



## Rethinking the Concept of Expert The Practitioner-Expert in Afterschool

### INSIDE

#### FEATURES

2 Staff Development

6 Our Collective Talents

8 PASEtter Awards

11 Train the Trainers

12 Interview: Wendell Ramsey

14 PASE Conference

#### COLUMNS

4 PASE Updates

5 Funding Alert

13 Off the Shelves

15 Insites

16 Bulletin Board

WHEN YOU THINK OF THE WORD “EXPERT,” who comes to mind? I always think of Ivy League professors trotted out on news shows to enlighten us. Maybe you think of doctors or researchers or maybe even the technician that built your computer. Now think of afterschool programs. Let your mind walk through the doors of any one of the afterschool programs you work with or in – do you see any experts there?

Every field has its notions about what constitutes an expert. In fact, one hallmark of a legitimate “field” is the presence of its own experts. Who, then, are the experts in the emerging field of afterschool education? What are the skills and abilities that these experts need to possess? What are our core values as a field, and how are they to be shared?

#### WHERE ARE THE EXPERTS IN AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION?

When we look for experts in our field, we seldom look to each other, our peers and partners in practice. We tend to look to those that conform to a more standard

definition of expert. In medicine, for example, formal training and academic credentials are given importance because of an assumption that relates formal training and good practice. What,

then, is most important in the preparation of afterschool education practitioners? Is it a college degree? Is it field experience? The answer depends on what we seek to do and accomplish in afterschool education.

#### HOW BELIEFS INFORM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PASE believes that a major challenge for afterschool education is to provide a comprehensive, cohesive, balanced, and innovative environment that is responsive to the needs of children, par-

*continued on page 10*



Top: Participants in the PASE Annual Conference, May 2000

Bottom: Participant in PASE training for youth workers.

# Staff Development: The Heart of Quality Afterschool Programming

By Vivian Vazquez

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## **PASE in a Nutshell.**

**A New York City association of youth practitioners, funders and technical assistance providers to youth programs. PASE's goals are to strengthen the identity and visibility of the afterschool profession, articulate concepts to guide programming, provide staff development, program exchange and networking opportunities, and advocate for funds and resources.**

IT WAS A THURSDAY AFTERNOON AT CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU GIRLS CLUB afterschool program. My staff and I were planning activities for a new theme on baseball which was to start the following Monday. Staff had spent two weeks designing their lesson plans, and had come up with some great activities such as having kids read about baseball players and baseball history, design a small scale baseball stadium, learn about teamwork, and, of course, play some baseball. The theme activities were to culminate in a field trip to Cooperstown, New York to visit the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Less than two days before the start of the program, we realized that some plans needed improvement because the activities did not make a strong enough connection with desired learning outcomes. In frustration, a group counselor approached me and told me that she did not know what I wanted. She explained that she had worked really hard and didn't know what else to do. As she walked out of my office, she threw her lesson plans into the garbage.

I was frustrated that I had failed to communicate my visions and expectations to her. We had put enormous effort into making our afterschool program educationally sound, but we were still struggling to 'get it right.' The incident spurred me to write the following article about the importance of staff development for afterschool programs.

## **EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL ROLES OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS**

There is a growing trend to expand the educational emphasis of afterschool programs in the city and across the country. Funders and policy makers have begun to recognize the important role that community-based programs play in their communities and are increasingly looking to community-based organizations to enrich the educational experiences of school-aged children.

Quality afterschool programs are dependent upon the quality of youth practitioners who need to become well trained and educated. Organizations have expanded their services to accommodate this training and technical assistance need. In addition, colleges are now beginning to create certificates and degree programs in the field of youth development.

As the swiftly evolving afterschool field establishes best practices for itself and articulates sets of competencies for workers, it is important to ask: What conditions make for effective staff development? How do staff development programs stay innovative and useful to our staff? How do you train staff to think of learning in a totally different way?

## **THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE AT CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is a social service agency that oper-

ates a wide range of programs for people of all ages in twenty-one locations in the Bronx. Services include five after school programs. Five years ago, CAB merged with the Girls Club of New York, located in the East Concourse section of the Bronx. When I began as Director of Program Development and Evaluation, the Girls Club operated a basic recreational and homework assistance afterschool program. One of my first responsibilities was to strengthen youth programs at the Girls Club, and my agency and Executive Director provided leadership and committed resources in order to re-focus activities that addressed the educational needs of children.

