

# Beyond Home and School

The Role of Primary Supports  
in Youth Development



Chapin Hall Center for Children

# Beyond Home and School: The Role of Primary Supports in Youth Development

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# Section I

## Describing Primary Supports



# Introduction

## DESCRIBING PRIMARY SUPPORTS

*When kids walk in here, it's entirely different than when they walk into school. They're not expecting to fail. They open the door differently, their caps turned back on their heads, they're ready. . . . What fires them up is getting excited about personal achievement. They are able to master concrete skills that are applicable to the real world.*

Charles Hammond, former Director,  
Bicycle Action Project

When the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development asked focus groups of young people what they most wanted during their nonschool hours, the answer was, "Safe parks and recreation centers; exciting science museums; libraries with all the latest books, videos, and records; chances to go camping and participate in sports; long talks with trusting and trustworthy adults who know a lot about the world and who like young people; and opportunities to learn new skills." (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1992) Most of these are easily accessed through a vital and varied system of primary supports.

Primary supports, in our definition, includes the full array of programs, places, and activities beyond schools that are available to and appropriate for all children and their families, and that supplement the family's own capacity to promote its children's safe and healthy development. This encompasses a broad range of activities and programs, including child care and after-school tutoring in church basements, sports leagues, scouting, choirs, and public parks and museums. In previous reports, Chapin Hall Center for Children has argued for greater emphasis on promoting the healthy development of *all* children and enhancing the functioning of *all* families through the avail-

ability of a wide range of opportunities for exploration, skill development, and support. Such a system of primary supports could provide an important balance. The current emphasis on treating problems of troubled children and families is typical of our nation's service system. (Wynn, 1994) Chapin Hall has placed a priority on promoting an increased understanding of the importance of these *primary supports* as a critical component of an effective and holistic social service system for children and families.

In this report, we will examine a number of youth-serving programs, specifically those characterized as among the best of their kind, and those that are providing some segment of their programming for youth in poor communities. These programs may be offered through small, local, grassroots, youth-serving agencies or large, national, multi-service organizations; they may be through museums or public parks; they may serve exclusively African American boys from an impoverished neighborhood or bring together a variety of young people from across the nation. What they have in common is a commitment to meeting normal developmental needs of young people, rather than focusing on the provision of treatment for specific problems.

The study that informs this report grew out of a desire to understand more about the variety and richness of the youth-serving programs throughout the country. We appealed to individuals knowledgeable in the field of youth development to help identify a diverse set of programs that were among the best of those providing youth-development activities. Although we encouraged these informants to share information about programs in all communities—economically disadvantaged, socioeconomically mixed, or affluent—informants were most excited about those reaching young people from poor communities. This *de facto* bias in the programs studied has allowed us an opportunity

to explore the unique circumstances of youth-serving programs with a special mission to either reach a mixed-income population, or more often, to target youth from low-income families.

Through extensive interviews with the leaders of these programs, we learned about the programs' missions, activities, services, practices, challenges, and perceived benefits for young people. In the first section of this report, we will discuss the role and importance of primary supports—particularly in low-income communities—describe the study that informs this report, and explore the significant commonalities among the programs studied.

The next section of the report analyzes the interviews with program directors. It is in this section that we explore the content, goals, and strategies of the programs. We have sorted the programs into six categories—Performance and Self-Expression, Recreation, Self-Enhancement, Educational Enrichment and Career Exploration, Developing Citizenship, and Comprehensive Service Programs.

The final section of our report synthesizes this analysis in order to examine the benefits offered by primary support programs in general and to highlight the challenges

they confront. We offer recommendations for further study and consideration, and present conclusions based on the study. In an appendix to the volume, we include profiles of all of the programs that were included in the study.

As the Lilly Endowment has stated, youth development

*. . . is not a happenstance matter. While children can, and often do, make the best of difficult circumstances, they cannot be sustained and helped to grow by chance arrangements or makeshift events. Something far more intentional is required: a place, a league, a form of association, a gathering of people where value is placed on continuity, predictability, history, tradition, and a chance to test out new behaviors.*

This study represents an opportunity to understand how programs that are seen as among the best of their kind think about the activities and options they provide and about their responsibility to the children, families, and communities they serve. Such an understanding can help to inform efforts to comprehend the primary supports sector and to facilitate planning and improvement of youth development efforts.

# Chapter 1

## THE ROLE OF PRIMARY SUPPORTS

*Community programs are a vastly untapped resource for meeting (the) needs (of) young adolescents. . . . Community organizations play a vital role in fostering healthy youth development. Despite evidence that youth programs can promote constructive behavior and reduce high-risk behavior, few American communities now seize the opportunity to create or strengthen these programs. More than 17,000 national and local youth organizations operate in the United States. Religious youth groups, sports organizations, adult service organizations, museums, public libraries, and recreation departments also offer community-based programs. All these organizations can do much more to meet the needs of young adolescents than they now do.*

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

Creating environments where young people can feel good about themselves, explore opportunities, and master new skills is at the heart of most of the best primary supports programs. The best of these programs offer young people places where they can find caring adults who believe that they are worthy of their time and organizations willing to invest their resources in engaging youth in activities that promote skill development and a positive sense of self. Whether called primary supports, community programs, or youth-serving organizations, these programs offer the potential of a meaningful support system to children, youth, and their families as young people try to navigate their path from infancy to adulthood. These programs often combine support to parents through supervision of children during non-school hours with helping young people to discover their talents and explore possibilities. At their best, primary supports programs have the potential to

help families and communities to promote the healthy development of our nation's children.

According to the Carnegie Council's report, 66 percent of all young people are involved in activities in the over 17,000 youth-serving organizations they identified throughout the United States. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992) Outside the constraints of the school day, these programs offer recreational, educational, and other youth-development opportunities with the potential for broadening young people's experiences, increasing their competencies, and providing them with safe and positive options for the time they spend apart from family and school. The Carnegie report, along with a number of others, strongly asserts the importance of exploring the potential of these programs to meet the varied needs of children and families. (Gambone, 1997; Pittman, 1991; Wynn, 1994)

Yet documenting the impact of these programs is challenging for a number of important reasons: First, both individually and collectively, the goals of these programs tend to be diverse, ambitious, and often abstract, making it difficult to measure progress toward reaching them. Further, without the benefit of classic research design with random assignment and a control group, it is difficult to isolate the impact of a program's involvement on a child from the effects of school, family, and other community or family resources. Additionally, the very nature of many of these programs—small staffs, shifting programming, and an informality that may make follow-up difficult, further contribute to the challenge of systematically measuring benefits.

Many of the studies that have been done are vulnerable to methodological criticisms regarding such factors as their use of convenience samples or the lack of a meaningful control group. As a result of these methodological limitations, most studies are only able to report positive corre-

lations rather than documented outcomes. Despite these limitations, there does appear to be increasing evidence that involvement in constructive activities, such as those offered by primary supports during nonstructured after-school time, is associated with positive outcomes, and that specific programs may be achieving some specific goals.

The Carnegie study suggests that positive outcomes may be “a matter of time”—time spent constructively on the one hand or potentially engaging in risky behavior on the other. As outlined in the Carnegie study, “The 1988 National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) indicated that about 27 percent of eighth graders spent 2 or more hours at home alone after school. Those in the lowest socioeconomic group were most likely to be at home alone for more than 3 hours.” The report goes on to highlight studies suggesting that these unsupervised after-school hours are positively associated with such high-risk behaviors as drug abuse, delinquency, and adolescent sexual activity.

A study by Reginald Clark found that one predictor of success in school was whether or not a young person spent 20 to 35 hours a week engaged in “constructive learning activities.” Although his study did not suggest that those activities must or should be pursued through a youth-serving agency, it did suggest that for young people faced with significant blocks of unsupervised time, youth-serving agencies offer an easy and accessible option that does not require young people to be supervised by their parents or to be entirely self-motivating in arranging their own “constructive time.” (Clark, 1988)

Another study suggests an association between extracurricular activities and later educational attainment. Hanks and Eckland took a nonrandom sample in 1970 of respondents to a 1955 survey of high school sophomores. This study found that students who participated in extracurricular activities went on to higher educational

achievement and to have an increased rate of participation in adult voluntary organizations. Holland found that participation in organized activities was positively associated with higher self-esteem, grades, educational aspirations, and sense of control over lives, and with lower occurrence of delinquency. Although these studies found associations, they do not, of course, prove causality.

Gambone and Arbreton took a very different approach to looking at the impact of youth-serving organizations and their activities. Rather than looking at the influence of youth programs on variables that are beyond the agency’s direct control, they developed a set of questions designed to measure the degree to which young people coming to youth-serving organizations were provided with seven key developmental experiences and supports. (Hanks, 1978) Looking at three of the major national youth-serving agencies, they found that these organizations were attracting a “reasonably diverse” group of young people, one-quarter to one-third of whom spend a significant proportion of their discretionary time at the agency, participating almost daily. They further found that 80 percent of participants in the organizations’ programs experienced exposure to three or more of the seven developmental building blocks (experiences and supports) measured, with 25 percent receiving exposure to six or more.<sup>1</sup>

Other studies have looked at the apparent impact of specific programs. Switzer (1986) found what he asserts to be a strong positive impact on self-image, attitudes, and altruistic behavior for boys who participated in a school-based helper program as compared to boys who did not participate. Girls, however, did not show a similar effect. A study of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s substance-abuse prevention program yielded an unanticipated finding: although they found little evidence of direct impact on drug use among participants, they found what they

believe to be strong evidence that the existence of a Boys & Girls Club in a housing project was associated with an overall reduction in alcohol and other drug use, drug trafficking, and other drug-related crime throughout the housing project more broadly. (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 1991)

Another study, this one of the Youth Opportunities Unlimited program model funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, targeted eleven poor inner-city neighborhoods working to “develop innovative approaches for addressing the needs of youth by creating a range of opportunities for youth to complete their education, prepare for employment and postsecondary education, and obtain assistance with personal problems by encouraging links among education, employment, social services, juvenile justice, recreation programs, and other community-based activities.” The evaluation, which compared neighborhood statistics with citywide and national data, suggested that neighborhoods offering a Youth Opportunities Unlimited program experienced reductions in teen live births, juvenile arrests, and dropout rates. (Orr, 1997)

In one of the few studies using random assignment and a control group, the evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program found that involvement with a Big Brother or Big Sister was associated with positive behavioral outcomes as well as a positive impact on peer and family relationships. The young people matched with Big Brothers or Sisters were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol, less likely to hit someone, and more likely to demonstrate improved school attendance and performance, as well as improved attitudes toward completing school work.

In their review of research studies related to youth-serving agencies, Pittman and Wright found studies that they believed document positive impacts of youth-serving organizations in every competence area they had identified

as important for young people. Although many of these studies documented associations rather than outcomes, Pittman and Wright’s assessment, based on their review, is that: “These organizations and programs do more than fill a small void in young people’s lives. They develop personal and social skills through structured programs, provide sustained interaction with adults and peers, and link the youth to the larger community. These opportunities complement the formal learning found in schools, and the research reviewed suggests they are valued and important.” (Pittman, 1991)

#### Youth-Serving Agencies in Economically Disadvantaged Communities

Despite growing evidence that primary supports offer a potentially important contribution to healthy youth development, these primary supports are not evenly distributed among our nation’s youth. The NELS study found that 83 percent of young people in the highest socioeconomic status (SES) group participated in at least one structured out-of-school activity, compared to only 60 percent of young people in the lowest-SES group. Littell and Wynn found that youth in the high-SES suburban community case study were much more likely than young people in their low-SES inner-city community to participate in more than one activity. (Littell, 1989)

This pattern of participation does not reflect a lack of appreciation of primary supports. Quite the contrary, Medrich and Marzke (1991) found that 75 percent of mothers of all backgrounds in Oakland, California agreed that organized activities are a very important part of their children’s education, and in fact low-income families were more likely to agree with that statement than high-income families. (Medrich, 1991) Other research has suggested that primary supports programs are particularly valued by

minority children. A Harris poll commissioned by the Girl Scouts found that, although 81 percent of participants surveyed said that Girl Scouting was at least somewhat important to them, 60 percent of African American girls and only 33 percent of Caucasian girls said it was *very* important. (Brown, 1990)

The Safe Havens study further suggests that once children from economically disadvantaged families access primary services, they use them just as frequently as children from advantaged families. (Gambone, 1997) Despite this high value placed on these activities among less-well-off-families, when it comes to the practice of actively seeking out such programs for their children and facilitating their participation, better-educated parents and those with higher incomes were more likely to seek them out for their children and to facilitate their children's participation. (Medrich, 1991)

It appears that the limited participation of lower-SES families in primary supports programs is at least partly a function of access. In fact, Wynn and Littell, in their comparison study of a high-SES suburban community and a low-SES urban community, found that for every 1,000 youth in the suburban community, there were seventy-one available activities a week—compared to approximately twenty-three comparable activities offered in the inner-city community. The situation with community facilities was even more disparate—with nine for every 1,000 children in the inner-city community compared to forty-one for those in the suburban community. Public schools in the suburban community offered almost seven times as many extracurricular activities as their inner-city counterparts.

Equally striking was the limited variety of programs for youth in the inner-city community. Sports in the inner city largely meant basketball; in the suburban community, sports included a wide range of options—swimming, ten-

nis, gymnastics, karate, golf, racquetball, and soccer. Other options in the inner city included church choirs or other church youth groups, and tutoring and prevention programs. Both the Medrich and the Wynn and Littell studies point out that most programs in the inner city are provided at low cost or no cost to participants, which tends to result in programs aimed at the common denominator—in effect, activities of interest to “most” young people. Such an approach does not offer young people in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods nearly as much opportunity to discover and explore their interests and talents as their advantaged counterparts.

In light of the growing evidence of the potential usefulness of primary supports in enhancing youth development, it is important to expand our understanding of these programs and to explore their value to the youth and families they serve. Given the evidence that such programs are highly valued in lower-income communities, despite lower levels of participation, it appears particularly important to increase our knowledge about how programs that are reported to meaningfully serve young people from low-income communities conceive their mission and surmount the challenges they confront.

In the next chapter, we will explore the commonalities that emerged in our interviews with directors of the seventy-seven programs included in our study in order to highlight those characteristics shared by programs that are among the best of their kind, as these are purported to be. We also will explore how directors themselves think about the benefits of their programs and how they have begun to attempt to document or measure them. Then, grouping the programs into substantive categories, we will describe them in more detail and discuss how differences in program goals may be related to differences in strategies underlying programming.

# Chapter 2

## COMMONALITIES AMONG PROGRAMS

The entities we define as primary supports are remarkably diverse. They include places—such as park districts, museums, libraries, and drop-in center programs—with a mission as narrow as that of a sports league or a music class or as broad as promoting good citizenship; and organizations—ranging from a volunteer providing homework help in a church basement to a national scouting organization with a multi-million-dollar budget.

These resources are available, to greater and lesser degrees, to all children and all families in all communities. Despite the fact that we are restricting our exploration to those primary supports organizations and entities offering programs to young people from poor communities, the variety of primary supports programs—and of the organizations that offer them—is broad.

Both public and private organizations, from secular to religious, from local grassroots organizations to multi-site national organizations, offer primary supports programs. Some have large budgets and large staffs, while others are all-volunteer efforts with virtually no budgets at all. Activities range from once-a-week piano lessons to six-week residential summer camps. Programs may be offered through a single site or many sites. Some target a specific ethnic group or gender; others make an effort to attract diverse participants. Some take a very narrow focus, while others attempt to be comprehensive by incorporating specialized services to meet the needs of children or families with such specific problems as substance abuse or mental health concerns.

### About the Study

The study detailed in this report sought to capture this richness and diversity while also trying to understand those unifying characteristics that help to define the primary supports sector. We set out to identify some of the best

programs serving adolescents within the United States. We sought nominations from knowledgeable individuals, published directories, and other printed materials. These nominations were guided by a set of criteria that served as our guide in screening nominated programs to arrive at the seventy-seven profiled here.

There were six guiding criteria. We see the first two as critical to our definition of primary supports programs. The remaining four simply reflect our priorities as we defined them prior to initiating the study. Criteria required that all nominated programs:

- work toward building the capacities and meeting the developmental needs of the youth they serve
- are voluntary—that is, young people can choose whether or not to participate in the program
- are considered to be among the best of their kind
- as a group, reflect the diversity that exists among youth programs more broadly
- provide at least some of their activities and programs for young people between the ages of 10 and 18, or some segment of that age range
- in order to screen out extracurricular school activities, are not exclusively school sponsored, although they may take place within the school setting if sponsored by an outside organization or jointly sponsored between an outside organization and a school

Certain points regarding these criteria warrant further clarification. First, our interest was in programs that focused on broad developmental goals for youth, rather than those programs that look to remediate problems. Thus, programs with an exclusive focus on delinquents, parenting teens, or school dropouts did not meet our criteria, even if they provide developmental activities or programs for that distinct population. The programs represent-

ed here provide at least some of their activities and services to young people who are not characterized by a “presenting problem.” Although young people may be referred to programs by a teacher, social worker, or probation officer, actual participation in at least some of the program’s activities must be voluntary. Our criteria required that young people have the option of whether or not to participate.

Our purpose in looking for nominations of programs that are considered to be “among the best of their kind” was not to identify model programs whose replication we endorse. Our intent, instead, was to locate our program selection and learning in the upper range of programs that are among the most well conceived and skillful at doing what they are doing. Within the group of programs nominated, we sought to learn about both their unique and common characteristics, and to begin to identify what appear to be core elements of best practice.

We also sought to reflect as much as possible the diversity that characterizes this sector. We asked the individuals who nominated programs to consider such dimensions as organization type, sponsorship, kinds of activities and services, type of physical setting where programs are offered, demographics of program participants, and the region of the country and characteristics of the community the program serves. As nominations of programs accumulated, we identified gaps in our sample regarding these characteristics, and when necessary, made a special effort to seek out a more balanced representation.

In identifying programs, we sought nominations from a variety of sources. First, we identified individuals and organizations knowledgeable about different kinds of youth development programs and whose knowledge about youth programs was varied. These included individuals in the following groups: researchers who are knowledgeable about youth development and have studied programs for youth;

foundation program officers who support youth programs; current or former directors of youth development programs who have thought seriously about the role programs can play in enhancing the development of young people; individuals who work in youth development programs or on policy development at one level up from direct service, including individuals involved with national youth-serving organizations or engaged in community planning for youth service provision; the leadership of relevant program associations; and current or former government officials of agencies that sponsor youth development programming.

In addition to these individuals, we reviewed eleven resource documents highlighting youth-serving programs as well as drawing upon the files of the Center for Youth Development and Chapin Hall. The programs in each of these resource documents were screened based on the criteria described above.

Once programs had been nominated and an acceptable balance achieved, we conducted brief phone interviews to screen out those programs that did not meet our criteria. In this way, we excluded those programs that did not meet our six primary criteria, reducing the over 100 to just over eighty. Another five programs were ultimately excluded either because they specifically defined a target group based on a need for intervention (for example, pregnant teens or delinquents) or because they did not provide services to young people from poor communities.

Although all nominated programs were the subject of at least a brief phone interview, most also participated in a fairly extensive phone or in-person interview of the program’s director covering a wide range of topics including their mission, activities and services, range of participants, challenges, and perceived accomplishments and benefits to young people. A smaller number of programs received site visits, and an even smaller number allowed us to orches-

trate focus groups with program participants. Often, the programs chosen for this more detailed look were identified as much by the convenience of their location as for any other program characteristics.

Additionally, we conducted two day-long discussions with a cross-section of program directors in Washington, D.C. and in Chicago. We used these discussions to further our understanding of common issues, such as those related to program practices, common challenges, and benefits of program participation.

Although this approach to data collection has allowed us to create a rich database of information regarding these youth-serving agencies, it has limitations. The identification of these programs as “among the best of their kind” was not based on consistent objective criteria; rather, the programs were identified through the varied approaches outlined above. Further, the bulk of our information about programs is based on interviews with program directors and, overall, is not balanced with systematic interviews of participants or program observations. Although we believe these directors offer one important voice that helps us to understand this universe of primary supports, a richer picture would obviously ultimately require the incorporation of additional perspectives, perhaps of direct service staff as well as participants and their parents, and systematic program observation.

### **About the Programs**

The programs ultimately included in our study are seventy-seven organizations or entities committed to promoting the health, competence, and vitality of young people, at least some of whom are poor and unable to pay substantial fees for participation. As mentioned above, those included here have been identified as among the best of their kind. The organizations offering the programs cover a broad spectrum that includes:

- 19 free-standing youth or community centers
- 9 affiliates or associates of national youth-serving or community organizations
- 3 religious organizations
- 2 camps
- 2 museums
- 2 public parks and recreation departments
- 1 housing authority
- 1 library
- 1 private for-profit organization
- 1 public school district
- 1 public health board
- 34 other not-for-profit organizations

Staff for these organizations range from a single part-time employee to 285 employees, both full- and part-time. Budgets range from a low of \$25,000 to a high of \$13.8 million. The number of children and youth served each year, according to directors, ranges from a low of 26 to a high of 26,000. These organizations draw their participants from an area as small as a single housing project and bring young people together from all over the world. Whereas one organization has a service history of over 90 years, another was intended at its inception to offer programming for only 2 years. Although this range of programs and organizations cannot fully capture the diverse characteristics of the entire primary supports sector, we believe it is reasonably reflective of the kinds of organizations offering youth-serving programs throughout the United States.

The kinds of activities offered are as wide ranging as the organizations providing them. To capture this full variety, we defined fourteen substantive areas of activities and programs. As we asked program directors about their programming, we used these categories to cluster those activi-

ties. These categories include both developmental program goals and the more specialized intervention services that some programs also provide. They are the following:

- recreation/socialization
- culture and arts/creativity
- physical health and development
- personal/social development
- practical skills
- community service/citizenship
- educational/cognitive development
- career development/employment training
- emotional development/mental health
- social services
- juvenile justice
- legal and other assistance
- health care
- housing services

Although some programs offer very focused activities in only one of these substantive areas—for example, music lessons or mentoring—a number of others offer some activities and services in each of the areas discussed above.

Despite their organizational diversity and the breadth of their offerings, there are many commonalities among the programs studied. This section will look at what these programs have in common. We will look first at commonalities in their missions and programming; then we will consider key elements that seem to characterize these programs; and, finally, we will discuss program benefits and how they are measured.

### **Program Missions**

Despite the fact that these programs offer very different activities and each has its own distinct mission and goals, a review of the language of their mission statements reveals

some striking commonalities. Over 80 percent of the mission statements include developmental language, using such words as *involve, motivate, engage, empower, challenge, enhance, nurture, and inspire*. Most also talk about the development of skills using words like *achieve, build, and master*. They encompass such concrete skills as *basic academics, career awareness, constructive problem-solving* and such developmental goals as a *sense of purpose, self-expression, self-esteem, independence, appreciation of diversity, or a positive view of self and the world*.

Many look toward the future with an eye toward ensuring that participants will be *healthy, skilled, disciplined, confident, productive, knowledgeable, motivated, successful, mature, self-reliant, and involved citizens and community members*. Finally, a number of these programs, through their mission statements, assert the intention of creating environments and opportunities for young people that are *stimulating, respectful, empowering, supportive, safe, and secure*—offering opportunities for *positive participation, exploration, contribution, and skill building*.

Michael Ward, former Director of Bethesda Youth Services, a sports and recreation program in Maryland, characterized the shared missions of these youth-serving primary supports programs:

*It's not just preventing a negative outcome, but enhancing a positive one. So if you have a kid who ended up not getting incarcerated, that's one thing, but if you can take that kid and help them be somebody who's really going to contribute to the community, that's really enhancing the positive.*

### **Program Offerings**

Regardless of the specific programming area, the programs examined exhibited a strong tendency to expand their pro-

gramming activities to meet a fuller range of young people's needs—regardless of how narrowly defined their original mission.

When Dr. Walter Turnbull first started the Boys Choir of Harlem, his primary aim was to give young people in the community something to do and to give them the opportunity to sing in a choir. But as the Choir grew, the problems confronting young people in Harlem risked undermining the potential benefits of participation in the choir. Slowly, the choir expanded its program to include educational support, mental health counseling, and career awareness.

For many members, Dr. Turnbull suggests, the Choir becomes a critical family support system.

*We are a lifeline for these kids. We provide stability. . . . Sometimes its our teachers who have to go to bat for kids that have been put in to foster homes and unless we work with the system and see to it that the kids stay in the community, they might be all over the city and not be able to take advantage of the Boys Choir. Or grandparents call and say "I'm 75 years old and the sole provider for this child and the mother has died of drugs and can I get a promise that somebody will take care of my grandchild if I die." It's a source of hope and it's an awesome responsibility. It's the Boys Choir at its best and that is addressing needs. Not saying "We do this, but not that." If we don't do something, we make sure we refer them to a source that can help them.*

This notion that programs should meet the needs that arise rather than simply providing whatever services or activities they were originally intended to provide is typical of the programs in our study. This sometimes means simply going "above and beyond" for a few youth in extreme circumstances; however, it generally seems to push pro-

grams to expand the base of services and activities they provide. Although the public perception of many of these programs may be that they offer sports or arts and crafts, we learned that they almost all provide a wide range of services and activities, well beyond the limits of any one kind of recreational opportunity.

Out of a list of nearly ninety diverse activities we asked about, the average organization in our study offered thirty-five or more of them either formally or informally. Thirty-three percent of organizations offered more than sixty. The following twelve activities were offered by at least 66 percent of all the organizations surveyed:

- leadership development
- decision-making skill development
- ethnic/cultural enrichment
- drug/alcohol awareness
- field trips
- communication skills
- academic enrichment
- health education
- mentoring
- within-program employment
- career awareness
- sex education

Of these activities, leadership development, academic enrichment, and health education were the most likely to be seen as core to the organization's work by the program directors. Approximately a third of the programs (as will be discussed below) aim to be comprehensive—serving not only a full range of developmental needs, but also offering counseling and other more specialized services, often including substance abuse treatment or broader case management. These programs, not surprisingly, are among the most likely to provide over sixty of the ninety activities discussed in our study.

The vast majority of these organizations provided these activities on their own. While we solicited information regarding collaboration among organizations, in most cases collaborations were quite limited—most often special projects or resource sharing. Only three programs were deliberately collaborative ventures among a number of organizations, working together to expand offerings through collaborative effort and shared space. Such large scale collaboration appears to be the exception rather than the rule.

### **Common Program Elements**

At a minimum, adequate youth-serving programs must offer safe spaces, opportunities for activity, and concerned adults. For these programs that have been identified as among the best of their kind, this minimum seems to be expanded to *safe and stimulating environments*, these programs have *meaning, relevance, and rewards for the participants*, they broaden the participants' *exposure to new worlds*, and they offer *relationships with knowledgeable and caring staff*. We explore each of these dimensions below.

### ***Safe and Stimulating Environments***

Over 25 percent of directors stressed the importance of the environment they provide in offering programs for youth. They focused on creating environments that are both safe and stimulating.

**Safety.** Talking about safety in both physical and psychological terms, nearly 20 percent of directors emphasized the importance of their environment being a safe place for young people. According to program directors, safety has three major components: the absence of threats to young people's physical or emotional well-being, predictability, and a sense of belonging.

Most youth-serving programs recognize at a minimum the importance of the first of these components, the ab-

sence of threats to a young person's physical or emotional well-being. In fact, many of these youth-serving programs came into existence in an effort to become a safe haven for young people in dangerous communities. The Brooklyn Children's Museum, in fact, revised its mission statement, making serving the youth in the immediate neighborhood a priority in direct response to "the lack of safe, viable opportunities for young people in the community."

Venice Camp, a summer camp program in Los Angeles, had a similar but broader goal, which encompassed an effort to bring diverse young people together in a safe and peaceful environment to learn to understand one another (including young people with physical challenges and limitations). The camp director believes the peaceful environment makes the assurance of physical and emotional safety easier.

*The city park in the Santa Monica Hills is something that kids from the inner city...have not been exposed to. It allows them to let down their defenses right away as there is no need to be tough. They also see an environment that is beautiful, peaceful, and well-taken care of.*

Greg Darnieder, formerly of CYCLE, a program dedicated to educational enrichment for youth in a Chicago housing project, talks about the importance of all elements of safety.

*We've always viewed our buildings as sanctuaries within the environment. When kids come into our buildings, they're not only physically safe, but they're emotionally safe, to the highest degree possible, from being abused. We also make it known that we will work together with them to protect them from the cruelty of other kids, which we know is often present no matter what the environment.*

When directors talk about the environments of their programs, they are speaking as much about feelings as physical space. Most talk about fun, security, and caring. As the director of the Indianapolis Youth Group, a program targeting gay and lesbian youth, suggests:

*We provide a place where youth can be themselves. They don't have to be afraid of who they are. It's a place that's fun, where they can make friends, have good role models, and know that they are worthy.*

A number of directors said that predictability is an equally important attribute of good programs. Activities should happen when they are scheduled, and programs must have clear rules and expectations for participants, which are consistently and fairly enforced. Jesse White reports that his tumblers must come to practices and performances on time, with themselves and their uniforms in fit condition; must be getting passing grades in school; and must refrain from drinking, smoking, drugs, and unkind or unfair behavior. White believes that the clarity of these rules and the consistency with which they are enforced helps young people to feel safe.

Many programs engage young people in discussions of rules and consequences, and offer a variety of predictable consequences for violations of rules. Although most try to avoid the most extreme measure of exclusion from program participation, many do maintain this as an option. Some programs have found that in order to ensure the safety of the whole, some children will sometimes have to be excluded. Betty Lou Hamlin talks about how this played out in CornerStone, a program creating neighborhood centers where young people can access the activities and programs of a number of different agencies at a single site.

*We ended up with some kids who had behavior and emotional problems that we just couldn't deal with.... So, bit by bit, we just began to recognize that we just couldn't help everybody, that there were some kids that were headed for prison...and they were intimidating the other kids. So we had to learn the hard way—we had to sort through kids like that who we weren't equipped to deal with.*

Most of the program directors tried many interim measures before excluding young people and, if exclusion did prove necessary, always tried to leave the door open for young people to return.

Finally, a sense of belonging appears to be a key component of a sense of safety in the environment. The programs we studied, like most youth-serving programs, represent a variety of approaches to assuring this sense of belonging, ranging from such external accouterments as membership cards, program tee shirts, or uniforms to promoting a sense of ownership in the program through attempts to engage young people in developing rules and planning activities.

A few of the program directors talk about this sense of membership as a very strong and deliberately created connection between the young person and the organization, strong enough that once a young person joins the program, that connection is ongoing regardless of the frequency of youth participation. At Lemmon Avenue Bridge, a program that brings twenty-four youth-serving agencies to a single site, once young people complete an intake form, they are “Lemmon Avenue Bridge kids” and if they fail to come back, Lemmon Avenue Bridge staff will pursue them.

*Once a young person comes in and becomes a member, they are our kid and we'll come after them. . . . We go*

*after them under the guise of “You filled out the intake form and this is what it says and you need to really work on some of these issues in your life.” But we go after them because for some reason they felt the need to come in and we really want to get at whatever that need was and find out how we could better serve them and see if we could set up that mix of kids that meet their needs.*

Many program directors discussed trying to stay connected with young people, even after they have “aged out” of the program, often involving them as staff or volunteers. Directors suggest that this sense of continuity and family can also contribute to the sense of program safety—if participants feel ownership of and investment in the program, they will also have an investment in protecting it.

**Stimulation.** Directors describe their programs as places with lots of activity and an expectation of productivity and excellence, but also as opportunities to explore new activities. Program directors stress the importance of being able to try out activities free of the obligation to succeed or even to like the experience. They recognize that this may not be a popular approach among funders. Truman Thomas of Lemmon Avenue Bridge says:

*We are setting up a situation where kids can just try if they like it, and if they don't that's fine. And that's very difficult for public funding agencies...because they see that as a waste. While for more affluent families, they don't see it as a waste. They see it as kids trying new and different things.*

The Explainer Program brings young people into the San Francisco Exploratorium, immersing them in the world of interactive science. As trained tour guides, they are exposed to all areas of the museum and encouraged to explore its possibilities. The Ginew/Golden Eagle Program, a weekly self-enhancement program for Native

American youth, celebrates Native American culture; young people are constantly reminded through art, music, and language of the beauty and wisdom of their heritage.

Charles Hammond, the former director of The Bicycle Action Project (BAP), an educational program associated with a bicycle repair shop, believes the environment is absolutely fundamental to engaging young people in what they do. When young people come in, the place is warm, relaxed, and inviting—a place where there is a lot going on and both youth and adults are excited and challenged by what they are doing. In these environments, it is difficult to be passive or uninvolved. Directors believe the environment itself challenges young people to explore possibilities.

