and teamwork skills through their efforts to improve youth opportunities and representation in their community. A group of 15 youth are hired by their peers to work in the program for a minimum of four hours a week, for which they are compensated minimum wage. The group members select their own projects and usually work on them in teams. A regular weekly meeting is held for youth to check-in with each other and staff, reflect on the past week's activities and plan for the committee meetings and activities of the approaching weeks. The group emphasizes building or utilizing partnerships with other organizations to achieve sustainable and city-wide changes.



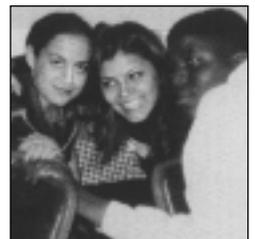
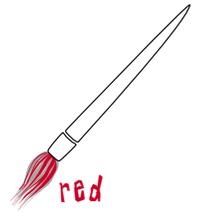
Even though Y-MACers usually work in teams on various projects, they try to operate like a cohesive and inclusive unit. Teams report back to the entire group on their progress and the group collectively emphasizes the value of each individual's perspective on issues and proposed ideas. The group pools their diverse backgrounds and experiences to come to a broader understanding of issues. "This is like a family," says Malea Mouton-Fuentes, a Y-MACer. "Everyone respects one another and everyone gets along. I don't feel uncomfortable sharing my personal life here. It is not like work, really, because you don't have to put aside who you are and what you do when you come here."

A recent project called San Francisco Compact included several youth-led collaborative efforts to increase civic participation among youth in the city. One effort was Y-MAC's annual Youth Vote, which is an opportunity for high school students to vote in a special election which includes candidates and initiatives that mirror the municipal election, as well as other issues facing youth. Several youth groups and volunteers draft a ballot and create a handbook with background information and pro and con statements on election items. Youth train teachers how to facilitate an election at their school, distribute ballots and voting machines borrowed from the city to schools, and then report results to the public through press conferences and other publicity. "Youth Vote is unparalleled by any other youth-led project that I know of in terms of providing youth with a variety of opportunities to get involved by educating themselves and their peers," says Jetzabel Diaz, an AmeriCorps member serving at Y-MAC. In 1999, more than 5,000 students from 13 high schools participated and voiced their concerns to the community by voting. Y-MAC uses the issues identified by youth in the election to create their future service and advocacy projects.

This year, the youth also organized mayoral candidates to visit classrooms participating in Youth Vote. Youth prepared for these visits and asked the candidates questions about issues ranging from homelessness to juvenile justice initiatives. A local television station broadcasted these visits, and youth created a website with election information and capabilities to ask candidates questions.

In another ongoing project, Y-MAC youth work to include youth voice in decisions made about the social studies and history curriculum adopted in the San Francisco Unified School District. Y-MAC formed a Student History/Social Studies Curriculum Committee a few years ago, which was endorsed by the school board and includes student representatives, teachers and others interested. The committee aims to survey students to gauge their opinions about the books and topics taught in history and social studies classes, and to evaluate the other options available for use in schools. The committee intends to identify books that are relevant and inclusive to students. "These students may have thought (the current curriculum) sucked," says Dickson Lam, an AmeriCorps member serving at Y-MAC. "This committee gives them a chance to affect change. They learn how to present information, facilitate meetings, create a survey, and that people can take them seriously."

In addition to learning skills and their ability to affect change, Y-MACers are exposed to an environment that fosters interest and action in political and social justice issues. As one Y-MACer Suzanne Chui says, "My friends are not interested in this kind of thing [political or community action]. At school I talk about other things. Here, the people talk about political stuff I've never even heard of before. I never got to do this type of [political] stuff before."



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## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- 15 youth ages 14 to 17 work on Y-MAC efforts for at least four hours per week
- 150 youth volunteers are involved in Y-MAC events and activities annually
- About 13,500 youth were impacted by AmeriCorps members serving with Y-MAC during the 1999-2000 program year
- About 50 organizations collaborated with Y-MAC during the 1999-2000 program year

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“Youth have an idea and then they are able to go after it. Like with the Youth Space, there are some youth who were involved in the beginning and now down the road four years it is really happening. I think seeing that things can really happen like that helps them become leaders. Their whole mind set is hella different. They realize they really can change things.”*

– Dickson Lam, AmeriCorps member

*“I met a lot of people and do things I had not done before, and I feel like I am giving back. Being in Y-MAC has opened a lot of doors for me.”*

– Suzanne Chui, Y-MACer

## what makes this program effective

### • EMBRACING AND WHOLLY SUPPORTING YOUTH VOICE

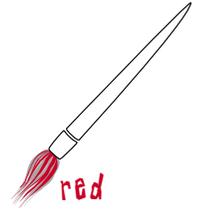
“It is hard to go from not a lot of youth leadership to having lots of it, unless the program is really sure of that direction and is willing to do a complete overhaul of the program. You can’t really have youth voice if you just ask them one question. You have to incorporate them into everything. We have never had a staff meeting where we made decisions about the program without Y-MACers there. A lot of programs do that and try to manipulate the youth into doing what the staff has decided they should do. You need to be serious about youth power and decision-making,” says AmeriCorps member Dickson Lam. The youth, in turn, value the role of adults in guiding the process. “We need young adults or youth advisers to keep us on task,” says Suzanne Chui, a Y-MAC youth. “Teens do things to get out of commitments, so we need adults to remind us why we are here.”

### • COLLABORATING AND BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS IS INTEGRAL IN EVERY PROJECT

Y-MAC strongly emphasizes working with other people and organizations to affect change on a city-wide basis. For every project, Y-MAC youth and staff identify allies and collaborators to help with certain aspects of an endeavor, advise the youth, broaden perspectives on the issue or idea and increase the outreach efforts. Some of the groups Y-MAC works with now are by-products of previous Y-MAC projects that are now sustainable.

### • PAID POSITIONS FOR YOUTH TO SERVE AND LEARN IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Paying Y-MAC youth for their time has several advantages, say AmeriCorps members Jetzabel Diaz and Dickson Lam. Youth who need to work to support themselves or their families are not excluded from the opportunity,



**“You can’t really have youth voice if you just ask them one question. You have to incorporate them into everything.”**

**– Dickson Lam, AmeriCorps member**

youth voice and leadership

as occurs in most service efforts which are not compensated. Also, working with Y-MAC demonstrates to youth that they can have jobs that help make a difference, that serving the community does not have to be a weekend event or side interest, but a path in life.



## challenges

- **BALANCING ADULTS' ROLE OF EMPOWERING YOUTH AND PROVIDING STRUCTURE FOR YOUTH**

AmeriCorps members find it challenging to balance their role as supporters of youth voice in the program process while keeping youth on task and working effectively. Given the developmental stage of teenagers in particular, it can be difficult to determine when to approach youth with more freedom or structure. "Teens go through stuff and things happen to them. So, they miss work or are distracted sometimes. We try to show them support so they can talk to us about that stuff," says Dickson Lam, an AmeriCorps member.

- **SUSTAINING A HIGH LEVEL OF COMMITMENT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

Many youth involved in Y-MAC are involved in other extracurricular activities, hold jobs and/or have other commitments outside of school, which can lead to less consistent participation in Y-MAC activities. When weekly meetings dwindle in size, the youth that do attend sometimes feel disappointed and unmotivated by their own group. "When only a few people show up, we lose our energy, our power," says Malea Mouton-Fuentes, a Y-MAC youth. "What can we do with four people? We need more people to get things going."

## contact information

Youth Making a Change  
Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth  
459 Vienna Street  
San Francisco, CA 94112  
(415) 239- 0161  
[www.colemanadvocates.org](http://www.colemanadvocates.org)

## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO INCLUDE YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

- *Invite youth to identify the type of service-learning projects and activities they want to work on.* Y-MACers use the Youth Vote to gauge what issues many youth think need to be addressed, which indicates the amount of support they can expect from other youth in rallying behind their efforts. They are empowered to choose the path of their efforts and follow their passions.
- *Establish systems and procedures with the youth to monitor their progress and keep everyone on task.* Y-MACers create the agenda for each weekly group meeting by reporting what actions they committed to do, their progress toward those actions and what their next steps are.
- *Encourage staff and adult volunteers to focus on facilitating the process, not the outcomes of youth efforts.* AmeriCorps members and staff have clear goals to

support and assist the youth, not to encourage specific outcomes or deliver identified results.

- *Include youth in every decision about the program.* Y-MAC staff do not make decisions about the programs without Y-MACers input, from program design changes to scheduling.

### **additional resources**

- *The Youth Power Guide: How to Make Your Community Better* by Urban Places Project, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2000.
- *Younger Voices, Stronger Choices: Promise Project's Guide to Forming Youth/Adult Partnerships* by Loring Leifer and Michael McLarney 1997. Promise Project/YMCA of Greater Kansas City.
- *Teens with Courage to Give: Young People Who Triumphed Over Tragedy and Volunteered to Make a Difference* by Jackie Waldman, 2000, Conari Press.
- Youth in Action. at [www.mightymedia.com/youth](http://www.mightymedia.com/youth)



## PROFILE 5

# fostering civic responsibility

*“There is nothing like it when you see one of the kids smile at you. That’s when you know you are making a real difference in their life. I mean, I never had to deal with some of the things they have. For me to be able to help them is a real honor.”*

– Kristen Gwaltney, Students of Promise youth volunteer

### Students of Promise (SOP)

based in Rockingham County, North Carolina serving the county with a population of 56,000

<b>AGES</b>	14 to 18
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	about 145 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% – 100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	To identify students from Rockingham County high schools from organizations such as student council, honor society, and other leadership groups, to be role models for a group of academically at-risk middle school students.
<b>PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>	School counselors and teachers invite service- and leader-oriented youth from high schools to apply to be SOP volunteer tutors and mentors. Selected youth are assigned to nearby after-school programs, called Support Our Students (SOS), for academically at-risk middle school students. SOP volunteers serve at the after-school SOS programs at least twice a month. SOP volunteers are not assigned to specific middle school students, but can work one-on-one or in groups, helping them with home-work, planning service-learning projects and participating in field trips or guest speaker presentations.
<b>SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION</b>	<i>Rockingham County Youth Services</i> is a county agency that provides prevention and enrichment programs for at-risk youth.



## education

### PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:

- rural
- high school
- after school
- county agency
- established 1998

## program background

<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1998
<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	1998
<b>STAFF SIZE</b>	program coordinator (P.T.), 12 site coordinators (P.T.), who are school employees that act as liaisons at each site and with the community
<b>STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	Some staff attend Learn and Serve America grantee trainings and workshops.
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	\$14,379, including \$3,379 of in-kind donations
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>	a Learn and Serve America Community-Based Grant; in-kind donations from county government and schools



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Mentoring younger youth — *example: During an after-school tutoring session, a SOP volunteer overhears a middle school student talk about dropping out of school. The SOP volunteer engages the youth in a conversation about possible life-long hardships that may result from not earning a high school diploma or equivalent.*
- Tutoring younger youth
- Working with senior citizens
- Working to improve schools

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: problem solving, issues of at-risk youth — *example: SOP volunteers attend a four-hour training on characteristics, needs and environments of at-risk youth led by county human services agencies, including local problems and issues that contribute to at-risk conditions for community members.*
- Social: leadership skills, intergenerational relationships, team building
- Civic: community responsibility, caring for others
- Personal: establishing goals and objectives to achieve results
- Career/work: exposure to teaching profession

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Role play of difficult decision-making situations — *example: Two SOP volunteers act out the following scenario while a third volunteer tries to mediate the situation: “There is racial tension between two middle school girls, one African-American, one white. Racial slurs have been exchanged and tension is escalating.” After the short role play, the SOP volunteers offer feedback on how the two handled the situation and possible alternative approaches.*
- Impromptu discussion, discussion led by staff, journal writing, art projects, written surveys/evaluations

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

- Youth choose when they participate and make their own schedule.
- Youth choose how to interact with middle school students (in groups or one-on-one).

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program fosters the ability to care for others and an understanding of an individual’s impact on the community through their tutoring and mentoring relationships with younger youth.



## **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

Program staff evaluate the youth volunteers' satisfaction and involvement, as well as analyze data collected by the SOS program to examine the youth volunteers' impact on the middle school students' academic achievements.

## **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

schools, volunteers, school site staff, county health department, county mental health department, Rotary Club, sheriff's office

## **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 9 to 1.
- Youth work in one-on-one or small group settings which fosters personal relationships.

## **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — middle schools, usually in a classroom or school library
- Schedule — two and a half hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday during the school year
- Youth time commitment — about a two-and-a-half hour sessions with middle school students twice a month, two half-day training events, development and implementation of three service-learning projects throughout the school year



## how the program started

Rockingham County Youth Services administers a statewide program in all of its middle schools called Support Our Students (SOS), which provides after-school tutoring and enrichment activities for academically at-risk middle school students. Spurred by the county's commitment to America's Promise and after receiving a Learn and Serve America Community-Based Grant in 1998, the county youth services department created the Students of Promise peer mentoring program involving high school students in the SOS program.

## narrative description

It has been a long day in rural North Carolina. A full day of classes at McMichael High School, a club meeting squeezed in during lunch period, and several hours of homework following tonight's basketball game does not leave much free time or reserved energy. But this high school student diligently hops into the car and heads over to Western Rockingham Middle School to join the SOS after-school students, knowing the few hours spent with them might be the most meaningful of this hectic schedule.

Most Students of Promise volunteers share this sentiment. These high school students work around band practices, sports games, choir rehearsals, jobs, school assignments and responsibilities at home to make time for the youth they mentor and tutor after school. Most SOP volunteers find their time with the younger youth so enjoyable, they frequent the after-school program more than the required two afternoons per month.

In addition to helping others, most of these high school youth find that their tutoring and mentoring experiences help them make sense of their own lives. "You have to understand yourself because you know that [the middle school youth] are going to be looking up to you and you are going to impact them," says SOP volunteer Jonathan McLawhon. So overwhelmed by his first day working with the middle school students, McLawhon says he went home that evening determined to thank everyone who was a mentor to him as he grew up. Another volunteer, Patrick McFall, says he joined the program to give back to his community, but has personally gained from participating. "[The middle school youth] are here to help us, too. I mean we are here to help them, but they are here to help us at the same time. They help us find out who we really are. They help us see what kind of power we actually have, what kind of influence we have on each other," says McFall, a high school senior.

Beyond self-discovery, the program also gives youth a chance to learn about life experiences different from their own. Many SOP youth say they never imagined the hardships some of their neighbors and community members experience. "I've been humbled by these kids I guess," says Kristen Gwaltney. "I hear their stories and I think, 'Wow, I'm really lucky to have what I have I have.' They go through things I didn't think really happened."

## how it works

School counselors recommend high school students for the SOP program and after an application process, selected youth attend a training that exposes them to the characteristics and environments of at-risk youth. For many SOP volunteers, this is



the doorway to a new world. As Program Coordinator Lynn Flowers recalls, “During one of the trainings led by county human services agencies on at-risk characteristics of youth, one of the girls got physically sick when she heard some of the things some of the at-risk kids have to deal with. So, they really do get a look at the different lives people are living out there.” For many SOP volunteers, this is their first experience as a mentor, and perhaps the first time someone relies on them for the answers — whether it is about a math equation or how to resist peer pressure to use drugs.

One hour of each day at the after-school program focuses on homework help and tutoring, with the remainder used for enrichment and small group activities. SOP volunteers say they enjoy helping the middle school students with the math, grammar and science problems that stumbled them not too long ago.

The unstructured hour and a half for enrichment activities seems to foster the most memorable interactions. “After a while [the middle school youth] open up to you and then it’s not about helping them with homework,” says SOP volunteer Jason Hamlin. “Sometimes they tell you a lot of things and you try to help them the best way you can because they need someone to talk to. They can’t always turn to a teacher.”

SOP volunteers admit they don’t have answers to all of the younger youths’ questions, but even sharing their own search for answers helps. “[The middle school youth] need to know that no one knows it all,” says McLawhon. “So, when things come up that you don’t know about, they need to know that. They need you to tell them you are on the same level.” As SOP volunteer Morgan Sharp says, “Sometimes all you have to do to make a difference is just talk to them, listen to them.”

SOP volunteers say being only a few years older than the middle school youth puts them in a prime position to relate to peer pressure issues. “If [the middle school students] see that we are in high school, we are not doing bad things like drugs or whatever, and we are still cool, then maybe it helps them see that they don’t have to do certain things,” says SOP volunteer Amber Sands.

During their term of service, SOP volunteers also plan and organize three long-term group service-learning projects that they lead SOS students through. The youth research community needs, meet with community groups related to their project and plan the entire effort. Projects in the past have ranged from school beautification to organizing a blood drive. “When we do a project, we teach the SOS students about the things they need to learn, like dependability and following through. Then when we do the projects and they get to help other people. Then they can see that they can do what we can do,” says SOP volunteer Valorie Conley.

The program also creates opportunities for meaningful interaction between the youth and senior citizens. SOP volunteers have organized visiting days, goodie bag deliveries and entertainment with the SOS students at senior citizen centers. “We try to set the stage so [youth and seniors] can get to know each other on an informal basis and then do more activities together,” says Youth Services Director Teresa Price. The program hopes that building up these intergenerational relations centered around service will aid in recruiting more senior volunteers for various community service efforts, including the forming of the community’s future volunteer center. The program aims to integrate senior citizens more into service-learning activities, so they are less recipients of service and become providers of service alongside youth.



One example of an intergenerational activity took place on Groundhog Day. “In past years the Madison-Mayodan Rotary Club traditionally had students come shadow them in their jobs, but this year we had them shadowing the kids. That’s a wonderful opportunity for these retired adults to actually see that all youth aren’t how they appear on the news, and to see how difficult school has become,” says Price.