My challenge was to work with staff to help them design and implement a theme-based approach to the afterschool curriculum. After five years of learning, struggling, training, making mistakes, and advocating for afterschool educational programming at CAB, I have learned some very important lessons:

### **Develop a Mission, Vision, and Goals for Your Program**

Staff needs to embrace the program's educational philosophy. If your program does not have a philosophy, then staff must develop a philosophy and establish goals or desired outcomes for children. Providing staff with the opportunity to discuss program goals will increase the chances of them accomplishing what they set out to do.

We discovered that in addition to having program goals, each group counselor needed to

work on his or her own goal. Examples of my staff's goals include making sure to organize the room before and after programming, checking one's tone when losing patience with the children, maintaining folders in an orderly manner, and taking risks and trying out new approaches.

### Staff Development and Training

When you hire a clerk-typist, you generally hire a person with the requisite skills. Whenever we hire a new afterschool staff member, it is rare to find people who come fully prepared. This is because we hire young workers, often college age, who are completely new to the field. Staff also include Board of Education teachers working additional hours and who often are immersed in a school culture that is different from the afterschool culture. Finally, staff include youth practitioners whose background is in traditional recreational programs and who haven't had training to help them move beyond this model or to rethink how they might provide services. Therefore, as an agency, we have to provide ongoing training and support.

Yet, it takes time and sustained effort to groom staff to assume alternative roles, learn new skills and gain new perspectives on learning and the needs of adolescents. Freeing up time for staff development and leveraging money is key, as it is necessary for staff to meet outside of program time, visit other programs, and attend outside workshops. We saw positive outcomes in creating additional hours for staff development, and the agency now builds training time into our budgets.

### Utilize Resources

Managers need to make sure that staff have the opportunity to attend training workshops given by a growing number of technical assistance providers in the field. They need to share with and learn from other youth practitioners outside of their own agencies, visit other programs, and attend conferences. These opportunities allow group counselors to return to their sites with new approaches for engaging children in their programs.

We have also invited technical assistance providers into our agency. This has been a mixed experience, the best being a long-term relationship that helped our program staff gain new expertise. The key was that it was consistent, enabling the technical assistance provider to establish trust and respect. The other important element was that it was a long-term process, which allowed the technical assistance provider to gain a real understanding of the program vision and mission and a clear understanding of the program context.

### Managers have learning needs, too.

Managers need to be able to articulate the program's goals and objectives. They need to have a deep understanding of program content, and must be able to model activities and train staff. When my staff is unclear, chances are I have been unclear. Another management requirement is the ability to determine and address the different needs of staff. Managers should draw from staff observations to create staff development sessions to give counselors constructive feedback and affirm and promote best practices in the program.

Managers also need to learn how to effectively plan for and utilize resources including personnel, materials, and funding. Lastly, managers need to be

aware of their own learning process, and seek opportunities to make time for their own professional development whether that be through additional training or attending networks or other meetings with administrative staff from other agencies.

### SUMMARY

The baseball theme was a hit in the end! Children learned about the history of baseball, including the women's and Negro leagues; they learned the official rules of the game, designed models of stadiums, learned to play fair and explored the characteristics of being a good team player. They participated in a World Series of their own and finally visited the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. As for staff, they wrote their lesson plans with a greater understanding of the connection between activities and learning outcomes; and had clear goals and objectives. The children were absorbed in educationally rich, engaging, and fun experiences. When it was all over, both staff and children emerged better prepared and invigorated by their learning process.

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*Ms. Vazquez is currently Director of Program Development at Citizens Advice Bureau. She has a MS in Management and Urban Policy from the New School for Social Research.*

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# PASE *updates*



Participants in the New York Round Table on Training Needs and Opportunities, February 29, 2000.

## **PASE/DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES CENTER AFTER SCHOOL LITERATURE PROJECT**

The Afterschool Literature Project has completed trainings for all participating programs for the 1999-2000 year. The Series III training was held on April 4 & 5, 2000 with 60 participants from sites participating in the project over the past two years. PASE received over 40 applications for the third year of programming, and will select 6 new sites to begin the ASL project in June 2000. Applications have been mailed to the PASE mailing list, and programs have applied for the next project cycle starting September 2000.

## **PASE FORUM (FORMERLY THE GENERAL MEETING)**

PASE held a Forum on the topic of *Developing an Afterschool Workforce: Spotlight on Young Adult Workers* on Friday, March 24, 2000. After a panel, workshops were offered including: *Saving Summer Jobs through Advocacy/Funding Alternatives*; *Developing a Young Adult Workforce: Preparing Young*

*Adults for the World of Work; Stocking the Toolbox: What Young Adults Need to Know about Working with Children.*

## **LEARNING LAB**

The Learning Lab held its second round of programming with 130 students from the 3 middle schools, (The Community School, Harbor School of International Studies & The Manuel de Dios Uname School of Journalism). Students were enrolled in performing arts, leadership and mentoring activities and health education provided by Grand Street Settlement—Girls to Women, NYU Creative Arts Team, the Valley and Young Dancers in Repertory.