For many young people, primary supports programs are the gateway to a range of supplies, equipment, facilities, and opportunities otherwise inaccessible to them. Clay or canvas “real” basketball courts, swimming pools and computers—all represent opportunities to explore interests and develop talents in a way that is otherwise inaccessible. The Police Action League in Jacksonville offers young people a 27,000-square-foot complex with two gymnasiums and a number of classrooms. Youth can access the resources and equipment necessary for almost every major sport—including boxing, basketball, wrestling, karate, track and field, soccer, weightlifting, and volleyball.

Many of the directors raised concerns that young people are not frequently exposed to a group of peers actively and excitedly involved in a project or activity. Providing a positive peer group was raised as a benefit of their program for young people by just under half of the directors with whom we spoke.

The Music Cultivation Program for Chicago Housing Authority youth, a music education program in a Chicago housing project, exposes young people to the world of music through access to instruments and musical instruction. The

former director explains that exposure to an engaged and engaging peer group is a critical program element.

*Youth have the pleasure of being surrounded by an unusual peer group, peers who share their love for music. The majority of the kids want to be at Merit. They love music. While they tend to be in the minority in their schools in terms of their love of music, they come into Merit and are with 150 youth who are interested in improving and striving for excellence.*

A participant at *New Expression*, a youth-written and edited newspaper, echoes this sentiment.

*Other people don't care and it's really good to be around people who want to be doing something. I need to be around people who are doing something.*

### **Meaning, Relevance, and Rewards**

Although primary supports programs by definition offer opportunities to young people that are different from the options available to them in other settings, what sets the programs in this study apart is the quality and relevance of those opportunities. Given the voluntary nature of primary supports, directors of good programs know they can only reach young people by engaging them in activities that they find meaningful and worthy of their time. Most programs place a strong emphasis on creating programming that young people will experience as relevant to the “real” world.

**Meaning and relevance.** At a minimum, being meaningful to young people often means presenting information and learning opportunities in a way that is interesting and different from school. Whether the program is tutoring, crafts, sports, or leadership training, it must engage young people in exploring, often one-on-one or in small groups, new ways of thinking about things, in an environ-

ment that is supportive and accepting of failure. Participants in the Teens Organized for Pride and Success Program in Peoria, Illinois, meet weekly to discuss a variety of health and personal issues designed to arm them with the information and confidence they need to make positive life choices. These weekly meetings focus on a specific topic for one month, exploring that topic from a variety of different approaches. Focusing, for example, on AIDS, they may have a speaker in one week to give some information about AIDS and to facilitate group discussion. The next week they may go on a field trip to a health center or museum to learn more. The following week, they may work on their own AIDS presentation, or a young person may talk about or bring in a family member with AIDS.

Some programs derive meaning by developing concrete skills and products that are valued by the youth themselves and others. Whether that is earning a bicycle while learning bicycle repair and maintenance, as with the Bicycle Action Project, or publishing a youth-run newspaper while polishing writing skills, as in *New Expression*, young people are involved in learning skills they want, value, and are able to demonstrate to others. According to a *New Expression* participant:

*When you write a story and you work on it and you get it done—it's a strict deadline and you work hard, it's like a sense of pride in that. I was able to do a large story and I was able to get it done by deadline. Or if it's a column or something—you get a sense of pride knowing that, you know, I'm able to do the things some adult reporters do. And they take us seriously, you know, very seriously around here.*

Similarly, programs like the D.C. Children's Orchestra, the Indianapolis Children's Choir, or the American Variety

Theatre Company help young people to hone their skills and then to provide performances through which their accomplishments can be recognized—and applauded—by parents, peers, and others.

Programs that convey the sense that young people have something important to give and that they are capable of being a positive force in their communities allow young people to experience their own power as a resource for their community. The Valued Youth Partnership Program has teens tutoring younger children; young people are rehabilitating dilapidated housing as part of YouthBuild, participating in community improvements and conservation work through Clean & Green, and reviewing proposals from other young people for community service projects as members of the Youth as Resources Teen Advisory Council.

Young people at El Puente are expected to give back to the community, but are given substantial control and responsibility over how such efforts should happen. According to Frances Lucerna from El Puente, a nationally recognized community center in Brooklyn:

*For young people, it's not enough for them to know that there is injustice. They need to be able to put together packages—whether it be community organizing or education packages . . . where they themselves can go out and make some changes.<sup>2</sup>*

Despite significant emphasis in the youth development field on involving youth in program planning and development, the programs we studied were—as a group—disparate in this regard. Most programs reported that young people have at least some input through oral feedback to project staff on activity planning; in some programs, young people take the lead in defining and imple-

menting activities. At New Expression, the young people produce the newspaper entirely, from identifying story ideas to completing the final edit. The Youth as Resources Teen Advisory Council involves young people in decision making at a variety of levels. First, young people in the community come together to design community service projects, and then Advisory Council members (youth themselves) make decisions about funding projects and are responsible for ongoing supervision of the proposals they choose to fund.

Primary supports programs, through their varied activities and opportunities, are well suited to accommodate different learning styles. Young people who may struggle with academics may excel through the arts, or sports, or more concrete job skills. The range of activities offered among these programs makes it possible for young people to find the opportunities that fit their interests, talents, and learning styles. Learning experiences where young people are able to feel competent and engaged are far more likely to feel meaningful in the context of their interests, abilities, and lives.

**Rewards.** Many activities within primary supports programs are intrinsically rewarding. Programs offering outlets for artistic expression, sporting opportunities, or community service, for example, offer rewards that are certainly part of what makes primary supports programs meaningful to the youth who choose to participate. Erika Schulte of the D.C. Youth Orchestra elaborates:

*When you can challenge at that deep level, you can give a child a sense that there is something worth doing that they can do by themselves. They have to do this by themselves—there's no greater high.*

Many programs build in additional rewards for both length of participation and competence acquired through

graduated opportunities and responsibilities. Young people's options are expanded as they develop competencies, and they become coaches for others or are employed by the program. At the Brooklyn Children's Museum, for example, participants advance through several stages, starting as Kids Crew, moving on to Volunteers in Training, to Volunteers, and then ultimately serving as Paid Interns. At each stage, they gain additional opportunities within the program and earn additional responsibility to help with younger children and to participate in the actual work of the museum.

Like a number of other programs, the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center, a program for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, trains young people who have been involved with the program for some time to act as peer counselors for other participants. Such responsibility signals respect among staff for that young person's personal competence and character. At the Bicycle Action Project, once young people have earned a bike through 25 hours of core instruction, they can advance through four tracks that include Advanced Mechanics, Athletics, Pre-Employment Skills, and Management and Leadership. Each track offers different payoffs as hours and expertise increase ranging from BMX team racing to employment as a peer instructor, shift supervisor, or advanced mechanic.

A few of the higher-profile programs, particularly those that are performance based, offer somewhat more dramatic rewards. Participants in such programs as the Jesse White Tumblers, the Boys Choir of Harlem, or the D.C. Youth Orchestra gain not only substantial pride at the respect they receive in the community simply by virtue of their participation in these programs, but also gain opportunities for travel and exposure to other worlds that would be virtually unthinkable to most of their counterparts in their communities.

Finally, most of the programs we surveyed, especially those with less obvious intrinsic rewards, make substantial efforts to incorporate opportunities for recognition of young people's efforts and accomplishments. The form these take are as different as the programs, but they range from regular awards ceremonies or arts festivals to fairly elaborate point systems that can be used to purchase goods.

At CornerStone, for example, young people earn points for participation and other positive accomplishments—including good grades—that can be converted into dollar amounts allowing participants to purchase donated goods. After accumulating 50 hours of participation in the NETworks program, participants may apply to the Exceller program, which affords them greater opportunities. Youth also can participate on the Exceller Youth Board, which plans activities for the Exceller Club, and two participants also sit on CornerStone's Board of Directors.

### *Broadened Exposure*

All of the programs included in our study shared a commitment to expanding the horizons of the young people they serve. Many directors talked about the restricted world experience of young people in poor communities and the importance of broadening their exposure—to geographic locales beyond their immediate neighborhoods, to differing cultural perspectives, and to enhanced career and personal options.

**Geographic locales.** According to program directors, few of the young people they serve have any experience with the world beyond their immediate neighborhood. Young people who live on the outer edges of a large city may never have been downtown. They may never have been to an ethnic restaurant of another group or attended the theater, or explored any but the few museums they have visited on school field trips. The director of the

Office of Special Programs, an educational enrichment program on the south side of Chicago, explains:

*When I was in Altgeld, those kids were coming in at 130th Street, and from 127th down to 111th there was a solid white community. So they went to Roseland to shop but that was about it. Most of them didn't know how to find their way downtown or any of those things. It's still true about kids; they don't know how to travel around...so we began to travel.*

The exposure they do get is sometimes incorporated into specific academic or arts programming to broaden young people's understanding of the subjects they are studying. At CYCLE, an educational program serving African American children in a public housing project:

*We have a scholarship group that spent an entire summer visiting different ethnic neighborhoods throughout the city. They went into Pilsen for a few days and ate at Mexican restaurants, visited places of cultural importance, talked with people in the neighborhood, did man-on-the-street interviews. They went into Humboldt Park, Chinatown, and many other neighborhoods in this old van that they repainted with mural scenes depicting the different neighborhoods they visited. We believe it allowed these kids to translate their experiences into artistic form.*

In performance-based programs, like the Family Life Theatre Program, the Boys Choir of Harlem, or the Jesse White Tumblers, performing gives young people the opportunity to travel throughout the city and sometimes the world. The Tumblers perform all over the city and its suburbs, as well as at professional sporting events and other significant events in the city; they have even traveled internationally. Jesse White discussed a trip they took to Japan:

*. . . these kids from Cabrini-Green have never been 10 feet in front of an airplane before, let alone traveled across the world to another country. This educational experience will be with them for the rest of their lives. These shows make the tumblers better traveled than most rich kids. I want them to see how other people live. I believe if you show them that you'll get them to aim higher than they might be aiming.<sup>3</sup>*

**Cultural perspectives.** Most programs in our study address themselves to some degree to cultural concerns. Some programs place strong emphasis on helping minority young people to learn their own cultural history and to develop pride in their own cultural identity. The National Indian Youth Leadership Project is concerned about the isolation of many Native American youth and their often significant distance from their cultural heritage. Through a range of programs, including an annual summer camp, young people are encouraged to explore and celebrate their heritage and their connections to their ancestors. McClellan Hall, the program's Executive Director, told a group of young people as they were beginning a hike in the Navajo Nation in New Mexico:

*This is your land. Your ancestors probably lived in a place like this. You belong to this land as much as any mountain lion, or chipmunk, any tree or flower you see.<sup>4</sup>*

The City, a program with two youth centers serving Native American as well as African American and Latino young people in poor Minneapolis neighborhoods, also borrows from the Native American tradition. The City demonstrates its respect for Native American traditions by employing three medicine men to work with Native American families and by rejecting mainstream America's notion of hierarchy and organizing itself around the five

equally influential totems of the Ojibway tribe, these being leaders—the board, management, and senior staff; healers—therapists; teachers—high school educators; warriors—advocacy and outreach workers; and farmers and hunters sustaining the tribe.

A number of programs seek to expand young people's understanding of other cultures by trying to attract participants who reflect the area's cultural and ethnic diversity or by taking advantage of opportunities to expose young people to people from other cultures. Encampment for Citizenship brings diverse young people from all over the country to camp in Oakland for 6 weeks to work and play together and to struggle with social issues and the role of youth leadership. Youth must not only consider complex social problems, but are also challenged to understand perspectives and life experience of young people from backgrounds quite different from their own.

The American Variety Theatre Company and Family Life Theatre are deliberately diverse, and use the medium of theatre to explore the social issues that divide cultures and to explore possibilities for conflict resolution. Participants at New Expression talked about the diversity of their program in this way:

*Since most of us are from different parts of the city and different backgrounds, it gave us a chance to interact with various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. So I mean, you know, whereas you might only be used to people on your block, this is a small jungle of 80 days around the world or whatever...It opens you up about different issues in the world and it just gives you an open mind about things.*

Magic Me involves young people in one-on-one relationships with residents of local nursing homes in the belief that these relationships help them to value older people and the wisdom and perspective that comes with experience.

Finally, good programs seem to make a special effort to capitalize on opportunities to broaden cross-cultural understanding. When the Indianapolis Children's Choir travels abroad, the director explains:

*I always try to make sure that they learn to meet and mingle with other people in that country so when we went to Australia, for example, we were hosted by various choirs. The children stayed in the homes with the families. When we went to Melbourne, we stayed in the homes of the boys from the National Boys Choir. The children have gotten a working knowledge of other cultures, and I think that those kinds of learning experiences are non-musical but an important element of this program.*

**Career and personal options.** Many of the programs place a high priority on exposing youth to different personal and career alternatives. Field trips may include visits to college campuses, career fairs, or workplaces. Often, programs bring volunteers of different backgrounds to talk about what they do and share their experiences with the youth. This is a critical component of the Concerned Black Men program, which is staffed almost entirely of volunteers, many successful professionals, representing a wide range of career options and backgrounds. These men serve as positive role models for program participants and provide a critical entree into the world of work.

Although a few programs actually train youth for specific career alternatives, such as some YouthBuild programs, which prepare young people for careers in construction, more programs are giving youth a general experience of career opportunities and some meaningful preparation for the expectations of employment.

A number of program directors place a priority on exposing young people to different worlds of opportunity and different kinds of environments, working to help them

to be comfortable in the full range of life situations they may face as they move beyond their neighborhoods. At CYCLE:

*Every month our "I Have a Dream" sponsor takes the kids who have birthdays that month out to have dinner at a fancy restaurant and to see a play. It creates an entire social experience for them to learn from: what to wear, how to behave, etc. Our kids attend and serve as hosts and hostesses at our fundraising activities at hotels, some being quite formal affairs. They're invited to sponsors' homes. Last Saturday, a group of minority professionals was hosting a semi-formal luncheon at the Harold Washington Museum, so we took twenty-five kids there. We look for these kinds of opportunities; they're real opportunities for socialization. Essentially, we're helping these kids learn how to be multi-cultural in their approach to life.*

Larry Hawkins at the Office of Special Programs talks about how his program exposes young people to life possibilities and prepares them to meet some of the challenges of broadened social situations and of the workplace:

*We give the students sessions on speaking. And then we put them all to introducing people. We keep trying to push them into social circumstances. One of the groups in the city that deals with the homeless had a banquet. The woman who runs it wanted to know if we would like tickets. I told her that what she could do for us is that I'd like a couple of my kids to introduce some of their speakers. And there were maybe a thousand people there. I know they were nervous as anything, but they did very well. We're always looking for opportunities like that to get our kids out into the world in ways they wouldn't be.*

### **Relationships with Staff**

Despite the fact that many program directors said that

young people are initially attracted to their programming by a combination of the activities, program reputation, or peer relationships, over two-thirds said that what keeps young people coming back is their relationships with staff. These relationships are the backbone of youth service programs. Seventy-five percent of program directors cited quality relationships with adults as contributing significantly to benefits for the children they serve. These relationships, according to program directors, have three important dimensions: *experience and expertise* in program content; the ability to establish *caring relationships* with the young people in the program; and the willingness and dissemination to hold and convey *high expectations of participants*.

**Staff experience and expertise.** The staff and volunteers in youth-serving agencies are the conduits to information and skill development. They must bring both concrete skills and information as well as the capacity to engage young people, develop trusting relationships, and manage group behavior. In our focus groups with young people from New Expression and CYCLE, they expressed an appreciation for the information and life experience that staff and volunteers may bring:

*Because for those of us that want to go into journalism, the more taste we have of being a real reporter the better. Because all of our supervisors here have had experience in journalism and they always tell us their experiences, what they've gone through and just give us a little insight what it's going to be like if we decide to.*

*I had a tutor this year, who helped me get ready for college and they were professional, they worked for an advertising company. We talked about a lot of different things, about everything, it was really interesting. I learned a lot of things I didn't know. I mean, because a lot of times*

*I need help with my homework and I just got a different type of person, they gave me a perspective on things.*

A few of the directors talked about the balance among their staff in terms of perspectives, talents, and expertise. One advantage that an organization has over even the best nuclear family is the range of adults with different approaches and knowledge bases. According to a participant at New Expression:

*(The staff here) all have different styles which is very easy to see. You know, I mean it's just interesting how all these styles of writing, you can draw upon, you have three different experiences. And that's a lot, you don't get three different people teaching you in a class at school.*

**Building relationships.** In addition to being expert in the area of the program offering, program directors believe that staff knowledge about and ability to relate well to young people is critical. Many directors cited this as a key consideration in hiring staff; some directors suggested that without this basic understanding of “where the young people come from,” staff are unable to relate to participants—and this inability turns young people off.

*Knowing their world is (critical). One of the things that can really spark a group of kids is if you know their music, dress, lingo, etc. Then you can have a discussion about things that they care about. That gives you legitimacy.*

*You have to tune in and know the difference between “What’s up?” and “Whassup?” Just that subtlety can make a difference.*

The Our Place program at Family Focus provides after-school tutoring and activities for youth, making special efforts to recruit staff from the community, like many community-based youth-serving organizations. Not only

do they find that this helps to ensure that staff understand youth’s life circumstances, it also means staff are likely to know family members from the church or the laundromat, strengthening relationships through informal contacts. It also makes it easier for staff to be available beyond formal program hours.

Universal among directors is a sense that their staff members care about the young people they serve and that that care is absolutely fundamental to the services they provide. We identified three specific components directors cited as demonstrative of caring—responsiveness, respect, and nurturing.

In a focus group of agency directors, the group agreed that one asset of primary supports programs that separates them from schools and the traditional public social service system is the lack of an entrenched bureaucracy. In the absence of such bureaucratic constraints, the directors contend they are able to respond more quickly and flexibly to individual needs and broader social changes.

Lyn McLain of the D.C. Youth Orchestra characterized the youth-serving organizations that we invited to a focus group in Washington this way:

*I would say that most of the organizations here have more flexibility than what they’re getting out of the public school system, just because of the nature of the animal. They (schools) have so many layers and so many commitments that sometimes they can lose their raison d’être . . . We’re more at the cutting edge because we can make decisions about things as they are at the moment. We don’t have to go back and seek permission from somewhere else. I would say that we have a flexibility and we can respond faster to the real world.*

Ruth Rucker from E. C. Mazique Parent Child Center added:

*That's important, because with many of the youth we serve, a 24- to 48-hour waiting period may be too late. You've got to be there now.*

The directors shared instances in which their organizations went well beyond the usual structure of their programs to be responsive to the unique needs of individual children. Jake Roach of the Male Youth Enhancement Project (formerly known as the Black Male Youth Health Enhancement Project), which works to enhance the physical and mental health of young black males, offers this example:

*One of our youths is three years behind in his physical development; he has sickle cell anemia. His father and mother are both incarcerated, so he goes between his grandparents. I saw him the other day, and he was eating every other day. He now has to come through the Male Youth Project to get his meals, and we have to tailor the meals to his certain problems, make sure he gets his complex carbohydrates, a certain amount of grams of protein, and we're still fighting a losing battle since his parents are in and out of jail and he has no books.*

Flexibility, for some programs, means being available at nontraditional hours and in nontraditional ways. For Jesse White, it means helping to compensate for the lack of fathers in the homes of most of his tumbler.

*Out of the sixty black kids I have, maybe two or three have fathers at home, so I'm their surrogate father. They confide in me, they contact me at home, they ask for certain things that are within reason. And sometimes they want advice, and sometimes they just need counseling, sometimes they need a few bucks, sometimes they need clothing. In one case the youngster would go out and buy gym shoes and sweat suits when he got paid. His brother was shot and killed*

*and he didn't have a pair of dress pants, a shirt, or a tie to wear to the funeral. That's where I step in.*

The Office of Special Programs (OSP) tries to have staff available:

*. . . at all times of the day and night, Saturdays and Sundays. As all of us know, with children, you can't say, "well from nine to five I'll talk about this or I'll teach this and this and he'll learn it." No. Some people want to talk or to learn from ten to eleven. That's when they're open.*

Larry Hawkins believes that the key to OSP's success is this availability and putting in the significant amounts of time that it takes to break through defenses and build a relationship with young people.

*We spend so much time and we fool around with the kids so much. That's how you get them, it's time, it's the time factor...what these young people taught me is that if you find them and you want to change them, then you have to be willing to bridge with them. You have to walk with them until they are over that hump. And that's a time factor; you can't farm it out, you can't send memos about it. You just have to put the time in.*

In addition to time, many of the directors talk about the importance of listening to young people, and stress that the respect of an adult listening to them is often missing from their lives. Betty Lou Hamlin, of CornerStone, says:

*[It's important] to give kids a chance to talk, to be able to share ideas and to figure out how you do things and to talk about things that are important to them and to develop the skills to be able to do that, and to just have access to an adult who is listening and paying attention to them.*

Directors explain how much emphasis they place in hiring decisions on finding staff who like and respect young people and people who will prove worthy of a young person's trust. Dolores Holmes, Executive Director of Family Focus, explains:

*We ask the young person to believe in us, to believe that what we say is true, and that we have their best interests in mind, and will try to create, with as much energy as we can, those opportunities that will enable them to develop far beyond what we can offer at CYCLE. Really you have to get people who like kids . . . who really genuinely like kids...[They need] a real commitment for working with the population....or want to make a difference through whatever sacrifice, commitment, flexibility. I have folks who are flexible, feel that they can make a difference with kids. People are super, super important.*

And participants at New Expression talked further about the importance of the nature of that relationship, of staff people who communicate that young people are worthy of their respect.

*You know a lot of times adults talk down to teenagers and just automatically assume that teenagers because of*

*how old they are don't know anything. [But not here] they all treat us like equals.*

When program directors talk about their programs' roles in young peoples lives, they often talk in terms related to family—surrogate parent, extended family, substitute family, or home away from home. These programs, at their best, offer potentially important supports to even the most stable families, but when families are struggling, these programs sometimes must pick up where families leave off—nurturing young people to give them the support they need to be successful.

Whether it is something as critical as feeding an undernourished child or simply taking a young person fishing who has never had a chance to go, or making warm soup available on cold winter days, or even sewing a prom dress to assure that a teen can go to the prom with pride, directors tell us that the staff of their programs are offering love, nurturing, and care to the children their programs serve. Most tell us that, of all the things they offer, this is among the most important.



# Section II

## Program Content



# Chapter 3

## PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Although the youth-serving programs we surveyed have many commonalities, there also are a number of interesting differences in how they think about and go about their work. As we studied the programs more closely, we found that they fell fairly naturally into six categories based on their primary programmatic focus. This programmatic core is generally reflected in their mission statements and program literature, as well as in the priorities discussed by program directors. The categories themselves are by no means exclusive, and many of the programs could arguably fit in more than one of the categories. The categories do, however, suggest some meaningful differences among programs that provide a useful way to more fully describe and understand the universe of primary supports.

The following are the six categories, each of which is described more fully in the chapters in this section:

- **Performance and Self-Expression.** These programs work to develop proficiency in artistic or physical performance so that young people can experience the satisfaction and confidence inherent in mastery, and in order to provide an avenue for young people to display their talents.
- **Recreation.** The priority in these programs is to help young people to find constructive ways to engage their time and to develop general competencies in a variety of areas.
- **Self-Enhancement.** Placing a priority on generalized promotion of self-esteem and self-confidence, the programs included in this category all target a group of young people at risk of low self-esteem and seek to promote an improved self-concept.

- **Educational Enrichment and Career Exploration.** These programs focus on the development of educational and vocational competency. Although many other services may be provided, there is a constant attention to the core concern of educational and vocational achievement.
- **Developing Citizenship.** With a primary focus on engaging young people in exploring their roles as contributing citizens, many of these programs focus on community service, while others encourage young people to explore questions of social and personal responsibility.
- **Comprehensive Service Programs.** These programs seek to meet the full range of the needs of young people who come to their doors.

Although these program categories were developed based on a review of the programs surveyed, the categories that emerged from this review closely mirror the list of competencies that Pittman and Wright outlined in *Bridging the Gap*, asserting that all youth must master these areas of competence if they are to move successfully into adulthood. The chart below shows Pittman and Wright's competency areas against the program categories we developed.

Although the fit is not exact, the parallel between these analyses does suggest that in developing programs, founders may be either consciously or unconsciously targeting their efforts to promoting youth development through one or more of these competence areas.

Chapters 4 through 9 of this report will explore the programs in each of these categories. We will look at commonalities and differences in a variety of areas, including size, auspices, budget, missions, program strategies, and perceived benefits. We will provide examples of a few of

Competencies*	Program Categories
Health/physical competence Personal/social competence Cognitive/creative competence Vocational competence Citizenship competence	Recreation Self-Enhancement Performance and Self-Expression Educational Enrichment and Career Exploration Citizenship Comprehensive Service Programs
<small>*Pittman, K.J. and Wright, M.</small>	

the programs in each category and the programming strategies they employ. For each category, we will also raise what we believe to be interesting findings unique to that category, such as the length of their histories or specific

characteristics about how program services are provided. Through this closer look at each of these program categories, we hope to shed increased light on the richness and diversity of youth-serving programs.

# Chapter 4

## PERFORMANCE AND SELF-EXPRESSION PROGRAMS

*We teach a young child a skill. Then we give them an opportunity to display that skill in an ensemble with a large number of others. Each time they do it, they do so in front of their parents, relatives, and they begin to cultivate greater responsibility. We get them into a structure they want and that's the short-term part of it. The long-term part of it takes years. It may be 10 years down the line before the individual is aware of the true benefits.*

Lyn McLain, D.C. Youth Orchestra

- n The American Variety Theatre Company
- n Boys Choir of Harlem
- n D.C. Youth Orchestra
- n Family Life Theatre Program
- n Indianapolis Children's Choir
- n Jesse White Tumbling Team
- n Living Stage Theatre Company
- n New Expression

The eight programs in this category all share the characteristics that Lyn McLain described above—they work with young people to develop a skill and then provide opportunities for them to work with others to share that skill with the broader public. Although skill development is a critical aspect of these programs, the process of using that skill to work together as an ensemble to produce a product worthy of public attention is equally important. Not only must young people learn to sing, or write, or leap, or express

themselves through drama, they also must learn to listen to and respond to others, to rely on one another and be responsible to the group, to trust one another enough to take risks themselves, and to support others should they falter.

Because of the performance- or product-based nature of these programs, they have an often higher profile than many of the other programs we studied. All but one serves a fairly large city, drawing participants from throughout that geographic area. Perhaps in part because of this higher profile, corporations and foundations play a larger role in the funding of these programs than of many of the other categories we examined. They are also able to rely more heavily than most other programs we studied on earned income and fees to support program costs.

### Missions

The Living Stage Theatre Company describes their mission as *“to inspire creativity, strengthen individual purpose and promote the development of a positive view of one's self and the world among those who participate.”* The missions of these programs clearly reflect the definition of the category described above—these programs are committed to giving young people concrete skills while using the ensemble nature of the performance (or product development) to promote self-awareness and interpersonal understanding. Although many of the programs strive for artistic excellence, none considers this its primary mission. The Boys Choir of Harlem, world renowned for its exceptional performances, describes its mission far more broadly as *“an artistically driven organization dedicated to providing students with a broad-based education. The Choir is a holistic program consisting of education, counseling, and performing arts. The Choir prepares inner-city youth to become disciplined, confident, motivated and successful citizens.”*

A subgroup of these programs view service to their audience as equally critical to their missions. The mission statement for Youth Communication, the parent organization of New Expression, includes being “*an independent voice for all Chicago teens, with a special mission to reach and involve inner-city youth. . . . and to provide vehicles through which teens can communicate with their peers and with the adult community.*” The Living Stage Theatre Company is further committed to reaching through its performances “children and special needs audiences.” The American Variety Theatre hopes its performances create “a positive, safe environment that promotes social interaction and the sharing of ideas and activities.” These programs dramatically expand their capacity for positive impact on youth by using the talents of their participants to challenge and inspire thousands of additional young people through their performances or through what they produce.

#### Programs

Beyond the development of skills and opportunities for public performance, these programs share a number of additional characteristics. As mentioned above, most draw from a fairly wide geographic area, bringing young people from different neighborhoods together at a central site. Program directors suggest that this centralized approach brings a diversity of membership that itself becomes one of the program’s important benefits—mixing young people from different ethnicities, neighborhoods, and life experiences. Lyn McLain, of the D.C. Youth Orchestra, says:

*One of the advantages of our program is that the children come from all over the D.C. area. There isn’t a group of kids who call all the shots, and someone from Northwest may sit next to someone from Potomac schools and is all la-di-da, and they think, “well, I have to make sure I can*

*play with this guy,” so they get interested in what they’re doing, in how to communicate better, and it creates a whole new kind of family. It’s really beautiful.*

All but two of these programs require some kind of audition or formal application to demonstrate commitment to skill development and a basic aptitude. These programs are generally forced to turn away more children than they are able to serve. Thus, merely being accepted into these programs can offer a tremendous sense of satisfaction and personal prestige. Jesse White describes the experience of his Tumblers:

*The kids in the program are local heroes and other youth are attracted to the idea of belonging to a team. Every day the Jesse White Tumblers receive ten requests from youth who want to participate and fifteen from groups who want to host a performance.*

These are among the only programs we studied that require a specific time commitment; in half of the cases, there is a one-year commitment for participation. As Henry Leck of the Indianapolis Children’s Choir explains:

*There is a one-year commitment, and once they are accepted and they decide to join they have to sign a pledge that says they will make the commitment to be in the program for one year. The parents also have to sign a pledge that says they will pay tuition, support their child, and make sure the child gets to all the rehearsals. There are lots of rules regarding absences. . . . The children feel it’s an honor to be in the Choir and they want to stay.*

In exchange for this commitment, young people receive what program directors believe to be high-quality instruction and, in most instances, opportunities for travel either throughout the city, or in some programs, the world.

The programs in this category fall into two basic groups demonstrating two different strategies for achieving similar, but distinctly different goals. We are describing these strategies as *discipline through artistic excellence* and *self-expression and performance*.

### **Discipline Through Artistic Excellence**

Four programs with this primary goal have gained international reputations for excellence and are in great demand to provide performances throughout this country and elsewhere. Yet, according to their directors, artistic excellence is just a small part of their story. As Henry Leck, of the Indianapolis Children's Choir, describes:

*Some people might think that my first goal is to get them so in love with music that they eventually become a professional musician. And that's probably the least important thing. My first goal for them is to help them develop their skills well enough so they can experience the beauty of artistic singing.... There are only a few moments in your life when music takes on a supernatural or super-human feeling of when your spine tingles or when the hair comes up on the back of your neck, those really special moments. Once a child has felt that kind of sensation, or has felt the real joy of singing artistically, I think it begins to change their outlook on life.... Really, it alters them for the rest of their life. . . .*

These programs most certainly set high standards—all require some kind of audition and a clear commitment for involvement; they have clear guidelines for dress, timeliness, attendance, and behavior. Often, though, auditions are less about natural talent than commitment and, although guidelines are clear and consistently enforced, according to directors, these programs are deeply committed to the young people they serve, and repeatedly work to extend their

The Boys Choir of Harlem was founded in 1968 to provide young boys in Harlem with a constructive use of their time and an opportunity to learn and express the beauty of music. In response to the needs of its members, the program has expanded its services to include not only music instruction, but academic tutoring and enrichment, and health education services and support, and has made counselors available to young people for mental health counseling as well as for working with families to address daily needs that may interfere in the young person's ability to continue with the Choir. Young people come to the program daily for rehearsal and educational support, and according to its Director, the program becomes very much an extended family for many of its members. Young people are given the opportunity to receive high-quality instruction in a wide range of classical and nonclassical music and, through national and international performances, are exposed to the wider world around them.

capacities to accommodate their varied needs. For example, although the Boys Choir of Harlem was developed to give young boys in Harlem a chance to sing, it quickly became clear that youth needs in the community were so great that if young people were to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that the Choir offered, they would need help with school and counselors that could help them to manage the challenges they faced at home and elsewhere.

As Walter Turnbull sees it now:

*We are a lifeline for these kids. We provide stability. . . . I like to say hope because it's a nebulous kind of thing, but it's real. People must feel good to produce and move forward.*

Founded in 1959, the Jesse White Tumbling Team has grown to seventy-five members divided into three units of twenty-five that perform separately. Most of the team members are drawn from the Cabrini Green Housing Project, although young people from throughout Chicago may apply. Because of their high profile throughout the city, as well as nationally and internationally, the tumblers are held in high esteem in their community and elsewhere, and they are also regularly paid for their performances. Jesse White reports being available for his tumblers from 10:30 am to 7:30 pm seven days a week, and they still call him at home with problems looking for his help and support. Although tumbling training and performances are the core of the program, the realities of the lives of the young people involved in the program has pushed program staff to provide a range of different kinds of support—from teaching them about using a checking account to helping with physical health and development-related concerns. The program also monitors their performance in school and helps them to find needed support to ensure they are able to maintain adequate academic performance to qualify for continued participation with the tumblers.