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- 55 SOP volunteers served 1,100 hours mentoring and tutoring 90 SOS students in the 1999-2000 program year; 50 SOP volunteers served 1,000 hours mentoring and tutoring 60 SOS students in the 1998-99 program year.
- About six long-term projects are completed annually, in addition to numerous small-scale community service projects, such as visiting senior citizens, planting trees, and beautifying school grounds.
- Middle school youth increased in academic achievement; in the 1998-1999 program year, 46 of 54 (85%) improved in at least one academic area as demonstrated by pre- and post-progress reports on grades; 47 of 54 (87%) improved on at least one academic area in end-of-grade tests; and 53 of 54 (98%) improved in two academic areas in end-of-grade tests.
- Middle school youth increased their self-esteem and social skills; in the 1998-99 program year, youth completed pre and post- inventories on self-esteem which indicated that 33% increased in their general self-esteem, 23% increased self-esteem in their academic abilities, 20% increased in their social capabilities.

### LEARNING

- 55 SOP volunteers participate in the two training sessions, on at-risk youth issues and service-learning project planning in the 1999-2000 program year; 50 SOP volunteers participated in the same training in the 1998-1999 program year.

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“I found that helping these [middle school youth] has helped me with my home life. I have a brother and he would act like them. I guess he was crying out for help. I just ignored him because he’s my brother. But after dealing with these [middle school youth] I realized I was not doing anything for him. So, now I realize I need to help him if I am helping out strangers.”*

– Morgan Sharp, SOP volunteer

*“I have learned a lot about myself, because I am really taking what a lot of other people have taught me and using that to positively influence someone else’s life. Knowing I am doing that is a great feeling for me.”*

– Patrick McFall, SOP volunteer

*“Planning has usually been the responsibility of adults. However, in [SOP] the youth initiate projects and activities. They are even planning projects on their own time outside of the SOP program, which many of us couldn’t have imagined. It is so wonderful and I think it has helped us see the value in what youth can do.”*

– Teresa Price, life-long resident and youth services director of Rockingham County



## what makes this program effective

- **FOSTER PARTICIPANTS' CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY BY PROVIDING THEM A STRUCTURE FOR HELPING OTHERS**

Staff help youth identify how they individually affect the youth they mentor by sharing academic improvement reports, aiding them to recollect their own mentors earlier in life and discussing changes they have witnessed in the youths' attitudes and behaviors. Also, in training sessions for youth volunteers, staff discuss civic responsibility in terms of caring for others, which they can relate to the at-risk middle school youth who they learn about first-hand. This helps SOP volunteers connect human faces to broad social issues and examine the role all citizens need to play to work toward solutions.

- **EMPHASIS ON RECRUITING YOUTH WHO CAN BE INVOLVED FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR**

In the program's first year, the staff heavily recruited sophomore and junior students so they could be involved for more than one year. The returning SOP volunteers serve as peer leaders, build long-term relationships with the middle school youth, recruit friends into the program and set examples for new SOP volunteers. "I thought we would have to police the contacts [between the high school and middle school youth] and put fires under them to get them to go, but it is just not that way. I had no idea that there would be that much involvement – their eagerness, their willingness, their responsibility," says Program Coordinator Lynn Flowers.

- **PARTNER WITH SCHOOLS**

"It is nice to be a community-based program, but to still have the support of the schools," says Teresa Price, youth services director. The high schools aided the program by helping identify youth participants, including the program in recognition events such as award assemblies, and giving youth participants permission to leave school on a few occasions for SOP-related events. The middle schools have also been supportive. "They let us use their facilities and computers – they opened the schools to us," says Price. "They were a little leery at first because of the fact that older kids would be on campus, but now they support us."

## challenges

- **LACK OF AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION**

The county's main communities are distant from each other, making transportation to various project sites difficult. To overcome this obstacle the program tries to link middle schools, high schools and community resources within walking distance of each other.

- **DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING TO YOUTH THROUGH SCHOOL CHANNELS**

Working with multiple schools makes communicating program information on a day-to-day basis difficult. The program has tried using public announcement periods during the school day and memos delivered to students in class, but schools are hesitant to interrupt class time.



## recommended resources

- *Play It: Great Games for Groups* by Wayne Rice and Mike Yaconelli, Youth Specialties/Zondervan Publishing House.
- *Pulling Together For Cooperative Learning* by Imogene Forte and Joy Mackenzie, Kid's Lore/Incentive Publications, Inc.
- *Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership* by Karl Rohnke and Steve Butler, Project Adventure, Inc., Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- *Warm Ups & Wind Downs: 1010 Activities for Moving and Motivating Groups* by Sandra Peyser Hazouri & Mariam Smith McLaughlin, Educational Media Corporation.

## contact information

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Rockingham County Youth Involvement Program  
P.O. Box 301  
335 County Home Road  
Wentworth, NC 27375-0301  
(336) 342-5756

## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO FOSTER CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- *Allow for genuine relationships between participants to form.* SOP are not assigned middle school youth to mentor, rather they can work with various youth each session or develop a more one-on-one relationship.
- *Clearly define the responsibility and commitment of youth.* A selection and application process, as well as clearly outlining the time commitment and expected attitudes, helps the SOP program recruit and retain committed and concerned participants.
- *Allow time for reflection focused on what youth gain from the experience.* SOP staff give youth journal questions that help them analyze how working with the younger youth influences them and who has been mentors to them through their lives.

## additional resources

- *Public Achievement*, an experience-based civic education program for ages 8 to 18, created by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at University of Minnesota. More information is available at [www.publicachievement.org](http://www.publicachievement.org).
- *Active Citizenship Today* by Close Up Foundation and Constitutional Rights Foundation. Curriculum guides for middle and high school, teacher's handbook and implementation guide. Available at [www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org) or (800) 488-4CRF.



**PROFILE 6**

# evaluating the program & activities

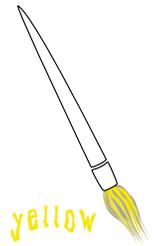
*“Our evaluation helps us re-assess the program model and make changes so that we are as effective as we can be.”*

– Fiona Tavernier, Project YES Administrative Support Coordinator

## **Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service)**

based in Oakland, California serving the city with a population of 375,000

<b>AGES</b>	5 to 18
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	1,200 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school, weekends, summer
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	25% – 50% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROJECT</b>	To build within youth a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to the communities where they live, as well as strengthen their academic and life skills. Learning to take responsibility for the destiny of their communities leads students to awareness of where they fit into the world at large.
<b>PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>	During the school year, AmeriCorps members work in schools with teachers to integrate service-learning into classrooms and lead after-school clubs that focus on service-learning and community service projects. During the summer, AmeriCorps members and program staff lead a six-week summer corps program for middle school youth using high school youth as assistants. Staff also provide teacher training in service-learning.
<b>SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION</b>	<i>East Bay Conservation Corps</i> is a local nonprofit corps that aims to promote youth development through environmental stewardship and community service and further education reform and social change.



## **environment**

### **PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- urban
- elementary school
- middle school
- high school
- after school
- weekends
- summer
- youth development
- conservation corps
- established 1989

evaluating program & activities

## **program background**

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED** 1989

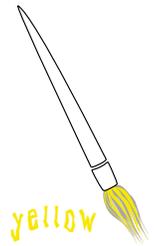
**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED  
USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1993

**STAFF SIZE** program manager (F.T.), service-learning specialist (F.T.), community service coordinator (F.T.), 3 school site supervisors (F.T.), 8 AmeriCorps members (F.T.), an administrative support coordinator (P.T.)

**STAFF TRAINING IN  
SERVICE-LEARNING** Some staff attend National Service-Learning Conferences and other such training opportunities; AmeriCorps members receive a month-long orientation focusing on service-learning, as well as weekly training on specific requested topics.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$850,000

**FUNDING SOURCES** AmeriCorps\*State/National grant, California Department of Conservation's Division of Recycling, Oakland Unified School District, foundations



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Conserving natural resources and the environment — *example: Youth create and maintain community gardens at school sites or collect and sort recyclable items at schools.*
- Improving schools
- Tutoring younger youth
- Helping the elderly
- Working at homeless shelters/soup kitchens
- Enhancing neighborhoods through beautification projects

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: academic achievement, environmental issues such as recycling and gardening, community history, visual art skills
- Social: leadership development, team work, communication — *example: Youth learn how to make decisions and complete tasks as a group, emphasizing each person's role and contributions to the group.*
- Civic: fosters service ethic
- Personal: planning and organization, importance of reflection

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Journal writing — *example: AmeriCorps members ask youth to answer a question about how a service activity made them feel. The member then makes comments to the youth after reading the journals.*
- Discussion planned by staff, impromptu discussion, journal writing, art projects, oral presentations, essay writing, discussion planned by youth

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program furthers personal commitment to service and the community through service-learning projects in schools and neighborhoods.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

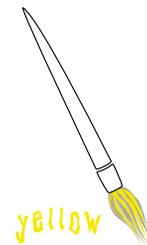
AmeriCorps members and staff work with an outside evaluator who designs tools and instruments for them to administer. The evaluator, who makes recommendations and reports to the program, analyzes data staff collects, as well as school records. The following tools are used for evaluation:

*For school year activities:*

- Youth pre- and post-survey on belief and service-learning practices
- Youth pre- and post-survey on actions and attitudes related to civic responsibility
- Interviews with youth, staff and teachers
- Grades assigned by teachers for classroom projects

*For summer activities:*

- Pre- and post- writing sample by youth
- Staff evaluations of youth at end of program
- One-on-one conference with staff and youth at end of program



*Throughout the year:*

- AmeriCorps member goal attainment scales
- Project evaluations completed by partnering organizations

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

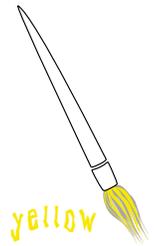
youth, AmeriCorps members, school staff, school district, community gardens, environmental nonprofit organizations, service and youth organizations, universities and colleges, city parks and recreation department, housing authority, merchants' association, county waste management authority, county recycling and composting programs, senior citizen homes, food banks

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 15 to 1 (for youth age 6 and older).
- Youth work together in corps.
- Youth develop one-on-one relationships with AmeriCorps members.
- Youth are exposed to community members.

### **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — participating schools, East Bay Conservation Corps space, project sites
- Schedule — after-school clubs meet for an hour and for five Saturdays per semester; summer program meets from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday; classroom activities vary throughout the school year
- Youth time commitment — for after-school clubs youth commit by semester for at least two days a week and five Saturday projects; for summer program youth commit to the six-week program



## how the program started

In summer of 1989, Project YES started as a pilot program modeled after the conservation corps' program which offers young adults opportunities to engage in environmental service and educational activities. Project YES targeted middle school students based on a national report documenting the needs of that age group, says Fiona Tavernier, administrative support coordinator who has worked for the program since its inception. The project used conservation corps interns to lead summer crews, after-school clubs, perform recycling skits in classrooms and help teachers plan service projects. In the 1992-93 school year, the program received an AmeriCorps\*State/National grant and hired college graduates as members to work in the schools with a service-learning rather than community service focus.

The program expanded to working with elementary and high school students in the 1993-94 school year due to a Learn and Serve America grant from the California Department of Education. The program worked with feeder elementary and high schools in an attempt to create continuous service-learning opportunities for students as they progressed through school. After a few years, the program phased out its presence at high schools and several elementary schools. "We found that our program ran best in middle school. The other schools did not have the same needs or structure of middle school," says Tavernier. "We decided we could better serve the youth of Oakland in middle schools." Currently, Project YES works with two elementary schools but plans to focus solely on middle schools in the future, with the exception of high school youth working as crew assistants during the summer corps program.

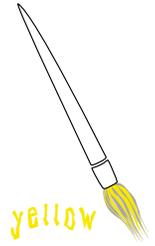
## narrative description

One crisp winter afternoon a dozen middle school youth and their adult leader walked off the campus and down the street. With clipboards in hand, the youth walked around the neighborhood jotting down what they saw as community resources and needs. Bus stops, graffiti, empty lots, parks and many other things were listed. This "walkabout" was just one step of many in this after-school club's plan to map the community.

The group of youth had started this project in December with discussions about the definition of community, how to identify community needs and resources, and how such information could be used to help improve the community. After the "walkabout," the youth created a survey and videotaped interviews asking community residents and other students what they viewed as local needs and resources.

"It is important for the community to know our resources and needs so we can be more like regular communities that have parks with lots of people and Boys and Girls Clubs that people can go to. Communities that don't have thugs around so people can play in the streets; and kids can just be kids," says Dasha Delley, a 12-and-half-year-old who worked on the project.

After spending months collecting information, the club members decided to present their findings to the school and community by painting a mural mapping the needs and assets in a nearby vacant lot. "We learned there are no places for kids to go after school, so maybe that's why they go into gangs and get in trouble," says Vanessa Roddy, a 13-year-old club member. "I hope the kids around here see the mural, grow up and become millionaires and build things for kids to do. If I had a million dollars I would build a building for Project YES and a place for kids to go after school."



## how it works

Eight AmeriCorps members each lead an after-school club at the elementary or middle school where they serve in classroom service-learning activities. A teacher at each school also works part-time for Project YES, helping AmeriCorps members in their service-learning activities, including the after-school club which typically meets in a teacher coordinator's classroom. The clubs are open to all students who apply and typically range in size from 15 to 25 students. AmeriCorps members choose most of the club activities, which range from service-learning to community service, based on students' interests. AmeriCorps member Paula Sobierajski says the youth have more ownership and voice in the club activities during spring semester after being exposed to different projects organized by program staff in the fall.

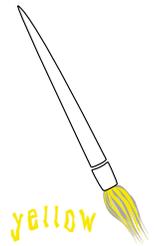
Several clubs operate school recycling programs, spending one day a week collecting and sorting recyclables and creating outreach posters or contests to encourage students to recycle. After tracking the recyclables, the clubs receive money through a recycling grant that they use for club activities and celebrations. The other two days at club each week are full of cross-age tutoring, tending to school gardens, visiting senior citizen centers, creating murals or learning about conflict resolution. Clubs also plan five Saturday projects per semester which vary from field trips to natural areas to tree planting projects to environmental education workshops. Youth receive \$5 education awards, or stipends, to cover food and transportation costs on these weekend activities.

"We see people in the community say we need to make the world a better place," says Danielle Roddy, a 12-year-old club member. "We are doing something, not just talking about it. That's what club is about."

Sobierajski says regardless of the project or activity, youth learn the importance of reflection. One common reflection activity for the clubs is to ask about the high and low points of the day's activities. Other reflection activities include writing in journals (which AmeriCorps members read and respond to), discussions or playing games. These regular check-in activities on how the youth feel about what they are doing seem to make an impression on how the youth process their experiences, even beyond club, says Sobierajski. "Once after a spring awards ceremony, one of the youth started teasing me by asking what I liked and didn't like about the ceremony," she says. "It struck me then, that they really realize and practice reflection after doing it with us in club so much."

Two representatives from each of the nine schools sit on a Youth Advisory Board, which meets monthly to plan program-wide events such as semester celebrations and camping trips, as well as to identify project ideas for the programs. The board serves as the primary vehicle for youth voice in project planning, since lack of time and the large number of youth involved forces summer projects to be planned months in advance, says Nancy Davenport, one of the program's school site supervisors. However on a daily basis, Davenport says youth leadership is fostered through responsibilities and roles for youth in the club and summer corps setting, from delegating tasks such as cleaning up to leading activities.

The summer corps program for youth ages 11 to 14 focuses on service-learning four days a week, with the fifth day for field trips to natural and cultural resources in the area. Youth must apply and be recommended by a teacher to participate. During the all-day program, youth spend mornings engaged in educational activities or presentations to prepare them for the afternoon service projects, coordinated by the program's community service coordinator. Projects range from litter clean ups at a



local lake to storm-drain stenciling. The educational activities relate to each project and include an emphasis on reflective writing and public speaking. In the past the school district awarded academic credit for the program's writing and public speaking activities, but lack of need for such credits ended that option. The youth are divided into crews of eight to ten with one or two supervisors, and based at one of three school sites. Some education activities and discussions are geared to an entire site, but crews generally rotate through various projects working independently.

In the summer program, AmeriCorps members, teachers and youth workers serve as crew supervisors, and high school students, who were usually involved in the program while in middle school, are hired as operations assistants. The program tries to empower, retain and promote youth throughout the various leadership positions to create a "cascading leadership model."

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- From a 1999 evaluation by Turning Point, Inc.: "Five of nine clubs/classrooms showed upward trends along four civic responsibility behavioral statements: 'I feel a part of the community;' 'I attend to news about the community;' 'I like to help even if it is hard work;' 'I know lots of people in the community.'"

### LEARNING

- From a 1995 evaluation by Loesch-Griffin, Petrides and Pratt: 221 students, mostly from middle school after-school clubs, completed pre- and post-activity questionnaires that showed increases in the following skills (in order of priority): coming to class on time, taking risks, completing tasks on projects, enjoying helping others in projects, being dependable for others, feeling comfortable communicating with ethnically diverse groups, taking the initiative to ask questions, and gaining an interest in doing something about community problems.

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*"I learned I can help myself and help others at the same time. I also learned I can do a lot more stuff than I thought I could. I think of myself as a positive person now."*

– Dasha Delley, 12-year-old club member

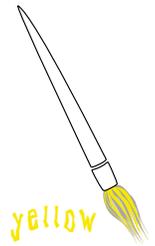
*"I learned that everyone is responsible for something. It may be something small or big, but we are all responsible for our part."*

– Danielle Roddy, 12-year-old club member

## what makes this program effective

### • EVALUATION EFFORTS GUIDE PROGRAM DESIGN AND ASSESS IMPACT ON YOUTH

The program annually budgets for an outside evaluator to conduct various evaluations. Early in the program a longitudinal study on youth participants was conducted, while more recent efforts have focused on the skills that youth gain from participation in the program. "We are doing the best we can to show that service-learning does support the development of skills that contribute to academic achievement," says Fiona Tavernier, administrative support coordinator.