The second Learning Lab Open House Session took place at the Community School on May 10, 2000 from 2:30pm – 5:00pm. Open House Sessions are opportunities for practitioners to come and observe promising practices in the afterschool field and at the same time an opportunity to discuss their own practices and what they observed during the presentations. To register for the next open house, please call (212) 571-2664.

## **PEER MENTORING PROGRAM**

The PASE Mentoring Program matches community-based organizations with a lead agency that provides support and guidance in a wide variety of management and programmatic areas over the course of a year. In addition to their work with each other, mentors and mentees have opportunities to participate in on-going programmatic and management training coordinated by PASE. Through a generous grant from the Pinkerton Foundation, PASE is expanding the project, adding additional mentors and mentees. Applications to become a mentee/mentor were mailed out to the PASE mailing list and distributed at the last PASE Forum.

## **AFTERSCHOOL TRAINING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT**

In collaboration with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, PASE has launched the "Afterschool Training Needs and Opportunities: Analysis and Inventory" initiative. The purpose is to nationally assess the need for training, gaps in training opportunities, and barriers to utilizing these opportunities for community-based organization youth workers, managers and executive directors, and school superintendents, principals, and teachers.

To gather this information, PASE is conducting the Afterschool Program Training Survey to find out about the types of trainings afterschool educators are utilizing. If you would like to fill out the survey, you can access it on the PASE website, [www.pasesetter.com](http://www.pasesetter.com). In addition, PASE is holding a series of Round Tables across the country. Round Tables have occurred in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Washington D.C., with planning meetings in Denver, Chicago, and Boston. Other meetings may be held in Texas, Kansas City, and the Southeast. In addition to a report, PASE will publish a Training

Resource Directory for each region. If your organization would like to be listed in the Resource Directory, please contact us at 212 571-2664.

### **TASC (THE AFTER-SCHOOL CORPORATION)**

PASE has had a productive and enriching year developing the training for site coordinators and staff of TASC-funded sites.

PASE continued supporting TASC coordinators with both a Coordinators Institute and ongoing professional development. This winter, PASE was fortunate to collaborate with the Institute for Not-for-Profit Management at Columbia Business School for the Coordinator Institute. Professional development offerings included program planning, effective communication with staff, and strategies for marketing programs.

PASE offered two sessions of its Core Knowledge Training for new site staff. This training is oriented around

Child/Centered Practices and those in attendance choose from workshops in conflict resolution, classroom management, and developmentally-appropriate practice. PASE complements these core training with half-day training in Core Elements-Arts and Academics.

### **PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAMS**

The Peer Technical Assistance Teams are composed of youth practitioners and technical assistance providers who offer technical assistance in specific programmatic areas including Literacy, The Arts, and Youth Leadership to selected community based organizations. The Teams are wrapping up the first year of work with participating programs. Applications for the second year will soon be distributed. PASE will also be developing a Management Team and recruiting additional consultants for the Literacy, Arts and Youth Leadership Teams.

### **6TH ANNUAL PASE CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM**

The 6th Annual PASE Conference and Symposium was held on May 4th and 5th, 2000. The Symposium, held at the Puck Building in Manhattan, was organized around the topic *Afterschool Education in a New Environment: Challenges and Opportunities*.

The Conference, held on May 5th, at Hostos Community College, CUNY, began with a plenary session and was followed by a full day of hands-on presentations and workshops. (See this *PASEsetter* for complete coverage of the conference).

John Bess, Carmen Vega-Rivera, Larry Woodbridge were conference co-chairs, and we thank them for all of their hard work and effort. Special kudos to the brilliant coordinating work of Marcia Smith and the PASE staff.

## **STATE LEGISLATURE ADOPTS BUDGET \$35 MILLION IS ADDED FOR SUMMER JOBS STATEWIDE!**

**O**n Wednesday, March 29th, the Campaign for Summer Jobs organized a Youth Action Day in Albany. This event brought close to 500 youth together from different youth organizations around New York City to Albany for the purpose of lobbying for summer jobs. The youth were greeted by Assemblymen Ramirez and Espalliat in the plenary as well as in the Chambers. The young people were divided into groups and were given appointments with over 100 state representatives. The youth provided the elected officials with packages of information that included a proposal to fund summer jobs and other needed youth services. At the end of the day the group rallied on the Capitol steps. The event was a great success and participants were able to learn first hand how government operates, they were also able to articulate and present their own issues to elected officials.