### **Self-Expression and Performance**

Although skill development is important in all the programs in the performance/self-expression category, a number of the programs demonstrate as strong a commitment to promoting the youth's capacity for self-expression as for skill development. These programs use dramatic interpretation and journalism as vehicles to explore social problems by bringing the youth's voice to promote broader public understanding. Young people are challenged to confront

The American Variety Theatre serves young people primarily from north Minneapolis. It involves youth from diverse backgrounds in a program of performing arts that serves as a vehicle for self-expression, individual growth, and group involvement. The Theatre aims to provide a positive, safe environment that promotes social interaction and sharing ideas and activities. Its programs include free theatre classes, a touring improvisational troupe, "Youth Teaching Youth" (a mentoring program), and the "Drug Free at the Capri," a program of music, drama, and dance performances by and for teenagers with content based on specific concerns of youth. All productions address social themes. The performances not only provide youth with recognition, but they provide opportunities for participants to learn about the issues while researching their characters and to challenge audience members with their new insight. This approach aims to incorporate information about substance abuse and life skills (problem solving, communication, decision making) in the context of performing arts instruction. Since good actors have to analyze their own feelings, the staff believe that the program serves as a therapeutic tool in a caring and safe environment where issues can be dealt with. Staff then can help youth to develop insight into problems, as well as ways to cope with them, without lecturing.

their own biases and assumptions about others and encouraged to explore their own power to make different choices and to affect the world around them. These programs also challenge their audiences to care about social problems and to explore their own role in effecting social change.

*New Expression* is a city-wide teen newspaper that is published monthly for the public schools. Written by and for youth in the Chicago area, the paper strives to be an independent voice for all Chicago teens. The core of the organization's activities is the actual production of the monthly newspaper, which involves graphics, layout, writing, editing, photography, reporting, and business management. Youth assume primary responsibility for all aspects of the newspaper's production. Young people decide for themselves the critical social issues that should be addressed in each issue. They then must research each issue, make certain that they are knowledgeable, and then have the opportunity to bring their voice to the debate through the vehicle of the newspaper they produce. Issues are debated as a group, and each article is subject to a critique session in which young people hear different perspectives and learn additional ways to improve their presentation. The program seeks to engage young people in the democratic process, both its participants and its readers, and to believe in their power and responsibility to influence the world around them.

#### Benefits

The directors of each of these programs, when specifically asked about program benefits, reported that young people develop concrete skills from their participation as well as being given the opportunity to explore their talents. The benefits most often mentioned by the directors of Performance and Self-Expression Programs include:

- development of concrete skills
- opportunity to explore talents
- improved self-esteem
- increased drive to achieve
- self-confidence
- self-awareness
- sense of belonging

These programs measure their success in the achievement of artistic excellence and competence as evidenced in the performance, as well as through feedback from program participants, both during and following their participation. Many of the directors of these programs talked about visits or letters from former participants in which they expressed the important role the organizations played in their lives. These programs were less likely than those in other categories to engage in formal program evaluations.

# Chapter 5

## RECREATION PROGRAMS

*Three elements are basic [to the program]. . . one is an activity, could be sports or a cultural activity of their choice of the twenty some we offer... They get that under the supervision of a very competent coach or instructor. This is the magnet of the program; they come in based on what they want. That's the hook. Once they come in and say they want this, we say we'll give it to you with all the frills. . . . But there's a trade off. We say, "we're going to give you what you ask for, but you're going to give us something we are asking for." So it is mandated that they go to a class an equal amount of time that they have the activity. . . . In addition to that every youngster must participate in counseling. . . . We have to fortify them internally so that whatever problems they are confronted with, they will know how to cope with them and deal with them.*

Ozelious Clement, formerly of the Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture

- n Bethesda Youth Services
- n Boys and Girls Club of Salem
- n Camp Fire—Potomac Area Council
- n City Streets Program
- n Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture
- n Lee Youth Association
- n Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs
- n National Institute of Taekwondo and Fitness
- n United Methodist Junior Basketball and Employment Project
- n University Park Community Center
- n Venice Camp

When many Americans think about youth-serving programs, recreation programs are most likely to come to mind—swim and gym programs, basketball, other sports, and maybe arts and crafts. What we discovered in looking more carefully at these programs is that even those that most closely fit that model offer a breadth of activities that are far more varied and complex than one might at first assume.

Most of these programs view recreation as a tool for attracting young people, as described in the quote above, and as an opportunity to teach, both through experience and example, the critical importance of such aspects of personal character as discipline, consideration, teamwork, and responsibility. Although sports or other recreational activities are at the core of what programs in this category offer, most also offer leadership development opportunities, tutoring, health education, and cultural enrichment.

This category of programming is one area where the public sector plays a somewhat larger role. Of the twelve programs in this category, two are run by public entities and another receives virtually all of its funding from governmental sources.

A few of the recreation programs in our study have strikingly long histories, with three founded well before the 1960s. Only three have a history of less than 15 years.

### Missions

The mission statements of these programs center on three major goals—creating recreation opportunities, promoting youth development, and prevention—with each organization placing a greater or lesser emphasis on one than the other. Strikingly, none of the mission statements talk about creating recreation opportunities in the absence of at least one of the other two goals; every mission statement that specifically states a commitment to creating recreational

opportunities also offers a youth development or prevention agenda as well. The mission statement of City Streets is typical, “*To provide all youth, at risk and not at risk, with an opportunity to participate in youth development and recreational activities.*” Camp Fire-Potomac Council describes its mission as providing “*youth with an opportunity to grow and reach their full potential.*” Similarly, the Boys and Girls Club of Salem is “*dedicated to promoting the health and social education of youth using a positive youth development strategy.*”

In contrast to these more socioeconomically mixed organizations, all of the programs exclusively targeting a low-income neighborhood include some variation on prevention language. Some may only characterize their target groups as high risk while others more explicitly emphasize prevention as a core activity. The Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs are “*dedicated to reducing juvenile delinquency through providing an array of organized activities for youth and for the community in general.*” For the United Methodist Junior Basketball and Employment Project, the mission is similar: “*to divert youth from involvement with gangs, drugs, and crime.*” It is unclear if this emphasis on prevention language reflects community concerns that guided the development of these programs, or if this language is merely responsive to the interests of funders. Nonetheless, this strong emphasis on prevention language was far more prevalent in programs serving economically disadvantaged communities.

#### Programs

Most of these programs rely upon sports and recreation activities to attract young people initially; they are then encouraged to engage in self-exploration and a range of other educational and leadership-development activities. Each program in this category, whether it's camping with

Camp Fire or taekwondo at the National Institute of Taekwondo and Fitness, reports that young people are first attracted by sports or recreation opportunities. While these were the most likely programs to report that the same feature that first attracted youth, that is the sports and recreation activities, also were the most important factor in keeping them, they nonetheless also reported that for a significant number of the young people, it is relationships with staff that keep them coming back.

These programs are of three structural types: center based, outreach oriented, and camp based. Although each type may be present within a single organization, they represent distinctly different approaches to providing recreational opportunities for children and youth.

#### **Center-Based Programs**

Center-based programs are those offered at a free-standing physical site, although the organization may be housed at a single site or multiple clubhouses in different neighborhoods. That center is a visible community resource and often a gathering place for neighborhood youth. Most of the programs of this type offer a drop-in center as one point of access as well as more structured sports and recreation activities. Once young people are involved, they are encouraged to participate in other educational and developmental opportunities. These programs are distinguished from the more comprehensive programs described below by virtue of their authentic emphasis on providing recreational opportunities—even when they are used as an entree to engage young people in academic or other programs.

#### **Outreach Oriented**

Another type of programming is built on outreach. Instead of locating services within a physical center, a number of

The Lee Youth Association (LYA), in Lee, Massachusetts, was founded by a group of Lee residents concerned about the lack of safe, well-supervised activities for young people in their community. LYA was developed with the intention of meeting and adapting to the needs of youth in the community. Youth often first come to LYA through the drop-in center and then become involved in activities, which include organized sports, theatre, fine arts, and outdoor adventure. The program places a strong emphasis on drug and alcohol awareness and decision making through a variety of youth development programs that include formal conflict-resolution training and values-clarification opportunities. Parents are involved in the program as volunteers and perhaps as board members, and are participants in program decisions.

The Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs operates ten clubhouses in the District of Columbia. These clubs attempt to combat the negative influences affecting youth such as drugs, crime, and peer pressure. Key to the program is the opportunity for youth to have close, fun contact with police officers so that they can develop trust and respect for the police force. There is a particular emphasis on serving pre- and early adolescents in the belief that effective prevention is most easily implemented early. In addition to organized sports and arts activities, the programs each offer a drop-in center, as well as tutoring, job and career counseling, drug prevention programming, life skills seminars, and peer and professional counseling services.

organizations bring activities to locations where young people naturally congregate. Such an approach can be a less-costly alternative to increasing physical accessibility for young people in neighborhoods significantly far apart. The following recreation programs offer two different approaches to this outreach strategy.

### **Camps Based**

A camp setting provides a distinct alternative to bringing the programming to the young people. Because sometimes the most effective way to influence young people is to get them out of their own environment and expose them to beautiful natural settings, almost half of the programs in the category offer camping as one of their recreational activities. For a few of these programs, camping is core to their program philosophy.

Venice Camp, located in Los Angeles, California, provides day and overnight camping opportunities to economically disadvantaged youth and youth with physical disabilities. The camp prides itself on bringing together youth of different ethnicities and abilities to learn to know one another and to enjoy new recreational and social activities in a beautiful, safe, and supportive setting. The camp program includes such activities as a daily camp sing, structured sessions or classes in sports and games, creative dramatics, environmental awareness, outdoor cooking, trips to the beach, and for older children, overnight camping. The program tries to serve the same communities, housing projects, and children and families from year to year in order to maximize the impact that the two-week summer session can have in the life of a child. Children are encouraged to learn how to understand and enjoy other children of different backgrounds and abilities, to develop

The Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture is part of the Brooklyn USA Athletic Association as well as Medgar Evers College. The Center offers its substantial array of sports or recreation opportunities in local public schools—with a target of reaching sixty-three schools and 20,000 children within the next few years. The program offers over twenty sports and cultural activities, each of which is highly organized and equipped with uniforms, trained officials, tournaments, trophies and the like. Young people choose one activity in which they participate twice a week for a total of 3 hours. As a condition for participating in this activity, they must sign a contract agreeing to attend an educational program for a similar period of time, and to participate in a weekly group counseling session. These weekly sessions include regular discussions on such issues as drugs, AIDS, cultural identity, and decision making. The belief is that these sessions will help to fortify the young person's social adjustment so as to complement the physical achievements and academic skills acquired through other parts of the program. There is also a youth leadership group for kids elected by their peers. These youth work on writing skills and understanding government and the legal system, among other things. The center plans to develop a program council comprised of staff, youth, and parents that will eventually serve as a forum for making administrative and organizational decisions.

improved communication skills, and to understand and respect the environment.

#### Benefits

The program directors of Recreation Programs had the least commonality in how they described the benefits of

The City Streets Program of the Phoenix Parks, Recreation, and Library Department, combines the center-based and outreach approaches, with the majority of its programming taking place outside the Park District's recreational facilities. Most activities are offered through the City Streets Mobile Cultural Outreach Program, which uses converted bookmobiles to bring enrichment and recreational activities to targeted areas. The program director describes the program as being about "*reaching out to those who are served the least by bringing the services to them.*" The bookmobiles reach their sites from one to three times a week. The program has found that how often the program reaches a community has a significant impact on young people's attachment to the program. Although the retention rate for neighborhoods the program reaches three times a week is 90 percent, when City Streets only visits a neighborhood once a week that retention rate drops to 50 percent. A high priority is placed on hiring staff who are able to attract and relate to youth within the program. As the director describes it, "*City Streets is not a job, it's a lifestyle.*"

their programs for the young people involved. The specific benefits most frequently mentioned were an improved sense of self-worth and improved relationships with others—parents, peers, program staff, teachers, or others. The benefits most frequently mentioned by the directors of Recreation Programs were:

- improved sense of self-worth
- improved relationships with others
- development of new skills
- knowledge development
- improved self-awareness

- assertiveness
- leadership skills

These recreation programs most frequently gauge their effectiveness according to the frequency of youth attendance. If young people keep coming, programs suggest, they must be meeting youth's needs and interests. Almost as frequently mentioned as a measure of success was the

observation of positive behavior—either during the program's activities, in improved school performance, or in college attendance. Despite the significant presence of prevention language in most of the programs' mission statements, only three of the eleven measured their success by avoidance of such negative behaviors as drug use, delinquency, and teen pregnancy.

# Chapter 6

## SELF-ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

*[TOPS participants] are successful if they are able to make decisions based on the information they have learned. They are fully aware of all their options in life, and whatever decisions that they make for wherever they want to go with their life and so forth is made on realistic, rational information. So . . . I don't define it that a kid that finishes TOPS, graduates from high school, and gets pregnant as being a failure. Because if that child, knowing all of his or her options, made a conscious decision that that's what he wanted for his life, then that wasn't a failure. . . . If they're in control of their life, then they're successful.*

Sandy Burke, Teens Organized for Pride and Success

- n Big Sisters of Los Angeles
- n Concerned Black Men
- n Fifth Ward Enrichment Program
- n Ginew/Golden Eagle Youth Program
- n Girls Inc. of San Leandro
- n Indianapolis Youth Groups
- n Lavender Youth and Information Center (LYRIC)
- n Male Youth Enhancement Project
- n Reaching Out to Chelsea Adolescents (ROCA)
- n Teens Organized for Pride and Success (TOPS)
- n YWCA of El Paso

For self-enhancement programs, the notion of arming young people with information and self-esteem so that they can make positive life choices is paramount. Although virtually all youth-serving programs seek to promote self-enhancement, the eleven programs in this category place priority on improving young people's sense of themselves, providing positive adult role models, and educating young people about life's risks and possibilities. As Jake Roach describes the Male Youth Enhancement Project, which serves young men from one of Washington, D.C.'s most troubled communities: "*We seek to stop young black men from killing each other. We want to clearly define their purpose, give them a plan, and teach them how to work their plan.*"

The eleven self-enhancement programs in our survey all developed in response to concern about a group of young people at risk of being devalued by our society. Almost all of these programs are targeted to a specific group identified as at risk for low self-esteem (for example, economically disadvantaged African American males, homosexual youth, or even girls more broadly) that may also jeopardize both their physical and emotional health. These programs are committed to promoting the self-esteem and confidence of these young people in hopes of promoting their resilience in the face of likely discrimination and disadvantage.

These programs report strikingly similar missions. Although strategies for achieving those missions vary substantially, certain universals remain. These include a commitment to reaching youth at an early age, exposing them to positive adult role models who share critical characteristics or life experiences with participants, a heavy reliance on volunteers to serve as those role models, and providing young people with information to support healthy life decisions.

Eight of the eleven are small grassroots programs that were founded in the 1980s; the balance are affiliates of national organizations with both larger budgets and longer histories. Budgets of these grassroots organizations range from \$65,000 to \$304,000, and funding sources are highly diverse for almost all of the organizations. The majority have more than five different kinds of funding sources, ranging from United Way to individuals or foundations, though government sources provide more than 50% of the budgets of five of the eight programs.

#### Missions

The mission statements of these organizations raise quite similar concerns and commitments. The five general goals outlined in the mission statement of the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC), a teen center for gay and homosexual youth, are typical of the goals of all of the programs within the self-enhancement category: *“to diminish the isolation targeted youth feel; to help them to cultivate a positive social identity; to diminish the risk of engaging in high-risk behavior; to enhance their self-esteem; and to instill a sense that recreation is important in life.”*

These programs are among the most likely to have mission statements that outline fairly long-term goals for the development of individual youth. Most of the mission statements speak to helping young people to become healthy, self-sufficient adults. For example, Girls Inc.’s mission is to: *“empower girls and help them achieve a greater sense of independence and competence.”* Similarly, the Black Male Youth Health Enhancement Project describes its mission as to *“enhance the physical health and mental health of black male youth, and to assist them in their transition from boyhood to manhood.”*

In discussion, the directors of each of these programs described discrimination that these young people likely

will face in achieving their goal of healthy, competent adulthood, and most identified one of their goals as empowering youth through increased competence, confidence, and information to overcome that discrimination. Only Girls Inc. of San Leandro, however, specifically added this likely discrimination to their mission—elaborating the national mission to state that the program *“is skills oriented, hoping to give girls the skills they need to overcome the barriers and gender discrimination they encounter.”*

#### Programs

The programs in this category serve a fairly wide age range, but most described a preference for reaching young people at an early age, before negative behaviors have become too deeply ingrained. Most of these programs hope to establish long-term relationships with youth that will allow the program to follow and support their progress through the years. Sandy Burke from TOPS talked about what this preference meant for their program:

*We felt very strongly about the fact that the earlier we reach kids the better. We decided to start at nine years old—that way we would get them coming out of grammar school. We would track them through that transitional period from grammar school to middle school and then we would be with them through middle school into high school. We felt very strongly about that aspect of it because we were seeing that transitional periods really seem to have a lot of impact on behavior.*

A critical component for these programs is providing these vulnerable children with positive role models that allow them to see others of their own ethnicities or individuals faced with similar challenges, who have successfully navigated the road to adulthood, and with support as they themselves try to navigate that path. A program like Con-

cerned Black Men is just that—a program whose purpose is to allow black men who care about the young people left behind in poor communities to express that concern in meaningful and constructive ways. The founders of Concerned Black Men lamented the lack of adult male relationships in the lives of African American youth in many inner-city communities. Broderick Johnson, the director of Concerned Black Men, talks about the concerns that led to its founding:

*What we were able to discern . . . was an absence, frequently, of a relationship from the child to the adult male parent, both in school, and in a larger context. What is critical about that relationship is the protection that children so often feel when they are surrounded by a male parent or other adult, and a sense of trust, that you are secure, and that someone is going to take care of you. So it is those relationships that we have to be able to give children on a regular basis.*

This concern for communicating to young people that they are cared for, and will be taken care of, is echoed by the late Chris Gonzalez, director of the Indianapolis Youth Groups, a center for lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens. The organization's gay staff both expresses its caring for the youth they serve and model self respect and confidence through their strong stance as advocates for the rights and concerns of gay youth. "I think it's the attitude of the organization [that matters]—that we will stand up for them, that we will fight for them, that we will be visible, that we are not going to hide in the closet about what we are doing."

The vast majority of these self-enhancement programs rely very heavily on volunteers. Most have small staffs, very substantially supplemented with volunteer labor that represents a large percentage of their workforce. Typical is Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center with

one full-time and two part-time staff members working with a group of twelve volunteers. For other programs, the ratio is more extreme. Concerned Black Men's staff of two full- and two part-time staff is supplemented by 300 volunteers contributing a total of 1,500 hours per month. Big Sisters of Los Angeles' fifteen-member staff manages the contribution of over 7,050 hours by over 470 volunteers each month. The role of volunteers in these self-enhancement programs is vital to the programs' ability to provide the activities and services that are the core of what they do.

These self-enhancement programs are among the most likely to see health education as a core aspect of their programming. This emphasis reflects a strong belief that the vulnerability of the groups that they serve place their participants at high risk for behaviors that jeopardize their health and well-being. Ginew/Golden Eagle Youth Program was initially started in response to the high rates of suicide, alcoholism, and drug abuse affecting the Native American community. The program incorporates education in nutrition, physical fitness, and disease prevention, making sure to provide balanced dinners before each session. As its program manager Shirlee Stone asserts, at the Golden Eagle Program, "Health education is key."

Our look across programs identified four distinctly different programming strategies employed by these programs in achieving their goals. These strategies are *weekly group meetings*, *center-based self-enhancement*, *one-on-one mentoring*, and *peer education*.

### **Weekly Group Meetings**

Three of the self-enhancement programs provide a range of enhancement activities in the context of weekly meetings staffed by supportive adults, both volunteer and paid, that have faced many of the same challenges the youth now face. In addition to health education and leadership devel-

Concerned Black Men is a national organization with local chapters established within schools, homeless shelters, or juvenile detention centers specifically directed toward helping African American male children and adolescents to prevail despite the substantial challenges they face. The program seeks to provide positive male role models and to build stronger channels of communication between adults and children. The program involves young people in a variety of activities with supportive volunteer adults, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Oratory contest, a History Bee, and scholarship contests. The program also offers a “Manhood Training Program” that they have found to be very popular with young people.

opment, these programs tend to emphasize such concerns as positive decision making, career counseling, and cultural enrichment, often through discussion sessions or shared activities and field trips.

### **Center-Based Self-Enhancement**

Three of these self-enhancement programs provide a physical space of safety, acceptance, and opportunities for young people from the target group they have identified as at a disadvantage within the dominant culture. These programs may provide, as the director of the Male Youth Health Enhancement Project suggests, “*an oasis in the middle of hell.*” They each offer a drop-in center and a variety of other social and recreational opportunities. These programs are quite similar to the Comprehensive Service Programs discussed in Chapter 9, but are more modest in scope and have a more narrowly defined focus of discouraging high-risk behavior and promoting increased self-esteem and competence in specific kinds of youth.

Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) works to provide a safe space where lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people can engage in social and recreational activities. The program was developed when gay activists became concerned that the only services available for gay and lesbian youth in San Francisco were therapeutically based and felt that those services should be supplemented with social and recreational activities. Like other self-enhancement programs, in addition to its drop-in center, LYRIC identifies its core program offerings as health education and leadership development. Although it is the only one of these self-enhancement programs that does not formally involve a mentoring component, the program involves three staff and twelve volunteers donating a total of 100 hours a month, all of whom are members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community.

### **One-on-One Mentoring**

Mentoring is a fundamental strategy of virtually all of the self-enhancement programs. Each program seems independently convinced that the support and interest of a concerned adult, ideally an adult faced with similar challenges to your own, is extraordinarily powerful in positively influencing the life of at-risk young people. Big Sisters of Los Angeles represents mentoring in its purest form—the facilitation of a relationship between a young person and a screened adult volunteer—with volunteer support but without other additional regular programming or services.

### **Peer Education**

We’re Educators: A Touch of Class (WEATOC) takes a very different approach to promoting self-enhancement concerns than the other programs in this category. It

Big Sisters of Los Angeles recruits and supervises female adult volunteers linking them in one-on-one relationships with at-risk girls between 6 and 20 years of age. When a child first becomes involved with Big Sisters, a needs assessment is done and this assessment is then reviewed annually. Volunteers meet with their Little Sisters on a weekly basis, with 470 volunteers averaging approximately 15 hours per month with their Little Sisters. The program believes that through this relationship, girls gain self-confidence, career awareness, and an increased sense of self-empowerment.

- improved academic achievement
- cultural awareness
- self-awareness
- sense of belonging

The emphasis on physical health was fairly unique to these programs. Some program directors asserted that, through access to better health information combined with improved self-esteem, young people are able to resist peer pressure that often leads to high-risk behaviors. David Roach, at Indianapolis Youth Groups, put it most strongly in saying that: “*At IYG, success is measured in terms of the number of lives we are saving.*”

involves a two-pronged strategy that most significantly involves a fairly small number of young people on staff, but then brings theatrical performances on topical concerns to a far broader audience to promote healthy adolescent development.

#### Benefits

All of the directors of Self-Enhancement Programs mentioned increased self-esteem and self-confidence as critical benefits young people receive from their programs. Those benefits most often cited by directors were the following:

- increased self-esteem
- increased self-confidence
- self-empowerment
- social development
- improved physical health

WEATOC is a health education and prevention program that employs twenty-six peer educators who receive substantial training in such areas as health education, alcohol awareness, values clarification, and communication skills to prepare them to teach health education workshops and perform theatrical presentations that address difficult issues that confront adolescents. WEATOC peer educators conduct comprehensive 8-week training sessions for other peer counseling groups and community leaders. Theatrical presentations, again presented by youth members, address such issues as teen pregnancy, self-esteem, birth control, suicide, child-parent communication, AIDS, and racism. The program is assisted by four volunteers a month who together contribute 72 hours of service.

# Chapter 7

## EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT AND CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAMS

*Often when I look in the mirror,  
I feel as if I have been cheated.  
Maybe God made a mistake  
when he made me black  
with an eager mind.  
Or, maybe I was meant to be black.  
Maybe God created me to prove people wrong.*

Jermaine Savage, CYCLE '89<sup>5</sup>

Although many of the eleven programs in this group offer a variety of services, their most fundamental commitment is to support and enrich “eager minds.” Many of the programs target minority and low-income young people who may be in overtaxed schools where teaching the three

- n Bay Area Youth At Risk
- n The Bicycle Action Project
- n Brooklyn Children’s Museum
- n The College Opportunity Program
- n Community Youth Creative Learning Experience (CYCLE)
- n The Explainer Program
- n Music Cultivation Program
- n Office of Special Programs
- n Valued Youth Partnership Program
- n The Work Force Unemployment Prevention Program
- n YouthBuild U.S.A.

R’s is a significant challenge. These supplemental educational programs strive to enrich and energize the educational experience of young people, who too often have come to see themselves as incapable and to see school as a source of frustration and failure. By engaging young people in new approaches to experiencing education and employment opportunities, they seek to both increase their academic achievement and to open a world of new and different opportunities.

Greg Darnieder, former Executive Director of CYCLE, describes a project:

*One group worked for several months on a project for the Mexican Día De Los Muertos, the Day of the Dead Festival, and built altars for the celebration of various black heroes and heroines on whom they had done historical research. We had an open house gallery, and the kids were there to explain what they had done. To see the kids translate their understanding of these people into an artistic format, and then share it with others, was very exciting. Essentially, we feel that when a kid builds something like that, they come to own that learning in a way that they can’t with book learning. It solidifies what they know, and also solidifies their engagement with learning.*

### Missions

The mission statements of these organizations virtually all use language related to opportunity and exposure, reflecting the goal of expanding young people’s skills and potential. Almost all programs’ missions also place a strong emphasis on esteem building as well as developing increased competencies to create a belief in young people that they can be successful and can make an important contribution to their communities. There is clearly a strong sense that if programs can inspire young people to

believe in their own capacities, this belief will translate into academic success and personal growth.

The Lawndale College Opportunity Program, for example:

*Envisions a future in which students graduate from high school and college and become empowered leaders of the community and the world; where each student has a positive self-image and an appreciation of his/her own culture as well as that of others; and has the ability to function in a multicultural society.*

Even those programs with a more direct employment focus use language about self-exploration. Although preparing young people for the work force is their fundamental goal, they believe it is equally important to expand young people's horizons and to enhance their sense of themselves as competent human beings. According to Charles Hammond, Bicycle Action Project:

*We want to motivate inner city youth . . . to learn. . . . [We have] a couple of major goals. One of those is preparation for employment and the other one is general personal development that would include both psychological growth and educational achievement.*

The mission statement of Bicycle Action Project reads:

*To teach at-risk youth self-management, basic academics, work readiness, and leadership skills through bicycle-related activities.*

The Work Force Unemployment Prevention Program includes in its mission statement such goals as “*fostering the development of self-esteem and personal empowerment; exposing young people to new experiences; and teaching critical life skills,*” as well as job readiness and employment retention capability.

## Programs

Programs fall into two broad categories—those with an academic focus and those with an employment focus. However, as mentioned above, the distinctions between them are anything but clear. Both kinds of programs have very similar sets of goals with slight differences in emphasis. In fact, most of the programs tend to be about both education and employment. Larry Hawkins, Office of Special Programs, explains:

*We have to prepare the student for the next step in his or her life. That's the key. Education plays an important role in that next step, no matter where the student is going. Now I seldom tell students to be a doctor, lawyer, or Indian chief, but I want them to be able to be a doctor, lawyer, or Indian chief. Education has come to be the bottom line for me. And all that we do should lead to that.*

### Academically Focused Programs

Most of the academically focused programs in this category started with fairly small budgets in the 1980s, and most have stabilized with budgets under \$500,000 and small full-time staffs of under five supplemented by part-time workers. All but two of the programs target minority youth from low-income families. Most serve a fairly small geographic area with a center located in that community. Private foundations and corporations play significant roles in the funding of most of these programs. Only two of these programs receive a substantial percent of their funding from public sources.

In the context of the overarching goal of exposing young people to a range of authentic learning experiences and inspiring excitement about learning and an increased sense of their own potential, programs operate in very different ways. Three of the approaches employed by some of

the academically-focused educational enrichment programs we looked at were *center-based academic enrichment*, *museum outreach*, and *youth as educator*.

### ***Center-Based Academic Enrichment***

Three of the academically focused programs, and one of the more employment-focused programs, employ this programming strategy. In these programs, activities are focused on a fairly small geographic neighborhood and are committed to being a part of the fabric of that neighborhood. These programs try to get young people involved as fairly young adolescents, intending to stay involved with them through young adulthood (and, in some cases, beyond as they come back as staff or volunteers). Once a youth is involved with one of these programs, generally attending several times a week, he or she becomes “one of *their* kids,” and program staff try to work with that young person through the range of obstacles they may confront that risk undermining their school and career success.

This sense of commitment to the youth seems to extend to involving the whole family in the work of the program. These programs all require formal parental consent and make regular contact in follow-up with parents to address concerns and chronicle their child’s progress. Three of the four programs also involve parents in some programming, use them as volunteers, and involve them in program decision making.

Each of these programs is further committed to exposing young people to a wide range of career and college options—offering career fairs, mentoring, scholarships, and trips to college campuses. Each works to make educational enrichment exciting, supplementing homework help with more engaging alternative programming involving field trips, guest speakers, and integrating such elements as

The Office of Special Programs (OSP) is housed on the campus of the University of Chicago, providing tutorial assistance counseling aimed at academic and life planning, and academic enrichment drawing in part on the departments and faculty of the university, and on the teaching of both older students enrolled in the program and of past graduates. Using sports as a draw for many students, as a means for creating a sense of membership, and as a way of teaching key values, the program offers students the opportunity to play sports such as volleyball or basketball as team members or less formally, as well as taking youth and their parents on diverse field trips to local museums, productions by African American playwrights, ethnic restaurants, and the opera. OSP collaborates with local high schools, the YMCA, Chicago Youth Centers, and an association of local churches to offer complementary activities, networking, and some joint events.

personal growth, social skills, and artistic expression with more traditional academic endeavors. The Office of Special Programs (OSP) specifically ties sports and recreation opportunities to academic enrichment requirements—using sports to attract young people who might otherwise shy away from an academic enrichment program—and then hooks them on the goal of academic achievement as they begin to see that they really are academically capable.

### ***Museum Outreach***

Two programs involve attempts by local museums to reach out to the surrounding community. Both programs involve frequent participation, with young people participating in experiential science learning as well as having a paid internship experience at the museum. Both programs work to keep families informed about their child’s experience in the program, but only recently has one of the programs begun to think about involving parents in a more substantive way.

The Brooklyn Children’s Museum found that an increasing number of unaccompanied young people were coming to the museum, which prompted the development of a program specifically to meet the needs of young people from the surrounding community. The Museum Team program serves young people from seven to eighteen years of age. Participants advance through several stages—Kids Crew, Volunteers in Training, Volunteers, and Paid Interns. Young people come to the program every day after school to participate in academic enrichment programs, tutoring, field trips, and to prepare for positions either as a volunteer or eventually a paid intern within the museum. These internships pay above minimum wage and involve a commitment of from 6 months to a year working with collection staff, administration, security, library, or education. The museum strives to have young people involved with the museum from the time they are seven through high school graduation.

### ***Youth as Educator***

This strategy is one employed in many primary support programs, but is especially prevalent in those focused on educational enrichment programs. As young people develop skills through program involvement, they then are able to support other young people in their own academic endeavors. Most of the education enrichment programs employ this strategy in some way in their programming. In the Valued Youth Program, this strategy is the fundamental building block of the enrichment program.

### **Employment-Focused Programs**

As mentioned above, the three employment-focused programs each try to combine the promise of employment

The Valued Youth Program works to help Hispanic young people from poor communities to remain in school by promoting increased self-esteem and self-worth. The program aims to achieve this increased self-esteem by training young people to tutor younger students. The program also has a variety of avenues to support youth progress and achievement, including award ceremonies, festivals, and celebrations. VYP’s experience suggests, according to their director, that the experience of helping a younger student helps participants to become more interested and competent in their own school work and more willing to assume greater responsibility.

preparation and opportunities with educational enrichment, in traditional and nontraditional ways. These programs offer real work experiences while working with youth to understand the relationship between successful employment and the achievement of academic goals. Two very different program profiles suggest how such programs may combine these academic concerns with youth’s interest in paid employment.