The program uses pre- and post-surveys on beliefs, actions and attitudes to gauge youths' civic responsibility and response to service-learning practices. AmeriCorps members administer these surveys and the evaluator analyzes them, as well as school records such as grades and attendance.

School Site Supervisor Nancy Davenport says the strength of the program's evaluation is that it aims to measure what the staff know is working in the program. "We are trying to document the things we do well," says Davenport. "The [AmeriCorps members] don't change what they do to look good for the evaluation. What they do is good already, we are just documenting it."

Tavernier says that the conservation corps also requires each department to participate in an annual formal strategic planning process outlining goals and strategies for achieving them, which utilizes evaluation outcomes and aids in directing future evaluation efforts.

- **PROMOTES SERVICE-LEARNING IN BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL SETTINGS**

"Youth in our after-school and summer programs tell their teachers they want to do service-learning, so they promote it as a strategy," says Nancy Davenport, a school site supervisor. This encourages both teachers and program staff to emphasize youths' interests and needs and, in many cases, creates a more seamless experience for youth. Davenport also says several principals support the program due to the need for after-school clubs, which then paves the way for service-learning to enter the classrooms. The service-learning activities of the after-school clubs also seem more visible within the school and community, bringing wider support for service-learning overall.

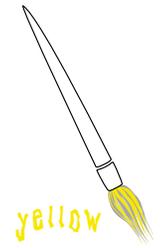
## challenges

- **KEEPING CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE AMONG YOUTH INVOLVED**

Despite informing youth of attendance expectations and having them sign a contract outlining five steps of disciplinary consequences, consistent attendance is an issue for most clubs. Staff tries to compromise with youth by asking them to commit to at least two days a week, while maintaining a sense of team and efficacy with those that attend regularly.

- **FINDING PROGRAM STAFF TO REFLECT THE CULTURAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY OF YOUTH INVOLVED**

Most of the current staff are white females, while most of the youth involved are African American or Asian males and females, which can create barriers in fostering one-on-one relationships. The staff tries to recruit potential employees to reflect the demographics of the youth, as well as deal with gaps in that area realistically. "We try to address these issues very openly. We also try to help youth view cultural backgrounds as an asset, such as using their language skills to connect with elderly in a senior home that share the same roots," says school site supervisor Nancy Davenport.



## recommended resources

(listed in the Project YES Service-Learning Guide)

- *Learning by Giving* by National Youth Leadership Council.
- *Reflection: The Key to Service Learning* by National Center for Service Learning in Early Adolescence.
- *The Complete Guide to Learning Through Community Service* by Lillian S. Stephens, 1995.

## contact information

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(510) 992-7832  
projyes@ebcc-school.org

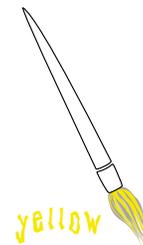
## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO EVALUATE THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

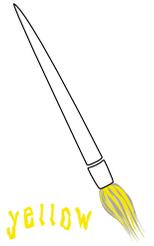
- *Identify what aspects of the program should be evaluated and for what purpose.* Evaluation could focus on impact on youths' attitudes, impact on adult-youth relationships, value of service work completed, community perceptions of youth, etc. Project YES initially focused on a longitudinal study of youth participants to assess the program's overall benefits to youth and then switched to evaluation focused on youths' attainment of skills that contribute to academic achievement.
- *Consider who should be involved in the evaluation process, including those whose experiences can be evaluated and those who can influence the design of the evaluation plan.* Those involved could include youth, program staff, service recipients, advisory board members, parents, teachers, and community members. Project YES has involved youth, AmeriCorps members, teachers and program staff in various evaluation efforts, including design of the evaluation.
- *Choose an evaluation plan appropriate to program needs, resources and time constraints.* Project YES has the resources and time to hire an outside evaluator to conduct its evaluation. The program also uses AmeriCorps members and staff to administer some of the evaluation instruments which are then forwarded to the evaluator.
- *Utilize existing data or evaluation tools when applicable.* Project YES uses school records such as attendance and grade reports of students involved in program activities to augment evaluation data.

## additional resources

- For self-assessment of overall program progress — *The YMCA Service-Learning Guide* by The YMCA of the USA, 2000. Available by calling 1-800-872-9622.
- *Doing Self-Directed Study for Service-Learning* by Robert Shumer and Thomas Berkas, 1992. Available from The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at 1(800) 808-7378.



- *Evaluation: The Key to Improving Service-Learning Programs* by Marybeth Neal, Robert Shumer, Kathleen Gorak and others. Also available from The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.
- *Service Learning Dipsticks: A Project Assessment Tool* by Service Learning 2000 Center, 1998. For more information, call (650) 356-0288 or contact SL2000@forsythe.stanford.edu.
- Project STAR (Support and Training for Assessing Results) at [www.projectstar.org](http://www.projectstar.org).



# evaluating program & activities

## PROFILE 7

# fostering positive human relationships

*"We know girls are not recognized too often as the leaders and girls pick up on that and start to play the role. We wanted girls to see they don't have to wait on boys. We want them to see that they need to take the lead now and we know that will only add to their development as they grow into being young women leaders."*

– Zola Shannon, Discovery Program Coordinator

### **Discovery: A Leadership Program for Girls and Women**

based in Minneapolis, Minnesota serving the northern and southern neighborhoods of the city with a population of about 200,000

<b>AGES</b>	9 to 14
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	112 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	after school
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% – 100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	Discovery Leadership aims to encourage girls and women to partner together to make positive change occur in their communities.

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The program promotes leadership among girls and women by bringing together girls who may not be identified as leaders and recognized and unrecognized female leaders from the community to engage in leadership development activities and plan a community action. Initiated by a facilitator from the YWCA, the groups of 12 to 15 girls and two to four women meet weekly as a group after school for 12 to 18 weeks to help young girls view themselves as leaders and complete a community action project.

### **SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

*YWCA of Minneapolis* is a branch of the national nonprofit organization (YWCA) that aims to empower women and girls and to eliminate racism.

*City of Lakes, Youth Works ~ AmeriCorps* is a national service program that aims to provide academic support and increase enrichment opportunities for children, youth and adults in three Minneapolis communities (see next page).



## human needs

### PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:

- urban
- elementary school
- middle school
- after school
- youth development
- established 1995

## program background

<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1995
<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	1995
<b>STAFF SIZE</b>	program coordinator (F.T.), staff person (F.T.), 3 AmeriCorps members (F.T.), volunteers, with oversight by one manager and director of social justice
<b>STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	YWCA staff are not trained in service-learning, but in topics such as gender equity and community organizing, in addition to monthly training in youth development, community activism and social justice issues with topics determined by staff needs.
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	\$100,000
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>	United Way, foundations, in-kind contributions from City of Lakes, Youth Works ~ AmeriCorps Program, schools, YWCA

## national service partner: CITY OF LAKES, YOUTH WORKS ~ AMERICORPS

### Sponsoring Community-Based Organizations:

Minneapolis Public School District – Family and Community Education, and YMCA

<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1994
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	500 youth annually
<b>NUMBER OF CORPSMEMBERS</b>	30 full-time equivalents

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

30 AmeriCorps members serve several school and out-of-school programs through various partnering agencies and schools to increase youths' academic performance and foster their service ethic.

### HOW DISCOVERY LEADERSHIP FITS IN

Several AmeriCorps members from the City of Lakes program serve as facilitators for Discovery Leadership groups as a portion of their service term.



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Organizing community action projects — *example: A group of girls organized a toy gun buy-back campaign in their neighborhood to raise awareness about violence.*
- Mentoring younger youth
- Working to change public policy
- Working to improve schools

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Social: leadership skills, communication
- Citizenship: community action, active citizenship
- Personal: self-esteem, values clarification — *example: Girls identify and discuss their talents, culture and skills in relation to how they can contribute to the group community action project.*

### CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Journal writing — *example: For the younger girls, the last ten minutes of the weekly session is reserved for them to answer a question posed by the facilitator in their journals. For the older girls, the facilitator gives them a topic to take home and write about in their journals.*
- Oral presentation, impromptu discussion, discussion planned by staff at the end of the program, collage cover for journals that represents themselves

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

- Youth identify, plan and implement action projects with guidance from adults.
- Youth receive training on leadership, including alternative leadership styles, and learn about examples of modern female leaders.

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program furthers understanding of an individual's impact on the community through action projects, while also fostering the ability to care for others through small group sharing.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

AmeriCorps members track their involvement with groups. YWCA staff analyze results of youth pre- and post-leadership surveys, teacher evaluations of youth, and informal entry and exit interviews with girls' guardians. Most assessment tools and evaluation methods are outlined in the Discovery Leadership curriculum guide (see recommended resources on page 111).



**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

Youth, adult volunteers, AmeriCorps\*State/National program, schools, youth organizations

**FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 15 to 3.
- Youth work in teams and with adults on projects.
- Youth are exposed to community members.

**PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — at participating schools and YWCA sites
- Schedule — once a week for an hour and a half (usually between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., depending on school site)
- Youth time commitment — for 12 to 18-week cycles



## how the program started

In 1995 several community leaders in the Twin Cities area developed a leadership program due to what they perceived as a shortage of young females with the vision or skills to lead the next generation of community programming. A model for females that focused on community action as the bonding experience between older and younger females, rather than mentoring, was drafted under the YWCA's lead. As the group looked for funding from the Lilly Foundation, the group linked with Girls, Inc. and the Girls, Inc. National Resource Center which works on curriculum development. The YWCA of Minneapolis and Girls, Inc. worked together to write the curriculum, pilot the program and assist in creating a replication process for Girls, Inc. affiliates across the nation.

Since then the Discovery Leadership program has become a part of the Minneapolis YWCA's annual programming, augmented by funding from the United Way. In 1997 YWCA partnered with the City of Lakes, Youth Works ~ AmeriCorps Program and several AmeriCorps members now serve as group facilitators. Also, every full-time YWCA staff member facilitates six to ten groups throughout each year.

## narrative description

A buzz of energy filled the room. A group of 12 Hispanic girls and a few women sat in a circle on the floor of the YWCA building late one weekend night chattering away in Spanish. They were just beginning their sleep-over for their Discovery Leadership group, which was especially for Hispanic females and facilitated bilingually by an AmeriCorps member.

They had been looking forward to this overnight adventure. It was their time to have fun with team building activities, talk about things on their minds and, most importantly, plan and shape their approaching community action project. To start off the event, they decided to tell the story of their lives in the Twin Cities and their experiences in the places they had been born. Each member of the group got a chance to tell her story when a wig, serving as a talking piece, was passed to her.

The wig had been passed almost all the way around the circle when it landed in Maria's\* lap. The group expected the shy girl to pass her turn without saying a word, since she had not spoken a word in the past seven weeks. She typically relied on her older sister in the group to respond to any questions directed at her. However, to everyone's surprise she blurted out her story in Spanish so fast no one could keep up with her.

Once their shock dissipated, the group asked her to repeat her story – slower so they could all finally learn more about this stranger that had been in their midst. Maria obliged, telling them of her life growing up in Mexico and her family's recent move to the United States.

The following week when the group's facilitator was at the middle school tending to some errands, Maria's teacher stopped her. The teacher asked what had happened over the weekend, because for the first time in months Maria had spoken in class.

\*Name has been changed.



## how it works

YWCA staff recruits a group of about 15 girls, typically from two consecutive grade levels, through teacher referrals or outreach efforts. The program targets girls that may not already be identified by peers or staff as leaders, but those that have such potential. YWCA also recruits two or three women who are “recognized and unrecognized leaders,” from mothers to politicians to business women to teachers, to join the group. “We wouldn’t necessarily recruit only recognized leaders, we would be looking at women who are leaders in a different sense – community leaders,” says Joyce Yamamoto, YWCA of Minneapolis director of social justice and co-founder of the program. The program seeks a diverse group of women, in ethnicity, age and leadership styles, who commit to the group for 12 to 18 weeks for one meeting a week. YWCA also assigns a staff member or an AmeriCorps member as facilitator of the group. This facilitator holds an orientation session for the women leaders to discuss their roles and responsibilities, define healthy boundaries for interaction with the girls and to answer any questions.

“We really try to emphasize that these women are not mentors,” says Zola Shannon, program coordinator. “They should see themselves as partners in the program, not mentors. The women should not answer every question for them. Girls are so used to adults coming in with answers, but we want them to see that they can do things themselves.” Shannon says many women struggle with this role. The facilitator aids in this area, showing the women how to assist but not dominate the girls’ activities. “When the girls ask me to make a phone call, I hand them a phone book and the phone. Together we practice how to call and inquire about information, and then they make the call.”

One adult volunteer says although it was hard at first to not mentor the girls, the program’s structure fosters more equitable relationships between the women and the girls. “I have created so many bonds with these girls. I think of them as little sisters,” says Joi Campbell, who has volunteered with the program for two years. “They don’t look at me coming in and being an authority figure, a parent or a teacher. We demand respect from each other. We are friends and partners.” Campbell says the adult volunteers demonstrate that women can reach personal goals and be involved in community service. “They can look at us and see that we have jobs, husbands, children and we still make time to be active in our community. We help them become determined to make things happen for themselves.”

The 12- to 18-week program is divided into three sections, following the curriculum guide produced by Girls, Inc. The first section focuses on building the group identity as one of leaders, while emphasizing each individual’s contributions. The group engages in art projects and games that celebrate who they are and their similarities and differences. They also talk about the characteristics and actions of leaders, different types of leaders and how they each possess leadership qualities.

The next section addresses their ideas about community and their role and responsibility in their community. The group first defines what community they feel they belong to, which varies from group to group due in part to the school district’s bussing patterns. “Students are bused into schools, so they are not all from the same neighborhoods,” says Shannon. “This brings up issues of class and race in these discussions.” To explore their ideas about community, the groups might conduct a community walk or anonymously tape record their thoughts on what community means to them and then share the recordings in a large group. Some groups



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create a visual representation of their community by drawing pictures of things they find in their community, such as stores, schools, parks, liquor stores and guns, and then attach them to a map of their community.

The last and longest section ties the first two themes together by challenging the group to select an issue in their community they want to change through an action project. “We try to get the girls to look at their role in the community. What can they do? Are they going to just sit back or are they going to take steps and speak up about what they see as problems?” asks Shannon. To inspire groups, facilitators frequently read stories about girls and women who have made positive impacts in communities (see recommended resources).

The facilitators also explain and emphasize the difference between community service and community action. “When we first start talking about community action with the girls they think we are talking about the do-good kinds of activities,” says Yamamoto. The program defines community action as a process that engages the community in working together to create a sustainable, positive change, rather than a one-time effort to fill a direct community need. As Shannon says, “When (the girls) identify a problem, organize others to join in and to follow their lead, change will happen and have an effect a long time after they are gone.”

Past community action projects have ranged from requesting state legislation to increase the number of jobs for 14-year-olds in a neighborhood to raising money for multicultural books at a local day care for teenage mothers. One group planned a march against violence, which has become an annual event. More than 100 people attended this year’s march, which began with a rally and the mayor speaking on violence. “The girls learned from that march that if they go into their community to do something positive, most people will support you,” says April Jennings, an AmeriCorps member and Discovery Leadership group facilitator. “They learned that they can make a difference and they can actually do something of that caliber without waiting for an adult to put it together.”

Breanna Watson, an 11-year-old who has been involved with Discovery Leadership for two and a half years, says she is particularly proud of the mural her group painted at her school last year, to which she contributed a flower and her initials. The mural depicts a young girl holding the world with children holding hands around the globe. “The mural is to teach people how the world should be,” says Watson. “I think some people listen to children, but more should because we have lots of good ideas on how to make things work.”

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

In the 1998-1999 program year:

- more than 115 girls and women connected and bonded through group activities
- 80% of girls and women “made change happen in their communities” through projects
- about 15 groups formed and worked together
- about 15 community action projects were completed

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“I learn a lot from different field trips and talking about things I don’t normally talk about. I learned how to be a better leader.”*

– Breanna Watson, 11-year-old participant



**“I think some people listen to children, but more should because we have lots of good ideas on how to make things work.”**

**– Breanna Watson, 11-year-old participant**

*“The girls really start to identify themselves as leaders. The goal is that they really see themselves as leaders, do-ers, starters and finishers. That they don’t think, ‘This is something I do when I turn 18,’ or ‘That’s for the boys to handle.’ They see that they can do something right now. There have been so many transformations. I have seen girls that at one point would wait around for someone else to do something and now they are taking more initiative.”*

– Zola Shannon, program coordinator

*“There is a huge impact on the community because people remember those community action projects. People still talk about the march on violence the girls organized. People remember these are middle school girls doing something for the community because they want to – they are not just talking about it, but doing it.”*

– Joi Campbell, adult volunteer

## what makes this program effective

- **PROGRAM FOCUS ON THE GIRLS’ SELF-ESTEEM AS A FOUNDATION FOR THEIR ABILITY TO CREATE COMMUNITY CHANGE**

“First we try to build their self-esteem, their belief in themselves. So many of the girls we work with are down and they don’t always get the attention they need and deserve. So, we work on their sense of value and self-worth first,” says Program Coordinator Zola Shannon. “When you value yourself, you are also going to value what’s around you. The girls are going to take care of what’s around them, who’s around them, and they are going to make better choices about their life. They can make choices to positively impact their community.”

- **GIRLS ARE EMPOWERED TO LEAD WITH SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM WOMEN VOLUNTEERS**

In an all-female environment girls can feel more comfortable taking risks to try leadership roles and can support and encourage each other to develop such characteristics. The women leaders and facilitator play a neutral role with the intent to facilitate the girls’ learning from experience. With the adults’ clearly defined roles to facilitate the process and encourage the girls, the girls are empowered in a safe and supportive environment.