As a result of this and other efforts, it is anticipated that New York City will receive approximately

\$22 million of the \$35 million added to the budget for summer jobs, providing approximately 20,000 summer youth jobs (it is estimated that NYC will still have a "hole" of about 5,000 jobs to fill to bring the total number of jobs this summer to last summer's level). Please call, fax, and write state officials to thank them for including \$35 million for summer youth jobs in the 2001 state budget. Please take some time TODAY to write to or call your State Officials.

*Contributed by Sam Sandino and Michelle Yanchee of Neighborhood Family Services Coalition and the Campaign for Summer Jobs.*



**FUNDING** alert!



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# Our Collective Talents: Insights on Providing Staff Development

By Neal Webster

“WHAT DO YOU DO?” the cabby asked, as we weaved through rush hour traffic. I had been contemplating the staff development workshop I was about to conduct, and his question snapped me back to the present. It was a question he had most likely asked countless times in this city of countless stories. “I’m the Literacy Program Developer for the Small Settlement House Collaborative,” I responded. “Yes, but what do you *do*?” he asked again. Fighting back the urge to say I develop literacy programs, I explained in detail. He nodded his head animatedly, as if experiencing an epiphany, smiled, and said, “You’re a teacher.” I too smiled. In many ways he was right. Since that time I have been asked, on numerous occasions the same question. Teacher, coordinator, developer, facilitator, educator? All of the above.

## A LOCAL PICTURE: THE SMALL SETTLEMENT HOUSE COLLABORATIVE

The Small Settlement House Collaborative (SSHC) is comprised of the ten smallest member agencies of the United Neighborhood Houses of New York City.

Founded in 1993, SSHC initiated a three-year program in 1998 to expand and enhance their afterschool programs for children ages 5-13. Called Project ASEP (After School Education Program), it is designed to provide Collaborative members with an opportunity to work together to better meet the educational needs of afterschool participants.

SSHC’s goal is to develop an effective, unified approach to literacy amongst all ten members’ afterschool education programs.

In assuring that SSHC’s goals are met, I conducted an assessment of each member agency’s afterschool literacy program. The experience and information collected during the assessment allowed me to prioritize training needs and begin to cultivate the relationships key to any effective staff development.

Over the course of the assessment process and subsequent training I designed based on the assessment, I’ve gained insights about my audience. First, the staff I work with consist of youth workers, many of whom are high school students, college students, parents, and community volunteers. Many are part-timers with varying levels of skill and education. All are committed to working with children and their job is not an easy one. It offers complete satisfaction, a sense of real accomplishment, utter disappointment, and true frustration. Staff find themselves being teachers, parents, mentors, and disciplinarians. Most earn an average of between \$7.00 and \$10.00 per hour. Needless to say, they won’t get rich doing this job. What drives them? Why do they do it? There are many reasons: a sense of community; an opportunity to gain experience; a love of children; a desire to help educate; a need to be involved and make a difference; a way of staying off the street and out of trouble. No matter, they are there. All afterschool programs depend on them to accomplish their objectives.

Art, recreation, education, cultural enrichment, and youth development are all the cornerstones of afterschool programming. Assessment, evaluation, and other tools for ensuring outcomes are part of the process. Curricula, lesson plans, individual progress reports need to be understood, implemented, and require consistent documentation. How do staff do it? One thing is for certain – without proper guidance, support, resources, and on-going opportunities for developing the needed skills, they can’t.

## THE WIDENING PICTURE: INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

My association with PASE has strengthened my work in the Collaborative by broadening my understanding of the process of providing support and technical assistance. I have had the great pleasure to be working with an extraordinary group of people on the PASE Peer Technical Assistance Literacy Team. The consultants on the team include Marygrace Berberian, Karin Schaefer, Belinda Passafaro, Sheila Lewis, and myself. Ellen O’Connell of PASE leads the team. In February we held a staff development session for those organizations PASE had selected for technical assistance in the area of literacy programming support. Normally I create and facilitate staff development workshops on my own. The unique opportunity to design and deliver a workshop through a team effort ensured not only the intended learning experience for

those who participated, but an unintended learning outcome for myself as well.

Out of several planning meetings, brainstorming sessions, and material gathering, came an agenda the team felt utilized all of our collective talents and skills. The team took special care to balance literacy theory and practice while at the same time present activities that the participants could take back with them and use in their programs.