YouthBuild prepares young people for careers in construction by employing them as trainees in the rehabilitation of vacant abandoned buildings into housing for low-income and homeless people. The young people alternate on-site weeks of supervised construction work with off-site academic programming, job skills training, and counseling, as well as recreational and cultural activities. The program is embedded in a context of leadership development. At the conclusion of the contract, trainees are sometimes placed in construction-related jobs. The rehabilitated housing is owned and managed by the community-based organization as permanent low-income housing.

The Bicycle Action Project (BAP) offers an experiential learning environment where young people receive “real world” opportunities to develop concrete skills and to explore the relationship between academic competence and a work environment—in the setting of a storefront full-service bicycle shop. Using a very low instructor-student ratio, often one-to-one and at the most one-to-three, youth first participate in twenty-five hours of core instruction that includes bike mechanics, math and communication skills, and bike safety. At completion of this segment of the program they have earned a bike and are free to choose from the following four tracks: advanced mechanics, athletics, pre-employment skills, and management/leadership skills and development. Youth over the age of 18 are often employed as shift supervisors and peer instructors.

The Bicycle Action Project’s director describes the program this way:

*BAP distinguishes itself from the traditional school classroom environment because the learning and activities that take place each week are part of the real world. For example, the repairs they make on bikes are frequently for actual customers. And the older youth in the apprentice phase of the program learn work habits and customer-relations skills through actual retail transactions. Thirty-five or 45 percent of youth in the inner cities are dropping out of school. BAP has labored to create an alternative learning environment that stimulates them to*

*learn, builds their spirit of inquiry, and gives them a sense of skill mastery, and then builds on that foundation to continue their enthusiasm.*

#### Benefits

Within primary supports, programs focused on academic enrichment are among the most likely to define benefits and measures of success in somewhat more concrete and quantifiable terms. These benefits include such items as improved test scores or high school graduation. Almost all of the directors of these programs look for general improvements in competencies. The benefits directors most frequently mentioned included:

- improved test scores or grades
- high school graduation
- college attendance
- successful employment
- mastery
- improved communication skills
- positive self-esteem/confidence
- motivation to succeed

More than half of the Educational Enhancement programs report routinely looking to some of these more quantifiable measures to monitor their impact on program participants. Further, three of the program directors expressed a belief that attitudinal changes they attribute to program participation are associated with a capacity for making “Abetter” life choices, including avoiding gang, drug, and criminal involvement and delaying parenting.

# Chapter 8

## CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMS

*[Through our program, young people] start to see the power they have to affect others' lives in positive ways. A lot of these youth know how to affect others' lives, but maybe not in positive ways. We hope that this experience will show them what it takes to become a significant part of their community, so we give them meaningful roles, and at the same time do a lot of workshops in life skills, and other things like emotional development, communication, critical thinking skills, etc. to give them the tools to springboard from that experience to start reaching out to other experiences in family life and school life, in particular.*

Alfred de la Cuesta, Magic Me

- n Children of War
- n Clean and Green
- n East Bay Conservation Corp
- n Encampment for Citizenship
- n Magic Me
- n Madison Square Boys and Girls Club  
Substance Abuse Prevention Program
- n National Indian Youth Leadership Project
- n Teens as Community Resources
- n Washington Leadership Institute
- n We're Educators: A Touch of Class (WEATOC)
- n Youth As Resources Teen Advisory Council
- n Youth Force (formerly Youth Force Citizen's  
Committee for New York City)
- n Youth Initiative Project

The programs that we have identified as “citizenship programs” directly address the development of what Pittman and Wright have defined as citizenship competence (ethics and participation). (Pittman, 1991) The majority of these programs said they developed in response to a growing negative view of youth and a sense that young people were disenfranchised from the democratic process. Program staff further expressed a perception that often young people had not been supported in developing a sense of social responsibility and understanding of their own power to make a difference in their community or the world.

Strikingly, all the citizenship programs identified in our study were founded (or reinstated) between 1980 and 1988, with eight of twelve being founded between 1985 and 1988. This period coincided with a fairly substantial increase in juvenile crime nationally, which may have helped to inspire their development.<sup>6</sup> It is equally striking that these programs have proven to be the most vulnerable of all the categories due to funding insecurities. Of the eight primary support programs that closed their doors between our original data collection and our update of information a few years later, four were citizenship programs.

### Missions

The vast majority of these programs used much shared language to describe their missions. Most specifically mention a commitment to “*leadership development through community service.*” Many suggest that promoting young people as a positive resource by involving them in solving social problems is key to their mission. Many also talk about empowering young people to play an active role in improving their communities.

According to one project director:

*We fill in a void for youth that see the regular system and the traditional organizations not meeting their needs. Because we are a place where they can be heard, where they make the decisions. Most folks feel that the system doesn't care about them, that there is no place for them. So what we're saying is that you can impact the system in such a way as to make it sensitive to your needs. You can make a difference.*

Where missions show greater variation is in more specific goals. Two of the programs, for example, have specifically targeted individual ethnic groups as at risk and thus place a focus on promoting cultural pride and a sense of self respect for one's own identity, as well as working to instill a sense of responsibility for giving service to this cultural community. More of the programs, however, are deliberately diverse in an effort to develop cross-cultural understanding. All of the programs focus on teens and explore different approaches to preparing young people to give service to their communities.

#### Programs

Looking over these programs as a category, two distinct groups emerge. The first involves the majority of the programs, which tend to be small leadership-development programs. The second group of programs is far larger, with a primary focus on large-scale community improvement and conservation projects. We will look at each of these groups separately.

#### **Small Leadership Programs**

The majority of programs we found focusing on citizenship were relatively small, with budgets under \$500,000, and with ten or fewer full-time staff. They were focused on promoting youth development, primarily through youth-driven projects and discussions focused on community

Teens as Community Resources (TCR) began as a project of the Boston Foundation but is now independently incorporated. It is staffed entirely by young people who come several times a week to the TCR offices to review proposals, attend training programs or activities, or help with the writing or publication of their newspaper. Those projects approved for funding by the youth program officers must be conceived by teens, must address real community needs, and must contribute to ongoing efforts to build teen leadership and power. TCR itself, according to staff, has come to be a resource center for youth and other youth-serving organizations.

improvement or cultural understanding. These individual programs tend to have a fairly small geographic focus, though two are national efforts. Most of these programs rely on foundations for a large proportion of their budgets. Where they receive government funding, it comes in the form of grants rather than contracts.

In analyzing the substance of programming, we found a great deal of overlap. Virtually all of the programs counted among their offerings leadership development, values clarification, critical thinking, community service, and communication skills development. Virtually all place a strong emphasis on youth taking substantial leadership in program development and on creating a sense of personal responsibility for social action. Looking across these programs, we identified four major strategies for promoting citizenship among young people—youth as funders, cross-cultural sharing, opportunities to learn and lead, and youth as caregivers.

#### ***Youth as Funders***

This strategy involves a two-pronged approach that trains young people to serve on a youth funding board that

reviews proposals developed by other young people to fund youth-led community service projects.

### ***Cross-Cultural Sharing***

This strategy brings young people together in intensive settings to promote ideas of cultural understanding, self-exploration, and social responsibility.

### ***Opportunities to Learn and Lead***

Programs employing this strategy provide a variety of opportunities, activities, and training programs to both attract youth and prepare them to develop and undertake youth-led community service projects.

### ***Youth as Caregivers***

This strategy involves young people as volunteer supports to more vulnerable populations. The opportunity to serve as a caregiver rather than as a recipient of care is seen to promote self-esteem, to increase understanding of others, and to promote social responsibility.

**Large-Scale Community Improvement Projects**  
Two of the programs are quite different than the others in this category. These represent large-scale efforts to involve young people in community service directed at substantial improvement of public lands, particularly through conservation projects. Both of these programs are located in large urban areas. Unlike the smaller leadership-development programs, funding for these programs is overwhelmingly public, most of which is provided in the form of fees for services.

Though each of these programs describes youth employment as a significant goal, they are also very clear that employment is not their primary goal. In addition to employment opportunities, both programs offer (and in fact, require) educational sessions on leadership develop-

The Encampment for Citizenship was originally founded in 1946 in response to the Hitler youth brigades. Since its reopening in 1986, it has once again begun its 6-week camp program that brings a diverse group of young people from all over the country together to engage in activities designed to address social problems, develop critical thinking skills, promote youth activism and leadership, and combat stereotypes through understanding. The accepted participants are deliberately diverse, half male and half female, representing all parts of the country including both urban and rural areas. Interested youth must write several essays to demonstrate their concern for social problems and to ensure they have the emotional maturity required for such an intensive program. Fifty percent of participants receive full scholarships to cover tuition.

ment and environmental awareness. Although youth leadership development and social action are clearly priorities for these programs, activities tend to be less youth-driven than in most of the smaller citizenship programs. Nonetheless, like their smaller counterparts, these programs are committed to empowering young people. A staff member of East Bay Conservation Corps says: “*Ultimately we want youth to regard the environment as their community, take responsibility for themselves and their community, and to see themselves as powerful resources rather than victims of the system.*”

The East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) combines 32 hours per week of youth employment on conservation and community development projects with 8 to 10 hours of education and personal development through the Comprehensive Competencies Program Learning Center. Through their involvement with

The Youth Initiative Project (YIP) was established by five black men who grew up in housing projects in Brunswick, Georgia. They were concerned about the lack of positive opportunities for African American youth in their community, and saw a need for a support system so that many young people could “overcome the adversity of living in the projects.” YIP provides opportunities for African American young people to be in charge and to see themselves as competent people capable of changing the world around them. The project has three primary activities. First, YIP offers a weekly youth club that is organized and run by the youth themselves. At these meetings, young people plan activities, speakers, and service projects. The project also offers a teen college scholarship program in the form of a pageant judging contestants on poise, talent, and creativity. Finally, each summer, the project offers the “Business Adventure” program in which paid participants are taught by paid peer tutors basic business and entrepreneurial skills through computer simulations and competency tests.

EBCC, youth experience a supportive environment where they may explore educational and personal development and gain access to a variety of recreational opportunities, including sports, arts, outdoor adventure, and entrepreneurship. The program even provides access to legal assistance and counseling resources. Despite the fact that the program strives to be nonjudgmental regarding youth choices, it adheres to a strong belief system and requires youth to make a commitment to the organization. Most youth come daily; 85 percent are reported to move through the program successfully, and 70 percent continue on to higher education.

#### Benefits

Citizenship programs tend to define success as an evolution in individual and collective thinking to broaden young people’s minds and increase their sense of personal capacity and responsibility to work to improve their community. This is equally true of the large, more employment-based programs. When asked about benefits, these programs too talked about evolutions in self-concept and relationship to the world around them rather than more concrete goals such as academic achievement or economic independence. The kinds of benefits these programs seek to promote include:

- personal growth
- cultural understanding
- positive self-esteem
- sense of competence
- social responsibility
- critical thinking
- a caring community

Magic Me is offered in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Education. The program matches middle school students from inner-city schools with senior citizens in a local nursing home. Young people meet with their partners once a week—talking and enjoying activities. Young people are referred to the program through their school principals, and the program becomes an integral part of their school experience. Many of the young people referred to the program are academically behind, and have attendance problems, low self-esteem, and/or behavioral problems. The program has been replicated in many schools throughout the United States and Europe.

The East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) combines 32 hours per week of youth employment on conservation and community development projects with 8 to 10 hours of education and personal development through the Comprehensive Competencies Program Learning Center. Through their involvement with EBCC, youth experience a supportive environment where they may explore educational and personal development and gain access to a variety of recreational opportunities, including sports, arts, outdoor adventure, and entrepreneurship. The program even provides access to legal assistance and counseling resources. Despite the fact that the program strives to be nonjudgmental regarding youth choices, it adheres to a strong belief system and requires youth to make a commitment to the organization. Most youth come daily; 85 percent are reported to move through the program successfully, and 70 percent continue on to higher education.

Only two programs mentioned more easily measurable outcomes such as improvements in academic achievement or attainment of college scholarships. Most, however, also mentioned the more concrete benefits of the service projects (and in the case of larger programs, public improvements) that happened as a result of youth community service efforts. Overall, however, the less-measurable benefits of these programs may be one factor contributing to their vulnerability to the vagaries of funding.

# Chapter 9

## COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS

*We have a drop-in room that's just kids hanging out—just TV and music and talking and playing games and kidding each other and that goes on in that particular area. We have a library where we have kids that are working on the computer and doing their homework and being tutored by volunteers or someone from the school district and then it's basically rooms and offices where behind brightly colored doors there are kids who are in incest groups and individual counseling groups, and High Adventure...is in a group with the kids either planning a trip or figuring out whether they should rappel off a mountain or whatever....In another room the physician might be doing physical exams and the dentist might be doing dental exams. So it's a wide range of activities that can be going on individually or simultaneously.*

Truman Thomas, Lemmon Avenue Bridge

Almost one-third of the programs in our study fall under the category of comprehensive service programs. These programs tend to offer a wide range of activities and services—many offer activities from each of the other categories. What separates these programs from the others is the attempt to meet, as much as possible, the full range of interests and needs of the children and families they serve. In addition to a wide range of developmental opportunities, these programs all also offer a number of intervention services designed to address specific problems—including mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, or family preservation services.

### Missions

Comprehensiveness is the most common theme in the mission statements of these programs, with many stressing

the holistic nature of their services. Mission statements are sweeping, committing programs to attempting to influence all aspects of the lives of the young people they serve. “*To address the social, economic, and human service needs of Latino and other minority youth in DC,*” states the Latin

- n Alianza Dominicana, Inc.
- n Carole Robertson Center for Learning
- n Center for Youth Services
- n The City, Inc.
- n CornerStone Project
- n Community Youth Gang Services
- n The Door
- n Dorchester Youth Collaborative
- n El Puente
- n Family Focus Our Place
- n Guadalupe Center
- n Latin American Youth Center
- n Lemmon Avenue Bridge
- n New Concept Self Development Center
- n Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families
- n Streetworker Program (formerly Youth Outreach Program)
- n United Community Center (Centro De La Comunidad Unida)
- n United Action for Youth
- n Valley Inc. (Manhattan Valley Youth Program)
- n Youth and Family Centers, Inc.
- n Youth Development, Inc.

American Youth Center; *“To create more comprehensive, accessible services for youth in an environment that celebrates the commonality of human experience,”* asserts The Door. A few are even more specific, such as Lemmon Avenue Bridge: *“To improve all aspects of young people’s physical, social, and emotional health and well-being.”*

Almost as frequently mentioned is extending service concerns beyond youth to their families and the community. This expansion distinguishes these programs from most of those programs included in other categories. The mission statements of Alianza Dominicana and Youth Development, Inc. reflect this broader area of concern respectively: *“To enrich the quality of community life and to work toward solutions to many problems that threaten the local Latin population, and to assist in healthy positive psychological, economic, and social development with an emphasis on building families*

It is important to note that most of these programs target services primarily at youth or young adults; only a few provide more than 5 percent of their services to adults. Rather they see improving family functioning and reaching out to effect community change as critical to their work. For example, The City, Inc., which serves only youth, describes its mission as being *“an agent of healing, growth, and advocacy participating in the building of culturally pluralistic communities through relationships with inner-city young people and their families.”*

A few programs’ mission statements focus on the challenges in the communities they serve and describe their missions as to help young people to overcome the challenges before them. The Dorchester Youth Collaborative describes its mission as to *“break the cycle of failure and hopelessness that has trapped many local youth.”* Similarly, the mission of the Center for Youth Services is *“to aid youth to become productive adults by overcoming the burdens that plague ‘high-risk’ youth.”*

## Programs

All of the twenty-one programs in this category are center-based, although they may provide some of their services through outreach to other sites, and some are multi-site programs in which each individual site is fairly self-contained. The programs in this category tend to have long histories. Only one of seventeen has a history of less than 10 years, and the majority have been in existence for 20 years or longer. Although they all have multiple funders, government provides at least 60 percent of the funding of over half of these programs and all but four received at least 40 percent of their funding from the government. Only two received no government funding, and one of these two has closed since our initial data collection.

Not surprisingly, these programs are among those offering the widest range of services. The largest programs offer over sixty different kinds of activities—ranging from arts, recreation, and academic enrichment to AIDS testing and entitlement program assistance.

For the majority of these programs, a drop-in center serves as a critical point of entry into the program. More than half of the programs identified the drop-in center as a core element of their services for young people, allowing young people to enter the program in an emotionally safe, low-pressure way, to “check out” the activities and services offered. Often participants encourage their friends to come and “hang out” in the drop-in center and get a sense of what the place is about.

Dolores Holmes, the Director of Family Focus—Our Place talks about the importance of their drop-in center, where they offer warm soup each cold winter day:

*Kids need to be together, they need to have hangouts, they need to have a place to go where they feel safe. Our Place is one such place where they can find caring adults who*

*will listen to them, who can offer them reasonably sound advice about situations, and who can try to help them deal with issues they are facing at home and on the streets, like drugs and gangs and such.*

These programs tend to be used very intensively by young people. More than half of the programs reported daily attendance, with the balance all reporting that young people attend their programs several times per week. Directors of these programs were among the most likely to speak in terms of extended family when discussing the relationship of the program to participants. For those young people who become actively engaged, these programs appear to become a significant factor in their daily lives.

Over half of the programs offer an alternative school to meet the needs of young people who have either dropped out of or whose needs do not seem to be adequately met within the traditional school system. These schools see themselves as quite different from traditional schools; they describe their high expectations and standards and nurturing and safe environments in which young people are not afraid to take risks. These programs suggest that their alternative schools are able to offer the kind of individual attention and flexibility that may be critical to engaging young people who do not easily fit within the traditional school system. Frances Lucerna offers the example of one student at El Puente:

*Academic rigor is emphasized here. . . . But it's kind of interesting. . . . one of the young people who made the most significant jump in their (standardized test) scores...is a young man who is special ed. . . . He was very very thin. Never spoke. You could barely see his face. He has now presented at Columbia University. . . . He is a leader. He's on the leadership committee. And his score was raised by 22 points last year. What does that suggest*

*and tell you about environment and how much environment and nurturing really plays in this whole issue of academic rigor?*

Finally, universal to this comprehensive approach is the inclusion of treatment services. All of these comprehensive programs offer counseling services, with many offering substance abuse treatment, family preservation services, case management, and other services as well. These treatment services are further augmented in many programs with health care, family planning, and legal advocacy, consistent with the missions described above to meet the full range of needs of young people and their families.

### **Program Approaches**

Two types of comprehensive programs were represented in the study. *Neighborhood-focused community centers* tended to see their roles as strengthening and empowering youth and families, both in the interests of families themselves and as a way to facilitate fundamental community change. *City-wide centers* placed emphasis on a model of individual and family support and intervention, with less emphasis on broader community-level concerns.

#### ***Neighborhood-Focused Community Centers***

About a third of the twenty-one comprehensive service programs are distinctly neighborhood focused. These programs provide the bulk of their services to young people and their families that live in the community immediately surrounding the center. Directors of these programs describe strong connections to their communities—rather than being a haven *from* a violent community, these programs are very much of the community and seek to be a positive agent for change. This change is often every bit as fundamental to their mission as helping individual children and families.

Frances Lucerna, principal of the El Puente Academy for Peace & Justice, El Puente's alternative school, talks about El Puente's relationship to the community:

*We don't see and I don't see this as an oasis. . . . we were very clear when we opened El Puente that this was about self-determination. This was about we in the community saying we have the rights and we will take and exercise our right to own our own community. To design and facilitate our own destiny. To do what we must do for our own young people, our children. So it's out of that perspective that we were mandated to open a school. That is a community institution.*

Consistent with this vision, these programs tend to place a high priority on hiring individuals from the community, both to serve as role models for community youth and to provide employment opportunities within the community. A number of program directors further suggest that having staff who live in the community helps to solidify the organizations' connections to the community. Most of Guadalupe Center staff grew up and still lives in the neighborhood, which is consistent with their belief that "Who better than us knows our needs and who better than us to fulfill our needs?" The Director describes the Center's program as similar to a "small town in a big city."

Although some of these organizations provide services in a number of sites throughout a larger city, each individual center is strongly tied to its community and operates as a fairly distinct entity within that community. The role of these programs frequently extends to organizing community members to influence the future of the community.

### **City-Wide Centers**

The programs run out of city-wide centers are distinguished

The City, Inc. was developed in 1967 by a group of Minneapolis mothers concerned about the delinquent and risky behaviors of their children. What started as a small local drop-in center called "Psychotic City" has grown to a two-site comprehensive service program serving two Minneapolis neighborhoods characterized by intense poverty and high unemployment. Young people are attracted to The City through its drop-in center or its alternative school, but once associated with the center, often participate in other programs that include a variety of recreation activities and employment services, as well as some more specialized services such as The Project, which provides advocacy and support to youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, and The Family Program, which provides counseling using culturally specific approaches to inner-city, multiple-problem families. Eighty-five percent of The City's 70 staff members when we completed our study came from the community, and through its Project on Urban Poverty they work to organize the community to address injustices and "to prevent further alienation from mainstream America."

from neighborhood-focused programs both in terms of their reach and their focus. They are often more centrally located within an urban area and draw their participants from across the city. Whereas neighborhood-based centers tend to place a strong emphasis on promoting the health and well-being of the surrounding community, often serving other adults as well as children and families, city-wide centers tend to focus more narrowly on youth and their families. A number of these programs, in fact, talk about

The Carole Robertson Center for Learning is one of the few social supports in this economically disadvantaged near west side Chicago community. In addition to a variety of services specifically for adults, this Center offers a Head Start program, an academically enriching after-school program, and a Youth Alternatives program in the evenings. The after-school program offers such topics as dance, woodworking, and gospel choir, while the evening program for youth over age 14 involves them in organized sports, arts, and other programs. Parents are heavily involved in all aspects of the Center: they run the evening Family Support and Recreation Program of family-based activities and occupy 60 percent of the seats on the Board of Directors.

the program itself creating a supportive community for the youth and their families within its walls.

Unlike neighborhood centers, a few of these programs also talked about the importance of not requiring family involvement if the young person is opposed to such involvement. These programs suggest that young people need to have a place where they are free of parental judgments and where they can find supportive adults willing to listen nonjudgmentally to their concerns and questions.

***Treatment through development.*** About half of these programs have a strong treatment-focused mission as well as a broader developmental focus, which may include services ranging from an emergency shelter for runaways to intensive substance abuse treatment.

Although most of these youth-serving comprehensive service programs allow young people to choose among a variety of programming opportunities, three programs take a distinctly more structured approach that includes a formal intake assessment and the development of a treatment plan

United Action for Youth (UAY) serves the Iowa City area through its renovated nineteenth century home, the Youth Center in the center of Iowa City, and has a number of outreach programs through the schools. UAY provides a mixture of traditional therapeutic intervention and opportunities for artistic expression. Although the Youth Center is open to all teenagers in Iowa City, local law enforcement considers the Center the principal resource for homeless youth, or any youth at risk of court intervention or homelessness. In addition to their treatment and intervention services, UAY provides activities including art, music, video production, a theatre troupe, and a literary magazine. Youth are actively involved in the administration of UAY, both through ongoing feedback to staff and through formal positions on boards and committees. Although parent involvement is considered important at UAY (parents act as volunteers and board members, and participate in family-centered activities), the staff nonetheless believes that youth must sometimes be seen outside of the context of the family, especially when the family unit appears to be destructive.

that guides the young person's involvement. These treatment plans identify which activities the young person will be involved in, at least initially, and help to define how their time at the Center will be spent. These plans outline specific goals for the youth's involvement at the Center, which again distinguishes this approach from that employed by most of the other youth-serving programs in our study. Youth Development, Inc. (YDI) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is one such program.

### **Collaborative Model**

Finally, three of these city-wide programs follow a collabo-

The Dorchester Youth Collaborative (DYC) is a multi-ethnic, youth-serving organization that provides a variety of prevention as well as intervention services. Although many DYC participants are first attracted by The Center for Urban Expression (a music program), the Prevention Clubs that provide after-school and summer activities on a daily basis for youth from ages 10 to 18 are the mainstay of DYC. In addition, the Education Program provides tutoring and assists dropouts, and the Family Mediation and the Community Mediation Projects help young people to address communication issues with their parents and to play a role in mediating community issues. DYC staff are available via beepers 24 hours a day to families, to ensure that both parents and their adolescents know that they can always get in touch with someone whom they trust and who can help. Families do not tend to be very actively involved in DYC unless at their adolescent's request.

rative model that brings a variety of providers into a single site to provide comprehensive services to youth. Such a model is seen to avoid duplication of services, maximize cost effectiveness (indeed, the budgets for these programs were the lowest of the comprehensive programs), and assure accessibility of services to youth and their families. For these programs, the structure of their program was a fundamental aspect of their mission—i.e., the bringing together of a variety of agencies in a single site. Although directors overall reported satisfaction with the model, they suggested that it is challenging to manage the logistics and balance the service philosophies of so many different providers in a single space. Lemmon Avenue Bridge follows this kind of collaborative model.

#### Benefits

Directors of Comprehensive Service Programs were among the most likely of all the directors whom we interviewed to look to changes in behavior to document their program's impact. These behavior changes included both the avoidance of negative behaviors and the development of positive ones most often associated with improvement in school performance. The only other benefit mentioned by more than half of the directors of comprehensive service programs was improved self-esteem. The most frequently mentioned benefits of these programs were:

- avoidance of problem behavior
- improved school performance
- graduation from high school

When young people first come to YDI, whether through the drop-in center or a formal referral from school or police, they are taken through a program orientation and assessment to inform the development of a treatment plan developed in conjunction with a counselor. Files on the youth are frequently updated daily, monitoring progress and keeping other staff informed of issues or concerns. The programs, which are all at full capacity, range from a latchkey program to businesses run entirely by youth, to drug and alcohol prevention programs using the medium of drama. The program also involves young people in community improvement projects and advocacy. YDI places a strong emphasis on teamwork and equality with all staff, including administrators, doing direct service work with youth. Success in the program is measured against the young person's individual treatment plan.

A young person who walks in the door of Lemmon Avenue Bridge in Dallas, Texas, gains access to twenty-four of the agencies in Dallas that provide services or activities for youth. One of the primary goals of the Bridge is to act as the community focal point for coordination, integration, and co-location of services for young people. Although mental health counseling and health education are seen as core to the services Lemmon Avenue Bridge provides, outside agencies provide services ranging from physical and dental care to Camp Fire activities to probation related services. Each outside agency has signed agreements to provide in-kind donated time for youth ages 12 - 18. Although parents are kept informed and referred to other services as appropriate, youth are the primary recipients of service at the Bridge.

- improved self-esteem
- increased competencies
- improved physical and mental health
- increased self-awareness
- increased connections to the community

In an effort to measure their impact on participants, these programs often try to monitor behavioral indicators, sometimes through testing or more often through participant feedback. Because of the comprehensive nature of these programs and the frequently daily contact with youth, directors of these programs expect to have a high level of impact on their most regular participants.

# Section III

## Benefits, Challenges, and Recommendations



# Chapter 10

## ASSESSING BENEFITS AND MEASURING SUCCESS

As with all activities requiring the expenditure of resources, there is an expectation among program directors, funders, and policy makers that these youth-serving programs are offering some benefits to young people that they would not otherwise be likely to receive. The value placed on these activities in economically disadvantaged communities suggests that these benefits are substantial. However, characterizing and defining these benefits is often challenging, and—as demonstrated by the methodological problems in many of the studies of these programs completed to date—measuring the benefits may be even harder.

In an effort to begin to understand more clearly the potential benefits of these programs, we engaged program directors in describing in some detail how they perceived the benefits of their programs to the young people they serve. As described in Section II, some of these benefits varied by the kind of program being offered. However, certain themes arose repeatedly as directors talked about the changes they saw in their programs' participants.

Although much of the rhetoric advocating for such youth-serving programs—particularly in poor communities—focuses on the avoidance of such negative behaviors as drug use, delinquency, or teen pregnancy, directors described a far wider range of benefits that focused more on personal growth than on the reduction of negative behavior.

### Benefits

By far the most frequently mentioned benefits were improved personal skills and self-esteem—increased sense of confidence, accomplishment, and self-awareness; better communication and decision-making skills; and stronger commitments to achievement and community contribution. Benefits overall fell into six broad categories:

**Sense of self.** Higher levels of self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness, sense of personal competence, and an ability (and responsibility) to positively influence the lives of others, overall an increased sense of personal efficacy.

**Critical thinking.** Improved problem-solving, independent learning, decision making, creativity, concentration, and reasoning.

**Strategic planning and action.** Coping and survival, developing strategies for self-sufficiency, resisting negative influences, accessing services, managing projects, and overcoming barriers.

**Relationship skills.** Improved communication, conflict resolution, negotiation, leadership, ability to function in diverse situations and among diverse populations, and respect for others.

**Knowledge and training.** Proficiency in academic subjects, cultural competence, creative mastery, career awareness, health information, and basic life skills.

**Positive life choices.** Avoidance of such negative behaviors as substance abuse, delinquency, gang involvement, teen pregnancy; and/or assumption of positive behaviors, such as completing high school, attending college, pursuing community service, employment, reflecting personal responsibility, citizenship.

The vast majority of program directors described a wide range of benefits that often crossed many, if not all, of these areas. Only two programs described their benefits strictly in terms of changes in problem behaviors. Most spoke as often, if not more often, about changes in attitudes, knowledge, skills, and engagement—as well as changes in behavior.

Not surprisingly, the specific benefits that directors associate with their programs vary somewhat based on the type of program. When we looked across program categories, only improved self-esteem was raised equally across

groups. Most other kinds of reported benefits varied at least somewhat depending on the program categories.

Educational enrichment and career exploration programs were among the most likely of all of the programs we surveyed to define benefits in fairly concrete, quantifiable terms, reporting such benefits as improved test scores or grades, high school completion, GED attainment, college attendance or successful employment. They also point to improvements in competencies, such as mastery of mathematical or scientific concepts, improved written or communication skills, or improved job readiness. Although most of these programs anticipated more attitudinal benefits as well, such as improved self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation, or sense of responsibility, only three directors of educational enrichment programs specifically described these changes in terms of their impact on avoiding negative outcomes, such as gang or drug involvement or teen parenting.

Recreation programs were the most likely to include prevention language in their mission statements, suggesting a conscious commitment to avoidance of negative outcomes. However, when we asked directors of these programs how they would describe the benefits of their recreation programs, they spoke primarily in terms of improved self-esteem and three positive behavioral outcomes—improved school performance, college attendance, or improved relationships with others, including parents, peers, program staff, or teachers. Only three of the eleven recreation programs specifically described the avoidance of negative behaviors as one of their benefits.

Directors of comprehensive service programs described the benefits of their programs largely in terms of behavioral change, both the avoidance of negative behaviors and the promotion of positive ones. These changes include both

academic improvements due to educational support and improved self-esteem, which they believe promotes the avoidance of negative outcomes.

In contrast, citizenship programs tend to define success as an evolution in individual and collective thinking and as having more positive impacts on the community of service projects. From the perspective of participants, these programs talked about such benefits as personal growth, cultural understanding, positive self-esteem, social responsibility, and creating a caring community, without pointing to more concrete behavioral changes.

Similarly, the benefits of self-enhancement programs tended to be intrapersonal more often than behavioral. All of the self-enhancement program directors mentioned increased self-esteem and self-confidence, and over half added self-empowerment and improved personal and social development. Just under half added such behavioral measures as improved academic achievement or completing high school, as well as improved physical health, including the avoidance of high-risk behaviors that could jeopardize that health.

Finally, performance program directors all described the benefits of their programs as developing concrete skills and offering opportunities for young people to express their artistic talents with a consistent by-product of improved self-esteem. The directors of more than half of these programs also credited the programs for increasing young people's personal drive for achievement, increased self-confidence and self-awareness, and sense of belonging to a supportive and caring group.

These differences across program categories suggest important variations in how different kinds of programs may impact young people's lives. These differences will be important to consider as programs work toward measuring

outcomes and documenting their success. Matching program evaluation strategies to realistic assessments of program offerings and reasonable expectations of benefits they would be likely to provide will be critical to meaningful and useful measurement of program outcomes.

#### Measuring Success

Although directors are readily able to articulate what they see as the range of benefits their programs offer, most report that measuring success is difficult, except in the broadest behavioral terms. A number of program directors commented that they thought measuring success was where they were failing—they were confident that they were having very beneficial effects for children and families, but had not found meaningful ways to document that impact. In fact, 25 percent of the programs whose directors we interviewed had no formal means of either evaluating their programs or documenting their impact. Those programs without formal outcome documentation often did nonetheless talk about informal approaches to getting feedback from participants and alumni regarding the importance of the program in their lives, though they did not routinely record such information.

The remaining 75 percent of programs use some combination of approaches to understand and document the impact of their programming. The approaches that were reported to us generally fall into four basic categories—tracking out-of-program behaviors, participation as a measure of engagement, monitoring individual progress, and multiple types of feedback.