- **LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE ETHIC IS FOSTERED BY ALL INVOLVED**

“The girls and the women provide examples and leadership for each other,” says AmeriCorps member April Jennings, with emphasis on the reciprocal nature of the interaction. “For myself and the other women, working with the girls makes me realize how important service work is. At the same time, the girls learn from examples of strong women who are volunteering and being resourceful.”

## challenges

- **RECRUITING AND RETAINING WOMEN VOLUNTEERS THAT REFLECT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH PARTICIPANTS**

“We want the girls to see and meet women that look like them, because we know that’s who they are going to connect with,” says Program Coordinator Zola Shannon. “We have to work on where to find such women and how to make the program more comfortable for them to participate in.” A major difficulty related to recruiting women is the afternoon meetings, which require women to leave work early once a week.



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The program has had success with teams of women who share the commitment to the group. The YWCA also plans to hire a volunteer coordinator to assist in recruitment for the program.

- **INCREASING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS DESPITE CHANGING SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

The amount of involvement with various community groups depends on staff's ability to maintain relationships with groups and weave them into group activities. "Not a lot of people understand community organizing and that their job might mean attending a neighborhood meeting, going to the PTA, knocking on doors and visiting with people in the neighborhood," says Yamamoto. The program tries to draw in new partners through the action projects, helping them realize how youth can help them meet their goals.

## recommended resources

- *Curriculum Guide for Discovery: A Leadership Program for Girls and Women* by Girls Inc. (Call Girls Inc. National Resource Center at 1-800-374-4475; materials distributed through a Girls Inc. affiliate or by becoming a licensee for distributing materials.)
- *Holding Our Own: A Handbook for Girls and Women Exploring Leadership* by Girls Inc. and YWCA of Minneapolis. (Call Girls Inc. National Resource Center at 1-800-374-4475.)
- *Girls and Young Women Leading the Way* by Frances A. Karnes, 1999.
- *Kids with Courage: True Stories About Young People Making a Difference* by Barbara A. Lewis, 1992.

## contact information

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(612) 588-9937

## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO FOSTER POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

- *Keep a low ratio of youths to adults.* School-age care standards recommend an adult to youth ratio of at least 1 to 15. Discovery Leadership aims for a 1 to 5 ratio of adults to youth to ensure that the youth receive the attention and guidance needed to positively impact their experience. The program tries to convey to youth their individual importance and the valuable skills and talents they each have. Adult volunteers can focus on a small number of girls to get to know them and develop trusting relationships, which help the women identify and foster each girls' talents.
- *Emphasize mutual respect between program participants.* In Discovery Leadership, adult volunteers act as partners to the youth, emphasizing that both groups can help each other. This mutual respect helps diminish



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feelings of inferiority and helplessness, which often occur as the “haves” and “have nots” dichotomy in service experiences. In Discovery Leadership the adults support the youth and empower them to achieve goals through their own abilities, rather than doing things charitably for them.

- *Adults learn about the developmental and individual needs of youth participants.* YWCA staff orient adult volunteers to the developmental and social needs of the youth involved. Background information on youth obtained through parents or school staff is conveyed to adult volunteers so they are aware of the youths’ needs.
- *Adults in the program interact positively among themselves.* Adults model the behavior and respect they hope to see youth adopt. In Girls Discovery, facilitators and adult volunteers communicate openly and maintain healthy relationships with each other, as well as with the youth. Facilitators often remind adult volunteers of their role as partners, not mentors, by offering suggestions to guide the youth rather than provide for them. Adult volunteers work cooperatively to lead the group through activities and address problems openly and respectfully if they arise.

### **additional resources**

- *A Trainer’s Guide to Caring for Children in School-Age Programs* by Derry Koralek, 1996.
- *Working with School-Age Children* by Marlene Anne Bumgarner, 1999.
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time at [www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC.html](http://www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC.html).



**PROFILE 8**

# building partnerships

*“We have all kinds of allies. We have a university and colleges, city departments, community-based organizations and merchant groups all supporting what we do and helping us do it.”*

– Karen Greenspan, Team Oakland Coordinator

**Team Oakland**

based in Oakland, California serving the city with a population of 375,000

<b>AGES</b>	15 to 25
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	120 annually
<b>TIMES PROGRAM OFFERED</b>	after school, weekends, summer
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% -100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	To engage young adults in youth employment skills and environmental education training while performing environmental community service projects in Oakland to develop future leaders in the community.

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

High school teens work in teams of eight to ten with an assistant team leader and team leader to develop job, leadership and environmental conservation skills through training and environmental service projects. During the school year, teams meet twice a week after school for workshops on leadership skills, environmental concepts, life and employability skills and other related topics. On Saturdays, the teams meet at community sites for environmental service projects. During the summer, youth serve five days a week for four hours a day with more emphasis on projects than workshops. Youth are paid for participation in all activities.

**SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

*City of Oakland Parks and Recreation Department* aims to maintain city park and natural areas and provide community recreation and nature programs.

*Youth Employment Partnership, Inc.*, is a non-profit organization aiming to provide training, staff and personnel resources to programs providing youth employment training and job-readiness skills.



## environment

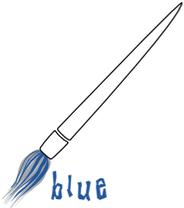
**PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- urban
- high school
- after school
- weekends
- summer
- city agency
- youth employment
- established 1994

building partnerships

**program background**

<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED</b>	1994
<b>YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	1994
<b>STAFF SIZE</b>	coordinator (F.T.), 2 counselors (P.T.)
<b>STAFF TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	Some staff attend leadership and service-learning trainings and symposiums.
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	\$500,000
<b>FUNDING SOURCES</b>	city-wide tax on garbage collection and in-kind donations



building partnerships

## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Presenting environmental education sessions — *example: Teams deliver presentations on environmental awareness topics to younger youth at recreation centers.*
- Removing litter and beautifying neighborhoods
- Coordinating community gardens

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: environmental concepts, health issues — *example: Through a partnership with a nearby university, youth attend workshops on composting, water cycles, environmental justice, and ecosystems.*
- Social: teamwork, leadership, public speaking
- Civic: community needs, individual's role in the community
- Personal: efficacy, personal responsibility
- Career/work: job readiness, work ethic, exposure to career possibilities

### CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Discussion within teams — *example: After a Saturday project, team leaders lead a discussion on what they gained from the experience, what could be improved, etc.*
- Yearbook at the end of the program year with photos, poetry and other contributions from youth
- Graduation ceremony with each youth speaking about their experiences

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

- Youth work in peer-led crews to decide how projects will be completed.

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

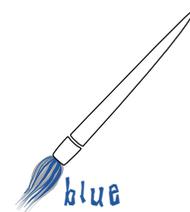
Program fosters personal commitment to service and the community, as well as furthers understanding of an individual's impact on the community through the projects based in youths' neighborhoods.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Staff evaluate the program based on assessments of youth participants. Youth complete a pre- and post-survey to gauge changes in attitudes, a pre- and post-test at each workshop, and counselors assess youth when they begin the program (and continually if needed).

### BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

participants, assistant crew leaders, crew leaders, staff, local universities and colleges, city department of parks and recreation, community garden groups, youth employment agencies, merchant associations, neighborhood councils, faith-based groups and other groups



**FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 10 to 1.
- Youth work in small crews with an assistant and crew leader who help foster teamwork and personal relationships.

**PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — workshops and trainings are held at a university campus, various community centers, and some nonprofit organizations' office space; projects sites are located in youth participants' neighborhoods
- Schedule — during school year: Tuesday & Thursday or Wednesday & Friday from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.; during summer: Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon or 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Youth time commitment— goal is one year; prolonged involvement requires a promotion to assistant team leader or team leader



## how the program started

In 1994 the program was created after the mayor of Oakland passed a 5-cent tax on city residents' garbage collection fees to support a youth employment program that focused on beautifying the city's neighborhoods. The program was housed in the city's public works agency with the environmental services department. The city partnered with a local nonprofit organization that specializes in youth employment programs to assist in the program design, curriculum, training and personnel tasks. The program focused on working with merchant associations to clean up neighborhoods and commercial districts to aid in the city's revitalization efforts. When a new program coordinator joined the staff in 1997, she added a leadership component to the program and focused on service-learning projects beyond litter pick-up and park beautification. In 1999, the program was moved to be administered through the city's parks and recreation department in an effort to house all youth programs in one department.

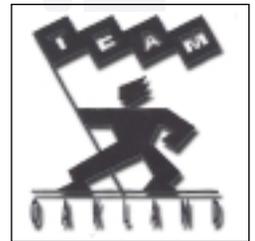
## narrative description

Four small groups of teenagers and young adults hover around tables, catching up with one another. Their chatter fills the large recreation room, whose walls are full of posters depicting Native American heritage. After several minutes pass, a woman calls the crowd's attention. She describes to them a team building challenge as she passes a long piece of rope and blindfolds to each cluster of youth. Soon the teams spring into action to solve the problem – to create a perfect square with the rope while blindfolded and without speaking. Silence falls over the Native American community center, one of the many sites used regularly by the group. After many attempts and several odd shapes, each group forms a perfect square.

The woman, Program Coordinator Karen Greenspan, moves on to the next activity for the afternoon. She and a fellow staff member explain the history of the environmental movement in the United States, including the history of Earth Day which is only a few days away. After their oral tour through "green history," the staff members quiz the teams on the presentation, awarding points for correct answers. The youth jump out of their seats to answer questions, using information they remember from previous outdoor projects and guest speakers to gain points for their team. After several rounds of questioning, a winning team emerges. Teammates congratulate each other and team pride escalates among all three teams. The participants disperse from the workshop in a buzz as the coordinator reminds them that their next meeting will take place at the university campus.

## how it works

Youth apply to the program, complete an interview and are assigned to a team based in their neighborhood. After an orientation, youth are assessed by a counselor who monitors their progress through the program and meets with youth if performance concerns or issues arise. During the school year, youth meet three times a week, twice with several teams for group educational workshops and once with their individual team. One weekday afternoon meeting takes place at a community center or nonprofit office space for life skills, job readiness or team-building workshops presented by Team Oakland staff. The next weekday the teams meet at University of California, Berkeley for training on various environmental topics related to their current service projects. On Saturdays, teams meet at their respec-



tive neighborhood project sites to complete service projects, ranging from landscape installation at a city park to asking residents to complete a community survey to working with neighbors in a community garden.

Youth are paid for every hour they participate in the program and staff focuses on developing a work ethic, as well as a service ethic, among the youth. For many youth the program is their first job experience, with rules, responsibilities and consequences unlike any they have dealt with before. The program enforces strict attendance and performance policies, and emphasizes personal responsibility and choice. Program Coordinator Karen Greenspan says this mix of employment, leadership and community service skills tends to exceed staff and youths' expectations. "We really see it working with the youth. They join because they want a job and then they get hooked on developing as a leader and doing things to help their community. They want to stay in the program and move up as an assistant team leader and a team leader," she says. "Their attitudes toward environmental issues change and they see how they can be leaders in their community."

Teams consist of about ten youth, typically ranging in age and possibly from different schools. A team leader, who is usually only a few years older and has been promoted from a regular participant, acts as the foreman of the group. Most teams also have assistant team leaders who are working their way to becoming team leaders. Team leaders lead weekly reflection activities for their team, handle conflicts and generally try to keep the team motivated and on track. All team leaders meet with program staff once a week to discuss future project plans, challenges they face and any other issues teams are dealing with.

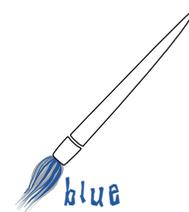
"Team leaders are like mentors. People look up at you to lead them. You have to be responsible, set examples and hope your members will become team leaders," says Freddie Cason, who was promoted to team leader after a year in the program. "The biggest challenge is getting them to listen," says the 19-year-old of his teammates who are between one and three years younger than him. "We have a meeting every Saturday and talk about what we need to do to be a better team. That seems to help us."

Team Oakland's partnerships with varying groups enrich the youth participants' experience, through both service projects and educational workshops. Service projects are identified and planned by the program coordinator through a combination of approaching organizations and receiving requests from various agencies. Each neighborhood team works with community organizations in that area, such as merchant associations, neighborhood crime prevention councils, cultural organizations, and faith-based groups. From these partnerships, projects for each neighborhood team emerge, such as creating marionette puppets and an accompanying play for a Chinatown festival, maintaining landscapes at a botanical garden, decorating sidewalk planters with colorful mosaics, planting natives for a creek restoration project and painting murals at schools for neighborhood beautification. Although the program has branched out from its community clean-up roots, teams also continue to pick up litter and help neighborhoods stay clean.

"[My team's neighborhood] was filthy everyday," says Cason. "We started picking up trash there and now it is getting better every day. People around there are helping. The merchants and people who live there even bring us food and drinks when we are working there."

Team Oakland also partners with a wide variety of community groups to provide educational workshops for youth. Both during the school year and in the summer,





teams attend classes at University of California, Berkeley's School of Natural Resources. University students and professors lead workshops for them on environmental justice, ecosystem protection, soil pollution monitoring and other topics related to the teams' current projects. University staff also plans field trips for the youth, such as nature hikes in nearby wilderness areas or tour a of a local estuary to explore its wildlife and water quality issues. Some youth qualify to participate in a special environmental education summer session, which they receive academic credit for.

The other half of Team Oakland's educational workshops are presented by various staff members and representatives from other agencies. In the past, people from community gardens, Planned Parenthood, college student clubs, community art organizations, environmental consultants, and city departments have presented workshops. Workshop titles vary according to the needs of the youth, upcoming service projects and the community needs to be addressed. Issues such as multicultural diversity awareness, breaking the cycle of violence and substance abuse are often included. Team leaders are required to present workshops to the group. Some topics such as resume writing, interviewing, the history of Oakland, leadership, community needs assessment and teamwork are presented by program staff and are included in every program cycle.

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

- About 30 service projects are completed each year.
- Partnerships are established or maintained with about 15 community organizations each year.

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*"Staff could ask [the youth] at the start of the program what they know about the environment and if they conserve energy or recycle. They wouldn't know much nor be active. By the end of the program, the youth say they are never going to litter again and they are trying to convince their families not to litter. There is definitely an attitude shift on environmental issues and on their sense of being part of a team."*

– Karen Greenspan, program coordinator

## what makes this program effective

- **A WIDE VARIETY OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS HELPS THE PROGRAM MEET THE COMMUNITY'S SERVICE AND YOUTHS' EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

By finding community allies within each neighborhood served, the program can align its capabilities to the particular needs of the area. Also by partnering with a broad range of community-based groups addressing different city-wide issues, the program can provide youth educational workshops that fill their needs and provide them with a broad range of life skills.

- **STABLE FUNDING SOURCE FOR PROGRAM ALLOWS STAFF TO FOCUS ENERGY ON PROGRAMMATIC IMPROVEMENTS**

"Probably the most important factor in our success has been our stable funding source. We are able to improve our program each year without facing or worrying about cutbacks," says Program Coordinator Karen

Greenspan. With the program's funding drawn from a city-wide tax on garbage collection, program staff does not need to dedicate large amounts of time to writing grants or otherwise securing funding. However, despite the constant local funding source, the program may face difficulties if minimum wage is increased.

- **USING PEERS AS LEADERS IN THE PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

Using older youth and young adults as leaders and supervisors helps younger youth adjust to the program's expectations and structure. The young leaders can relate to the younger participants and model acceptable performance. "It is hard for team leaders to be supervisors to peers that are not that much younger than them. It is a crash course in being responsible and leading," says Karen Greenspan, program coordinator. "But it is amazing how much more effective they are than [program staff]. The teenagers admire them and look up to them – even though they are not that much older."

## challenges

- **MANY YOUTH INITIALLY LACK SELF-DISCIPLINE AND COMMITMENT TO PROGRAM**

Often the program is the first strict and structured activity youth have been involved in through their own choice, says Program Coordinator Karen Greenspan. At times, it is difficult to help youth recognize the responsibility connected to their choice to participate. "Sometimes they don't show up to work on time, some have never worked under a supervisor before and other such issues come up, which are challenging," says Greenspan, especially when other groups are depending on the teams to complete projects. "But we go through workshops on what it means to be a team player, interpersonal communication and other skills to help in those areas."

## contact information

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## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS

- *Approach potential partners with the ways their goals intersect with yours.* Team Oakland staff present how working together with other groups can be mutually beneficial for both parties. For example, a merchants association may benefit by providing the materials for a sidewalk planter project, which will boost the attractive atmosphere of the business district as well as renew community pride and offer youth an opportunity to learn new skills.
- *Seek potential partners that can bring various resources to the program.* Team Oakland has partners who help provide educational workshops for youth, others who help identify neighborhood needs and others who have service project sites that teams can work on.



- *Partnerships can vary in degree of commitment and involvement.* Some partners can offer specific resources or address certain on-going or short-term needs. Each partnership should vary to reflect the needs and abilities of the particular organizations involved. Team Oakland has a long-term close relationship with the university that provides weekly training for youth, whereas the program may not communicate regularly with a health organization that presents a workshop once a year.
- *Clearly articulate the motivation and goals of all partners.* Partnerships need to share a common vision and understand each other's motivation for reaching that vision. Open and clear communication at the beginning of a partnership can help avoid conflicts and unmet expectations in the future.

### **additional resources**

- For designing partnerships – *Building Sustainable Partnerships: Linking Communities and Educational Institutions* by Robert Sigmon, National Society of Experiential Education, 1998.
- *Linking Learning With Life Series* by National Dropout Prevention Center, which includes booklets titled, “Partners In Prevention: Involving College Students in Dropout Prevention,” “Off Their Rockers Into Service: Connecting the Generations Through Service Learning,” “Parent Involvement in Service Learning,” and “Connecting Communities Through Service Learning.” Available at [www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org) or (864) 656-2599.
- America’s Promise at [www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org)



## PROFILE 9

# providing accessible places and times for activities

*“Our museum’s environment helps us attract volunteers because it looks fun and inviting.”*

– Lynne Goodwin, Director of Treehouse Children’s Museum

### Treehouse Children’s Museum Learn and Serve Program

based in Ogden, Utah serving a region with a population of 233,000

<b>AGES</b>	12 to 18, and 8 to 12 with an accompanying parent
<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	350 annually
<b>TIMES ACTIVITIES OFFERED</b>	during school, after school, weekends, school holidays, summer
<b>OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME</b>	75% – 100% of programming
<b>USE OF SERVICE-LEARNING</b>	almost all activities use service-learning as a strategy
<b>MISSION OF PROGRAM</b>	To involve youth in providing the encouragement and the instruction that will foster reading and language readiness among young children coming to Treehouse Children’s Museum. Informal goals include: (1) keeping older children involved in the life of the museum, (2) providing opportunities for youth to mentor younger children and in turn be mentored by adults, and (3) to provide future parents with skills they will need to raise readers.
<b>PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>	High school and middle school youth volunteer to lead and assist younger youth and their families in various activities geared toward reading and language readiness at the museum. High school youth serve in shifts after school and on weekends and attend monthly volunteer meetings for training and reflection activities. Middle school youth participate in the summer Special Participating Youth (SPY) program doing similar types of activities with museum visitors.
<b>SPONSORING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION</b>	<i>Treehouse Children’s Museum</i> provides interactive literacy, language and learning activities, exhibits and programs for families.



## education

### PROFILE HIGHLIGHTS:

- suburban
- urban
- middle school
- high school
- during school
- after school
- weekends
- school holidays
- summer
- nonprofit museum
- established 1992

## **program background**

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED** 1992

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED  
USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1998

**STAFF SIZE** manager of volunteers (F.T.), Learn and Serve coordinator (P.T.)

**STAFF TRAINING IN  
SERVICE-LEARNING** The manager of volunteers attends training from Learn and Serve America and the Utah Committee for Volunteers, and then trains other staff.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** about \$30,000, with \$21,500 in grant funding and the remainder from in-kind donations

**FUNDING SOURCES** Learn and Serve America Community-Based grant, foundations, corporations, donations, nonprofit organizations



## community-based service-learning during out-of-school time practices

### SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Mentoring younger youth — *example: Youth volunteers engage children visiting the museum in language activities such as an interactive game teaching them to identify vowels.*
- Helping parents and grandparents facilitate literacy activities
- Working to enhance schools through enrichment and service-learning activities

### IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Intellectual: how children learn, language development processes, reading comprehension, exhibit information such as global music instruments and Utah state history — *example: Youth volunteers learn the developmental process of a child in relation to how and when they gain reading comprehension and spoken language skills.*
- Social: teamwork, parenting skills, behavior management
- Career/work: exposure to teaching

### CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

- Interactive games to prompt discussion — *example: In the “Snowball Fight,” youth write down something they learned, felt or experienced at a service activity, crumple the paper up and throw them at each other like snowballs. Once everyone has tossed their “snowball,” each person picks up the crumpled paper closest to them and reads it aloud in a sharing circle.*
- Art projects — *example: After reading a story about tying knots, each youth is given four different colored strings, with each color representing a different story genre. Each time the youth learn a new story they would tie a knot on the rope, helping them remember what they learned.*
- Discussion planned by youth, written evaluations, drama activities

### INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP

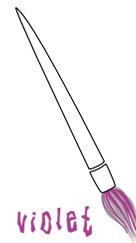
- Youth serve on an advisory board.
- Youth select the types of exhibits and activities they would like to be involved in.
- Youth choose their own schedule for volunteering.

### FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Program fosters the ability to care for others through small group work with younger youth.

### EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

Museum staff track youth volunteer hours and involvement in various projects, which is reported to funders. Staff also uses various reflection activities, such as short written activities, art projects, and discussions, in addition to exit interviews to assess what youth volunteers learn from the program. “We don’t want them to feel like they are in school, so we focus on reflection



instead of evaluation,” says Lynne Goodwin, museum director. “There also seems to be cross-over between reflection and assessment, with the reflection being the learning they apply to themselves personally. We know from our exit interviews they learn things related to people skills and being on a team, as well as the importance of reading to young children and other types of reading skills.”

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

Youth volunteers, staff, school districts, colleges, youth organizations

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- Youth/adult ratio is 3 to 1.
- Youth volunteers lead youth and other museum visitors in small groups.
- Youth usually volunteer in pairs or small teams.

### **PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

- Facilities — four mall storefronts serve as a children’s museum totaling about 17,000 square feet
- Schedule — youth can volunteer for any available shift while the museum is open; middle school youth volunteers serve four hours per week in the summer
- Youth time commitment — no set amount, although youth are encouraged to participate for a goal of at least 50 hours



## how the program started

When the museum's initial volunteer program, which was geared toward adults, experienced recruiting problems, its steering committee decided to investigate using youth volunteers. After contacting schools and various youth organizations to gauge the need for such a program, the museum developed its youth volunteer program. The museum secured funding from a local foundation to hire a volunteer manager and in 1998 received a Learn and Serve America Community-Based Grant.

## narrative description

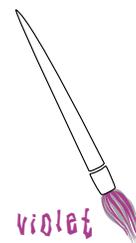
A group of youth volunteers sit in the center of the children's museum theater. Costumes and props line the stage and anticipation fills the room. The Youth Advisory Council and museum staff explain the basic procedures for the upcoming week-long event, the Enchanted Woods. The Woods was designed by the museum to offer an alternative to the scary side of Halloween, blending interactive story-book activities with the traditional holiday customs such as dressing up in costumes and trick or treating. The Woods takes over the entire museum and draws some of the museum's largest crowds, totaling around 7,000 last year, making the youth volunteers' assistance critical to its success. Some youth volunteers act out the role of a story-book character, such as King Arthur who asks – Woods visitors to help him pull his sword out of a stone. Other youth volunteers help guide children through the hour-long trip through the Woods as they receive treats and meet friendly story-book characters along the way.

About forty youth volunteers and twenty adults are gathered at this orientation meeting for the approaching Woods event. Many of these teens have participated in this magical event before, either as volunteers or as visitors themselves. Others have never witnessed the Woods before, but are anxious to see the medieval dresses made of lush fabric, the enormous, lanky spider costume and the rest of the deflated story-book costumes piled up on the stage come to life.

Three weeks later, the same group of volunteers came together to reflect and celebrate another successful Woods. At this gathering, each volunteer shared a memory or experience from the event. Some expressed what they learned about themselves, or about other children. Others told of how a timid seven-year-old offered a volunteer some of his candy for safely leading him through the Woods. One youth volunteer, Ian Trew, who played Farmer McGregor from *Peter Cottontail*, said the children's reactions to the live story-book characters that walk around and talk to them during the event seemed to make the biggest impression. "I enjoy seeing the smiles on the faces of the children," says the 18-year-old, who has volunteered with the museum for a year and a half.

## how it works

Youth apply and interview to participate in the museum's Learn and Serve America program. Once accepted, youth receive a volunteer job description and an individual orientation from staff about the mission, activities and facilities of the museum. Working with youths' interests and availability, youth create a schedule to serve in pairs for a multiple-hour shift (or two) per week. For the first two shifts, new volunteers shadow an experienced volunteer to familiarize themselves with the museum's procedures and activities. Staff help volunteers track their hours on a paper tree that lives on a wall inside the staff office. As volunteers complete service hours, leaves bearing their names migrate up the branches of the tree.



**"I enjoy seeing the smiles on the faces of the children."**

**– Ian Trew,  
youth volunteer**

accessible places and times

Youth volunteers help develop and lead activities that teach the alphabet, the concept of reading left to right, the difference between vowels and consonants, and other reading skills. They also read aloud to groups of children and parents, create crafts related to reading for the museum gift shop, and lead parent-child reading events. Youth plan and facilitate art, drama and storytelling activities focused on making children's literature and reading fun.

"All of the museum's exhibits have different activities we can do with kids," says youth volunteer Laura Woolf. "We teach them about things they learn in school, but we do it with games." Woolf enjoys working with youth in the Art Garden. Inside the miniature garden fence, Woolf sits at a round, low table with a group of children who play a game identifying vowels. Woolf has always enjoyed children and began volunteering with the program over the summer as a way to spend time with her mother, who also volunteered. Once school started, she decided to continue with the program because she had fun and was learning new things. "I've learned how to teach children things, how to work with people and how to be more outgoing and not so shy and quiet," says the 16-year-old.

The youth volunteers seem to enjoy their role as teachers, especially since they are learning in the process. "I had to learn things about the exhibits and about how children learn to be able to teach them," says Ashley Holt. "I volunteered in other places before, but it was just office work. It wasn't hands-on helping and I wasn't learning." Holt, who fondly remembers visiting the museum when she was younger, serves in the program two afternoons a week. She enjoys helping children in various exhibits, such as teaching them about China and its culture while making origami at the Chinese exhibit or showing them international instruments and explaining how they originated at the music exhibit. "I teach them motor skills, how to use their hands, and cultural things, as well as the language and reading skills," says the 17-year-old, who has been volunteering for six months.

Some projects reach beyond the museum walls, such as the Read to Your Bunny project in which youth assembled donated books, books made by junior high school students and stuffed bunnies in baskets for single parents of preschool-age youth. For another project, students in a local high school science class contributed activity ideas for the museum's new medical exhibit about infants' development.

Staff work with the Youth Advisory Council, composed of 12 youth volunteers, to plan how youth volunteers can support various exhibits and events at the museum. The youth council meets every first Saturday to brainstorm ideas for new projects, exhibits, volunteer incentives and social activities. The council also works with staff to plan reflection activities for specific events or during monthly volunteer meetings.

Monthly volunteer meetings serve as a time to introduce new volunteers, recognize volunteers' accomplishments, announce new exhibits and projects, and train youth in a new literacy game, reading readiness strategy or story-telling activity. In addition to training, meetings allow all of the volunteers to gather together and reflect on their individual and shared experiences. Reflection activities range from discussions to written exercises to interactive games.

During the summer, high school youth continue to serve in shifts to assist the museum's visitors with exhibits and activities. In addition, youth ages 12 to 15 serve in the Special Participating Youth (SPY) program one afternoon a week. SPY participants attend training on museum policies, exhibit information and job skills, from filling out a time card to fulfilling the duties in a job description. Although



**"I volunteered in other places before, but it was just office work. It wasn't hands-on helping and I wasn't learning."**

**— Ashley Holt, youth volunteer**

accessible places

SPY youth focus more on facilitating activities rather than developing them, they have responsibilities such as cleaning the exhibits, selecting stories to read and assisting visitors. After each day at the museum, youth discuss the events of the day and what they learned. At the end of the summer, the SPY youth celebrate with a pizza party and several reflection activities.

## measurable program impacts

### SERVICE

According to program reports from July 1998 to July 1999:

- 413 youth volunteered 11,894 hours of service; 10 youth served 100 or more hours
- 141 adult volunteered 2,217 hours of service
- 554 people were impacted by the literacy component of the program, "Hands on Language"

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*"One youth volunteer had to work off community service hours, so he signed up with our program. One day his father stopped by and poked his head in and witnessed his son participating in a drama production for younger youth. He could not believe his eyes -- He asked, 'Does my son talk in front of all those people?' That young man even recruited two of his friends to volunteer with us."*

– Chris Grondahl, manager of volunteers

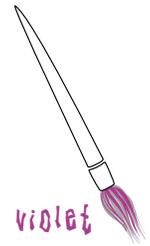
*"We try to convey to the youth that service helps part of the community keep going. We also believe the best citizens are also good parents. Our youth learn many parenting skills and what it takes to be a good parent."*

– Lynne Goodwin, museum director

## what makes this program effective

### • ENGAGING AND STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH AT AN ACCESSIBLE LOCATION

"Youth volunteers tell us they like being involved with a program that devotes such quality to the children it serves, which they can see in how the museum and its exhibits look," says Lynne Goodwin, museum director. "Our museum's environment helps us attract volunteers because it looks fun and inviting. There are also a lot of volunteer opportunities to make the museum even more fun." The museum, located in a downtown mall, consists of four mall storefronts that have been transformed into a colorful, engaging wonderland of story-book settings, foreign lands and fun-filled activity stations. Volunteers have contributed ideas and labor to make the museum's high-quality exhibits and facility a reality. One corner houses an oversized stuffed grandmother that serves as a chair for youth and their parent to sit on while reading a book. Another area is fenced off for an area serving as an art garden with bright colored round tables for groups to work on arts and crafts projects. A wooden tree, complete with ladders and hide-out platforms, sprouts from the center of the museum and reaches to the ceiling. In another room the floor is a large painted map of Utah with an interactive game to test knowledge of state history. The various rooms and their high quality exhibits stimulate and engage youth and adults alike, and offer a safe and comfortable environment for child-like creativity.



- **YOUTH CREATE THEIR OWN SCHEDULE**

Teenage volunteers decide on their own schedule at the museum, which allows them flexibility to balance other obligations and extracurricular activities. The youth can also pick shifts at the museum that coincide with the activities they enjoy most, such as the art garden or story time. Staff help youth select a shift, which they try to keep regularly each week.

## challenges

- **YOUTH VOLUNTEER TURNOVER CONSUMES STAFF TIME AND RESOURCES**

With many youth volunteers involved in other extracurricular activities, having part-time jobs and facing the demands of school, many youth leave the program before reaching their 50-hour goal. This attrition forces staff to invest more time and resources into recruitment and training to keep a steady number of youth involved. Staff try to clearly articulate the time commitment involved when talking with prospective youth volunteers to avoid future problems.

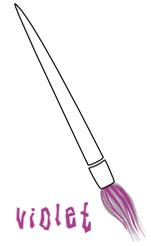
## contact information

Lynne Goodwin, Museum Director  
Treehouse Children's Museum  
2255 B Ogden City Mall  
Ogden, UT 84401  
(801) 394-9663  
[www.relia.net/~treehouse/](http://www.relia.net/~treehouse/)

## applying lessons learned

### HOW TO CREATE ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES

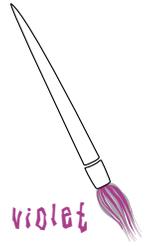
- *Involve youth in designing or decorating the program environment.* Ask youth how to make the program facility more comfortable, inviting and youth-friendly. Treehouse staff consult with youth when trying to design a specific exhibit or brainstorm with youth when new décor ideas are needed. They also invite youth to construct and paint new exhibits, offering them new learning experiences and a sense of ownership over the museum. Youth at the museum take pride in knowing it is a place created especially for them.
- *Try to reflect youths' interests and needs in the physical environment.* Treehouse appeals to youths' need for childlike play and stimulation of their imagination. The museum's exhibits engage the younger youth visiting the museum, as well as offer a refuge from the pressures of adolescent and teenage life for youth volunteers. Young and older youth can escape into creative and fun activities in the colorful, imaginative museum full of story-book settings.
- *Keep youths' various learning, communication and work styles in mind when arranging meeting, recreation or work space.* Within space and resource constraints, try to appeal to youths' differing ways of learning and working. The museum has an art garden where groups of youth help numerous visitors with activities at small tables and chairs. In another area, youth volunteers can read stories to visitors sitting on the floor in a quiet alcove.



- *Check program facilities for safety and adequate heating and lighting.*  
Program facilities should be free of hazards and staff should regularly check the safety of the environment, including equipment and supplies. Staff should test equipment and tools and provide clear instructions and safety measures for youth and volunteers. Indoor environments should have adequate heating and lighting, and outdoor sites should be well combed for any hazards, from car traffic to poison oak.

### **additional resources**

- *Landscapes for Learning: Creating Outdoor Environments for Children and Youth* by Sharon Stine, 1996, John Wiley and Sons.
- *Design Standards for Children's Environments* by Linda Cain Ruth, 1999, McGraw Hill Text.
- *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School* by Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, available from the U.S. Department of Education at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) or (800)-USA-LEARN.



## index of snapshot program profiles

community-based organization	YMCA Earth Service Corps	Volunteer Center of Manatee County, Inc.	Girl Scouts of Central Maryland	Sunshine Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls	Washtucna 4-H	City of Decatur Recreation and Com. Serv. Dept.	Ohio-West Virginia YMCA	East Bay Institute for Urban Arts
<b>highlight</b>	network of after school clubs	grant-making youth council	short-term project	menu of projects	community development	an element in programs	youth camps and clubs	apprenticeship
<b>location</b>	urban/suburban	suburban	urban/suburban	rural/suburban	rural	suburban	rural	urban
<b>ages</b>	12-18	12-18	5-17	5-18	5-18	11-14	7-18	15-20
<b>times program offered:</b> (before school) (during school) (after school) (weekends) (holidays) (summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•before school</li> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•holidays</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•before school</li> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•holidays</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•before school</li> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•holidays</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•after school</li> <li>•holidays</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•during school</li> <li>•after school</li> <li>•weekends</li> <li>•summer</li> </ul>
<b>frequency of service-learning activities</b>	weekly	2 three-week grant-making cycles	annual project for between 2 and 26 meetings	varies with each youth	varies from once a week to once a month	weekly and monthly	varies from week-long camps to on-going clubs	3 days/week (school); 5 days/week (summer)
<b>primary service type:</b> (human needs) (education) (environment) (public safety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> <li>•education</li> <li>•environment</li> <li>•public safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> <li>•education</li> <li>•environment</li> <li>•public safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> <li>•education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•human needs</li> <li>•education</li> </ul>
<b>CBO type</b>	youth development	volunteer center	youth development	youth development	youth development	city recreation department	youth development	community arts
<b>year began using service-learning</b>	1989	1995	1991	1995	1997	1995	1920's	1994
<b>annual number of youth involved</b>	600	40	1,500	at least 500	960	300	9,000	180
<b>program staff size</b>	21	1	2 to 4	9	13	7 to 8	9	30
<b>annual budget</b>	\$100,000	\$25,000	n/a	n/a	\$70,000	\$72,000	\$900,000	\$250,000

**SNAPSHOT I**

# network of after-school environmental clubs

**YMCA Earth Service Corps, Northwest Regional Center**

based in Seattle, Washington serving King County with a population of 1,664,846

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
12 to 18	100%	before school, lunch breaks, after school, weekends and summer	environmental service-learning projects and participate in regional leadership and networking events	weekly for about an hour; varies with special events	youth development

**CBO** YMCA Earth Service Corps Northwest Regional Center

**CBO MISSION** To empower students to become effective, responsible global citizens by providing opportunities for environmental education and action, leadership development, and cross-cultural exchange.