#### Tracking out-of-program behavior

This was the most frequently cited measure and the measure over which programs have the least control—tracking

the absence of negative outcomes such as pregnancies, arrests, substance abuse, disciplinary action at school as well as documenting positive accomplishments, such as improved school performance, graduation, college attendance, or employment. Although program directors described a far wider range of attributes when describing program benefits, avoidance of negative behaviors was among the most frequently offered measure of program success.

**Participation as a measure of engagement.** This is probably the most direct measure of the meaningfulness of the youth-serving agency in young people's lives. Since participation is voluntary, and the decision to come to the program means choosing participation over a variety of other ways to spend their time, some program directors believe that the simple fact that young people are choosing to spend significant amounts of time engaged in their program is a key indicator of success.

Although for some programs measuring participation means taking attendance on a daily basis, for others it involves trying to chart the depth of commitments and the range of participation. So, beyond counting how many days participants come, looking at how long they spend, how many different kinds of activities they participate in, how they have grown in their participation—assuming leadership in projects, taking on more challenging activities, or volunteering to help younger participants—is an attempt to measure level of engagement. Given the significance of mutual engagement in successful treatment in the mental health literature, this seems a potentially important measure for primary supports.

**Monitoring individual progress.** Some organizations also try to establish baseline measures and then to assess individual progress against established goals. Sometimes these goals are established by the program—for example,

improving reading levels for tutoring programs—while others may be determined by the young people as they establish their own goals for program participation and as staff work with them to measure progress against their goals over time.

Some approaches to monitoring individual progress can translate easily into broader measures of program-wide efficacy—overall improved test scores can suggest program impact. Other approaches may provide critical evidence of progress for individual youth, while making only a modest contribution to a program's efforts to prove its value to outside funders. El Puente, for example, requires young people to keep portfolios including works they have written, awards, signs of accomplishment, anything that they view as benchmarks of their own growth. Such a portfolio may be extremely valuable to the individual youth, but may nonetheless be difficult to translate into concrete measures for a funder.

**Multiple types of feedback.** Many organizations rely heavily on feedback from a variety of sources as measurement of the importance of their work for children and families. These programs may combine informal feedback with more formal questionnaires soliciting ratings of satisfaction from youth, parents, graduates, and staff. A few programs commented that feedback from graduates was particularly important in that they had the distance of time to measure the impact of the program on their lives.

Our discussions with program directors may suggest a potentially important mismatch between what directors perceive as the benefits of their programs and what they are actually measuring to document their impact. None of the approaches they reported using to measure outcomes directly measures those aspects of personal change that directors reported most frequently as their most significant

benefit to the young people they serve. In fact, measuring these more subtle personal changes may require more formal evaluation efforts relying on more sophisticated methodological expertise.

Despite the fact that our study did not give us substantive information regarding the measures used, we did find that at least half of the programs surveyed had been involved in some more formal program evaluation. Fifty-seven percent of the evaluations that we were informed had been completed were conducted by outside, independent evaluators. The balance were conducted internally. The most likely programs to be involved in independent evaluations were citizenship and self-enhancement programs. It seems possible that given these programs' almost exclusive focus on psychosocial benefits that are difficult for program directors themselves to document, these programs are among those most anxious to have their effectiveness verified by an outside evaluator.

We further found that a number of programs lauded as national models for quality youth development programs have never been formally evaluated in any way. Only very few programs talked about ongoing evaluation as being a routine aspect of their program's operations. Those that did engage in ongoing evaluation most often did so in the context of the report of a local affiliate to its national organization.

Despite the variety of measures that programs have found to begin to understand their impact, directors continue to express frustration at their inability to measure their impact on those benefits that they often feel reflect most importantly what their programs offer to young people—improvements in personal skills, self-awareness, and self-esteem. Michael Ward, of Bethesda Youth Services, implored us to help develop better measures:

*We do get funding and they do want to know if it's being well spent. They want to hear more than for us just to tell them as much. One thing that would be helpful is if you could develop some better instruments for doing evaluations. It's difficult to get 10-year-olds to do a 150-question survey pre- and post. Instruments that could measure prevention programs would be most helpful.*

This seems an important call to the research community interested in youth development programs to help define more easily verifiable measures so that programs can be helped to document their more subtle impacts on the young people they serve. Our interviews with program directors suggest that they observe many varied behavioral changes, which they believe reflect fundamental changes in how young people see themselves and their relationships to the world around them, as a result of program involvement. Trying to capture the variety of those changes may help youth-serving programs to “prove” their value without being held to the standard of directly altering substantial life choices, a standard that we believe to be unreasonable for many of these quite modest programs, though certainly some of these programs may well have that kind of impact. If Little League is not required to prove delinquency prevention to document its value in wealthy suburban communities, that should not be the expectation in economically disadvantaged communities.

Yet, at the same time that we encourage researchers to struggle with program directors to explore new ways to document more fully the range of impacts these programs

may have on their participants, we would further assert a strong caution in relying too heavily on program evaluations to justify public expenditures on primary supports programs. With programs such as these, in which young people control the level of their involvement and the way they access available opportunities, even the best programs may have difficulty proving measurable outcomes against meaningful control groups. Because these programs are not designed to provide a uniform intervention to address a specific problem, documenting impact is far more challenging. In programs such as these, what young people take from the experience may well be as individual as the way in which they use it.

If one accepts that it is the aggregation of developmental life experiences that combine to build a mature adult, there may well be an inherent validity to the notion that increasing the variety of positive life experiences makes an important contribution to such development—even in the absence of fully satisfying verifiable and measurable outcomes. As the research world continues to struggle to identify appropriate outcome measures for these youth development programs, the field should not ignore the intuitive logic that supports the notion that there is simply inherent value in providing young people with a richer array of life experiences. If children and youth in economically disadvantaged communities are not to continue to lose ground to their more advantaged counterparts, the exposure to such experiences will require public and private commitment and support for primary supports.

# Chapter 11

## CHALLENGES FACING PRIMARY SUPPORTS PROGRAMS

The programs we learned about in this study are providing children from economically disadvantaged communities with a diverse array of programs, activities, and services that appear to enrich their lives and expand their exposure to opportunity. These programs tend to be responsive to the interests, needs, and desires of the young people who choose to participate—letting those needs and desires drive programming. Many of the program directors counted this capacity for responsiveness, often termed flexibility, among the most important assets that youth-serving agencies offer the young people involved in their programs.

A clear commitment among the programs studied to providing safe and stimulating environments, meaningful and rewarding opportunities, exposure to new worlds, and relationships with knowledgeable and caring staff may be what makes these programs “among the best of their kind.” But even these programs, many of which have been nationally recognized for excellence, face myriad challenges due to their commitment to reach young people from some of our nation’s poorest communities. According to program directors, these challenges sometimes threaten to undermine their ability to provide the kinds of programs to the range of young people they wish to serve.

Given the challenges these problems present to these established and mostly thriving programs, it appears likely that these same problems undermine the ability of average programs serving young people from poor communities. We have identified four categories of challenges that this study and other research in the field suggest confront primary support programs. These four categories are sustaining funding, the need to meet unreasonable or differential expectations, facilitating access, and staffing.

## Sustaining Funding

Problems in securing adequate funding were the most frequently mentioned obstacle that program directors told us they face. Although most nonprofit primary supports programs face an uphill battle in accessing sufficient funds to provide the range of activities they would like, youth-serving programs in economically disadvantaged communities find this battle particularly difficult. The reliance of these programs on public or charitable funders places substantial burdens on agency staff to compensate for the community’s poverty.

In many more affluent communities, activity fees make a substantial contribution to program budgets, even in not-for-profit or publicly supported programs. In these communities, the YMCA or park district can reasonably charge basic fees for lessons or summer camp, offering the possibility of scholarships for more economically disadvantaged participants. In communities where poverty is the norm, however, any significant reliance on fees to fund programs fundamentally excludes a large percentage of the population. Littell and Wynn (1989) found that the vast majority of programs included in their inner-city community case study charged few or no fees. This financial reality places primary supports programs in poorer communities at a significant disadvantage compared to their counterparts in more affluent neighborhoods.

Further, many of the small grassroots organizations that provide youth services in these communities are unable, for a variety of reasons, to access formal funding sources, according to a recent study of administrative challenges facing small grassroots agencies. (Quern, 1998) First, many smaller organizations have difficulty securing information about funding opportunities, especially if foundation and corporate funds have not been a tradition-

al source of revenue for the organization. These programs often find they fall outside the network of funders and larger agencies who have the history, credibility, and information necessary to secure available dollars. The problem is compounded by the board structures of smaller organizations, which are often composed of community members and local activists who lack access to corporate and foundation funding. Aside from these initial challenges, most directors of grassroots programs cite a lack of time to devote to fundraising. As one director states: “*I’m a program person. I run programs. I’ve got some skills in writing proposals for funding and that kind of stuff, but running seven sports a year doesn’t leave you much time to put a proposal together.*” (Quern, 1998) Lacking the resources of larger agencies, these smaller organizations must constantly make difficult choices about allocation of time and staff, and frequently it is programmatic rather than administrative concerns that receive priority.

Additionally, attracting financial support for providing what may be viewed by many as “extras” in communities facing a wide range of fundamental problems can be difficult. Just as the arts and extracurricular programs are often among the first programs cut from public school budgets as funds become tight, funding primary supports programs in poor communities may appear frivolous to some in the face of high levels of substance abuse, crime, and teen parenting. Thus, programs without regular sustaining funding may find themselves constantly working to make the case for the importance of their programs, often emphasizing the programs’ potential for prevention to justify both public and private support. As these youth development programs justify themselves with promises of prevention, they are faced with a complex web of expectations—both external and internal—that ask them not only to promote posi-

tive development, but to compensate for depleted families and communities—a tall order for a basketball league or arts program.

#### Expectations

Economically disadvantaged communities present a host of complex problems for the children and families who live there. Although young people everywhere are at risk for drug involvement, early pregnancy, delinquency, gang involvement, and early school withdrawal, those risks are undeniably higher in poorer communities. Few economically disadvantaged communities have sufficient resources, services, or programs to address the magnitude of need. Thus, there is a natural and strong tendency to look to *any* available resources to address a variety of social problems.

In affluent communities, where parents can afford to pay the cost of a sports camp, expectations of a sports camp tend to be fairly modest—perhaps that participants learn to play a variety of sports in a safe and supportive environment. Parents might also expect that young people would learn about being a member of a team and develop a sense of their own competence and talents. But when that same sort of program is located in an economically disadvantaged community, where funding must come from public or philanthropic sources, a different set of expectations come into play. Program directors tell us that funders want to hear about concrete behavioral measures—school performance, delinquency prevention, drug abuse levels, or teen pregnancy rates. According to the director of CornerStone:

*I know that ultimately to build this into a model program that can be replicated, it’s far easier to raise money for it if I can say, “We have this many kids and this percentage of them raised their grades to this level and this*

*many weren't pregnant." They've got to be able to see what you've done.*

Program staff frequently hold themselves to those same standards, perhaps because of the tremendous need for intervention in the communities they serve and because of the expectations of funders and others. Although the vast majority of the programs we surveyed described their missions in developmental terms, when asked about the benefits of their programs, over 50 percent of program directors talked, at least in part, in concrete life-changing behavioral terms.

It appears that we are asking the least well-funded programs in the most troubled communities to have the most profound impact on the lives of the young people they serve—often an impact only indirectly related to the activities or programs provided.

Medrich puts these differential expectations of youth-serving programs more starkly, asserting that: “For the poor, the ideological emphasis tends to be on ‘social control,’” whereas for “the middle class and wealthy it is ‘opportunity enhancement.’” (Medrich, 1991) Although this assertion is painful and alarming, it is clear that the United States has not made a public commitment to sustaining primary supports—to acknowledging the importance for all young people to have an opportunity to explore their talents and learn more about the world around them. What limited public money is available to youth development concerns tends to be provided in the interest of prevention—in effect funding “opportunity enhancement,” but expecting “social control” in return. As mentioned in our discussion of benefits, such expectations both risk holding these youth development programs to an unreasonable standard and undermining the importance of the developmental goals they are designed to advance.

#### Access to Programming

Another substantial challenge for programs in poor communities lies in facilitating access to programs among the range of youth within the community. Medrich defines access as having two primary components—the availability of programs and the ability to get there. We would add to that definition a third component, that of *psychological access*

#### **Availability**

As discussed earlier, far fewer programs are available for youth in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods than in their more advantaged counterparts. This means fewer program sites and a smaller range of activities young people may choose among. With limited program sites and few programs doing outreach to young people, concerns related to the ability of young people to get to these limited sites are heightened.

Further compounding the question of availability is the issue of affordability. Where fees are required to supplement public or private support, such fees undermine program accessibility to the community’s more economically disadvantaged families. But without such fees, the range of programming that organizations are able to make available may be extremely limited.

#### **Ability to Get There**

This component involves a variety of factors, including physical location, safety concerns, transportation, and social organization of families. Because of the limited number of programs and facilities in poor communities, the majority of potential participants are unlikely to live in physical proximity to programs. Thus, concerns about safety and transportation come to the forefront.

Safety can sometimes seem an almost insurmountable problem in some inner-city communities. The closest pro-

gram can be inaccessible if participants must cross gang turf lines to get there. As Furstenburg has detailed, many frightened inner-city families choose to isolate themselves and their children in order to ensure their safety (Furstenburg, 1993). This may mean that young people are left at home alone watching television rather than participating in programs, regardless of how close they appear to be.

Transportation is another critical concern in suburban and rural communities as well as in the city. Although urban communities may have public transportation to serve the downtown area, within-neighborhood transportation is often limited and expensive, and many poor families do not own cars. Suburbs generally have limited public transportation and, although parents may be more likely to own cars, they may be unable to provide transportation during the work day. Moreover, the large distances between programs in rural areas may make transportation a major challenge.

Finally, the limited outreach undertaken by many primary supports programs makes it necessary for families to have sufficient social organization to search out appropriate programs, complete registration requirements, and then get young people to the program site on time. For families stretched to their limits with the struggles of daily living, this may be a formidable task. The director of the Indianapolis Children's Choir discusses this challenge:

*The children in the Indianapolis Children's Choir are getting a wonderful experience, but they are all children that can get there on their own or their parents bring them. So I lose a lot of disadvantaged children because they have trouble getting there or because they have trouble making the commitment. They are often from homes where they are moving from one location to another. They are now living with this aunt, and then that grandmoth-*

*er, so their lives are disrupted and there's no structure for them to hang on to in the home.*

Although a few programs actually pick up young people to bring them to their programs, or escort them on foot, as young people move or programs expand, this can become a substantial challenge. Sandy Burke, from Teens Organized for Pride and Success, explains:

*We pick up just about everybody. . . . It's becoming more and more of a problem each year. Even some of the kids who live close enough to walk over we're having to pick up because of so much increased gang activity. . . . When they move, mom will call us up and say 'Hey we live over on such and such street, don't forget to pick him up on Monday night.' . . . So where I may have had, 4 years ago, a large number of kids that could just walk over, a lot of those families [now] live on the other side of town. Now we have kids from every corner of the city. . . my transportation costs have increased continually every year.*

### **Psychological Access**

Just as important as other barriers to access are concerns about the degree to which young people feel comfortable participating in program activities. Do I feel emotionally safe going there? Are the kids who go there "like me?" A program across the street may not feel accessible to a Latino teen whose perception is that it is an African American program. A gang-involved youth may find a program inaccessible if he or she believes all the young people who participate are anti-gang. In diverse communities, it is difficult to achieve the kind of diversity in both staff and participants that reflects the make-up of the community and assures that the program is comfortable for young people of diverse backgrounds.

One of the few programs we studied with a strong and consistent commitment to outreach “in the streets” to attract young people who would never come into a center on their own was City Streets. Through their Mobile Outreach Program, their Youth-at-Risk Coordinator reported that they are about to reach young people who would never feel comfortable in a center setting and some of whom might pose a threat to the sense of safety of other program participants. They believe that through street-based outreach, they are able to establish connections with some of the more hard-to-reach young people and can begin to develop the kinds of relationships that both encourage them to come to the Center and that make it possible for them to be safely engaged there.

Such deliberate and aggressive outreach was rare in the programs we examined. Given that most programs are full without active outreach, our interviews seemed to confirm Medrich’s notion that, “Providers tend to worry least about non-users.”<sup>7</sup> As young people ask the question “Are the kids who go there like me?, if the answer is no, it will likely take active outreach on the part of providers to help young people to overcome psychological barriers to participation. Given the limited amount of outreach among the programs we surveyed, primary supports programs appear vulnerable to the criticism that they are likely to fail to reach those children and youth who are the most isolated and, therefore, might represent the greatest challenge to primary supports but also might reap the greatest benefit.

#### Staffing, Leadership, and Governance

Many of the programs we studied expressed substantial pride in the longevity of their staff’s histories with their organizations. Quite a few organizations have some staff members who have been with them since they began—

often more than ten or even twenty years. In fact, remarkably few of these programs cited staff burnout as an important obstacle, suggesting that with sufficient support and engagement, staffing youth service programs doesn’t have to be a “revolving door.”

Nonetheless, even these organizations share some of the challenges seemingly inherent to youth work in the United States. Low salaries and stiff demands make it difficult for some staff to stay in youth work positions, even in some of these programs. Finding qualified staff, ideally people who understand the circumstances of the young people being served and who have basic skills and experience in youth work, is even more difficult—especially at the salaries these programs are able to offer.

Some directors report a tension in balancing the priority of hiring knowledgeable and experienced staff against identifying staff that have a full appreciation of the life experience of the young people these programs serve. Raul Daniels of City Streets acknowledges this tension and explains that they emphasize hiring staff who “*can relate to youth regardless of whether they have experience or a [college] degree,*” going on to say that “*programs will often choose to train staff in their program’s way of doing something.*” Although this has certain advantages in imparting the specific program philosophy, it does mean that programs must frequently train from scratch and that staff are stretched to do jobs that are beyond their training and experience.

Finding and training adequate staff is that much more complicated when programs are trying to employ mental health or other specifically trained professionals. Not only are they offering low salaries, these programs further often ask professionals to give up the trappings of success—the nice office, the title, and the 50-minute hour and to use skills that may be quite different than those in which they

have been trained. Dolores Holmes, Executive Director of Family Focus, explains:

*You have to find folks who are not looking for the 9 to 5, who have all the skills that you need from a social worker but who are flexible enough to give up the traditional way of doing it and fit into a sort of a drop-in family resource way of doing it. They're not sitting down and interviewing people and doing the normal intake kind of thing.... You have to be flexible in terms of meeting that person the way they are and they're going to tell you what their problems are before they want to give all sorts of data that you need. So it's real hard to find the social workers who have the skills.*

Leadership in these programs can be an additional challenge. Many of these programs have strong charismatic leaders whose vision and dedication created the programs that now exist. Such leaders may be extremely difficult to replace and many small grassroots organizations cannot survive the loss of such a leader. Although only one director spoke specifically about his concerns about developing new leadership, another organization was in the throes of the recovery from the loss of such a leader. This question of how organizations prepare for these transitions to ensure organizational stability appears critical. Larry Hawkins

spoke about his attempts to identify and prepare his own successor, which so far have been unsuccessful:

*All of us have been a hundred years at this and our time is over. And the question is "What do you do with it?" And we all have the same perplexing questions.... I used to meet with five or six young men who were interested in this work. I would meet with them and we would have lunch or dinner, we'd talk about what was going on and I'd try to hook them up with different things. Well, almost all those guys got out of this work. . . . And there aren't many kids like that now, there aren't many young people, men or women. . . . [Those that he used to meet with] all of them raise this—that you can't earn a living on it.*

Finally, often only the most sophisticated of these programs have been able to create the kinds of Boards of Directors one generally associates with successful not-for-profits. Most of these smaller grassroots agencies have chosen to create boards heavy with concerned community members who may not have the expertise or connections to access funding sources or the experience to provide leadership in administrative areas. Such agencies may be vulnerable to the vagaries of funders' shifting priorities and the challenge of nonprofit management.<sup>7</sup>

# Chapter 12

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Recommendations

The challenges to primary supports programs described above in the areas of funding, expectations, access, and staffing are substantial, and resolving them will not be easy. We believe, however, that an important place to begin may be for primary service providers in all their variety to begin to see themselves as part of the same enterprise—advancing the healthy development of all of America's children and their families.

Viewed this way, primary supports as a sector is neither small nor powerless. The Carnegie Task Force identified over 17,000 youth-serving programs. When one includes the full range of primary supports—from child care to park districts—the number of programs is truly staggering. When Kohm and Garg attempted to count the number of primary supports programs in Grand Boulevard, one of Chicago's poorest communities, they found over 400 organizations, including churches, parks, libraries, schools, child care providers, museums, and community organizations. (Kohm, 1998) If this group could begin to see their common interests, either in modest ways such as providing mutual support, or in terms of the broader goal of changing public policy in favor of positive developmental goals rather than reactive treatment ones, their power to support one another and affect social policy could be substantial.

Charles Jordan, Director of Portland Parks and Recreation, echoed this sentiment in his remarks at a Youth Summit in Oregon in 1992:

*While retaining our uniqueness and autonomy, we in the field of recreation who share the same values and goals, can accomplish more by working together than we can on*

*our own. This is the chance for us to demonstrate the full value of who we are and what we can do. Our youth are at risk, and our society is at a loss. Up to this point we've been fighting a nuclear war with conventional weapons. The first addition to our arsenal must be a new way of thinking...we must learn to work together. Because society needs help with its youth. And we have a piece of the solution.*

The possibility of primary supports programs identifying themselves as part of a common enterprise offers three potential payoffs:

- To facilitate the improvement of the quality and quantity of primary supports programs through mutual support and legitimizing of the field
- To create a common voice that can advance primary supports and the concerns of healthy youth development onto the policy agenda and make it a priority for private funders
- To explore the possibility of the reform of our nation's social service system to create a comprehensive network of primary and specialized community supports

Below, we will discuss each of these in more detail.

### To Facilitate the Improvement of the Quality and Quantity of Primary Supports Programs

The programs we learned about were identified for us as programs of substantial quality. Many of the programs offering primary supports activities throughout the country fall far short of the standard these programs set. If, as we suspect, these kinds of programs provide a potentially important balance to the deficit-driven specialized service programs that form the core of our nation's public service system (child

welfare, mental health, etc.), then it is important to ensure that these programs are of the highest quality possible. One approach to influencing that quality is by increasing the availability of knowledge and expertise by establishing a common field of practice, and ultimately program standards, similar to those in place for treatment services.

There are some hopeful signs in this direction. The youth development movement has begun this process for one segment of the primary supports sector. Increasing numbers of youth-serving programs are coming to see themselves as part of a common enterprise and are working to establish mutually agreed upon standards and to advance the legitimacy of youth-serving programs. Such efforts offer the potential to substantially improve the quality of primary supports by offering small, less-sophisticated programs standards to measure themselves against and by creating a field of both study and practice.

Increasingly, these youth development professionals are suggesting the need for more centralized training and credentialing, which would allow locally recruited adults to develop the broad range of competencies needed for youth work as well and would enable them to develop transferable skills to allow them to advance in their chosen profession. Approximately a third of the organizations we spoke with are involved in some kind of collaboration to coordinate staff training. These efforts hold promise for helping to create a legitimate “field” of youth work that may be more successful in attracting new staff interested in making a career in the area to provide the field with its new leaders.

These same kinds of collaborations are being used by some primary supports programs to share administrative expenses, to offer joint programming, to maximize the use of resources and facilities, or to facilitate referrals among

programs. Although such collaborations may be logistically complicated, they offer the potential of expanding the range and quality of activities available to young people, especially in economically disadvantaged communities where participant fees cannot support the full cost of program operations.

These efforts are an important beginning, and demonstrate the potential significance of primary supports programs coming together for mutual support and to develop program standards and credentials. Expanding this effort to include the full range of primary supports programs, with a special effort to engage small volunteer programs as well as more professionalized organizations, will represent important progress.

#### To Create a Common Voice

Because primary supports programs represent a mosaic of sports programs here and choirs there, they have no common vehicle to bring the voice and concerns of these programs for the young people they serve to the fore. Obvious social problems have a capacity to demand a response from social policy makers, and the professional staff of such organizations as child welfare agencies or drug treatment programs can help to ensure that the need for foster care services or adequate levels of drug treatment are constantly before policy makers. But when the concern is advancing the healthy development of all children, including the majority, who represent no direct problems to society, this message can get lost. As we have asserted above, this is not a small or powerless sector, but it is a sector that fails to identify itself as such. Bringing together the power of the varied voices that this sector represents could be a valuable first step in bringing the potential value of these kinds of programs into the policy debate.

Such public debate could further be critical to promoting consistent interest in primary supports programs within our nation's philanthropic community. While many of the programs we examined relied heavily on private support, most directors reported a sense of vulnerability to shifting funding priorities. Few foundations or corporations have demonstrated a strong, ongoing commitment to this kind of programming. An engaging public debate could solidify the role of primary supports programming within the priorities of private funders.

To Explore the Possibility of the Reform of Our Nation's Social Service System to Create a Comprehensive Network of Primary and Specialized Community Supports

Seven years ago, Chapin Hall advanced a vision for the reform of our nation's social service system that involves two essential and interrelated components. First is supporting and expanding the often-overlooked primary supports that already exist in communities, and the second is forging links between these primary supports and such specialized services as child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health, as well as with our nation's schools. The vision suggests that these primary supports must be seen as every bit as critical to a comprehensive social service system as foster care or substance abuse counseling. With these different levels of service working in tandem, primary supports can both enhance the development of all children and serve as an early warning system for families in need of more specialized services before problems become chronic and potentially intractable.

This kind of fundamental shift in our nation's social service system could affect the challenges that the youth-serving programs we surveyed described to us in a number of important ways. First, altering the concept of a basic

social support system to include primary supports could open avenues of sustaining public funding to primary supports programs. It also could allow for a shift in expectations, freeing youth-serving programs and other primary supports from having to be all things to all people. As one director noted:

*Ideally we could isolate youth development away from those basic things (like poverty and related problems) that society should take care of—securing food, shelter; those kinds of things—and then youth development takes off from there.*

If primary supports could be more easily coordinated with available treatment and other intervention services, primary supports programs could be allowed to be simply what they are—potentially meaningful resources for helping young people to explore, grow, and develop competencies needed both as adolescents and adults.

Such an integrated service system also has the potential of addressing access concerns by increasing public funding available to support greater numbers of primary supports and by improving knowledge throughout the system about available programs and activities as well as facilitating connections among these resources. If connections among programs, both primary and specialized, could be expanded, it may even be possible to temper issues of psychological/social access as known staff from one program may be able to create connections for a youth with staff or participants in another program to ease the stressful period of “trying out” a new kind of place or activity.

#### Conclusion

The primary supports programs we have considered in this study suggest the potential of youth-serving programs at

their best. These programs are by no means typical. Certainly many youth-serving programs provide young people with far more modest offerings—reasonably safe environments that offer opportunities for young people to learn new skills or simply enjoy the camaraderie of peers or staff. What these interviews with the directors of better programs do suggest, however, is that good youth-serving programs may play an important role in supporting families and schools and in promoting youth development.

Much of the argument currently advanced in support of the importance of these kinds of youth-serving programs, particularly in economically disadvantaged communities, points to their potential for preventing negative outcomes. Often programs sell themselves based on this standard, funders look for such evidence, and increasingly researchers are asked to evaluate programs with such a standard in mind.

Yet, this standard appears at once too high and not high enough. Sports and recreation programs in more economically advantaged communities are not expected to control the likelihood that young people will engage in problem behavior, and such a standard should not be in place for their counterparts in less advantaged communities. The programs we examined suggest that, far from merely preventing a negative outcome, good youth-serving programs have the potential to help young people to master new competencies, explore new horizons, develop social responsibility, and prepare for contributing adulthood. If they also happen to discourage negative behaviors, as research seems to be increasingly suggesting, that is certainly a desirable by-product. As we look to understand and document the contribution of these programs, it will be important to consider the full range of impacts program staff, participants, and families believe they have.

Our hope is to encourage examination of the primary supports sector within the public debate, and to bring the sector onto the agenda of the policy makers, researchers, and practitioners who are concerned with the well-being of children and families. Much remains to be learned about primary supports programs and their role in communities. In this study, we have highlighted the voices of program directors. It is certainly equally important to explore the experiences of participants and their families to understand how they see the role of primary supports programs in their lives and to learn about the significance they may have in youth development.

Further, there is much more to be learned about the availability of primary supports in all kinds of communities, about which young people are using them, and which find themselves excluded, overlooked, or underserved. Particularly important seem to be questions of psychological/social access, what factors influence a sense of accessibility for young people and what role race, gender, and ethnicity play in interest, value, and utilization of primary supports.

Finally, particular challenges arise as we seek to explore the question of benefits of primary supports programs. We have seen that there are substantial methodological challenges to identifying verifiable outcomes against meaningful control groups in circumstances such as these, where participation is so varied and participants are self-selected. Researchers will likely be important players in helping to clarify the role of primary supports within a meaningful system of community supports. As they do so, care should be taken to look at least as much to positive interpersonal and developmental outcomes as to the avoidance of negative behavior. There also should be room for the argument that there is simply inherent value in offering young people expo-

sure to new opportunities and a safe and supportive place to play and develop, even in the absence of documented proof of long-term positive developmental outcomes.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> These developmental building blocks were *leadership, challenging and interesting activities, belonging, input and decision-making, safety, and community service*. Safe Havens: The Contributions of Youth Organizations to Healthy Adolescent Development. Gambone, Michelle A., and Arbreton, Amy J., 1997 P/PV

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in *El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice: A Case Study of Building Social Capital* by Sharon Ramirez and Tom Dewar, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 25, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in *The Role of Caring in Youth Development and Community Life* by Diana Mendley Rauner, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in Irby, Merita; *Black with an Eager Mind: The Design of Diversity in a Neighborhood-Based Organization*.

<sup>6</sup> Medrich & Marzke, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Quern, S., and Rauner, D.M. (1998). *Administrative Resources and Support for Grassroots Youth Programs: The Challenges of Providers and Ideas for Targeted Support*.

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# Profiles

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# Alianza Dominicana, Inc.

2410 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10033

Moisés Pérez, Executive Director

(212) 740-1960

(212) 740-1967 FAX

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**Mission:** Alianza Dominicana seeks to enrich the quality of community life and work toward solutions to the challenges confronting the local Dominican and Latino populations.

**Program Description:** Alianza Dominicana is located in Washington Heights, New York. It was formed as a resource center for the Dominican community that would deliver comprehensive services to nurture and strengthen families. Operating out of four sites and five public schools, Alianza provides over 15,000 children, youth and families annually with educational, vocational, counseling, and recreational support. Alianza also operates an interagency planning council to assess community needs and award grants to innovative projects.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, drug and alcohol awareness, sex education, AIDS prevention and outreach, athletic activities, ESL instruction, GED preparation, dropout prevention, leadership development, ethnic and cultural enrichment, political and social action, citizenship and naturalization classes, career awareness, AIDS/HIV case management, family support services, mental health counseling, day care, drug treatment.

**Staff Number:** 140 (full- and part-time)

**Year Established:** 1982

**Funding Sources:** Government 88%, Foundation 11%, Corporate 1%

**Annual Budget:** \$4,138,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 7,000 Latino youth, predominantly from low-income families.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# American Variety Theatre Company 4-H

**c/o Minnesota Extension Services, Hennepin County**

2027 West Broadway, North Minneapolis, MN 55411

Janelle Ranek, Artistic Director

(612) 521-4439

(612) 521-1652 FAX

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**Mission:** The American Variety Theatre Company (AVTC) 4-H program involves youth in a program of performing arts that serves as a vehicle for self-expression, individual growth, and group involvement. AVTC aims to provide a positive, safe environment that promotes social interaction and the sharing of ideas and activities.