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1989

**YOUTH INVOLVED** about 600 annually

**STAFF SIZE** 1 program director, 10 YMCA branch youth development directors and 10 AmeriCorps members

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$100,000

**FUNDING SOURCES** fundraising, AmeriCorps\*State/National grant, in-kind donations, grants

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• environmental projects</li> <li>• educating peers/community on environmental issues</li> <li>• community organizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• environmental concepts, stewardship practices, environmental justice</li> <li>• community needs, civic responsibility</li> <li>• public speaking, project planning, teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussion after events</li> <li>• weekend retreats</li> <li>• group skits, narrated slide shows of project sites</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth initiate, identify, and plan projects
- youth leadership activities/skill building
- youth advisory council

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding the individual's ability and impact on the community
- personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- impacts evaluation completed by staff for funders (see Measurable Program Impacts on the next page)
- impacts evaluation completed by outside evaluator (Search Institute) for funder

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- YMCAs, AmeriCorps\*State/National, schools, environmental groups, colleges, service organizations

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio is below 1:15
- one-on-one opportunities between youth and adults
- exposure to community members; positive peer relationships through teamwork

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* — classrooms, YMCA space, outdoor project sites
- *Schedule* — varies, but usually weekly for about an hour
- *Youth time commitment* — varies from club to club

## **how it works**

YMCA Earth Service Corps (YESC) is a club-based environmental service-learning program with six regional centers coordinating activities and helping YMCA branches with 193 clubs nationwide. YESC started in Seattle, now a regional center that supports 32 YMCAs and 65 clubs. Most of the Northwest Regional Center's clubs work with a YMCA branch, which each use an AmeriCorps member to coordinate clubs at multiple schools. Clubs typically meet once a week, some for 20 minutes during lunch breaks while others met for an hour and a half after school. Each club has an adviser, which can be a teacher, counselor or other adult, in addition to one or two other adult volunteers to guide the club of between four and 25 youth. Clubs use a handbook and resource booklets created by the national YESC (see recommended resources on page 135). Youth determine the group norms, including membership guidelines with some clubs asking youth for a year-long commitment and electing club officers, to other clubs planning drop-in activities and using informal leadership roles.

Clubs use a "crawl, walk, run" approach for their environmental service projects. Initially, clubs start with "crawl" projects by participating in short-term projects planned by community partners which expose youth to project sites and local needs. As clubs progress, they become involved in the planning and help organize a project over a period of time, or work on a "walk" project. Eventually clubs get to the "run" level, which means long-term and youth-initiated projects, such as a high school club that launched a letter writing campaign against linking education funding to local industry after researching the implications of their school using funds from local logging companies.

The regional center coordinates several events for clubs in an effort to create a network of young environmentally active youth. Many of these activities are planned by the Student Advisory Council, which has representatives from different clubs and meets once a week. The council plans special events such as an environmental justice weekend that consisted of a tour of environmental and community project sites and meetings with local activists. Each year the council also helps

plan a fall and a spring weekend retreat for club members to attend workshops, leadership activities and meet youth from other clubs. Environmental symposiums have also been held at college campuses to expose club members to environmental careers, workshops by college students and environmental research projects. A Community Advisory Council, composed of adult volunteers, helps locate resources for individual clubs and regional events.

During the summer the regional center leads a program called Eco-Leaders, which hires low-income high school students to work on seven-week long environmental service-learning projects. Youth work with AmeriCorps members and YMCA staff on projects such as a photojournalism portfolio of an environmental issue or documenting a road trip to San Francisco that visits various sustainability sites and projects.

## **measurable program impacts**

The following data represents program activities between September 1999 and February 2000:

### **SERVICE**

- 70 environmental education and service-learning projects completed involving 344 youth donating more than 929 hours of service and 59 other volunteers donating 502 hours of service.
- 519 youth involved in environmental service-learning and environmental education activities and regional events through 69 collaborations with various community groups.

### **LEARNING**

- 88% of 49 youth surveyed reported an increase in understanding of how to plan and carry out effective club meetings for their peers and presentations on environmental topics to elementary school youth.
- Of 37 youth surveyed at a regional symposium on sustainable energy, 89% reported "I know more about sustainable energy now than yesterday," and 97% reported they were motivated to learn more about the topic.

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

(excerpts from the YESC Northwest Regional Center website, see recommended resources)

*"Now I think of the earth more than community service hours. The community around me has problems and needs more solutions. I used to be a follower and now I'm a leader, and my problem solving skills have been improved by the tasks I've been given."*

– Roy Kennedy, 18-year old member of the Student Advisory Council

*"The [YESC] program has made me aware of environmental problems, more than school or the news. The program has improved my leadership skills tenfold. I have become a leader. My actions will be different for having been in the program. Now when I buy products I buy natural and safe products to help the environment. The program has also made the eyes of the community look different on teenagers and what they can do for the environment."*

– James O'Connor, 16-year-old member of the Student Advisory Council

## **what makes this program effective**

### **• YOUTH EMPOWERED TO TAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES**

Clubs typically grow from youth interest and the regional center tries to heighten their enthusiasm and offer them opportunities to lead efforts. Program staff emphasize the importance and power of a network of environmentally active youth and their ability to individually and collectively create change, says Fran Lo, program director.

- **CULTURAL AWARENESS AND DIVERSITY IS WOVEN INTO MOST ACTIVITIES**

“Youth are exposed to and learn to understand different communities, values, cultures and perspectives through our regional activities and some of those in their clubs,” says Lo. Youth learn about the views of various cultures in the Pacific Northwest in terms of whaling, logging and land preservation, as well as global views on issues such as pollution, mining and wildlife management. Regional events allow youth to share their ideas and values with people from other cultures and communities.

## challenges

- **TRAINING IN SERVICE-LEARNING MODEL NEEDED FOR ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

“For service-learning to be incorporated, the adult leaders need some awareness of the service-learning model,” says Fran Lo, program director. Lo says YMCA staff and AmeriCorps members are trained in service-learning, but adult advisers usually are not involved in such training due to their busy schedules. Lo plans to organize a training for adult advisers in the future, as well as identify ways to make the club activities relate more to the schools’ classes.

- **PRESENCE OF A YOUNG ADULT GUIDE CAN INHIBIT YOUTH INITIATIVE TO LEAD**

“AmeriCorps members and YMCA staff do a lot to make clubs successful, but sometimes by having an enthusiastic young adult in clubs causes youth to not step up to be leaders. Some of the grassroots leadership by youth can be lost, because they know the young adult will and can do what needs to be done,” says Lo. To address this challenge, Lo says the program could do more training for young adults on how to facilitate clubs and empower youth, rather than lead youth.

- **SUPPORTING CLUBS THROUGH A MEANS OTHER THAN AMERICORPS MEMBERS WHO WILL NOT BE USED NEXT YEAR**

The regional center was not awarded a grant for AmeriCorps members in 2000-2001 school year, so YMCA staff and the regional center will rely more on teachers and advisers to sustain clubs. “We have to figure out how to better compliment what teachers are doing in the classroom,” says Lo. “We can’t ask teachers to take on too much more, so we need to have clubs play into what they are already doing with environmental education.” The regional center plans to help teachers link club activities to their classroom curriculum and activities, as well as recruit more adult volunteers to support clubs.

## recommended resources

YMCA Earth Service Corps website, which has club handbooks, regional center information and project ideas, at [www.yesc.org](http://www.yesc.org)

## contact information

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YMCA Earth Service Corps  
YMCA of Greater Seattle  
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Seattle, WA 98104  
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[www.yesc.org](http://www.yesc.org)

**SNAPSHOT 2**

# a grant-making youth council for service-learning

**Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc.: ManaTEEN Club’s Youth Service Learning Council**

based in Bradenton, Florida serving the rural and suburban county with a population of 85,000

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
12 to 18	75% – 100%	after school, weekends, school holidays and summer	youth council learns to award grants to service-learning projects	2 three-week grant-making cycles; several training sessions	volunteer center

- CBO** ManaTEEN Club of Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc.
- CBO MISSION** ManaTEEN Club aims to assist youth in fulfilling and documenting volunteer service-learning hours as recommended and/or required for the classroom or college scholarships while providing assistance to local organizations and creative solutions to meet community needs.
- YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1995
- YOUTH INVOLVED** 40 annually
- STAFF SIZE** 1
- ANNUAL BUDGET** \$25,000
- FUNDING SOURCES** Learn and Serve America Community-Based grant, foundations, corporations, local government, non-profit organizations

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• administering mini-grants for service projects</li> <li>• helping local groups write grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public speaking/teamwork</li> <li>• grant-making process, service-learning practices, project planning and design, budgeting and outreach methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group discussion</li> <li>• evaluation surveys</li> </ul>

**INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- almost all activities are youth led
- youth leadership activities/skill building
- youth elect own officers for various tasks

**FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens
- personal commitment to service and the community

**EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based and process evaluation (including youth satisfaction; how to improve program) completed by youth

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- Florida Learn and Serve K-12 program, Florida Commission for Community Service, Do Something Foundation, faith-based groups, families

**FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- positive peer relationships through teamwork
- exposure to community members

**PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc. office space
- *Schedule* – three-week grant cycles full of evening meetings, several training events
- *Time commitment* – about 100 hours

**how it works**

The council is composed of 40 youth officers, who each have completed more than 1,000 hours of service, who solicit, review, select and administer mini-grants to local groups for service-learning projects. The youth apply to be on the council and if selected commit 100 hours to afternoon meetings between December and July. Youth spend about fifteen hours a week on council activities during two three-week grant cycles, one in winter and one in summer. The rest of council members' time is spent in training workshops on service-learning practices, grant reviewing and attending the state commission's service-learning conference.

The grant cycle process starts with the council publicizing the mini-grant opportunities to local groups and distributing the grant application. Council members help groups who need assistance with planning out a project, creating a budget or completing the application. Then the council reviews the grants submitted, interviews representatives from each project for ten minutes, and selects projects that fit the criteria designed by the organizations providing the funds. The council aims for consensus on all decisions regarding the mini-grants, which usually means lengthy meetings for each council member to discuss their recommendations. After selecting projects to fund, the council administers the grants and requires the groups to complete a report after completing the project.

The council awards grants between \$100 and \$1,000 to groups that include youth as decision makers in preparing and completing the project. Past funded projects include \$1,060 to an educational consortium to organize a Kwanzaa celebration, \$ 119 to a local middle school for their involvement in a guide dog project, and \$1,500 for a poetry reading and Hiroshima commemorative project through the Peace and Justice Coalition.

## measurable program impacts

- between 1995 and 1999, \$43,000 in mini-grants awarded to local groups and organizations

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“I joined the council because I knew I would make an impact on the community and for the comraderie that the council fosters between the teens that join.”*

– Will Hauser, 17, council president

## what makes this program effective

- **OFFERS YOUTH AN ENTICING POSITION OF RESPONSIBILITY**

“Teens want to get involved because it is such a unique experience. They ask themselves, ‘When would I ever have the chance to give out tens of thousands of dollars?’” says Will Hauser, council president.

## challenges

- **ESTABLISHING AN APPROACH THAT BALANCES YOUTHS’ WORK ETHIC WITH FUN**

“It is tough getting the teens to a point where they come to our meetings with a strong work ethic,” says Will Hauser, council president. “We try to get the youth to treat being on the council like as job, but still make sure everyone has a good time.” Hauser says guest speaker presentations explaining how the council’s work impacts the community and how other grant-making entities operate has helped the youth appreciate their positions on the council and motivated them to serve well in their roles.

## contact information

Will Hauser, Council President  
Youth Service Learning Council  
ManaTEEN Club of Volunteer Services of Manatee County, Inc.  
1701 14th Street West  
Bradenton, FL 34205  
(941) 746-7117  
Manateens@aol.com

**SNAPSHOT 3**

# short-term project incorporated into ongoing program

## Girl Scouts of Central Maryland: Harvest for the Hungry Program

based in Baltimore, Maryland serving Baltimore and the five surrounding counties

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
5 to 17	75% – 100%	before school, during school, after school, weekends and summer	learning about the needs of children in poverty and malnutrition, and collecting food for food banks	short term project for between 2 & 26 meetings with youth	youth development

**CBO**

Girl Scouts of Central Maryland

**CBO MISSION**

To provide accepting and nurturing environments that encourage girls in small groups to build character and skills for success in the real world.

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING**

1991

**YOUTH INVOLVED**

varies; usually 1,500 or more annually

**STAFF SIZE**

varies from 2 to 4

**ANNUAL BUDGET**

N/A

**FUNDING SOURCES**

N/A

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collect food for food banks</li> <li>• work in soup kitchens and food pantries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• status of children living in poverty, hunger issues and function of food banks</li> <li>• malnutrition issues and healthy eating habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• art projects</li> <li>• group discussion</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth choose activities to participate in

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- personal commitment to service and the community
- ability to care for others

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- impacts evaluation completed by troop leaders (see Measurable Program Impacts)

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- food bank, soup kitchens, food pantries, All State Insurance Company offices

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio 1:4 for youth under age 6 and 1:10 for ages 6 and older
- one-on-one opportunities between youth and adults
- exposure to community members
- positive peer relationships through teamwork

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – Girl Scout troop group meeting space and local food banks and Girl Scout community activities
- *Schedule* – varies by troop
- *Youth time commitment* – between two and 26 troop meetings

## **how it works**

Girl Scout troops/groups can participate in the Harvest for the Hungry patch program by obtaining a program booklet that outlines the requirements, educational activities and service site contacts. Each troop/group, depending on age level, can choose from 25 listed activities which range from educational games about hunger to inviting speakers from hunger agencies to a council meeting to serving in a soup kitchen. The final activity for all troops/groups is donating food to the food bank during January and February. Girl Scout troops complete a pre- and post-tests, as well as an evaluation form before being awarded Harvest for the Hungry patches.

## **measurable program impacts**

- 26,936 pounds of food donated to the Maryland Food Bank by 1,788 Girl Scouts in fiscal year 1999

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

*“By developing this activity into a patch program, there is a way to reinforce what the girls have learned annually.”*

– Terry Anderson, Program Specialist

## **recommended resources**

Harvest for the Hungry booklet, (1999). Girl Scouts of Central Maryland. Available through the contact information listed below.

## **contact information**

Terry Anderson, Program Specialist  
Harvest for the Hungry  
Girl Scouts of Central Maryland  
4806 Seton Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 358-9711

**SNAPSHOT 4**

**a menu of activities and projects**

**Sunshine Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls**

based in Lakeland, Florida serving the rural and suburban area with a population of 165,000

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
5 to 18	75% – 100%	during school, after school, school holidays, weekends and summer	providing youth the skills and opportunities to plan and implement service-learning projects	varies with each youth	youth development

- CBO** Sunshine Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls
- CBO MISSION** Camp Fire Boys and Girls builds caring, confident youth and future leaders.
- YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1995
- YOUTH INVOLVED** varies, but at least 500 annually
- STAFF SIZE** 9 and volunteers
- ANNUAL BUDGET** depends on activities
- FUNDING SOURCES** no funds directly for service-learning activities, but council draws funds from United Way, foundations, contributions, local government, nonprofit organizations and fees paid by youth

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serve with child care providers</li> <li>• community organizing</li> <li>• environmental projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership, teamwork, communication skills</li> <li>• budgeting and planning skills</li> <li>• social, human needs and environmental issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating scrapbooks after projects</li> <li>• group discussion</li> <li>• journal writing</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth individually choose activities to participate in
- youth initiate, identify, and plan projects
- youth leadership activities/skill building

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding the individual's ability and impact on the community
- personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based evaluation (including impact on youth, community, and participating organizations; youth satisfaction; staff satisfaction) completed by staff for funders

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- schools, service organizations, environmental groups, senior citizen centers, colleges, family child care providers

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio is 1:5 for youth under age 6 and 1:12 for youth age 6 and older
- one-on-one opportunities between youth and adults
- exposure to community members
- positive peer relationships through teamwork

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – various community sites depending on project
- *Schedule* – varies
- *Youth time commitment* – varies from one-time projects to ongoing involvement

## **how it works**

This Camp Fire Council coordinates three service-learning activities:

### **VOLUNTEER YOUTH CORPS**

The corps acts as clearinghouse of service-learning opportunities for middle and high school youth. Youth collect service projects needs from agencies and project ideas from youth and publish them in a monthly newsletter sent to interested youth. Youth then choose which projects to participate in and how they will be involved, from doing a one-day service activity to planning and organizing a project for several months. Teams, including a Camp Fire staff member or adult volunteer, usually work on projects after school, on week-ends and during school breaks. The youth corps also hosts service-learning projects on national service days and as alternative spring break experiences.

### **SERVICE ROAD TRIP**

Youth plan a week-long road trip within the state to serve at various project sites. On the trip youth must locate the sites by figuring out clues created by the youth planners. Inspired by MTV's "Road Rules" show, this Camp Fire Council wanted to combine fun with service and learning about other communities and their needs. After setting out in rental vans with adult volunteers, youth navigate the route, budget funds for food, sleep in churches or shelters, and function as a close-knit crew serving in soup kitchens, national parks and other sites arranged by the youth planners.

### **A GIFT OF GIVING**

Camp Fire staff and volunteers provide train-the-trainer sessions for youth organizations and child care providers in a curriculum designed by the national Camp Fire Council called *A Gift of Giving*. After about three hour-long meetings, attendees use this training to incorporate service-learning into summer camps, after-school child care programs, and other types of youth activities.

## program impacts beyond the numbers

*“If it wasn’t for the service road trip I would not have known people like the ones we met were out there. We got to know some of the people at the homeless shelter and see what it was like to be in their shoes.”*

– Nicole Trueblood, 15-year-old Volunteer Youth Corps member

*“The service road trip was definitely a cultural awareness experience. It helped decrease stereotypes youth may have had by seeing the day to day experiences of the people they served.”*

– Holly Lane, Community Programs Director

## what makes this program effective

- **OFFER YOUTH A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES AND FREEDOM TO CREATE OWN SERVICE PROJECTS**

The council offers a broad range of projects for youth to choose from, catering to their interests, availability and skills. The council depends on *A Gift of Giving* service-learning curriculum, as well as a conscientious risk-management plan, to ensure the quality and success of the various activities.

- **PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES AND WORST CASE SCENARIOS**

Program staff try to be prepared for unfortunate events and articulate to youth the consequences of misbehavior. For example, for the summer road trip youth and parents signed a contract for participation stating that parents would pick up youth if they violated group norms. In another instance, a group of youth found a handgun a block from a school during a litter clean-up. Staff handled the situation by helping youth realize they may have prevented younger youth from finding it and harming themselves, says Community Programs Director Holly Lane.

## challenges

- **DIFFICULT TO FIND FUNDING FOR A MULTITUDE OF ACTIVITIES RATHER THAN A SINGLE, ANNUAL PROGRAM**

“Potential funders have a hard time understanding that we are not doing a project, but a bunch of projects that are all different but all need funding,” says Holly Lane, community programs director. Lane says she has trouble conveying how these various activities benefit youth and suit their needs, versus a traditional service program which the same set of youth attend regularly. Lane hopes to develop better evaluation methods to document the impact and benefits of the Camp Fire Council’s many activities, which may help improve funding requests.

## recommended resources

*A Gift of Giving*. by Camp Fire Boys and Girls. Contact the national headquarters to find a council nearby with curriculum materials and training opportunities; National Camp Fire Boys and Girls, 4601 Madison Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64112, (816) 756-1950, [www.campfire.org](http://www.campfire.org).

## contact information

Holly Lane, Community Programs Director  
Sunshine Council of Camp Fire  
2600 Buckingham Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803-3109  
(863) 688-5491  
[CAMPFIRE-LAKELAND@juno.com](mailto:CAMPFIRE-LAKELAND@juno.com)

**SNAPSHOT 5**

# community development for a rural area

**Washtucna 4-H: Bridging the Gap of Isolation**

based in Washtucna, Washington serving the frontier town with a population of 270 and surrounding areas

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
5 to 18	75% – 100%	before school, during school, after school, weekends, school holidays and summer	engage youth and adults in organizing and operating community events and youth activities	varies from once a week to once a month	youth development

**CBO**

Washington State University Cooperative Extension 4-H

**CBO MISSION**

To provide youth development education that creates supportive environments for all youth and adults to reach their fullest potential. This youth development will: (1) provide formal and informal community-focused experiential learning, (2) develop skills that benefit youth throughout life, (3) foster leadership and volunteerism in youth and adults, (4) build internal and external partnerships for programming and funding, (5) strengthen families and communities, and (6) use research-based knowledge and the land grant university system.

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING**

1997

**YOUTH INVOLVED**

960 annually in the two-county program; approximately 80 annually just in Washtucna

**STAFF SIZE**

13, varying throughout the year with some full-time, part-time and seasonal (just Washtucna has approximately 3 volunteers)

**ANNUAL BUDGET**

\$70,000

**FUNDING SOURCES**

U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center grant (shared with neighboring communities); U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Drug-Free Communities Support Program (also shared with other communities); Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development's (a division of National 4-H Council) Bridging the Gap of Isolation grant for in-kind training and technical assistance; local donations and other grants

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community organizing, community asset mapping</li> <li>• leading recreational and enrichment classes for others</li> <li>• planning, organizing, refurbishing a facility for a community center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community development methods</li> <li>• ability to care for others</li> <li>• leadership, communication skills, how to work with adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produced video with a partnering university to document activities</li> <li>• group discussion</li> <li>• written projects or reports</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth on decision-making committee
- youth initiate, identify, and plan projects
- youth leadership activities/skill building
- youth individually choose activities to participate in

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding the individual's ability and impact on the community
- understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens
- personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based evaluation (including impact on youth, families, community, and participating organizations; youth satisfaction; parent satisfaction) completed by staff and outside evaluators for funders

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- schools, families, local businesses, sheriff's department, Washington State University Cooperative Extension 4-H, state university, National 4-H Council and local service organizations such as Parks and Recreation, Boys and Girls Scouts and churches

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio is 1:5
- one-on-one opportunities between youth and adults
- exposure to community members; positive peer relationships through teamwork

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – various community sites depending on project; in process of creating a community center for future activities
- *Schedule* – varies
- *Youth time commitment* – varies

## **how it works**

The Washtucna 4-H program received a Bridging the Gap of Isolation grant for training and technical assistance from the National 4-H Council to increase the community's capacity to provide positive youth development opportunities. For the first two years, a group of adults and youth from the community formed a committee to assess community needs and resources. The committee started a local newsletter which included results from the committee's community asset mapping, a process that included surveying 150 residents, interviewing numerous community members and holding several community meetings. Two youth and two adults from the committee attended several regional and national training events and presented what they learned to the community.

Using these new skills, committee members led community meetings to identify the community's top concerns. The highest concern was the lack of activities for youth and families, says Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, an agent for the Washington State University Cooperative Extension 4-H program.

The committee then planned several community gatherings and youth activities in an effort to engage all residents, regardless of age. Examples of such activities include Friday night family events, such as dinners and games that youth and adults planned and hosted together. Also, high school youth paired up with adults to teach classes on how to make scrapbooks, model airplanes and other recreational activities for youth. Also, a local woman taught interested youth how to embroider and the committee helped the youth start a small business embroidering sports team uniforms to fund youth activities. The committee also worked with neighboring communities to apply for various grants, which led to funds to hire a part-time youth activity coordinator who works with the committee.

The community identified the need for a community center to house youth and community activities, so after almost three years of planning activities the committee evolved into a community center board. This board, composed of youth and adults, is working on becoming an incorporated nonprofit so it can seek funding for the future center more easily. In the meantime, volunteers from the community have begun to clean and restore an old building that will be the future community center.

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

*"I learned more about my community, other communities and how all communities are alike. Each town has problems, it doesn't matter how big or small it is."*

– a youth on the community committee responding to an evaluation survey

*"I learned how to write grants, how the government works, how different groups face different obstacles and how to change the community for the better."*

– a youth on the community committee responding to an evaluation survey

*"I learned to stand up for what I believe is best and right, regardless of what my best friend and a few others think."*

– an adult on the community committee responding to an evaluation survey

## **what makes this program effective**

- **YOUTH EMPOWERED TO EXCEED COMMUNITY MEMBERS' EXPECTATIONS AND BECOME LEADERS**

"Some people in small communities expect certain youth to be leaders because of their last name and certain youth not to become leaders because of their last name," says Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, an agent for the Washington State University Cooperative Extension 4-H program. "The Bridging the Gap program brings out the leader in all youth who get involved by building up their skills and letting them excel in whatever their talents are."

## **challenges**

- **DIFFICULT TO GAIN COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS OR INITIATIVES WITHOUT FUNDING OR QUICK RESULTS**

Many people were hesitant to get involved with the program efforts, especially since the program did not provide any funding, only training and technical assistance. "People want to be a part of something growing, exciting and good. It took some finances, skills and resources to get people interested and the ball rolling," says Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, an agent for the Washington State University Cooperative Extension 4-H program. To over-

come this initial obstacle, the Bridging the Gap committee emphasized the value of the training and how the program's effort could attract funding to the community.

### **recommended resources**

*Youth Development in the Context of Isolation: Challenges and Opportunities* by Roger Rennekamp, Hartley Hobson and Kristen Spangler, 1999.

*Resources for Youth and Community Development in Isolated Communities: Stories from Ten Communities* by Hartley Hobson and Kristen Spangler, 1999.

Both available through Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, a division of National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-4999, (301) 961-2800, [www.fourhcouncil.edu/cyd](http://www.fourhcouncil.edu/cyd)

### **contact information**

Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, 4-H Youth, Family and Community Extension Agent  
Wash Tucna 4-H Bridging the Gap of Isolation  
Washington State University Cooperative Extension System  
P.O. Box 399  
Davenport, WA 99122  
(509) 725-4171

**SNAPSHOT 6**

# an element of an after-school and summer program

**City of Decatur Recreation & Community Services Department: The 3:00 Project**  
 based in Decatur, Georgia serving the suburban area with a population of 17,414

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
11 to 14	75% – 100%	after school, school holidays and summer	day-long to several week-long projects with gardens, elderly, youth shelters, etc.	monthly and weekly	parks and recreation and community service

**CBO** City of Decatur Recreation & Community Services Department

**CBO MISSION** To work with the City of Decatur to meet the needs of the community while serving all with respect and integrity.

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1995

**YOUTH INVOLVED** during school year: 60  
 during summer: 240

**STAFF SIZE** two full-time and four to five part-time during school year;  
 seven to eight full-time during summer

**ANNUAL BUDGET** about \$17,000 for after-school programming; about \$55,000 for summer programming

**FUNDING SOURCES** city government, statewide The 3:00 Project, fees from participants, 21st Century Community Learning Centers

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with elderly and AIDS patients</li> <li>• work with a children's shelter</li> <li>• environmental projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teamwork, communication skills</li> <li>• awareness of various social issues</li> <li>• impact on individual on the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presentations</li> <li>• journal writing</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth choose which projects to participate in and plan the logistics within a designated theme

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based evaluation (including youth, parent, staff, teacher, principal and advisory council member surveys) completed by an outside evaluator (see Measurable Program Impacts)

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- middle school, Georgia School-Age Child Care Alliance, 21st Century Community Learning Center, community garden group, families of participants, community volunteers

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio of 1:12
- positive peer relationships through teamwork
- exposure to community members

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – Renfroe Middle School’s gym, cafeteria and some classrooms
- *Schedule* – during after-school and summer program Monday through Friday
- *Youth time commitment* – by semester or by session during the summer

## **how it works**

The 3:00 Project is a statewide after-school program created by the Georgia School Age Care Alliance (GSACA) with funds from the state assembly. The program is currently used at 26 school sites, administered through schools or parks and recreation departments with funding, training and technical assistance, and evaluation provided by GSACA. The program’s curriculum focuses on four areas: (1) service learning, (2) academic enrichment, (3) communication strategies, (4) socialization/recreation. Each site’s activities vary slightly due to youths’ needs and accessible resources.

The Decatur Recreation and Community Services Department has operated a program site in partnership with a 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) since 1996. The 21st CCLC, funded through the U.S. Department of Education, operates the academic enrichment and communication strategies programs (primarily tutoring), while the city’s recreation department offers the service learning and socialization/recreation programs.

During the school year the program operates Monday through Friday from 2:45 p.m. to 6 p.m. Once a month youth can choose to work on a service-learning project, which could last one afternoon or two weeks. In the summer, the program operates in two-week sessions all day Monday through Friday and youth usually work in teams on a service-learning project once a week. When youth are not involved in service-learning, they are either engaged in recreational activities or attending tutoring sessions at the 21st CCLC.

The service-learning projects vary and have included community garden projects, visiting with a children’s shelter, and creating bike safety brochures. Typically staff plan the projects according to a theme, such as homelessness or environmental issues, and follow a curriculum designed by GSACA for service-learning activities (see recommended resources).

## **measurable program impacts**

### **SERVICE**

- More than 70% of parents, teachers, principals, staff and advisory council members report that youth participants are making a difference in their community through volunteer work.

- 40% of 19 youth surveyed report they like doing volunteer work in the community
- 50% report they will volunteer in the future; and 28% report they are making a contribution to the community.

### **LEARNING**

- (learning through academic enrichment activities is evaluated, not through service-learning)

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

*“It is important to get the best people you can to work for you and to work with them as much as possible.”*  
– Lisa Shaw, program supervisor

## **what makes this program effective**

### **• COOPERATION IN PLANNING AND DESIGN WITH OTHER PROGRAMS**

By working with a 21st Century Community Learning Center at the same middle school, the youth participating in The 3:00 Project not only receive tutoring at the same site, but also are provided with a bus ride home. These benefits satisfy the youth, as well as the parents of participants, says Lisa Shaw, The 3:00 Project program supervisor.

## **challenges**

### **• TRYING TO INVOLVE FAMILIES MORE IN PROGRAMMING**

The program currently holds family gatherings four times a year that allow family members to participate in a meal prepared by the youth or some other demonstration of what they have learned. However, staff would like to see more continual involvement from families. Working toward this, the program is in the process of establishing a Parent Advisory Council to give parents more voice and investment in the program, says Program Supervisor Lisa Shaw.

## **recommended resources**

*It's About Time: The 3:00 Project Operations Manual* by Susan Sutton; *It's About Learning: The 3:00 Project Curriculum* by J. Mercedes Smith; and *It's About Doing: Activity Plans for The 3:00 Project Curriculum* by J. Mercedes Smith, 1999. Available through the Georgia School Age Care Association, 246 Sycamore Street, Suite 252, Decatur, GA 30030, (404) 373-7414, gsaca@aol.com.

*Agencies + Schools = Service-Learning - A Training Toolbox* by The Points of Light Foundation, 1996. Available through the Points of Light Foundation, 1400 Eye Street, NW Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 729-8000, youth@pointsoflight.org.

National School-Age Care Alliance, 1137 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02142. (617) 298-5012  
www.nsaca.org

## **contact information**

Lisa Shaw, Program Supervisor  
The 3:00 Project  
City of Decatur Recreation & Community Services Department  
231 Sycamore Street  
Decatur, GA 30030  
(404) 378-1082

**SNAPSHOT 7**

# youth leadership camps and clubs

**Ohio-West Virginia YMCA**

based in St. George, West Virginia serving Ohio and West Virginia with a population of 14 million

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
7 to 18	50% – 75%	during school, after school, weekends and summer	building youth leadership skills to increase their civic participation	varies from week-long camps to on-going clubs	youth development

**CBO** Ohio-West Virginia YMCA

**CBO MISSION** To help youth achieve their full potential. “We seek to help youth develop leadership and citizenship skills for a lifelong commitment to service through character-building programs for all that strengthen spirit, mind and body.”

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1920's

**YOUTH INVOLVED** 9,000 (annually)

**STAFF SIZE** 9 and 275 volunteers serving as board members, advisors, etc.

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$900,000

**FUNDING SOURCES** foundations, contributions, grants and fees paid by youth or on behalf of youth from various sponsors

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community organizing</li> <li>• community educating on social issues</li> <li>• contributing legislation proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• government processes, civic participation</li> <li>• understanding of personal efficacy, self-confidence</li> <li>• public speaking, teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussion after events</li> <li>• journal writing</li> <li>• group reflection activities planned by youth</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth initiate, identify, plan projects
- youth leadership activities/skill building

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens; personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based and process evaluation (on impact on youth and communities; youth satisfaction; how to improve programs) completed by youth and staff (see Measurable Program Impacts)

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- schools, businesses, chambers of commerce, state departments of education, local service and community groups, local-state-federal government, human service organizations, YMCAs

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- positive peer relationships through teamwork; exposure to community members

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – Most residential camps and some events take place at the YMCA's 42-acre Camp Horseshoe facility (surrounded by over 100,000 acres of U.S. Forrest Service land that can be used) in the Monongahela National Forest, in West Virginia, and the soon to be open 700-acre facility at Cave Lake in Ohio. Local Hi-Ys meet in classrooms, community halls, city council chambers and other local sites.
- *Schedule* – varies according to activity
- *Youth time commitment* – varies from one-week camp to ongoing club involvement

## **how it works**

This YMCA coordinates several activities aiming to engage youth in service, leadership, and civic participation, as described below:

### **HI-Y CLUBS**

About 100 of these service-learning leadership clubs exist throughout the two states, engaging middle school and high school youth in activities after school, on weekends and in the summer. Teachers and community members volunteer to guide the clubs, each varying in size, service projects and budget. In Richwood, West Virginia, the mayor serves as the advisor of the club and meetings take place in the council chambers. In Hillsboro, Ohio, the Hi-Y Club has completed a food drive for the needy and a landscaping project in a neighborhood park, guided by their advisor, who is an employee from the nearby General Electric operation. The YMCA also serves as National HI-Y Resource Center helping communities across the nation offer HI-Y to their youth.

### **SUMMER CAMPS**

Four week-long service-learning camps are offered. Two camps bring together youth for training on servant leadership and helps them plan and participate in service-learning projects. One of these camps targets middle and junior high students and the other is for high school students. Another high school camp targets Hi-Y Club members, bringing them together to increase their skills in leadership, running effective youth clubs, and engaging others in service. The fourth camp, the Free Enterprise Camp, offers high school students training in three areas: service, enterprise (or business), and leadership.

## **YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT**

High school youth select, research and get involved in service activities related to a social issue. Then they write legislative proposals to their state officials addressing the issue. Youth come together to present their proposals before a youth governor, who works with elected youth to select several proposals to submit to the actual state governor.

## **UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLIES**

Junior high and high school students select a nation and a world issue facing the nation. After months of research, youth come together in mock United Nations Assemblies representing their selected country to discuss world issues.