**Program Description:** AVTC serves approximately 400 youth, aged 4 to 19, per year. Most participants are low-income, minority youth recruited through posters, flyers, and word of mouth. AVTC involves youth in dance, acting, piano and voice classes, jazz and blues workshops, and 12 to 20 productions a year. All AVTC's productions deal with social problems; thus, participants are able to learn more about social issues that might concern them while researching their characters. In addition to the classes in the theater arts that form the base of its activities, AVTC also runs the Youth Teaching Youth program, where high school students train their peers to promote drug and alcohol awareness and teach decision-making skills to elementary school children. Through participation in AVTC, youth increase their knowledge of issues, become involved in the community, make friends and gain a sense of belonging. Though anyone may attend the free classes, students must register and those in the improvisational troupe must sign a contract. In the classes, students earn points for attending, following directions, and memorizing lines. Parents are also involved, through meetings and invitations to performances. AVTC also collaborates with other youth agencies in the Minneapolis area to network, run joint activities, and advocate on common issues.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Theater, dance, music, recreational activities, formal youth involvement in program decisions, employment, communication skills, leadership development, mentoring

**Staff Number:** 7 (4 full-time and 3 part-time), 200 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1981

**Funding Sources:** Government 58%, Foundation 33%, Corporate 4%, Other (Earnings) 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$120,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 400 low-income minority youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participation:** Several days a week

# Bay Area Youth-At-Risk Project (YAR)

520 3rd Street, Suite 202, Oakland, CA 94607-3520

Stan Weisner, Executive Director

(510) 839-4593

(510) 834-5193 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the YAR project was to develop strategies to better serve youth-at-risk at San Francisco libraries. The project aimed to expand and improve library and information services throughout the BALIS communities while informing youth of the resources available to them at the libraries and throughout the community, and encouraging them to use the libraries into adulthood.

**Program Description:** The YAR project was a two-year endeavor aimed at promoting youth development projects among the nine-library Bay Area Library and Information System (BALIS). During the first year, the libraries conducted needs assessments using surveys, demographic data analysis, interviews with library staff and teens, and planning committees. During the second year, the libraries implemented pilot programs based on the information they had gathered. New programs included teen rooms with age-specific collections and decor, cultural activities such as a rap day, and fine amnesty. The overall goal of the project was to change the libraries' image among teenagers. Collaboration between the libraries and local youth agencies was an essential part of the project, and the information sharing and cross-referrals have continued. YAR project staff provided administrative and clerical support, and assisted the library staff in developing and improving youth services. Library staff were then responsible for implementing the programs that were developed based on the needs assessments.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Youth rap and poetry program, ethnic and cultural enrichment, tutoring, career awareness, teen rooms in libraries, fine amnesty, festivals.

**Staff Number:** 12 (2 full-time, 10 part-time)

**Year Established:** 1990

**Funding Sources:** Government, 83%, Foundation 3%, Corporate 4%

**Annual Budget:** \$600,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** N/A

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Bethesda Youth Services, YMCA

7425 MacArthur Blvd, Cabin John, MD 20818

Mike Ward, Executive Director

(301) 229-1347

(301) 229-1626 FAX

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**Mission:** Bethesda Youth Services (BYS) seeks to strengthen families, facilitate access to services, and assist youth and families in successfully negotiating the challenges of adolescence. BYS also strives to mobilize individual and family strength in order to improve the quality of life in the community.

**Program Description:** BYS serves the greater Bethesda and Chevy Chase area in Maryland. About 60 percent of the participants come from upper middle or high income families, and 40 percent from low or lower middle income families. The community is generally responsive to and invested in its youth, and resources are available. Most of the program participants have problems in school, or are dealing with absent parents or a high pressure to achieve. The program works to stabilize youths' lives and to direct them toward resources before problems become too serious. The program emphasizes family involvement and also conducts extensive community outreach. Prevention and early intervention are the focus of its efforts. Through participation in the program, youth develop positive relationships with adults, build skills and knowledge, make connections with peer groups, and identify their own strengths and resources.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drug and alcohol awareness; athletic activities; outdoor adventure; sex education; parenting skills; volunteering; tutoring; peer counseling; outreach; field trips, festivals and celebrations

**Staff Number:** 9 (5 full-time and 4 part-time), 20 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1974

**Funding Sources:** Government 50%, Corporate, individual contributions, and fundraising 50%

**Annual Budget:** \$325,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 2,500 youth and their family members from the greater Bethesda and Chevy Chase community

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# The Bicycle Action Project

22 East 22nd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Nancy C. Naramore Hart, M.B.A., Executive Director  
(317) 931-9893  
(317) 931-9895 FAX

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**Mission:** The Bicycle Action Project's (BAP) mission is to teach at-risk youth self-management, academic, work, and leadership skills through bicycle-related activities. The primary philosophy behind the program is experiential education.

**Program Description:** Begun in 1988, BAP is a storefront classroom and full-service bicycle repair shop. The project is part of a Lilly Endowment consortium of youth agencies. Each year, 125 young people begin the program. Seventy-five percent of the participants are between the ages of 9 and 16, 15% are between 16 and 22, and the remaining 10% are over 22. Youth over the age of 16 are often employed as shift supervisors and peer instructors. Eighty percent of the youth are African American and come from low-income households, and 90% of the participants are male.

All youth begin the program with 25 hours of core instruction. They learn bike mechanics, math and communication skills, and bike safety. After completing this instruction, they are awarded a bike. They then choose among four tracks: advanced mechanics, athletics, pre-employment skills, and management/leadership skills and development. About half of the youth who start the program manage to complete it. The instructor-student ratio is very low, which allows the staff to create a nurturing environment for participants. Youth feel a sense of ownership in the bike shop, and gain feelings of belonging and membership, self-awareness, and mastery. BAP has a competency checklist of specific, measurable things that participants gain, including manual and cognitive skills related to bike mechanics, employment skills, work habits, communication skills, visual acuity, and general environmental education.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Camping trips, organized sports, communications skills, decision making, leadership development, bicycle or car maintenance, academic enrichment, employment readiness

**Staff Number:** 7 (2 full-time and 5 part-time), 60 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1988

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 75%, revenue from bike shop 15%, fundraising 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$260,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 280 youth, most of whom are low-income African Americans

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Big Sisters of Los Angeles

## Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

6022 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 202, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Janet Schulman, Executive Director

(213) 933-5749

(213) 933-6685 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of Big Sisters of Los Angeles is to empower at-risk girls and young women from diverse communities to develop self-confidence, independence, and respect for others by fostering one-to-one relationships with female role models in order to enrich their lives, guide them toward their full potential, and help them become responsible, self-sufficient adults.

**Program Description:** Big Sisters of Los Angeles is a mentoring program that helps girls and young women between the ages of 6 and 18 in need to develop into independent and responsible adults by matching them with qualified women volunteers in one-to-one relationships. An affiliate of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, BSLA primarily serves at-risk girls throughout Los Angeles County. Big and Little Sisters are paired according to common interests, area of residency, and ethnicity whenever appropriate in order to make the strongest “match” possible. Each Big Sister/Little Sister match is assigned a culturally and linguistically compatible social worker whose primary goal is to ensure that the match is successful in meeting the needs of the Little Sister and in supporting the Big Sister in her mentoring role. All Big Sister volunteers are screened, trained, and supervised by professional social work staff. All Little Sisters are evaluated for their needs and interests. The agency collaborates with many other community agencies including schools, Department of Children and Family Services, private organizations, and the Big Brothers agencies.

**Programs/Services Offered:** One-to-one mentoring, crisis intervention; family counseling; career, school and financial training for teens; and multicultural events.

**Staff Number:** 22 (full-time), 2 (part-time), 9,600 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1979

**Funding Sources:** Special events 44.5%, corporate and foundation 14.5%, government 11.6%, investments 3.3%, endowment 12.2%, individuals 13.6%, and miscellaneous .3%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$1,241,750

**Basis for Eligibility:** Gender, residence in Los Angeles County

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 500 girls and their families.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Two to four times per month

# Boys and Girls Club of Salem

## Boys and Girls Clubs of America

1395 Summer Street, NE, Salem, OR 97303

Lloyd Tolle, Executive Director

(503) 581-7383

(503) 375-6129 FAX

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**Mission:** The Boys and Girls Club of Salem is dedicated to promoting the health and social development of youth.

**Program Description:** The Boys and Girls Club of Salem serves a metropolitan area of approximately 200,000 people. The city faces problems stemming from drugs, gangs, and poverty. Youth are often involved in program decision making, and develop a sense of usefulness and self-worth while improving their leadership skills. The Club is part of the Teen Activity Network of Salem, a collaborative effort between youth organizations.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, health education, drug and alcohol awareness, physical fitness, camping, drop-in center, communication skills, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, parenting skills, babysitting, bicycle and car maintenance, cooking, sewing, formal youth involvement in program decision making, volunteering, academic enrichment, peer counseling, substance abuse counseling, career awareness, case management, family support services, service referrals, court advocacy.

**Staff Number:** 68 (18 full-time and 50 part-time), 2,500 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1970

**Funding Sources:** Bingo project 40%, Federated campaigns 4%, Individual contributions 15%, Foundation 10%, Fundraising 10%, Corporate 10%, Fees 10%, Membership 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$1,100,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 8,188 youth 1st through 12th graders

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several times a week

# Boys Choir of Harlem

2005 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10035  
Dr. Walter Turnbull, Executive Director  
(212) 289-1815  
(212) 289-4195 FAX

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**Mission:** The Boys Choir of Harlem is an artistically driven organization dedicated to providing students with a broad-based education. It is a holistic program consisting of education, counseling, and performing arts. The choir prepares inner-city youth to become disciplined, confident, motivated, and successful citizens.

**Program Description:** The Boys Choir of Harlem was founded in 1968 as the Ephesus Church Choir of Central Harlem. It serves youth from the entire New York City area. Incorporated in 1975, the Boys Choir has grown over the years from a small church choir to a major performing arts institution of international repute, with a school providing academic and performing arts education for students in grades 4-12. The environment at the Choir is supportive and family like; youth develop a sense of membership and belonging, and form close friendships with the adults at the program. Parents are also involved in the program as volunteers and board members.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music, health education, counseling, dance, ethnic and cultural enrichment, career awareness, tutoring, drug and alcohol awareness, male responsibility, leadership development

**Staff Number:** 77 (32 full-time and 45 part-time), assisted by 5 volunteers per month

**Year Established:** 1968

**Funding Sources:** Fundraising 60%, Foundation 14%, Corporate 12%, Government 14% or Fundraising (Foundation) 14%, Corporate 14%, Government 12%, Earned Income 40%, Individual 10%, Other 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$3,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 560 youth, predominantly African American youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# The Brooklyn Children's Museum

## Museum Team

145 Brooklyn Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11213

Carol Enseki, Executive Director

(718) 735-4402

(718) 604-7442 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the organization is to systematically and comprehensively create programs that serve neighborhood youth, provide a safe haven for youth, and help young people succeed in education and careers.

**Program Description:** The Brooklyn Children's Museum, located in Crown Heights, was founded at the turn of the century and is the world's first museum for children. In 1987, staff decided to focus on serving youth in the immediate neighborhood, and on providing a safe haven for youth who might have no other place to go. All of the youth who participate are from low-income families. Seventy percent are between the ages of 7 and 13, and 60% are female. The participants come from Crown Heights and from neighboring Bedford-Stuyvesant. The majority of activities and services offered are part of the Museum Team program for 7-18 year olds. Participants advance through the program in a succession of roles: Kids Crew, Volunteers in Training, Volunteers, and Paid Interns. The museum also sponsors a Youth Council, and a parents Resource Group. Success is measured by the number of youth who take advantage of the educational programs and progress through all the stages of the program. When the program began, many parents simply sent their children to the museum unaccompanied, treating it as a day care facility. Over time, parents have become increasingly aware of the benefits and involved in the program. The museum staff collaborate with social service providers, college prep programs, and various advocacy groups, and work with a consortium of agencies. Anyone is eligible to come to the museum; however, youth register for the Museum Team, and must maintain good behavior in order to remain in the program. The program helps young people gain a sense of community responsibility and explore new areas of interest.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Field trips, artists and scientists, storytelling, academic enrichment, in-residence peer tutoring, career counseling.

**Staff Number:** 6 (4 full-time and 2 part-time), 70 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Government 20%, Foundation 80%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$300,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,200 youth

**Frequency with which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Camp Fire Boys and Girls

## Mid Atlantic Council

P.O. Box 7598, Arlington, VA 22207

Barbara LaPosta, Executive Director

(703) 569-1686

(703) 569-1686 FAX

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**Mission:** The Camp Fire program encourages youth to have fun, be self-reliant, and increase their self-esteem in a coeducational, recreational setting.

**Program Description:** The Camp Fire Potomac Area Council serves youth in Washington, DC, northern Virginia, and four counties in Maryland. Camp Fire teaches boys and girls to learn and play together in child care centers, clubs, and camping activities, and self-reliance courses.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Outdoor adventure, camping, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, leadership development, conflict resolution training, communication skills, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, mentoring, parenting skills, spiritual enrichment, values clarification, field trips, arts and crafts, theater, babysitting, budgeting and banking, cooking, sewing, volunteering, formal youth involvement in program decisions.

**Staff Number:** 9 (1 full-time and 8 part-time), 400 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1941

**Funding Sources:** Federated campaigns 48%, Fees 15%, Fundraising 10%, Individual contributions 8%, Foundation 8%, Other 11%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$100,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 2,700 youth from suburban and inner-city areas

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Carole Robertson Center for Learning

2020 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL 60608

Gail Nelson, Executive Director

(312) 243-7300

(312) 243-4881 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Carole Robertson Youth Center is to nurture and challenge children and youth, and to strengthen and support family and community life. The Center aims to provide children with a physically and emotionally supportive environment in order to help them reach their full potential.

**Program Description:** The Carole Robertson Center for Learning (CRC) offers four major programs at two sites in Chicago. Families pay tuition on a sliding scale determined by family size and income. Parents of the program participants are required by the Title XX Employment Program, which provides subsidized tuition to CRC, to be employed or in a certified training program. The School-Age Child Care Program is the center's core activity, providing academically enriching after-school activities for children aged 5-14. The Youth Alternatives program was developed for youth who wanted to continue in the program after age 15. Participants in this program participate in sports, social events, and volunteer services. They are encouraged to assume leadership roles in the center as members of the Leadership Council, teacher's aides, and tutors. CRC also runs a day care program for preschoolers aged 3-5, and the Family Support and Recreation Program, which offers parent-child outings, workshops, discussions, and support groups.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, day care, dances, field trips, arts and crafts, academic enrichment, critical thinking skills, tutoring, career counseling.

**Staff Number:** 70 full-time equivalent, 2,500 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1974

**Funding Sources:** Government 85%, Foundation 5%, Fees 5%, Federated campaigns 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$2,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 452 African American and Latino children and youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Center for Youth Services

921 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Washington, DC 20003  
Samuel Tramel, Executive Director  
(202) 543-4535

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**Mission:** The program aims to provide high-risk youth aged 14-21 with a healthy, safe environment and to help them become productive adults.

**Program Description:** Center for Youth Services (CYS) was founded in 1982 as a comprehensive program that would be able to meet the participants' various needs in one place. CYS staff serve as an extended family for program participants, teaching them to cope with their situations, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and become productive adults. Educational enhancement, job training, and health care are the core services CYS provides, but staff also devote a large portion of their time to informal counseling. Participants go through a six-day orientation process in order to become members of CYS; this includes a reading assessment, five days of workshops, and assignment to a primary counselor who conducts an intake interview and devises a treatment plan. Some participants are referred to CYS by the court, and others find the program through friends or through the organization's recruiting efforts.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, meals, budgeting and banking, carpentry, cooking, youth advisory board, job skills training, job placement, field trips, primary health care, sex education, academic enrichment, service referrals, legal advocacy

**Staff Number:** 3 full-time, 120 volunteer hours per month.

**Year Established:** 1982

**Funding Sources:** Government 60%, Individual contributions 20%, Foundation 20%

**Annual Budget:** \$1,000,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 900 youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Children of War

85 South Oxford Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Judith Thompson, Executive Director

(718) 858-6882

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**Mission:** Children of War's mission is to develop leadership skills in youth from domestic and international areas of violence, engage youth in social action, and inform them about issues of peace and justice. The goal of the program is to encourage youth leaders to play an active role in ending violence and reclaiming hope for the future.

**Program Description:** Children of War places a strong emphasis on the use of peer support groups and peer counseling in all workshops and retreats. The organization serves youth in both low-income and middle-income communities who suffer from low self-esteem, sometimes brought on by poverty, unemployment, economic discrimination and racism. Youth from inner-city and refugee/immigrant neighborhoods are trained as peer role models, and are then given the opportunity to educate and unify other young people through nationwide tours, leadership development workshops, action campaigns, and conferences. Young people lead most workshops, with adult "peer leaders" providing support. Youth are encouraged to share their personal stories and see them in the context of the broader social forces presented by the peer leaders. The program seeks to make youth aware of the heroism in their lives, thereby helping them to regain their self-esteem. Youth who have participated in Children of War programs generally exhibit high self-esteem, an understanding of the dynamics of oppression, a commitment to developing alliances with youth from other backgrounds, an ability to speak effectively in public, and a sense of hope, mission, and purpose.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development workshops, peer counseling, action campaigns and conferences, retreats, youth advisory board, ESL instruction

**Staff Number:** 15 (4 full-time, 11 part-time, 2 volunteers contributing 40 hours a month)

**Year Established:** 1984

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 50%, Government 35%, Individual contributions 13%, Corporate 2%

**Annual Budget:** \$425,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (14-21). Youth are formally referred to the program, usually by their school.

**Youth Served Annually:** 5,000 (youth and adults)

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once or twice a month

# The City, Inc.

1545 East Lake Street, Minneapolis, MN 55407  
Keith Ellison, Interim President  
(612) 724-3689  
(612) 724-0692 FAX

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**Mission:** The City, Inc.'s mission is to foster hope, opportunity, and a sense of community among inner-city youth and their families.

**Program Description:** The City, Inc. was founded in 1967 by a group of mothers concerned about their children's high-risk behaviors, and has since expanded to provide a comprehensive range of social services. The agency takes a nontraditional approach to service provision; the staff is ethnically and racially consistent with the agency's clients and includes gang members and Native American medicine men. The City offers programs including The Project, which provides advocacy and support to youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, the City School, which offers alternative schooling for students who have had repeated academic failures, the Adolescent Pregnancy/Parenting Project, which helps teen mothers get their high school diplomas, and the Family program, which provides community-based counseling to inner-city families facing multiple problems.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drug and alcohol awareness, alternative schooling, family support services, outreach, drop-in center, academic enrichment, health and sex education, peer counseling, career counseling, job skills training, emergency shelter, housing rehabilitation

**Staff Number:** 70 (full-time), 120 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1967

**Funding Sources:** Government 32%, Federated campaigns 16%, Individual contributions 5%; Foundation 24%, Corporate 22%, Church donations 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$3,000,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area, court referral

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 3,000 youth, most of whom live in extreme poverty

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# City Streets Program

## City of Phoenix Parks, Recreation, and Library Department

2705 North 15th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004

Cynthia Peters, Recreational Supervisor

(602) 262-7370

(602) 262-7333 FAX

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**Mission:** The City Streets Program mission is to provide all youth with the opportunity to participate in youth development and recreational activities. "Prevention is the Building Block, Youth are our Greatest Resource."

**Program Description:** The City Streets/At Risk Youth Division represents a concerted effort by the Phoenix Parks, Recreation, and Library Department to reach out to youths considered at-risk in the City of Phoenix. The City Streets/At Risk Youth Division operates two teen/youth centers, six PAL (Police Activity League) centers, and coordinates the implementation of more than 20 city-wide youth programs. These programs include local teen councils and a Teen Parks & Recreation Board (a forum for youth to provide input to the Parks Department), Wuzz Up Teens Quarterly Newsletter and Cable TV Program, and a Recreation Internship Program, a hands-on training program for youth interested in careers in the recreation field. Additionally, the City Streets Mobile Unit, a converted book mobile, brings additional enrichment and recreation activities to neighborhoods with fewer resources, reaching young people who are less likely to access other City Streets or neighborhood programs.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drug and alcohol awareness, health education, meals, sex education, athletic activities, physical fitness, communication skills, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, parenting skills, drop-in center, dance, volunteering, youth advisory board, career awareness, support groups

**Staff Number:** 29 full-time and 35 part-time, 500 volunteer hours per month by interns in schools, 9,500 volunteer hours by court-ordered volunteers

**Year Established:** 1993

**Funding Sources:** Government 66%, Grants 34%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$1,600,000 and an additional \$900,000 in grants

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 112,000 youth from a variety of backgrounds

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several times a week

# Clean and Green

## Los Angeles Conservation Corp.

1402 South Union Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90015

Bruce Saito, Executive Director

(213) 389-3229

(213) 389-3272 FAX

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**Mission:** To perform needed community improvements while providing work experience and skills training for at-risk youth in Los Angeles.

**Program Description:** In 1988, the Mayor of Los Angeles asked the Los Angeles Conservation Corp. (LACC), which is geared primarily toward older youth between the ages of 18 and 23, to develop a parallel program for younger people. Clean and Green, geared toward junior high school students, is the resulting program. Like LACC, Clean and Green's basic mission is to perform needed community improvement and conservation work while providing youth with work experience and skills training. Troops perform environmental clean-up projects in locations throughout Los Angeles. Staff focus their efforts on youth development, and try to instill feelings of belonging and self-worth in the program's participants. The program has a high retention rate, although its comparatively short duration (12 to 18 weeks) limits its potential for long-term impact on youth. The organization is currently being expanded, restructured, and evaluated.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Employment and job training, volunteer opportunities, opportunities for political and social action, leadership and environmental awareness education, training in fine arts and carpentry

**Staff Number:** 27 (full-time), 40 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1988

**Funding Sources:** Government 90%, Foundation 10%

**Annual Budget:** Not available

**Basis for Eligibility:** Youth must apply and have a recommendation from their school. Most participants are age 13-15.

**Youth Served Annually:** 1,500 at-risk youth between the ages of 13 and 23

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** 2-3 afternoons a week and on Saturdays.

# Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

## Intercultural Development Research Association

5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, TX 78228-1190

Linda Cantu, Project Director

(210) 684-8180

(210) 684-5389 FAX

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**Mission:** The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a dropout prevention program. Its primary goal is to help schools and communities see the inherent value and potential of each child. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program's philosophy is that all students are valuable and none is expendable.

**Program Description:** The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) designed and developed the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in 1984 with funding from Coca-Cola USA. The Coca-Cola Foundation, Coca-Cola USA, and other corporate, federal, and local funds are providing support to replicate the program nationally and internationally. In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, secondary students who are considered to be at risk of dropping out are placed as tutors of elementary students, enabling the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives. With a growing sense of responsibility and pride, the program reports that tutors become more interested and competent in their schoolwork, and stay in school. The program has been implemented in schools in California, District of Columbia, New Mexico, Texas, Puerto Rico, and internationally, in Great Britain.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Tutoring, celebrations, conflict resolution training, leadership development, mentoring, critical thinking skills, ESL instruction.

**Staff Number:** 10 (2 full-time and 8 part-time in the San Antonio office)

**Year Established:** 1984

**Funding Sources:** Government 57%, Corporate 43%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$500,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Reading skills below grade level, high absence rate, lack of participation in extracurricular activities.

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 4,000 youth from low-income families, 1,000 secondary, and 3,000 K-6th

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Community Youth Creative Learning Experience (CYCLE)

515 West Oak Street, Chicago, IL 60610  
Connie Van Brunt, Executive Director  
(312) 664-1194  
(312) 664-1534 FAX

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**Mission:** CYCLE's mission is to provide both structured and unstructured educational opportunities for young people who live in and around the Cabrini-Green housing project.

**Program Description:** CYCLE promotes educational achievement and personal growth among youth living in Cabrini Green and the surrounding area. The organization is committed to utilizing and developing the talents of the youth of Cabrini as a resource for positive community development. This is done through a variety of programs including after-school tutoring, scholarships for grade school, high school, and college levels, and the Future Teacher Training Program. The latter is a program that operates in nine schools, matching participants with mentors who help them prepare academically for college and encourage them to enter the teaching profession. Youth are drawn to CYCLE primarily by the scholarship programs, but they also come for academic assistance, to get a job in the organization, to visit college campuses, or to be part of a support group. In addition to building basic academic skills, CYCLE youth develop leadership skills, self-esteem, and social skills to help them better integrate into society. The program is seeing continued growth in the number of participants, and numbers of students have graduated high school and gone on to college. Consistent participation is expected: more than two absences are grounds for being dropped from the program, and students lose their scholarships if they fail two consecutive semesters. On the rare occasions when a student is dropped from CYCLE, they are told they can return upon demonstrating a renewed commitment to the program. CYCLE has not been evaluated, but many youth agencies and schools have inquired about expanding the program into other neighborhoods.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, academic enrichment, career counseling, drop-in center, field trips, fine arts, volunteering, tutoring, job placement, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 50; 300 volunteers contributing 2,500 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1980

**Funding Sources:** Government 25%, Corporate 20%, Foundation 20%, churches, investments 20%, Individual contributions 8%, Federated campaigns 5%, Fundraising 2%

**Annual Budget:** \$1,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** 1,200 people; 875 youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Community Youth Gang Services, Inc.

144 South Fetterly Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90022

Steve Valdivia, Executive Director

(213) 266-4264

(213) 267-0338 FAX

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**Mission:** Community Youth Gang Services aims to reduce delinquency and violence among youth through community action and mobilization. They help youth develop enhanced self-esteem so that they will make more positive choices in their lives and have less respect for gang violence.

**Program Description:** Community Youth Gang Services was established in response to the high incidence of gang violence in Los Angeles. Their programming consists of six main components: crisis intervention; community mobilization; graffiti removal; job development; the Parent-Teacher Education Program; and Career Path, for fourth and fifth graders. Staff provide youth with individualized attention, and try to find creative ways to get youth hooked on the program. Community Youth Gang Services measures its success with youth by the number of crimes its participants commit, by pre and post tests in some of the programs, and through casual observation. Through participation in the programs, youth change their mode of dress and comportment, develop a more positive attitude toward the outside world, become more confident, and feel safer. The program stresses individual achievement as opposed to the group mentality that gangs foster. Thus, youth become more competent academically, on the job, and in their relationships.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, communication skills, decision making, mentoring, formal youth involvement in program decisions, youth advisory board, academic enrichment, career counseling, employment, drug and alcohol awareness, sex education, conflict resolution training, leadership development

**Staff Number:** 120 full-time, 300 volunteers contributing 300 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1981

**Funding Sources:** Government 70%, Fundraising 10%, Corporate 10%, Individual Contributions 10%

**Annual Budget:** \$5,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** 12,500 youth; 25,000 people

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Concerned Black Men

1511 K Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005

Kelvin Glymph, President

(202) 783-5414

(202) 783-4842 FAX

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**Mission:** The goal of Concerned Black Men (CBM) is to provide positive African American male role models for youth, and to create academic and social opportunities for participants that enhance their cultural awareness, productivity, and decision-making and conflict management skills. CBM also seeks to provide youth with a better understanding of African American history.

**Program Description:** CBM is a nonprofit organization composed of male volunteers. It builds stronger channels of communication between adults and children in the Washington, DC, area. CBM sponsors a variety of programs and activities promoting educational, cultural, and social development. Youth who participate in the program tend to become more self-confident and positive, develop a greater interest in academic achievement, and relate better with others. The program features contests such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. oratory contest, the History Bee, and a scholarship contest, all of which attract youth to the program. Youth meet regularly with their mentors, and their progress and achievement are acknowledged.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Mentoring, tutoring, career counseling, academic enrichment, peer counseling, conflict resolution training, decision-making skills, leadership development, drug and alcohol awareness, athletic activities, field trips, service referrals

**Staff Number:** No staff, 1,500 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1982

**Funding Sources:** Federated campaigns 60%, Fundraising 10%, Corporate 9%, Foundation 9%, Government 5%, Dues 2%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$60,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Youth must attend a school, live in a homeless shelter, or be placed in a juvenile detention center where there is a CBM program.

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 12,000

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# CornerStone Project, Inc.

P.O. Box 45086, Little Rock, AR 72204 or  
4323 West 29th Street, Little Rock, AR 72204  
Laveta Wills-Hale, Regional Director  
(501) 664-0963

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**Mission:** The CornerStone Project, Inc. uses community resources to enable at-risk youth to develop their abilities and potential to become successful adults.

**Program Description:** The heart of the CornerStone Project are the NETworks (Neighbors and Education Together Works) Centers, which are drop-in neighborhood facilities that provide a wide range of programs and activities for youth and their families. The centers offer after-school tutoring, life skills classes, and other activities. After completing fifty hours of volunteering, tutoring, and class attendance, students can participate in more intensive programs that build on skills learned at the centers, and eventually receive jobs within the organization. CornerStone also has a student-operated recycling business.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Arts and crafts, dance, music, theater, field trips, sex education, physical fitness, male responsibility, health education, drug and alcohol awareness, family planning, primary health care, weight control, mental health counseling, tutoring, communication skills, life skills training, meals, support groups, youth advisory board, career counseling, mentoring, leadership development.

**Staff Number:** 10 full-time, 20 volunteers contributing 105 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Government 44%, Foundation 33%, Fees 19%, Corporate 3%, Individual contributions 1%

**Annual Budget:** \$300,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** No specific requirements, but there is a waiting list to enter.

**Youth Served Annually:** 90

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# D.C. Youth Orchestra

## D.C. Public Schools

P.O. Box 56198 / Brightwood Station, Washington, DC 20011

Lyn McLain, Director

(202) 723-1612

(202) 723-1612

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**Mission:** The D.C. Youth Orchestra is committed to the idea that all children should have the opportunity to play music regardless of their income or background.

**Program Description:** The D.C. Youth Orchestra Program offers high quality music instruction and performance opportunities for young people from the Washington metropolitan area. The organization maintains six student orchestras whose members come from families that span the entire social, ethnic, and economic spectrum of the Washington metropolitan area. The program holds classes, rehearsals, and concerts year-round at Coolidge High School in north-west Washington. Parental involvement is crucial for children when they begin their participation, because families must bring participants to rehearsals, encourage them, and provide them with space to practice at home.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music

**Staff Number:** 28 teachers and 3 staff, 100 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1961

**Funding Sources:** Fees 25%, Corporate/Foundation 27%, Government 43%, Individual contributions 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$500,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (5-18); beginning musicians may join only in the fall

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 800 youth from throughout the metropolitan area

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# The Door: A Center of Alternatives

121 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013

Christopher Ambrose, Associate Director

(212) 941-9090

(212) 941-0714 FAX

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**Mission:** The Door's mission is to provide high-quality, cost-effective comprehensive integrated services for adolescents, thus eliminating fragmentation and other barriers adolescents face in obtaining services.

**Program Description:** The Door is the most comprehensive health, mental health, education, arts, and cultural service center for disadvantaged youth in the nation. The organization operates free programs for youth in the afternoon and evening. Clients receive a psychosocial intake assessment, and can participate in any of the ongoing structured activities offered by the organization, including health care and education, a perinatal program, food services, employment services, and drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs. One of the newest activities is a degree-granting alternative high school. The Door's overall aim is to create a holistic youth-centered environment that can address the integrated physical, psychological, developmental, and creative needs of its participants.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, field trips, leadership development, parenting skills, youth advisory board, academic enrichment, ESL instruction, career counseling, peer counseling, arts and crafts, substance abuse counseling, primary health care, health and sex education, organized sports, budgeting and banking, cooking, sewing, housing assistance, legal advocacy, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 141 (92 full-time and 49 part-time), 1,120 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1972

**Funding Sources:** Government 56%, Foundation 22%, Corporate 5%, Individual contributions 2%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$5,800,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 6,000 youth, from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Dorchester Youth Collaborative

1514-A Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02122

Homer Rahnn-Lopez, Executive Director

(617) 288-1748

(617) 288-2136 FAX

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**Mission:** The Dorchester Youth Collaborative (DYC) seeks to free local youth from a cycle of hopelessness and failure by providing them with activities that maintain a strong social structure and offer direct assistance in problem areas.

**Program Description:** All of the DYC's activities are aimed at youth, and emphasize nonviolence and the importance of education. DYC's core activity is the Prevention Club program, which provides constructive daily after-school and summer activities for youth aged 10-18. DYC also runs the Center for Urban Expression, which involves youth in music, an education program that provides tutoring and assists drop-outs, and family and community mediation projects that address communication difficulties and community conflicts. DYC is an informal program in which youth can socialize with staff members and their peers; staff members wear beepers so that they will always be available for youth. Most of the program participants are male, and all come from low-income families.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, music, field trips, leadership development, health education, meals, organized sports, budgeting and banking, cooking, alternative schooling, academic enrichment, career counseling, job placement, substance abuse counseling, service referrals, legal advocacy, emergency shelter

**Staff Number:** 20 (15 full-time and 5 part-time)

**Year Established:** 1978

**Funding Sources:** Government 40%, Foundation 60%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$750,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,000 youth including dropouts and delinquents

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# East Bay Conservation Corps

1021 Third Street, Oakland, CA 94607

Joanna Lennon, Executive Director

(510) 891-3900

(510) 272-9001 FAX

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**Mission:** The East Bay Conservation Corps (EBCC) promotes youth development through environmental stewardship and community service, and furthers education reform and social change.

**Program Description:** EBCC serves East San Francisco Bay area residents and communities. Most participants live below standard poverty levels, and often feel disenfranchised from the democratic process. Through EBCC, these youth engage in projects to improve public lands and facilities, schools, and neighborhoods. They learn practical skills including money management and carpentry, and are offered academic enrichment including homework help, GED preparation, and computer training. The EBCC's comprehensive program model enhances participants' academic, leadership, employment, and life skills, as well as their self-esteem, civic responsibility, and environmental awareness.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Academic enrichment, alternative schooling, computer skills, GED preparation, homework help, tutoring, career awareness and counseling, employment readiness, job skills, training, job placement, mental health and substance abuse counseling, political and social action, outreach, camping, athletic activities, outdoor adventure, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, first aid training, conflict resolution training, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, parenting skills, case management, housing assistance, dental and vision checks

**Staff Number:** 90 (full-time), Approximately 20 volunteers per month

**Year Established:** 1983

**Funding Sources:** Government 67%, Fee for service 28%, Foundation and other 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$9,124,732

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 2,200 people, mostly at-risk minorities from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# El Puente

211 South 4th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211

Luis Garden-Acosta, Executive Director

(718) 387-0404

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**Mission:** El Puente is committed to supporting the mental, physical, and spiritual growth of its participants, and to helping them better their own lives and the lives of their families, friends, and community. The agency hopes that its services will serve as a bridge for young people from adolescence to adulthood, and from dependency to self-empowerment.

**Program Description:** El Puente offers services in three designated areas: social medicine, arts, and social health. Youth arriving at El Puente are asked to develop a "total person plan," describing how they plan to use the agency's services and what they hope to achieve. Participants are given a medical exam, and can participate in karate and aerobic classes, arts classes, theater, GED and ESL classes, and other activities. Young people are actively involved in program planning and implementation, serve as peer counselors, teach classes, and serve as receptionists and maintenance workers.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, field trips, arts and crafts, music, dance, fine arts, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, athletic activities, political and social action, leadership development, academic enrichment, peer counseling, service referrals, family planning

**Staff Number:** N/A

**Year Established:** 1983

**Funding Sources:** N/A

**Annual Budget:** N/A

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** N/A

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Encampment for Citizenship

c/o AEU

2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023

Ellen McBride, Executive Director

(212) 873-6500

(212) 362-0850 FAX

e-mail: aeuoffice@aol.com

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**Mission:** Encampment for Citizenship strives to promote youth leadership development as it relates to addressing social issues and problems.

**Program Description:** The Encampment for Citizenship was founded in 1946 by Algernon Black and Alice Politzer as a response to World War II and the Hitler Youth Brigades. The founders believed that youth can be a positive force, and wanted to give youth the tools to question and look critically at society. The program focuses primarily on critical thinking skills, youth activism and leadership, and combating stereotypes. The participants are a racially mixed group, and many come from low-income households and receive full scholarships for the program. Applications to the program are recruited through the Encampment's collaboration with other organizations, as well as through advertising and a diverse alumni network. Parents are kept informed about the program, involved as volunteers and included as board members. In addition to the six-week summer program, the Encampment has recently begun a year-round program for youth in the Oakland, California area.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, communication skills development, critical thinking skills development, mentoring, job skills training and placement, political and social action, service referrals, legal advocacy

**Staff Number:** 3 full-time, 10 part-time

**Year Established:** 1946

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 44%, Individual contributions 40%, Fees 10%, Fundraising 3%, Corporate 2%, Federated campaigns 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$150,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (15-19). Youth must submit an application demonstrating a genuine interest in addressing social problems, emotional maturity, and a desire to learn about different people.

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 45 youth from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# The Explainer Program

## San Francisco Exploratorium

3601 Lyon Street, San Francisco, CA 94123

Darlene Librero, Manager

(415) 561-0342

(415) 561-0370 FAX

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**Mission:** The purpose of the Explainer program is to provide an interactive learning environment for students in which they cultivate their own knowledge while interacting with and teaching others.

**Program Description:** The Explainer Program is run by the San Francisco Exploratorium, a museum devoted to art, science, and human perception. Each year, the museum hires about a hundred youth over three four-month “semesters.” These “Explainers” serve as the museum’s floor staff, explaining exhibits and performing scientific demonstrations. The program has been very successful in attracting a mixed group of youth. Previous scientific knowledge is not a requirement, and the program accepts academically motivated participants as well as youth who have done poorly in school. Youth are recruited through a number of avenues including schools, social organizations, and local youth groups.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Employment, academic enrichment, communication skills

**Staff Number:** 35 staff in spring, 55 staff in summer

**Year Established:** 1969

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 49%, Government 13%, Unrestricted funds 38%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$500,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Referral, Selection

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 120 youth, with varying degrees of academic skills, most from middle-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Family Focus Our Place

## Family Focus

2010 Dewey, Evanston, IL 60201  
Delores Holmes, Executive Director  
(847) 475-7570  
(847) 475-7590 FAX

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**Mission:** Our Place aims to support teen parents and pregnant teens, to ensure the optimal growth and development of adolescents, and to prevent unwanted pregnancies among sexually active teens.

**Program Description:** Family Focus Our Place runs a drop-in center, tutoring sessions, rap groups, and self-development and job-training workshops. The program serves as a supportive place where pregnant and parenting teens can learn parenting skills and discuss issues that are important to them. Our Place also runs a primary prevention program, which focuses on preventing negative youth outcomes, such as teen pregnancy, by providing youth with opportunities for positive development.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, homework helps, support groups, mental health counseling, peer counseling, substance abuse counseling, case management, day care, family support services, service referrals, arts and crafts, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, meals, athletic activities, sex education, conflict resolution training, communication skills, leadership development, parenting skills, volunteering, youth advisory board, career counseling, family planning, STD testing, babysitting

**Staff Number:** 9 full-time, 215 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1979

**Funding Sources:** Government 35%, Public/Private Partnership Fund 28%, Corporate 2%, Foundation 2%, Individual contributions 1%, Miscellaneous 11%, Unrestricted revenue 2%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$375,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,108 young people, many of whom are teenage mothers and fathers

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Family Life Theatre Program

178 East 80th Street, Suite 5A, New York, NY 10021

Irene Diamant, Co-Director  
Wilfredo Medina, Co-Director  
(212) 628-5347  
(212) 787-0488 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Family Life Theatre Program is to provide audiences with an opportunity to explore issues, put themselves in other people's places, actively listen to one another, and consider alternate modes of behavior.

**Program Description:** The Family Life Theatre program is a private, for-profit acting company that performs scenes dealing with pressing social problems. Performances are geared toward young people, and twelve youth are members of the company. The program began in 1974 as part of the New York Medical Hospital's adolescent outreach program, which dealt with issues of sexuality. Theater instruction forms the core of the program's activities, although staff also provide the youth with counseling. All of the participants are between 16 and 18 years old and come from low-income families. Most are high school students in the New York City public school system, and many learn about the program through seeing one of its performances.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music, theater, conflict resolution training, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, career awareness, sex education, drug and alcohol awareness, academic enrichment, communication skills

**Staff Number:** 2 full-time and actors for the projects

**Year Established:** 1973

**Funding Sources:** N/A

**Annual Budget:** Not available

**Basis for Eligibility:** Audition, interest in theater

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,000

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Four days a week

# Fifth Ward Enrichment Program

## Urban Affairs Corporation

4014 Market Street, Houston, Texas 77020

Ernest McMillan, Executive Director

(713) 229-8353

(713) 229-8311 (FAX)

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**Mission:** The Fifth Ward Enrichment Program (FWEP) is dedicated to the empowerment of young black males in the Houston inner city. The program aims at helping young men who are at risk of dropping out of school, becoming involved with crime or drugs, or becoming teen fathers to channel their energy into positive activities.

**Program Description:** FWEP is a community-based, school-housed primary prevention program with a staff composed entirely of black males who serve as role models for the participants (aged 11-15). The program has a part-time psychologist, a drug counselor, a group facilitator, a clerical aide, and a group of Peer Leaders who are past participants of the program and serve as mentors. Participants receive academic support, therapeutic services, and skills enhancement, and parents are involved through a support group, home visits, and social activities.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, leadership development, mentoring, volunteering, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, organized sports, meals, parenting skills, academic enrichment, peer counseling, substance abuse counseling, case management, family support services, service referrals, court advocacy

**Staff Number:** 30 (including full-time and part-time), 100 volunteer hours per year

**Year Established:** 1984

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 70%, Corporate and individual contributions 14%, United Way 16%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$400,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, geographic area (participants must attend one of the four schools served by FWEP).

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 300 youth, most are African American males from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# The Ginew/Golden Eagle Program

## Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC)

1530 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Shirlee Stone, Program Director

(612) 879-1708

(612) 879-1795 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Ginew/Golden Eagle Program is to help urban American Indian youth develop a strong sense of identity and self-esteem and overcome risk factors through educational and cultural programming.

**Program Description:** The Ginew/Golden Eagle Program is a resiliency-building program for urban American Indian youth aged 5-18. Most of the program's participants live in the economically depressed Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis, which is home to the country's highest concentration of urban American Indians. Many American Indian youths have become distanced from their traditional cultural heritage, and are disproportionately affected by poverty and related factors such as poor housing, high suicide rates, and high rates of teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. The program offers a support system to these youth, and teaches them about healthy development, responsibility, and self-respect.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Ethnic and cultural enrichment, health education, leadership development, volunteering, field trips, tutoring, drop-in center, drug and alcohol awareness, meals, academic enrichment, mental health and substance abuse counseling, support groups, primary health care

**Staff Number:** 19 (15 full-time and 4 part-time), 70 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1986

**Funding Sources:** Government 69%, Foundation 13%, United Way 18%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$814,814

**Basis for Eligibility:** Race/ethnicity

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 350 Native American youth, ages 5-18

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Girls Inc. of Alameda County

## Girls Inc.

13666 East 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94578

Pat Loomes, Executive Director

(510) 357-5515

(510) 357-5112 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of Girls, Inc. of San Leandro is similar to that of the national organization: to empower girls and help them achieve a greater sense of independence and competence. The program is skill-oriented, and seeks to help girls develop the skills they need to overcome the barriers of gender discrimination.

**Program Description:** Girls Inc. of San Leandro is an affiliate of Girls Inc. They offer many programs for health education, academic enrichment, and personal and social development. In addition to the ENABL program, Girls, Inc. runs the FUTURE program (Females Unifying to Undertake Responsible Education) and a Math/Science program. Girls Inc. helps girls develop skills for overcoming gender discrimination.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, leadership development, case management, parenting skills, academic enrichment, youth advisory board, volunteering, career awareness, ethnic and cultural enrichment

**Staff Number:** 26 (full-time), 800 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1958

**Funding Sources:** Government 40%, Individual contributions 25%, Federated campaigns 12%, Foundation 10%, Corporate 5%, Fees 3%, Fundraising 3%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$1,570,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, gender

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 5,400, predominantly adolescent girls from racial and ethnic backgrounds

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Guadalupe Center

1015 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez, Kansas City, MO 64108

Cris Medina, Executive Director

(816) 472-4770

(816) 472-4773 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Guadalupe Center is to improve the quality of life for Latino youth in Kansas City, and to provide them with a positive alternative to the streets.

**Program Description:** The Guadalupe Center is a community-based organization that provides social services, education, and recreational opportunities, with more than half its activities and services directed toward youth. Education plays a central role in all the youth programs at the center. Activities, which are organized by age group, include an alternative school. Most of the program participants are Latino and come from low-income families in the surrounding neighborhood; for many, the Center is within walking distance of their homes. Much of the staff is also from the area. The Center sees family involvement as critical in fulfilling its mission of promoting positive youth development, and provides family and individual counseling.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Mentoring, alternative schooling, employment, drop-in center, dances, fishing, arts and crafts, music, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, male responsibility, meals, athletic activities, outdoor adventure, sex education, conflict resolution training, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, budgeting and banking, political and social action, youth advisory board, academic enrichment, ESL instruction, career counseling, entrepreneurship development, substance abuse counseling, support groups, case management, day care, family preservation counseling, family support services, service referrals, outreach, legal advocacy, hotline, prenatal care, emergency shelter, housing assistance, substance abuse treatment

**Staff Number:** 70 (40 full-time and 30 part-time), 400 volunteer hours per year

**Year Established:** 1919

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 50%, Government 25%, Federated Campaigns 15%, Fundraising 5%, Fees 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$2,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 5,000 youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Indianapolis Children's Choir

4600 Sunset Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46208

Henry Leck, Music Director

(317) 940-9640

(317) 940-6129 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Indianapolis Children's Choir is to provide children from all backgrounds with musical instruction, with the goal of attaining the highest level of artistic excellence in choral music performance.

**Program Description:** The Indianapolis Children's Choir offers six different choirs, each geared toward a different skill level. The choirs perform at churches, holiday celebrations, retirement homes, sporting events, etc. Choir members are taught the history of the music they sing, and learn about the history, culture, and geography of places they visit. Older choir members act as mentors to younger participants. The choir takes a major international tour every three years, and more frequent short tours.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music, theater, conflict resolution training, decision making, leadership development, mentoring, academic enrichment, communication skills

**Staff Number:** 7 (5 full-time and 2 part-time), 250 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1986

**Funding Sources:** Fees 50%, Individual contributions 20%, Foundation 20%, Government 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$400,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Audition

**Youth Served Annually:** 903 youths

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Indiana Youth Groups (IYG)

P.O. Box 20716, Indianapolis, IN 46220-0716

Steven T. Laughner, Executive Director

(317) 541-8726

(317) 545-8594 FAX

(800) 347-TEEN Youth Hotline

e-mail - iygteen@aol.com

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**Mission:** Indianapolis Youth Group (IYG) supports, educates, and provides a safe place for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, and serves as an advocate in their behalf.

**Program Description:** IYG was established to meet the needs of gay and lesbian young people, who had nowhere else to go in their communities for support or information. The program attracts a racially diverse group of participants from all economic backgrounds. Most, however, come from communities where homophobia, religious intolerance, and discrimination are present. IYG strives to educate youth about important issues while providing a social network that can reinforce the messages that are taught. The program offered the first 24-hour hotline for gay and lesbian youth. IYG also advocates for gay and lesbian youth, and works to educate community leaders through workshops and conferences.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Decision making, leadership development, political and social action, dances, drop-in center, fine arts, gay TV show, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, sex education, mentoring, volunteering, youth advisory board, communication skills, tutoring, computer skills, career counseling, employment, peer counseling, support groups, substance abuse treatment, legal advocacy, hotline, outreach, emergency shelter

**Staff Number:** 4 full-time

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Government 55%, Foundation 15%, Fundraising 15%, Individual contributions 10%, Corporate 4%, Federated campaigns 1%

**Annual Budget:** Not available

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (under age 21), lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are targeted

**Youth Served Annually:** 250 youth per month from lesbian, gay and bisexual orientations.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture

## Brooklyn USA Athletic Association, Inc.

1424 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11216

Ozelious Clement, Executive Director

(718) 773-3456

(718) 773-3489 FAX

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**Mission:** The Jackie Robinson Center aims to strengthen the institutions of the family, the community, and the school system by providing for the needs of youth.

**Program Description:** The Jackie Robinson Center primarily serves low-income African American youth aged 8-18 in Brooklyn, New York. Program activities take place in seventeen public schools, and are offered five days a week after school hours. Youth spend about eight hours a week in program activities. Participants are divided into groups that participate together in activities within the program's four components: sports and culture, education, social services, and special events. Youngsters spend an equal amount of time in recreational and academic activities, and have weekly, hour-long group counseling sessions where issues such as drugs, AIDS, and cultural identity are discussed. There is a youth leadership group whose members are elected by their peers, and a parent council which meets weekly to discuss activities and concerns.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, ethnic and cultural enrichment, academic enrichment with a focus on mathematics, health and sex education, drug and alcohol awareness, career counseling, job placement, leadership development, substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 414 (399 part-time and 15 full-time)

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Government 100%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$2,500,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** age, school enrollment

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 6,000 youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Jesse White Tumbling Team

1452 North Sedgwick Avenue, Chicago, IL 60610

Jesse White, Executive Director

(312) 266-7498

(312) 266-2275 FAX

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**Mission:** The Jesse White Tumbling Team sees its mission as that of a juvenile delinquency prevention program. Tumblers must adhere to strict rules, and are seen as role models for other youth.

**Program Description:** The Jesse White Tumbling team has seventy-five members between the ages of 6 and 26. The focus of the team's activities are the tumbling training program and performances, though the primary goal is to involve the youth in a positive activity that will broaden their horizons. Participants, about half of whom live or have lived in the Cabrini Green housing development, agree to adhere to a strict code that prohibits drinking and drug use, forbids dropping out of school and requires good and polite behavior at all times. Youth receive demerits for violations of this code, and a participant who receives more than three demerits will be dropped from the program. The team performs around the Chicago area and abroad, and the youth who participate are exposed to different environments and cultures. Members of the team are also paid for their performances, and earn up to \$800 a month in the summer, when they practice daily.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, field trips, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, male responsibility, meals, sex education, conflict resolution training, budgeting, time management

**Staff Number:** 8 (3 full-time and 5 part-time), 64 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1959

**Funding Sources:** Corporate 65%, Government 25%, Individual contributions 5%, Foundation 5%

**Annual Budget:** Not available

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, skill level

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 75 youth, primarily African American adolescents from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Latin American Youth Center

3045 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009

Lori Kaplan, Executive Director

(202) 483-1140

(202) 462-5696 FAX

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**Mission:** The Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) was established to address the social, economic, and human service needs of Latinos and other minority groups in Washington, DC.

**Program Description:** LAYC is a private, nonprofit community-based organization founded by Latino youth frustrated by the lack of recreational opportunities in their community. Over the past twenty years, LAYC has grown, and now offers an array of services in four areas: employment and training, outreach and prevention, health education, and social services. The target population are youth aged 14-21 who live in the Adams Morgan/Mount Pleasant community in Washington.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, employment readiness, case management, academic enrichment, mental health and substance abuse counseling, family support services, arts activities, health education, leadership development, organized sports, political and social action, budgeting and banking, cooking, sewing, carpentry, primary health care, transitional living program

**Staff Number:** 60 (45 full-time and 15 part-time), 400 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1968

**Funding Sources:** Local government 43%, Federal government 22%, Foundation 26%, Subcontracts 6%, Other 3%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$3,000,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, immigration status (because the program is federally funded, participants must have a green card)

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 5,000 youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC)

San Francisco Women's Centers, Inc.  
127 Collingwood Street, San Francisco, CA 94114  
Melinda Capiraso, Executive Director  
(415) 703-6150  
(415) 703-6153 FAX

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**Mission:** To provide a safe place where lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people aged 23 or younger can engage in social and recreational activities. LYRIC also seeks to empower youth to take leadership within LYRIC and within the larger lesbian and gay community.

**Program Description:** LYRIC was founded in 1988. The founders observed that services for lesbian and gay youth in San Francisco were all therapeutic, and set out to supplement those services with social and recreational opportunities. LYRIC has five goals that it seeks to achieve with the 500 youth it serves each year: to lessen their feelings of isolation, to help them cultivate a positive social identity, to discourage their engagement in high-risk behavior, to enhance their self-esteem, and to give them the sense that recreation is an important part of life. LYRIC serves homeless and runaway youth, youth in foster care, and HIV-positive youth. LYRIC provides youth with a place to go and people to identify with, and creates awareness about lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in the larger community.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, health education, leadership development, sex education, dances, field trips, athletic activities, conflict resolution training, decision making, volunteering, career awareness, peer counseling

**Staff Number:** 14 (9 full-time and 5 part-time), 100 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1988

**Funding Sources:** Government 50%, Foundation 27%, Federated campaigns 11%, Fundraising 7%, Individual contributions 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately 600,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 800 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth; over 10,000 calls to LYRIC Youth Talkline

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Lawndale College Opportunity Program

## Lawndale Christian Development Corporation

3843 West Ogden, Chicago, IL 60623  
Robin Johnson, LCOP Program Director  
(773) 762-8889  
(773) 762-8893 FAX

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**Mission:** The Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC), which runs the Lawndale College Opportunity Program, envisions a future in which students graduate from high school and college and become empowered leaders of the community and the world; where each student has a positive self-image and an appreciation of his or her own culture and the cultures of others.

**Program Description:** The Lawndale College Opportunity Program (LCOP) serves the community of North Lawndale, a largely low-income neighborhood plagued by drugs, violence, and a lack of affordable housing. LCOP is a 5-year college preparatory program that works to enhance public school education through after-school tutoring, specialized academic classes, mentoring, financial assistance for college, parental involvement, entrepreneurship training, and occupational internships.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Academic enrichment, tutoring, arts programs, public speaking, decision-making skills, career counseling, volunteering, camping, dances

**Staff Number:** 14 (13 full-time and 1 part-time), 100 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1988

**Funding Sources:** Federated campaigns 60%, Individual contributions 30%, Church, etc. 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$700,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 100 African American youth from low-income neighborhoods

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Lee Youth Association

Academy Street, P.O. Box 115, Lee, MA 01238

David Canterbury, Executive Director

(413) 243-5535

(413) 243-5539 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Lee Youth Association (LYA) is to meet and adapt to the needs of youth in the community, to improve their situations whenever possible, and to provide affordable services for those in need.

**Program Description:** LYA serves as a community center, offering a variety of services to residents of Lee, MA, a predominantly white, low to low-middle income community. There are few other support services in the area, and LYA is the main provider of family services in the region, offering kids a safe place to go after school and a number of constructive leisure-time activities. LYA also interacts with parents and families to keep them informed and involved. LYA also collaborates with the school system and other local organizations to share information, space, and equipment, and to run joint programs.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, drug and alcohol awareness, decision making, dances, field trips, arts and crafts, health education, male responsibility, sex education, camping, athletic activities, conflict resolution training, leadership development, mentoring, communication skills, babysitting, budgeting and banking, cooking, political and social action, volunteering, formal youth involvement in program decision making, career counseling, job skills training, homework help, peer counseling, support groups, substance abuse counseling, family support services, day care, pre-school

**Staff Number:** 12 (4 full-time and 8 part-time), 190 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1980

**Funding Sources:** Fees 39%, Federated campaigns 18%, Corporate 12%, Individual contributions 10%, Government 7%, Fundraising 7%, Foundation 5%, Dues 1%, Other 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$300,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,500 youth predominantly from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Lemmon Avenue Bridge

2920 Lemmon Avenue East, Dallas, TX 75204-2318  
Truman Thomas, Executive Director  
(214) 927-4343

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**Mission:** The Lemmon Avenue Bridge is run by Youth Impact Centers, Inc. It is the first youth impact center established by the organization, whose mission is to improve all aspects of young people's well-being by situating coordinated services from a wide variety of social and health care providers in one location.

**Program Description:** Lemmon Avenue Bridge consists of twenty-four youth service agencies which have agreed to provide donated time. Youth are referred to the Bridge by schools, parents, or other agencies, or find it on their own. Upon entering the program, youth meet with a counselor and complete a short assessment form. The Bridge offers participants, who are between the ages of 12 and 18, a variety of resources and activities, including physicals, dental exams, counseling, Camp Fire activities, and an adolescent pregnancy prevention program.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, mental health counseling, arts and crafts, drug and alcohol awareness, athletic activities, sex education, conflict resolution training, leadership development, employment readiness, case management, family planning, primary health care

**Staff Number:** 6 (5 full-time and 1 part-time)

**Year Established:** 1989

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 89%, Corporate 11%

**Annual Budget:** \$270,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, Geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** N/A

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Living Stage Theatre Company

## Washington Drama Society, Inc.

1101 6th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024

Oran Sandel, Artistic Director

Vanessa Eaton, Managing Director

(202) 234-5782

(202) 797-1043 FAX

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**Mission:** Living Stage hopes to inspire creativity, strengthen individual purpose, and promote participants' development of a positive view of themselves and the world. The focus of Living Stage's work are children and special-needs audiences.

**Program Description:** Living Stage, a part of Washington, DC's Arena Stage, is a social outreach theater company. The company believes that everyone is an artist, and tries to tap into this artistry through improvised productions and workshops that are designed to actively engage the audience in the creative process. The company has a long history of working with children and teens from inner city neighborhoods.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Theater, arts and crafts, dance, music, photography, field trips, drug and alcohol awareness, conflict resolution training, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, outreach, academic enrichment, career awareness

**Staff Number:** 12 (full-time)

**Year Established:** 1966

**Funding Sources:** Fees 30%, Government, corporate, individual contributions, and foundations 70%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$520,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 376 African American youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Madison Square Boys and Girls Club

301 East 29th Street, New York, NY 10016

Milford Liss, Associate Executive Director

(212) 532-5751

(212) 779-2169 FAX

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**Mission:** Madison Square Boys and Girls Club aims to help youth become mature, self-reliant adults, fully able to participate in society. The Club philosophy maintains that when youth believe in themselves, they will steer clear of substance abuse.

**Program Description:** Madison Square Boys and Girls Club operates out of five clubhouses in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan boroughs of New York City. The Clubs developed recreational, educational, and guidance services for at-risk youth. Activities range from workshops that teach values clarification, decision-making skills, and the consequences of drug use, to creative exercise designed to foster feelings of group belonging and self-esteem in participants. As a group, participants also select a community service project, wherein they assess community needs and develop a project that conveys a drug-free message.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, tutoring, career counseling, dances, drop-in center, field trips, arts and crafts, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, male responsibility, sex education, meals, athletic activities, conflict resolution training, communication skills, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, mentoring, parenting skills, budgeting and banking, political and social action, formal youth involvement in program decision-making, youth advisory board, outreach, court advocacy, academic enrichment, job skills training, employment readiness, entrepreneurship development, peer counseling

**Staff Number:** 237 (62 full-time and 175 part-time), 300 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1884

**Funding Sources:** Government 18%, Federated campaigns 6%, Foundation 14%, Fundraising 35%, Fees 7%, Corporate 5%, Individual contributions 7%, Dues 1%, Endowment 8%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$5,500,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 12,000 youth predominantly from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Magic Me

2521 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

Katherine Paul, Executive Director

(410) 243-9066

(410) 243-9076 FAX

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**Mission:** Magic Me's mission is to motivate and educate adolescents both academically and socially by engaging them in long-term community service.

**Program Description:** The target participants for Magic Me are inner city sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who are considered at risk. The program links these students with senior citizens in nursing homes. The students spend about an hour a week, during school hours, interacting with a nursing home resident. Youth who are referred to the program generally are academically behind, have attendance problems, low self-esteem, and/or behavioral problems. The program teaches youth that they are capable of making a positive contribution to their community. Frequently, participants improve in their grades, their self-esteem, and their attitudes toward the elderly. Participants often ask that the program include high schools as well, and principals usually are very supportive of student's involvement in the program.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Field trips, volunteering, political and social action, mentoring, values clarification.

**Staff Number:** 10 full-time

**Year Established:** 1980

**Funding Sources:** Government 45%, Individual contributions 25%, Foundation 20%, Corporate 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$800,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Referral by school principal

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 3,000

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** once a week

# Male Youth Enhancement Project

## Shiloh Family Life Center

1510 Ninth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Rev. Barry Hargrove, Director

(202) 332-0213

(202) 234-6235 FAX

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**Mission:** The project strives to enhance the physical and mental health of black male youth, and to assist them in their transition from boyhood to manhood.

**Program Description:** The Black Male Youth Health Enhancement Project is a year-round program designed to assist young African-American men in their transition from boyhood to manhood. The project educates participants on how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Regular workshops are held on issues including teenage pregnancy prevention and drug abuse prevention. Participants are given academic and job preparation, and exposed to African-American culture and history as well as other cultures. The program also tries to provide positive adult male role models who serve as mentors for each program participant.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, athletic activities, academic enrichment, mental health counseling, conflict resolution training, mentoring, employment readiness, peer counseling.

**Staff Number:** 3 (1 full-time and 2 part-time), 26 mentors, 10 tutors, 30 parent volunteers

**Year Established:** 1985

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 83%, Government 17%, or Foundation 50%, Government 25%, Church support 25%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$125,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Race/ethnicity, gender

There is a waiting list for participants, with priority granted to residents of the Shaw neighborhood and those who do not have a father living at home

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 100 young African American males from low to moderate-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs

4103 Benning Road, NE, Washington, DC 20019

Robert Bowen, Executive Vice President

(202) 397-2582

(202) 399-7945 FAX

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**Mission:** Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs are dedicated to reducing juvenile delinquency by providing an array of organized activities for youth between the ages of 6 and 18.

**Program Description:** The Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Club includes ten clubhouses and a summer camp, all of which operate in the Washington, DC area. The program differs from other recreation centers in that the participants come in close contact with police officers, and develop trust and respect for the police force. The clubs combat negative influences affecting youth, including drugs, crime, and peer pressure, through substance abuse prevention, violence reduction, and conflict resolution workshops, and offer a variety of recreational activities.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, mental health counseling, tutoring, dances, drop-in center, field trips, arts and crafts, dance, camping, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, male responsibility, meals, athletic activities, conflict resolution training, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, parenting skills, values clarification, budgeting and banking, academic enrichment, volunteering, youth advisory board, career counseling, job placement, substance abuse counseling, peer counseling, support groups, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 11 full-time and 34 part-time, 7,500 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1934

**Funding Sources:** Individual contributions, Foundations, Corporations, Civic groups, Federal grants, United Way

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$1,680,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 12,000 boys and girls

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Music Cultivation Program for CHA Youth

## Windows of Opportunity, Inc.

626 West Jackson Boulevard, Sixth Floor, Chicago, IL 60661

Desma Thrist, Executive Director

(312) 441-0389

(312) 441-9686 FAX

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**Mission:** Windows of Opportunity, the parent organization, builds partnerships between public housing residents, corporations, foundations, and service providers. Windows' partner in this endeavor, the Merit Music Program, helps economically disadvantaged youth achieve their full musical potential and stimulates young people's personal and educational growth through music.

**Program Description:** The Music Cultivation Program for CHA Youth was created in 1989 by CHA's not-for-profit affiliate, Windows of Opportunity. The goal of the program is to expose children and families in public housing to the arts. Windows teamed with the Merit Music Program to provide music instruction for these children. Musical instruments, lessons, and transportation are all provided at no cost to the participants. Students receive private instruction in violin, bass, and cello one day each week, and can participate in the CHA orchestra. When youth first enter the program, they are tracked and assigned an instrument. They are then placed in different orchestras according to their progress and skill level. An important aim of the program is to prepare youth for college, and success is defined by their ability to translate their musical involvement into academic achievement at school. The program stresses the importance of parental involvement; parents serve as volunteers and attend meetings twice a month.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music instruction

**Staff Number:** 1 part-time coordinator for Music Cultivation Program, 10 part-time teachers at the music school, and 1 part-time administrator at Windows of Opportunity

**Year Established:** 1990

**Funding Sources:** Foundations/Corporations 30%, Government 60%, Fundraising 2%, Individual contributions 8%

**Annual Budget:** \$654,125 (Windows of Opportunity, Inc.), and \$53,150 (Music Cultivation Program)

**Basis for Eligibility:** Referral

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 47 African American youth from Chicago public housing developments

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# National Indian Youth Leadership Project

650 Vandembosch Parkway, Gallup, NM 87301  
McClellan Hall, President  
(505) 722-9176

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**Mission:** National Indian Youth Leadership Project (NIYLP) strives to develop leadership capabilities among Native American youth so they can contribute to their communities.

**Program Description:** NIYLP, currently affiliated with the National Youth Leadership Council, was created by the Cherokee Nation in response to a school system that did not seem to adequately serve the needs of Native American youth. NIYLP primarily serves youth living on Native American reservations, trying to teach these youth that traditional Native American values and practices are relevant to life in the 1990's. In particular, the project emphasizes the importance of community service, respect for others, and the belief that a leader is a servant of the people. The core of the NIYLP program are the camps, which offer leadership development, health education, jogging, and conflict resolution training. The philosophy behind the camps' approach is consistent with Native American values—in order to bring about positive results, such as increasing alcohol awareness, positive alternatives to alcohol use are emphasized, as opposed to negative outcomes. NIYLP hopes that its participants will achieve heightened self-esteem, physical and mental health, and responsibility.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, volunteering, spiritual enrichment, ethnic and cultural enrichment

**Staff Number:** 18 (6 full-time, 12 part-time, 15 volunteers contributing 350 hours per month)

**Year Established:** 1980

**Funding Sources:** Government 80%, Foundation 15%, Fees 5%

**Annual Budget:** \$400,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 350 total, 300 youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once or twice a month

# National Institute of Taekwondo and Fitness

3293 Brinkley Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748

Lynette Love, Director

(301) 505-0055

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**Mission:** The Institute works to help youth get off the streets and set goals for themselves through the practice of martial arts.