Regardless of the activity, the Ohio-West Virginia YMCA tries to engage youth in experiences that help them realize their leadership potential, teaches them to be responsible citizens and provides them with skills and tools to take action to improve their homes, schools and communities. "We try to get kids to stop and think about the world around them and what they think would make it better," says David King, executive director. "We help them create a response to make their vision happen and then we look at what they learned from the process." The YMCA emphasizes residential camps and other events that bring youth from various communities together to create their own temporary community. Exposing youth to people from other regions helps them see beyond the limits of their own communities, schools and cliques. "After camp, we send back youth who look beyond their peer network to find connections to strengthen their communities," says King.

Many of the YMCA's programs involve partnerships between schools, youth groups and communities, and look very different in each setting. The YMCA offers organizational structure, helps recruit adult volunteers to guide activities, and provides training materials and ongoing support to communities that start a program. To increase schools' support of YMCA programming, the West Virginia Department of Education is helping the YMCA match state education goals and objectives to some of its activities. The department also sends two youth from each school-based Learn and Serve America program in the state to the YMCA's summer service-leadership camp. "After these camps, youth go back home excited and prepared for service-learning, and they help others get motivated for it," says King. "They are not looking at service-learning as just a class in school or a project, but as part of what their community needs to improve."

## **measurable program impacts**

- 3,706 teens are involved with 108 local HI-Y Clubs
- 300 teens are involved in mock United Nations Assemblies
- more than 700 teens serve in Youth in Government with over 100 pieces of West Virginia and Ohio law originated as ideas and proposals created by youth participating in the Youth in Government program

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

(adapted from HI-Y Leadership Center promotional materials)

*"The sense of empowerment is amazing. I came out of Youth in Government on fire. I can conquer the world. We go home and get others involved. I know I can make a difference."*

– Youth in Government high school student

*"Hi-Y has helped me become more of an asset to my city. My school, especially my HI-Y, seems to have bonded together around the idea of helping others, and even my family seems a little closer as an indirect result of my treating them a little better."*

– HI-Y high school student

## what makes this program effective

- **YOUTH OWN THE PROGRAMS**

“The youth have the freedom to create and to do things and even to make mistakes,” says Executive Director David King.

- **YOUTH ARE VIEWED AS RESOURCES, NOT AS PEOPLE WHO NEED TO BE ENTERTAINED OR SERVED**

“The adults and organizations we work with really see the youth the same as any other people, full of ideas and potential,” says King.

## challenges

- **THE ABSENCE OF A SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CLIMATE THAT FOSTERS CIVIC PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUTH**

“Our biggest roadblock is the retreat by public education from the concept of preparing youth to be good citizens and running away from engaging students in service,” says David King, executive director. “Trying to recruit teachers and parents to participate in service-learning activities in this climate is very difficult, except for those who can see that education is about more than academic subjects.” King hopes this climate will change as more youth become involved in service and civic participation, leading schools and adults to respond to their interests and needs.

- **PERCEPTION THAT ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO CREATE NEW PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS YOUTH ISSUES**

“You hear people talking about needing to create new and ‘cutting edge’ programs. It is hard to get people to look at what might already be working,” says King. The Ohio-West Virginia YMCA documents its successes and its positive impacts on youth and communities to garner support for its work. This YMCA also uses its former and current participants to be spokes-people for its benefits to youth.

## recommended resources

*Healthy Communities; Healthy Youth* pamphlet by Dr. Dale Blyth; and *The Troubled Journey: A Profile of American Youth* by Dr. Peter L. Benson. Both available through the Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415, (800) 888-7828, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

*A Nation of Spectators: How Civic Disengagement Weakens America and What We Can Do About It* by National Commission on Civic Renewal. Available through the National Commission on Civic Renewal, (301) 405-2790, [www.pauf.umd.edu/covocorenewal](http://www.pauf.umd.edu/covocorenewal).

Youth Service America, 1101 15th Street, NW Suite 2001, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 296-2992, [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

## contact information

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**SNAPSHOT 8**

# apprenticeship and activist training

**East Bay Institute for Urban Arts: The Pathways Project**

based in Oakland, California serving the urban area with a population of 375,000

ages	focus on out-of-school time	times programs offered	main activities	frequency of using service-learning	community-based organization's mission
15 to 20 and 21-29	75% – 100%	during school, after school, weekends and summer	community arts projects in visual arts, drama, music and other mediums that educate others about a social issue, from environmental justice to human rights	three times a week during the school year  five times a week during the summer	community arts and education

**CBO** East Bay Institute for Urban Arts

**CBO MISSION** To serve youth and adults from across the social and economic spectrum with classes, apprenticeships, residencies, events and commissions through a community-based visual and performing arts school.

**YEAR PROGRAM STARTED USING SERVICE-LEARNING** 1994

**YOUTH INVOLVED** 30 in after-school program and 50 in summer program

**STAFF SIZE** 30 seasonally

**ANNUAL BUDGET** \$250,000

**FUNDING SOURCES** Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, city government, fund-raising, fee-for-service contracts, artwork sales, state government, National Endowment for the Arts, foundations

service activities	learning objectives	reflection activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community organizing</li> <li>• environmental justice work</li> <li>• human rights awareness/ community educating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop art skills and ability to express oneself</li> <li>• increase social consciousness, awareness of community issues, advocacy methods</li> <li>• dedication, determination and self-discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portfolios with samples of art work, resume and artist's statement</li> <li>• journal writing</li> <li>• group discussion</li> </ul>

### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

- youth in decision-making roles
- youth initiate, identify, and plan projects within a designated theme
- youth leadership activities/skill building

### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

- understanding of democratic society and the roles and responsibilities of government and citizens
- understanding the individual's ability to impact the community
- personal commitment to service and the community

### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

- outcomes-based evaluation (including impact on youth and community; youth satisfaction) completed by staff for funders

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GROUPS**

- high schools, families, colleges, city's cultural arts division, community-based organizations

### **FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

- adult-youth ratio is 1:8
- one-on-one opportunities between youth and adults
- exposure to community members
- positive peer relationships through teamwork

### **PROVIDING AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE AND TIME FOR ACTIVITIES**

- *Facilities* – East Bay Institute for Urban Arts office space, art studio, and performance space
- *Schedule* – three days a week during school year and some Saturdays; five days a week in the summer
- *Youth time commitment* – by semester during school year; for six weeks during summer

## **how it works**

The Pathways Project has four main components:

- Images Creating Unity, an after-school program
- Careers in Art Apprenticeship Program, a summer class
- Arts in Action, a 20-week art residency program at a local high school
- A Masters of Arts program in Curriculum Development is being established with Hayward State University School of Education.

Each of these programs use the C.R.A.F.T. approach to community arts, which resembles elements of service-learning:

- **CONTACT:** team building and developing communication skills
- **RESEARCH:** investigate issues and meet with community members and groups
- **ACTION:** making and working on the art projects
- **FOLLOW-THROUGH:** plan and carry out the distribution or public outreach of the art projects
- **TEACHING:** youth are encouraged to act as mentors to peers and lead workshops and discussions

Two of the programs engage youth in service-learning during out-of-school time and are described below.

### **IMAGES CREATING UNITY**

About 30 youth meet three times a week after school at the Urban Arts space, for a total of twenty hours a week, to attend workshops and create public artworks, such as a mural,

performance, or publication. The program makes these works of art available to community groups for educating, organizing and fund-raising, and sells them to the community. Youth must apply and be interviewed for the program, and are divided into teams according to their interest in art mediums, ranging from visual arts to drama to music. For the twenty-week program, youth work on developing their skills as an artist with the assistance of faculty members and community artists that volunteer to be mentors. Once a month, youth meet on Saturday for a field trip to a local artist's studio or another site of interest. Youth also work with community groups and faculty to increase their knowledge of a social issue designated by the institute for the year's Pathways programs. Former issues have been environmental justice and human rights. Guest lecturers teach youth about the local impacts of the issues, how art can be used as an advocacy tool and methods to create social change.

### **CAREERS IN ART APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

Between 20 and 50 students meet five days a week for six-weeks during the summer to create an art-based project addressing a designated social issue. Youth apply and interview for positions in the program and are paid an hourly wage. Youth receive similar training and education as the after-school program, as well as work with adult artists who mentor them.

## **program impacts beyond the numbers**

(from an Urban Arts Spring 2000 newsletter article written by Eric Haber, Mentor Coordinator)

*"My mentor has opened doors for me that I didn't know existed - inside of me. She saw the potential in me to be whatever it is I want to be."*

– Alexis Smith, Images Creating Unity visual arts student

*"I was most impressed by my mentee's ability to be open and honest. This has been an eye-opening and inspirational experience for me."*

– Erica Hartono, Images Creating Unity mentor

## **what makes this program effective**

### **• MULTI-GENERATIONAL APPROACH BENEFITS ALL PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE**

"It is important that we don't alienate ourselves as adults in our desire to provide youth development," says co-founder and faculty member Mat Schwarzman. "We treat the youth as colleagues rather than clients." High school youth, college students, adult mentors, young adult and other adult staff all work together and share program responsibilities.

### **• PROGRAM OFFERS AN EXCHANGE OF CONCRETE BENEFITS BETWEEN YOUTH, THE ORGANIZATION AND THE COMMUNITY**

"We don't ask them to sacrifice themselves at an altar. They need to know that what they do with us they can take to the bank, whether it is academic credit, employment connections, college support, special scholarships, or art skills," says Schwarzman. Not only do the youth benefit, but the organizations Urban Arts partners will gain new ideas, energy and community support from the youth programs. Also, community needs for public education and awareness of social issues are met through the artworks produced and active participation of community members, from youth to adults.

## **challenges**

### **• DIFFICULT TO RETAIN YOUTH IN THE ENTIRE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The after-school program typically loses a significant number of youth throughout the 20-week session. Some youth overextend themselves with extracurricular activities, while

others find the program's structure and high expectations too cumbersome on top of a full load of schoolwork, says co-founder and faculty member Mat Schwarzman. To overcome this obstacle, staff may offer an introductory semester of ten weeks during which time youth must demonstrate their commitment to continue for the next ten weeks. In this way, the program could still expose the same number of youth to the program, while retaining its high standards for motivated students.

## **recommended resources**

*Arts in Action LISTEN: A Curriculum Guide* by Juana Alicia, Mat Schwarzman and The East Bay Institute for Urban Arts, 1999. Available through contact information listed below.

## **contact information**

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## findings and recommendations

### summary of findings

Community-based organizations can and are making valuable contributions to our youth and our communities. The organizations and the programs profiled in this study demonstrate this. These organizations transform out-of-school time risks into opportunities, while filling the needs of working families and youth alone in the non-school hours. These organizations engage youth in service-learning activities which are mutually beneficial for the youth involved and the communities served.

The types of community-based organizations making these contributions through service-learning activities in the non-school hours are mostly nonprofit organizations. These organizations, from conservation corps to children's museums to youth development centers, incorporate service-learning for youth into their goals. Some local government agencies and faith-based groups also adapt their goals to engage youth.

These community-based organizations use service-learning as a strategy in varying ways. Some programs plan service-learning activities monthly, in addition to their recreational, academic enrichment and other activities. Others use service-learning practices to enhance the youth volunteer components of their programs. Some programs adopt a service-learning philosophy that guides program design, staff management, daily implementation practices and most program activities.

Based on the programs analyzed, community-based organizations use nine practices to guide their efforts to success. These practices, documented in service-learning and out-of-school time research and identified as successful in the field by the programs profiled, are: serving a community need; identifying and fostering intentional learning objectives; creating structured opportunities for reflection; including youth voice and leadership; fostering civic responsibility; evaluating the program and activities; building partnerships between youth, parents, schools, and community, as appropriate; fostering positive human relationships; and providing accessible times and places for activities.

### recommendations

Given the successes of the programs included in this study, more community-based organizations should consider using service-learning as a strategy during out-of-school time. By creating such programs and activities, communities and youth will benefit. The path for more community-based organizations to engage youth and communities through this strategy has already been charted. Organizations can apply the lessons learned and successful practices accumulated by the programs profiled in this study to guide their own local efforts.

The following are recommendations to support youth and communities helping each other through service-learning during non-school hours:

#### **RECONSIDER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR EXISTING YOUTH PROGRAMS, TO EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATE SERVICE-LEARNING, AS WELL AS OTHER OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME STRATEGIES, FOR A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO YOUTH PROGRAMMING.**

Service-learning should not be viewed as another type of youth program, but rather as an addition to the many strategies that programs can utilize to engage youth. Programs, and resources for them, should unify under their mission to engage youth, rather than separate from each other according to the type of strategy used, whether it be prevention, youth development or academic enrichment. As Karen Pittman states, "Before we go overboard in the proliferation of specialized

programs that promote one type of participation over another, we should pause, take a deep breath, and ask every young person what they care about, what they think they could do about it, and what they need to make a difference.” Pittman warns against repeating the inefficiencies that occurred in the youth prevention field, when funding and information for violence, drug and pregnancy prevention programs were treated independently (1996).

**INTEGRATE AND INCREASE RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN SERVICE-LEARNING BOTH DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AND DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.**

Currently most research and publications on service-learning focus on school-based programs and activities. Few studies examine the impacts of community-based service-learning, in comparison to those analyzing school-based efforts. Most curriculum, training guides, and implementation manuals are written for teachers or school staff, even though in many cases staff from community-based organizations (from national service programs to youth development agencies) implement service-learning activities both in school-based and community-based programs. Many community-based programs must adapt these materials to their needs. Community-based organizations need research and resources, from program guides to outreach materials to funding processes, that address the characteristics that distinguish them from school-based programs.

Of the community-based programs profiled, most partner with schools and 65% offer service-learning activities during the school day, as well as during out-of-school time. Yet, many funding sources and information resources fail to recognize and support community-based organizations’ roles in both contexts. Most service-learning funding for school-based programs remains in the hands of the schools, despite the costs community-based organizations incur from providing staff time, training, transportation and curriculum to school-based activities. In addition, many funding sources provide more funds for school-based service-learning programs, such as the Corporation for National Service’s Learn and Serve America program which awards community-based program’s less than 15% of its budgeted funds.

Many community-based organizations also experience a lack of acknowledgment, and consequently resources, from their partnerships in school-based service-learning. For example, service-learning requirements are often designed and implemented without adequate consultation with community-based organizations. In many instances, partnerships between schools and community-based organizations are based on unequal leverage and are more for the sake of appearing inclusive than actually working together. National Collaboration for Youth recommends providing incentives for “holistic youth development through truly collaborative partnerships between community-based organizations and local education agencies” (1999).

For service-learning to be enhanced, both within school-based and community-based programs, the significant role of community-based organizations needs to be recognized through further research, supported by more equitable funding and resources, and addressed in collaborations with schools.

**CREATE MORE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS, WITH SERVICE-LEARNING AS A POSSIBLE STRATEGY.**

As the National Collaboration for Youth states, “There is a need in communities nation-wide for a major expansion of community-based services that promote positive youth development” (1999). This national organization encourages government efforts to support positive youth programs as a “front-end investment in youth which will eventually lower public expenditures for incarceration, social support, and welfare payments” (1999). Whether motivated to reduce the risks associated with unstructured out-of-school time or to fill working families’ need for more programs during non-school hours, government, foundations and communities need to leverage more funds for community-based youth programs. Federal agencies can examine how current out-of-school time programs, such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, can utilize school-based service-learning. Agencies should also consider integrating various youth programs for more holistic and

efficient outcomes on the community-based organized and local level. As the Carnegie Council on Adolescents states, “The time has come to recognize community organizations committed to youth. While the potential of community organizations to promote youth development is enormous, they have been largely neglected in public debate and policy formation” (1994). Foundations can investigate how resources can be pooled for research, capacity-building and funding of out-of-school initiatives. Communities and states can explore adding youth programs as a line item to their budgets. Overall, more funds and resources are needed to ensure that youth and communities develop in positive ways.

## APPENDIX A

# successful practices checklist

## FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

Nine profiled community-based organizations and youth, ages 5 to 18, used these practices to combine service and learning successfully after school, on weekends and during summers. Each practice is also supported by at least one national organization.



### **SERVING A COMMUNITY NEED**

1. National and Community Service Act of 1993
2. Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
3. Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning, A Special Wingspread Report, Johnson Foundation, 1989
4. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
5. National Youth Leadership Council's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998
6. Points of Light Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996
7. National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, 1992
8. U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics's "Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools," 1999



### **IDENTIFYING AND FOSTERING INTENTIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. National and Community Service Act of 1993
2. ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
3. Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Report, 1989
4. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
5. NYLC's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998
6. POL Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996
7. National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, 1992
8. U.S. Department of Education's "Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools," 1999



### **CREATING STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION**

1. National and Community Service Act of 1993
2. ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
3. Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Report, 1989
4. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
5. NYLC's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998
6. POL Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996
7. National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, 1992
8. U.S. Department of Education's "Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools," 1999.



### **INCLUDING YOUTH VOICE AND LEADERSHIP**

1. ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
2. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
3. NYLC's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998
4. POL Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996
5. National Dropout Prevention Center's Pocket Guide to Service-Learning, 1992



### **FOSTERING CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

1. National and Community Service Act of 1993
2. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998



### **EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES**

1. ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
2. Wingspread Report, 1989
3. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
4. NYLC's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998
5. POL Foundation's "Critical Elements of Service-Learning," 1996

**BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN YOUTH, STAFF, PARENTS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY, AS APPROPRIATE**

1. National Institute on Out-of-School Time's "Quality Measures" in Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time: A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs, 2000
2. National and Community Service Act of 1993
3. ASLER's Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service Learning, March 1995
4. Wingspread Report, 1989
5. Service Learning 2000 Center's "Seven Elements of High Quality Service Learning," 1998
6. NYLC's Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning, 1998

**FOSTERING POSITIVE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

1. National Institute on Out-of-School Time's "Quality Measures," 2000

**CREATING ACCESSIBLE PLACES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVITIES**

1. National Institute on Out-of-School Time's "Quality Measures," 2000
2. Wingspread Report, 1989

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