**Program Description:** The National Institute of Taekwondo and Fitness serves approximately 250 people per year, 70 percent of whom are youths between the ages of 10 and 18. The Institute's founders hope that youth who study the martial arts will enhance their concentration skills, and cultivate a dedication and focus that they will be able to apply to their schoolwork and their lives in general. The majority of participants are boys from low-income families, though many of the children under 10 served by the Institute are girls. Youth are grouped according to age and skill level, and take periodic promotional exams. The Institute keeps parents informed of their children's activities, and offers family events to keep parents involved.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Taekwondo, organized sports, physical fitness, decision making

**Staff Number:** 2 (full-time), 8 volunteers contributing 30 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1989

**Funding Sources:** Government 40%, Fees 50%, Fundraising 10%

**Annual Budget:** \$100,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 250

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# New Concept Self Development Center

4828 West Fond du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53216

June Perry, Executive Director

(414) 444-1952

(414) 444-5557 FAX

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**Mission:** New Concept Self-Development Center (NCSDC) provides diversified human services to socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged families in Milwaukee's inner city.

**Program Description:** NCSDC operates from three Milwaukee sites located in low-income, African American neighborhoods. NCSDC began by providing mental health services to families in crisis, but has expanded to offer a diverse array of services geared toward empowering families, including development, prevention, and education programs.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Ethnic and cultural enrichment, mental health counseling, family support services, drop-in center, field trips, youth-directed clubs, drug and alcohol awareness, sex education, leadership development, mentoring, youth advisory board, academic enrichment, career counseling, substance abuse counseling, support groups, case management, service referrals, legal advocacy, family planning, prenatal care

**Staff Number:** 70-80 (full-time)

**Year Established:** 1975

**Funding Sources:** Government 40%, Federated campaigns 30%, Foundation 20%, Corporate 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$3,000,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 7,500 youth, predominantly African American youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# New Expression

## Youth Communication at Columbia College, Chicago

600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605-1996  
Bill Brooks, Executive Director  
(312) 922-7150  
(312) 922-7151 FAX  
e-mail: ycbb@aol.com www.chicago.digitalcity.com/go/teen

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**Mission:** *New Expression* Newspaper is run by Youth Communication, an organization that works to: encourage teens to investigate issues that affect their lives, provide vehicles through which teens can communicate with their peers and with the adult community, offer hands-on learning experiences, and teach youth to use teamwork and accept individual responsibility. The organization's mission is grounded in the belief that teens will respect the democratic process when they are active participants in it. *New Expression* strives to be an independent voice for all Chicago teens, with a special mission to reach and involve inner-city youth.

**Program Description:** *New Expression* is a teen newspaper that is published monthly and distributed in all of the Chicago public high schools and nearly 75 other locations for youth. The core of the organization's activities are related to the production of the paper, including graphic design, layout, writing, editing, photography, and illustration. All youth are eligible to participate, and many do so on a daily basis.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Newspaper, desktop publishing, academic enrichment, computer skills, fine arts, photography, communication skills, career awareness, employment, job skills training, Web site design.

**Staff Number:** 2 adult staff

**Year Established:** 1976

**Funding Sources:** Corporate 9%, Foundation 76%, Fees 5%, Government 5%, Individual contributions 5%

**Annual Budget:** \$288,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 125 youth from a variety of backgrounds, most from low-income families. 120,000 teens read *New Expression* each month it is produced.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Office of Special Programs

5845 South Ellis, Chicago, IL 60637

Larry Hawkins, Executive Director

(773) 702-8288

(773) 702-0189 FAX

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**Mission:** The program's goal is to help students build the academic and social skills needed to succeed in school, to go on to higher education, and to be successful academically and in their life choices beyond school.

**Program Description:** Housed at the campus of the University of Chicago, the Office of Special Programs (OSP) is a rigorous academic enrichment program for children aged 10 and older. The program aims to interest these students in learning, to strengthen their academic skills, and to broaden their connections and sense of belonging in the larger civic and cultural community in Chicago and beyond. OSP provides tutorial assistance, academic enrichment, athletic activities and counseling aimed at academic and life planning. Athletics are used as a way to draw students into the program, and to create a sense of membership. Participants can play sports such as volleyball and basketball as team members or less formally. The program also takes students and their parents on trips to local museums, the theater, ethnic restaurants, and the opera.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Academic enrichment, athletic activities, mentoring, alternative schooling, homework help, critical thinking skills, decision-making skills, field trips, ethnic and cultural enrichment

**Staff Number:** 15 (6 full-time and 9 part-time), 128 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1968

**Funding Sources:** Government 90%, Fundraising 10%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$450,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 215 African American youth, predominantly from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# Reaching Out to Chelsea Adolescents (ROCA)

101 Park Street, Chelsea, MA 02150  
Molly Baldwin, Director  
(617) 889-5210  
(617) 889-2145 FAX

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**Mission:** ROCA was originally established to unite the community into action around issues relating to teen pregnancy, then evolved to provide direct services to Chelsea youth and their families and to coordinate the Chelsea Coalition for Youth.

**Program Description:** ROCA's multicultural youth development programs focus on youth between the ages of 12 and 21. The program serves 1,000 youth directly, as well as an additional 3,500 who come into contact with the program through its outreach efforts. ROCA follows the social justice model of the El Puente program in Brooklyn, attempting to provide positive activities for youth while enabling them to understand that they have the power to change themselves and their community. ROCA stresses youth involvement and input, giving participants the skills, support, and love they need to become leaders of a positive youth movement in their community.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, peer counseling, drop-in center, hobbies, arts and crafts, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, athletic activities, sex education, mentoring, academic enrichment, youth advisory board, career counseling, support groups, family support services

**Staff Number:** 14 (11-12 full-time, 2-3 part-time), 5 volunteers contributing 150 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1986

**Funding Sources:** Government 75%, Foundation 20%, Corporate 2.5%, Individual contributions 2.5%

**Annual Budget:** \$800,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, geographic area

**Youth Served Annually:** 4,500

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families

2770 Broadway, New York, NY 10025  
Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO  
(212) 866-0700  
(212) 932-2965 FAX

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**Mission:** Rheedlen's mission is to provide high quality preventive services to children and families living in New York's most devastated neighborhoods, thereby contributing to community regeneration.

**Program Description:** Rheedlen delivers a wide range of school and community-based services for minority, at-risk children and their families in four Manhattan neighborhoods. All services emphasize education, and even the recreational programs include an academic component. The organization reaches out to children and youth who are chronically truant, at risk of abuse or neglect, or at risk of becoming homeless, providing them with a safe haven during their after-school, evening, and weekend hours. Rheedlen's Peacemakers Program, an anti-violence initiative, and Community Pride, a homelessness prevention and community redevelopment initiative, have received national recognition.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Tutoring, family support services, drop-in center, arts and crafts, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, sex education, athletic activities, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, budgeting and banking, cooking, sewing, academic enrichment, career counseling, youth advisory board, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, support groups, case management, service referrals, family planning, homelessness prevention

**Staff Number:** 155 (75 full-time and 80 part-time), 200 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1970

**Funding Sources:** Government 75%, Foundation 15%, Corporate 3%, Individual contributions 3%, Fundraising 2%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$7,400,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area; for some programs, participants must have a particular problems, such as being abused, neglected, or homeless

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 3,000 youth, most from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Streetworker Program

## (Formerly Youth Outreach Program)

1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA 02118  
Tracy Litthcut, Unit Manager  
(617) 635-4920  
(617) 635-4524 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of the Youth Outreach Program (YOP) is to establish street-based outreach to teens from all neighborhoods, in order to address complex issues confronting youth, including violence, racism, and poverty.

**Program Description:** YOP is one of five youth programs run by the Boston Community Centers, a municipal department. It was founded in 1985 to establish a street-based network to reach teens from all neighborhoods. The program includes several community-based youth councils whose teenage members plan programs, secure necessary resources, and become involved in the political process. YOP also has paid Peer Leaders who work directly with youth in the streets in an effort to create "positive gangs." Those who choose to join the program must sign a contract and attend council meetings; many participants are paid for their work. The organization operates its program in twenty schools, as well as ten teen centers and its own eighteen centers.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, arts and crafts, dance, theater, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, athletic activities, sex education, conflict resolution training, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, parenting skills, budgeting and banking, political and social action, volunteering, youth advisory board, academic enrichment, peer counseling, support groups, service referrals, outreach

**Staff Number:** 35 full-time

**Year Established:** 1989

**Funding Sources:** Government 63%, Foundation 25%, Fundraising 12%

**Annual Budget:** \$800,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 8,000 to 10,000 youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Weekly

# Teens as Community Resources

100 Massachusetts Avenue, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02115

Bill Batson, Executive Director

(617) 266-2788

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**Mission:** The Teens as Community Resource's (TCR) mission is to create and develop leadership and responsibility in teens through community service. TCR funds projects that are designed by teens to address social problems, thereby encouraging youth to play an active role in addressing the needs of their communities.

**Program Description:** TCR is a small foundation staffed primarily by young people that focuses on developing leadership and citizenship skills in Boston teens through community service. It began in 1987 as a project of the Boston Foundation and is now independently incorporated. All of the projects are developed and implemented by youth. Most of the program participants are older teenagers, with an even split between males and females. All come from low- or low-to-middle-income households. In addition to an ongoing, internal staff evaluation, evaluations of TCR are conducted by the groups who receive funding.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, ethnic and cultural enrichments, political and social action

**Staff Number:** 14 (4 full-time, 10 part-time, 3 volunteers contributing 60 hours per month)

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 99%

**Annual Budget:** \$294,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area (must be a Boston resident).

**Youth Served Annually:** 1,000 people

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Teens Organized for Pride and Success (TOPS)

## National Urban League

317 South MacArthur Highway, Peoria, IL 61605

Floya Fountain, Associate Director

(309) 672-4360

(309) 672-4366 FAX

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**Mission:** Teens Organized for Pride and Success (TOPS) seeks to assist disadvantaged African Americans and other ethnic groups in their move toward self-sufficiency. TOPS strives to be comprehensive in its service delivery approach, as well as in the range of developmentally appropriate services it offers.

**Program Description:** TOPS is a primary prevention program located within the Tri-County Urban League, a non-profit, multi-component social service agency. It strives to help its participants graduate from high school while avoiding patterns of negative behavior. Throughout their transition from adolescent to adulthood, the program seeks to provide a haven for these adolescents: a place where they can come to talk, get information, share experiences, and escape negative influences. TOPS encourages positive youth behavior by providing adolescents with the information they need to make informed decisions, including hygiene and nutrition information and sex education.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Health education, tutoring, leadership development, mentoring, career counseling, employment, field trips

**Staff Number:** 4 (1 full-time and 3 part-time), 20 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1986

**Funding Sources:** Government 80%, (or Government 40%, other 60%)

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$65,715

**Basis for Eligibility:** Referral; open to at-risk youth from low-income families

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 100 youth, predominantly African Americans from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# United Action for Youth

410 Iowa Avenue, P.O. Box 892, Iowa City, IA 52244

Jim Swaim, Executive Director

(319) 338-9279

(319) 337-7999 FAX

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**Mission:** United Action for Youth (UAY) was originally dedicated to preventing juvenile delinquency; however, its aim has shifted to assisting young people and their families in resolving problems.

**Program Description:** UAY offers a unique mixture of traditional therapeutic interventions and opportunities for artistic expression. The organization operates the Youth Center in Iowa City, which is open to all teenagers and serves as a prevention and intervention program. Approximately 15% of the agency's caseload are runaway and homeless youth, and the city's police and parole officers consider UAY an important resource for intervening with youth who are at risk of homelessness or court intervention. In an area where the economy is poor and there are few chances outside of school for building competencies, UAY plays an important role in providing creative opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, mental health counseling, arts and crafts, theater, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, athletic activities, leadership development, values clarification, budgeting and banking, cooking, academic enrichment, case management, family support services, service referrals, outreach, family planning, smoking cessation, parenting skills

**Staff Number:** 30, 330 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1970

**Funding Sources:** Government 80%, Federated campaigns 6%, Fundraising 5%, Individual contributions 5%, Foundation 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$750,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 2,000 people

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

# United Community Center

## Centro De La Comunidad Unida

1028 South 9th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204

Dr. Walter Sava, Executive Director

(414) 384-3100

(414) 649-4411 FAX

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**Mission:** The United Community Center's (UCC) mission is to serve Latino families through education, recreation, fine arts, and social service programming.

**Program Description:** UCC is a multi-service agency that primarily serves Latino children, youth, and families in the Walker's Point area of Milwaukee. UCC plays a major role in providing recreation, education, alcohol and other drug abuse prevention programs, and counseling. The organization aims to keep youth in school and out of the juvenile justice system, and develop their responsibility, sense of safety, and self-esteem. Parents are kept informed of events at UCC and family activities are provided.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, drug and alcohol awareness, arts and crafts, health education, athletic activities, academic enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, career counseling, substance abuse counseling, case management, day care, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 130 full-time and 30 part-time, 1,500 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1977

**Funding Sources:** Government 49%, Federated campaigns 14%, Dues 1%. Milwaukee public schools 8%, Fundraising 6%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$5,400,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 20,000 Latino youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# United Methodist Junior Basketball and Employment Project

## United Methodist Church

240 West Queen Street, Unit 3, Inglewood, CA 90301

Dr. Ronald Barrett, Founder and Project Director

(310) 677-8414

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**Mission:** The primary objective of the United Methodist Junior Basketball and Youth Employment Project (UMJB&YEP) is to divert youth from becoming involved with drugs, gangs, and crime.

**Program Description:** UMJB&YEP is a comprehensive youth ministry geared toward inner city youth. The organization offers two programs: a recreational athletics program and an individual counseling and employment program. The project serves at-risk youth in a community with a significant gang presence, as well as high rates of drug use and crime. Youth also encounter positive influences in their community, such as a sense of racial pride, and church involvement. UMJB&YEP seeks to strengthen the impact of these influences by nurturing youth, improving their self-esteem, refining their social and interpersonal skills, and empowering them to become contributing members of their community.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, career counseling, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, meals, sex education, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, mentoring, values clarification, communication skills, budgeting and banking, formal youth involvement in program decisions, computer skills, job placement, peer counseling, support groups, substance abuse counseling and prevention, youth and community outreach

**Staff Number:** 4 (full-time), 60 volunteers contributing 1,600 hours each month.

**Year Established:** 1988

**Funding Sources:** Fundraising 60%, Corporate 25%, Individual contributions 5%, Churches 10%

**Annual Budget:** \$20,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 540

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# University Park Community Center

## Portland Park and Recreation

9009 North Foss, Portland, OR 97203

Lee Jenkins, Recreation Supervisor

(503) 823-3631

(503) 823-3631 FAX

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**Mission:** University Park Community Center (UPCC) provides low-cost recreational and educational activities for at-risk youth, providing them with time away from home and positive role models to help them make choices in life.

**Program Description:** UPCC is operated by the Portland Park Bureau. The UPCC is located near a housing project that has been plagued by gang violence in the past, and has developed programs to reach local youth and protect them from negative influences. The program serves as a meeting place, as well as a forum for involving youth in positive activities and introducing them to role models. The facility includes a game room, and offers special events that draw many youth to the program.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Organized sports, dances, drop-in center, field trips, arts and crafts, ethnic and cultural enrichment, leadership development, camping, athletic activities, outdoor adventure, meals, sex education, health education, youth advisory board, volunteering, ESL instruction, tutoring, academic enrichment, employment, service referrals

**Staff Number:** 8 (2 full-time and 6 part-time), 110 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1954

**Funding Sources:** Government 95%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$150,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 1,600 predominantly gang-exposed African American youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# The Valley, Inc.

1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025

John Bess, Executive Director

(212) 222-2110

(212) 222-4671 FAX

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**Mission:** The Valley's primary goal is to empower young people and enrich their school experiences.

**Program Description:** The Valley, Inc. offers a variety of programs for young people between the ages of 14 and 24 from all New York City communities. Through its leadership training and job readiness program, the Valley offers workshops in many New York City high schools. The Genesis program uses employment as a vehicle to stabilize school performance and discourage participants from dropping out of high school. The I Have A Dream Initiative is a six-year program that includes working with and guiding young people, and providing full college tuition for every participant who graduates from high school. The independent living program, for youth in foster care, serves as a home away from home for participants.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, academic enrichment, employment, mental health counseling, independent living program, fine arts, music, photography, theater, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, athletic activities, outdoor adventure, sex education, budgeting and banking, cooking, sewing, volunteering, youth advisory board, peer counseling, substance abuse counseling, support groups, case management, service referrals, legal advocacy

**Staff Number:** 69 (full-time), 200 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1979

**Funding Sources:** Government 87%, Foundation 12%, Individual contributions 1%

**Annual Budget:** approximately \$3,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 10,000 Latino, African American, and Caribbean youth

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Venice Camp

c/o UAP

P.O. Box 54700, Los Angeles, CA 90029

Carl Dugas, Camp Director

(213) 661-9629

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**Mission:** Venice Camp hopes to help kids appreciate and understand the differences between people, to interact with peers of different races and abilities, to understand and respect the natural environment, and to use their skills and develop self-esteem.

**Program Description:** Venice Camp is a two-week summer program that brings physically disabled children together with children from economically disadvantaged families. Camp activities consist of a camp sing, creative dramatics, environmental awareness, outdoor cooking, and trips to the beach. The camp is held in the Santa Monica mountains, a beautiful environment to which many of the participants from the inner-city would not otherwise be exposed. Many parents hear about the camp through word of mouth, or through fliers they receive in the mail. Return participation is highly encouraged—because the camp session is short, youth can benefit far more when they return summer after summer.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Music, theater, camping, field trips, picnics, arts and crafts, athletic activities, outdoor adventure, cooking, academic awareness, career awareness, employment

**Staff Number:** 30 (full-time summer staff)

**Year Established:** 1969

**Funding Sources:** Government 35%, Private funders 65% (Fundraising, Corporate, Individual contributions, Foundation)

**Annual Budget:** \$140,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Geographic area, Poverty or physical disability

**Youth Served Annually:** 600

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Washington Leadership Institute

310 Campion Tower, Seattle University, 914 East Jefferson, Seattle, WA 98122  
Stephen Boyd, President and Director  
(206) 296-5630

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**Mission:** The purpose of the Washington Leadership Institute (WLI) is to foster civic participation and educational change. WLI provides leadership development and community service skills, encourages self-esteem and creates partnerships among youth and adults who will assume civic responsibility for America's third century.

**Program Description:** WLI has four major components. The Governor's School for Citizen Leadership is a four-week summer institute that provides high school students with the critical thinking and leadership skills necessary to effect change and contribute to their communities. The Washington Youth Initiatives engage larger numbers of youth in community service projects. The Washington Student Press, founded by two graduates of the Governor's School, is a state-wide, youth-operated news service. WLI also acts as a consultant to develop strategies and curricula to effect change within the educational system.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, political and social action, communication skills, community service, summer leadership institute, student-operated news service

**Staff Number:** 42 (9 full-time, 33 part-time), 60 volunteers contributing 6 hours a month

**Year Established:** 1985

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 40%, Corporate 30%, Other 30% (Government, Fees, Other organizations)

**Annual Budget:** \$450,0000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 850 people

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# We're Educators: A Touch of Class (WEATOC)

14 Crawford, Boston, MA 02121  
Claradine Moore-Cowell, President and CEO  
(617) 482-0482  
(617) 541-5859 FAX

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**Mission:** We're Educators: A Touch of Class (WEATOC) was founded to address rising numbers of teen pregnancies, and has since expanded its mission to focus more broadly on healthy adolescent development, with particular attention given to youth from high-risk environments. The program's main objective is to encourage positive youth development through peer education, child-parent communication, and community support.

**Program Description:** WEATOC uses trained youth and adult peer educators to teach health education workshops, engage in peer counseling and training, and perform theatrical presentations addressing some of the problems that confront adolescents, including teen pregnancy, child-parent communication, AIDS, suicide, and racism. Twenty-six youth actually serve on WEATOC's staff, while many more are reached through the program's presentations. Youth who join the program's staff attend an eight-week health and sex education course, in which they are tested on the information they learn and practice writing and performing skits. Parents of youth who are accepted into the program also attend a seminar. WEATOC has a small adult staff, but the adolescent staff members take primary responsibility for the program's function.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, drug and alcohol awareness, health education, sex education, theater, arts and crafts, physical fitness, conflict resolution training, communication skills, decision making, mentoring, parenting skills, political and social action, formal youth involvement in program decisions, youth advisory board, career awareness, employment, babysitting, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, peer counseling, support groups, service referrals, outreach

**Staff Number:** 35 (6 full-time and 29 part-time), 72 volunteer hours per month as well as 26 paid peer educators that work year round, full-time in the summer and part-time during the school year.

**Year Established:** 1979

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 60%, Government 25%, Fundraising 5%, Fees 5%, Individual contributions 4%, Corporate 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$250,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, Application

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 23,000 youth and adults per year through outreach presentations and workshops.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** 4 to 5 days per week.

# The Work Force Unemployment Prevention Program

## Cambridge Housing Authority

675 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 01239  
Steven J. Swanger, Director of Tenant Services  
(617) 864-3020  
(617) 520-6306 FAX

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**Mission:** Work Force targets in-school, low-income youths living in public housing. Its goals are to foster self-esteem, expose young people to new experiences, teach life skills, enhance school attendance and academic performance, increase access to post-secondary education, expose youth to a variety of work settings, develop job skills, and develop positive attitudes toward work among its participants.

**Program Description:** The Work Force Unemployment Prevention program consists of a sequence of classroom and employment experiences. The program's Job Developer works with over 75 local employers to provide participants with a progressive series of after-school "tryout" jobs in a variety of fields. Youth proceed through the three consecutive levels of the program at an individual pace.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Homework help, career awareness, employment readiness, communication skills, mentoring, conflict resolution training, leadership development

**Staff Number:** 9 (6 full-time and 3 part-time), 40 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1984

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 25%, Government 66%, Corporate 9%, or Foundation 50%, Government 30%, Corporate 20%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$396,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, geographic area: youth must live in specific public housing areas, be in school, and be between the ages of 13 and 19.

**Youth Served Annually:** 120 youths residing in public housing

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Youth and Family Impact Centers

4135 Office Parkway, Dallas, TX 75204

Truman Thomas, Executive Director

(214) 827-4343

(214) 827-4496 FAX

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**Mission:** The mission of Youth and Family Impact Centers (YFC) of Dallas is to improve all aspects of young people's physical, social, and emotional health and well-being. To accomplish that mission, YFC has developed a model for a new service delivery mechanism based on the on-site "co-location" of services from a wide variety of local social and health care providers. The first established Youth and Family Center opened in September 1989. That center was an outgrowth of the Impact '88 project, which examined adolescent health needs and school-age pregnancy in Dallas County.

**Program Description:** Initially located in the Oak Lawn/East Dallas neighborhood of North Texas, YFC coordinated the services of 22 Dallas-area agencies that serve youth. One of the primary goals of the YFC is to act as the community focal point for coordination, integration, and co-location of services for young people. As of October 1995, YFC included a network of nine high school clusters that provide health and mental health services to students and families. The centers are located in the six areas that comprise the Dallas Public Schools. Youth and Family Centers, Inc. consists of twenty-four youth service agencies, each of which has signed agreements to provide in-kind donated time for youth ages 12-18. Each center offers youth a variety of resources and services, ranging from physicals and dental checkups to Camp Fire activities and an adolescent pregnancy prevention program.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Arts/creativity, physical health and development, sports and other athletic activities, personal/social development, practical skills, community service/citizenship, education/cognitive development, other assistance, career development/employment training, mental health, social services, and health care.

**Staff Number:** 8 full-time

**Year Established:** 1989

**Funding Sources:** Foundation 89%, Corporate 11%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$270,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** N/A

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 350 youth from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds.

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** N/A

# Youth as Resources Teen Advisory Council

## Youth Resources of Southwestern Indiana

216 South East Third Street, Evansville, IN 47713

Phyllis Kincaid, Executive Director

(812) 421-0030

(812) 422-9143 FAX

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**Mission:** Youth as Resources of Southwestern Indiana (YAR) is a nonprofit youth agency committed to building a supportive community environment where youth are nurtured, appreciated, and empowered to be contributing members of society. YAR is committed to cultivating an awareness in the community of the values and use of youth; to making youth issues and concerns a top priority within the community; and to establishing and providing opportunities for area youth to develop responsibility, improve self-esteem, give service to others and reach their fullest potential.

**Program Description:** The Teen Advisory Council is a program run by the Youth As Resources of Evansville, part of the Youth as Resources of Southwestern Indiana. It is a program that challenges young people to act as community resources, and adults to serve as responsible role models for youth. The program works by funding community service projects that youth design and implement. YAR offers few activities directly, but rather sponsors them through the projects it funds. First, groups of teens submit grant proposals for community service projects. These proposals must include the name of an adult advisor, and be associated with a nonprofit organization. A teen advisory council, whose members have been appointed through recommendations from their principals or guidance counselors, then evaluates the proposals and decides which ones will receive funding. YAR's overall aims are to increase youth self-esteem and encourage adults to perceive youth as a source of solutions rather than problems. Council members generate enthusiasm for the program, so little recruitment of youth is needed.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, political and social action, volunteering, formal youth involvement in program decisions, communication skills, decision making, ethnic and cultural enrichments; teen advisory council.

**Staff Number:** 7 (2 full-time and 5 part-time)

**Year Established:** 1987

**Funding Sources:** Government 33%, Corporate 27%, Other 16%, Fees 8%, Foundation 8%, Individual contributions 8%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$425,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Youth council members are appointed by their principal or guidance counselor; coalition membership is open to anyone.

**Youth Served Annually:** 10,000 youth from a variety of socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once or twice a month

# YouthBuild U.S.A.

58 Day Street, P.O. Box 440322, Somerville, MA 02144

Dorothy Stoneman, President

(617) 623-9900

(617) 623-4331 FAX

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**Mission:** YouthBuild USA moves the YouthBuild movement by providing technical assistance and training to groups committed to developing YouthBuild programs; organizing the YouthBuild coalition to advocate for funding and to link interested groups with each other; developing a national core of youth leaders who can share leadership of the YouthBuild Coalition; and providing training to adults in the theory and method of youth leadership development.

**Program Description:** YouthBuild prepares young people who have dropped out of school for careers in construction by employing them as trainees in the restoration of abandoned buildings as housing for low-income and homeless people. Participants alternate on-site weeks of supervised construction work with weeks of academic and job skills training and counseling at the YouthBuild Alternative School. At the conclusion of their contracts, many participants are placed in construction-related jobs; others go on to college or post-secondary training. YouthBuild USA was incorporated in 1990 as a national organization to provide youth organizations with training in youth leadership development and to ensure that YouthBuild be replicated across the country. Over 100 local YouthBuild programs are operated in cities and rural areas across the country. Many are funded by HUD or AmeriCorps. YouthBuild USA links them together through trainings and conferences where they learn and share best practices.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, carpentry, and other construction skills, budgeting and banking, community service, social action, formal youth involvement in program decisions, GED and high school diploma preparation, job skills training, career counseling

**Staff Number:** 52 (full-time)

**Year Established:** 1990

**Funding Sources:** N/A

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$10,000,000, including \$5,000,000 regranted to local programs for program enhancement and innovation.

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (16-24), selection process in which youth must convey a seriousness of purpose and a desire to take advantage of opportunities

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 4,500 or more indirectly

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Full-time for one year and at their own initiative in alumni clubs subsequently

# Youth Development, Inc.

6301 Central, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87105

Chris Baca, Executive Director

(505) 831-6038

(505) 352-3400 FAX

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**Mission:** Youth Development, Inc. (YDI) takes a holistic approach toward meeting the needs of children and youth. As part of its mission to assist in the health and positive development of youth, YDI emphasizes strengthening the family unit.

**Program Description:** YDI is a comprehensive program offering an array of prevention, early intervention, and treatment services to at-risk children, youth, and families. YDI targets runaway and homeless youth as well as Hispanic and Latino youth living in Albuquerque's poorest neighborhoods. The programs at YDI range from a drop-in center and latchkey program to businesses run entirely by youth and a drama-based drug and alcohol prevention program. Youth begin the program by going through an orientation and assessment process with a counselor to develop their individual goals and a treatment plan. YDI collaborates with schools, youth agencies, and hospitals in order to provide program participants with a continuum of care

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, theater, arts and crafts, athletic activities, drug and alcohol awareness, budgeting and banking, formal youth involvement in program decision making, alternative schooling, academic enrichment, decision making, career counseling, peer counseling, substance abuse counseling, case management, service referrals, hotline, probation-related services, emergency shelter, independent living program.

**Staff Number:** 369 (339 full-time, 30 part-time), 40 volunteers contributing 480 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1971

**Funding Sources:** Government 75%, Foundation 5%, Fundraising 15%, Federated campaigns 5%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$12,000,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 14,039 at-risk, poor Hispanic, and all youth needing services and opportunities

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Daily

# Youth Force

**(Formerly Youth Force Citizens Committee for New York City)**

320 Jackson Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454

Kim McGillicuddy, Executive Director

(718) 665-4279

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**Mission:** Youth Force strives to develop and support youth leadership and participation in the community, and to provide a peer support network.

**Program Description:** Youth Force serves young people in thirteen low-income communities in New York City. Approximately one-third of the participants are current or former drug dealers. The program is entirely youth-run, and was created to show young people that they have the ability and the right to act for change. When youth first come to the program, they identify personal goals, and their progress is charted throughout their involvement with the program. Youth Force collaborates with other community-based organizations to share information, offer complementary services, run joint activities, and participate in advocacy on common issues.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Leadership development, fine arts, peer counseling, mentoring, service referrals, political and social action

**Staff Number:** 4 full-time and 20 part-time, 6 college interns, and 50 to 60 part time volunteers

**Year Established:** 1994

**Funding Sources:** Government 60%, Foundation 35%, Corporate 5%

**Annual Budget:** \$372,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age

**Youth Served Annually:** 5,000 people

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Several days a week

# Youth Initiative Project

P.O. Box 1114, Brunswick, GA 31520

Allen Booker, Executive Director

(912) 265-9335

(912) 265-0681 FAX

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**Mission:** To build a community-based organization that will (1) facilitate the development of young African American leadership, (2) support existing positive leadership, and (3) confront important community wide issues through collective and direct action.

**Program Description:** The Youth Initiative Project (YIP) was founded in 1985 in Brunswick, Georgia. It is based on the lack of positive opportunities for African American youth in their communities, as well as the need for a support system for many young people to overcome adversities. YIP provides opportunities for African American youth to be in charge and see themselves as competent people who are capable of changing the world around them and to make a difference. The project has activities geared toward youth under the age of 21. The main program that is always in focus is the Youth Unlimited Program. The Club, organized and run by its young participants, meets weekly. Youth organize field trips, invite guest speakers, and hold “rap sessions” at their meetings. There are two major summer activities that YIP is responsible for: the JTPA Summer Jobs Program and The Summer Enrichment Program, which exposes minority youth to activities that both expand their understanding of the culture and provide them with fun activities in a safe, structured environment.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Drop-in center, leadership development, entrepreneurship development, scholarship program

**Staff Number:** 2 (1 full-time and 1 part-time), 60 volunteer hours per month

**Year Established:** 1985

**Funding Sources:** Government 50%, Foundation 38%, Fundraising 10%, Corporate 1%, Individual Contributions 1%

**Annual Budget:** Approximately \$135,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age (10-18)

**Youth Served Annually:** Approximately 200 African American youth from low-income families

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once or twice a month

# YWCA of El Paso del Norte Region

## Young Women's Christian Association

1918 Texas Avenue, El Paso, TX 79901

Myrna Deckert, Executive Director

(915) 533-2311

(915) 533-7921 FAX

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**Mission:** The Young Women's Christian Association of Metropolitan El Paso is a community organization that strives to enhance the ability of women of diverse cultures, experiences, and faiths to achieve their fullest potential.

**Program Description:** The YWCA primarily serves young women ages 18-34 and their families. The YWCA of El Paso offers a program called Project Redirection, which helps pregnant teens stay in school and become successful parents. The YWCA also offers a teen leadership program and a teen educators program in which teens give presentations on HIV/AIDS awareness to students.

**Programs/Services Offered:** Communication skills, leadership development, drop-in center, field trips, arts and crafts, health education, athletic activities, sex education, parenting skills, budgeting and banking, political and social action, youth advisory board, homework help, tutoring, career awareness, peer counseling, support groups, service referrals, court advocacy, transitional housing

**Staff Number:** 700 (500 full-time, 200 part-time), 4,000 volunteer hours per month or 1330 volunteers contributing 47,880 hours per month

**Year Established:** 1909

**Funding Sources:** Government 65%, Fees 23%, Fundraising 5%, Dues 1%, Federated campaigns 2%, Foundation 2%, Corporate 2%

**Annual Budget:** \$17,200,000

**Basis for Eligibility:** Age, Gender

**Youth Served Annually:** 27,698

**Frequency with Which Youth Participate:** Once a week