### **THE IMMEDIATE PICTURE: MY OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Staff developers need their own professional development, and I have had the incredible good fortune to continue to grow and learn. I initially sought out the advice and wisdom of several people in the field. Colleagues were extremely gracious in pointing me in the right direction, and I continue to tap into their experience and knowledge. Perhaps the single most important advice I was given was to focus on a core group of programs and expand from there. The advice was critical due to the fact that afterschool programs in the Collaborative are at various stages. Starting with those programs who needed and requested immediate assistance, or who were just beginning to develop a literacy program has enabled me to create a model to extend to other member agencies.

### **SUMMARY**

I have had the opportunity to constantly improve my own skills and knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of afterschool education in general, and staff development in particular. This has occurred through my job experience at the Small Settlement House Collaborative and my

inter-agency relationship with PASE which has provided a perspective and insight that informs my future direction. Working with afterschool staff from every borough in New York City allows me to see how much alike their problems and needs are. Further, my association with PASE and other technical assistance providers makes available an arena wherein I can interact with other afterschool professionals and observe some of the best in staff development and training for afterschool education.

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*Currently Literacy Program Developer for the Small Settlement House Collaborative, Neal Webster holds a BA from Columbia University and a MA from Teachers College.*

*This article was made possible, in part, by a grant from The Robert Bowne Foundation.*

## **YOUR TWO CENTS**

**PASE conducted a focus group on training at its**

**March 24th General Forum at the College of**

**Insurance. Participants reflected on priority**

**skills they look to develop in staff, identified**

**training gaps, and shared barriers and solutions**

**to accessing training. Participants talked of the**

**different staffing patterns, and hence, skill**

**levels at sites and the need for increased**

**sharing and pooling of training resources. As**

**always, hearing from the field provides the**

**richest source of information. Many thanks to**

**those who shared their thoughts and expertise.**

**Please share your “two cents” with us by**

**completing our training survey available on our**

**homepage on the World Wide Web at**

**[www.PASEsetter.com](http://www.PASEsetter.com).**

# PASEsetter Awards Ceremony

May, 2000, Celebrates Five Outstanding Professionals



Left to right: Michelle McPherson, Jairo Pinargote, Daniel O'Gallagher, Susan Peters, Clayton Evans

The PASEsetter Award, the first of its kind in the afterschool field, was presented for the second year to five outstanding youth professionals in an awards ceremony on May 4th at the Puck Building. "The PASEsetter Award represents our belief and investment in people who invest in our youth" stated Alison Overseth, President of the PASE Board.

The PASEsetter Awardees for 2000 were nominated by colleagues and selected by a committee of peers. An audience comprised of afterschool professionals, civic leaders, foundation and community based organization representatives attended the awards following the Symposium of the 6th Annual PASE Conference. Corporate underwriting of this important celebration was generously provided by PricewaterhouseCoopers; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP; The Scotts Company and The Gap. This year the PASEsetter Awardees include:

**Clayton Evans, Interfaith Neighbors, Inc.**

Mr. Evans is the Director of Art and Training Programs at Interfaith Neighbors, Inc. Each day he introduces children to new worlds of creativity and self-expression, whether it be through playing chess, tutoring, counseling, leading an art activity, or reading to a group. Mr.

Evans founded Urban Voices, a group that helps young men to express themselves beyond the world of sports, and continues to advocate for the development of diverse programming for boys. Accepting his award, Mr. Evans said, "I feel most appreciative, humbled, and challenged by this recognition.

**Michelle McPherson, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center.**

A graduate of Clinton High School and a sophomore at Lehman College, CUNY, Ms. McPherson has been a youth participant at the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center's Afterschool Program and Teen Program for ten years. She was

the head of the Youth Leadership Council and then became Group Leader. This year, she began working in the Teen Program as a youth worker in the recreation room. She is also a computer instructor. Ms. McPherson has consistently encouraged children to strive and has made an impact on their self-confidence. Her creativity allows her to make learning enjoyable through writing, and she has developed innovative ways for kids to learn through technology.

### **Susan Peters, Goddard Riverside Community Center**

Ms. Peters' dedication and leadership has been invaluable to the Goddard Riverside Community Center's Youth Center, where she has provided guidance to the afterschool program at Joan of Arc Public School. She has also been instrumental in shaping the Beacon Program. For the past six years, Ms. Peters has supervised the homework help, tutoring, drama, music, dance, art, and sports programs. She is especially involved in developing programs in conflict resolution and leadership development, seeking ways that youth can positively interact with their peers and parents. Ms. Peters is committed to creating programs where students use their abilities and sharpen their skills to plan, communicate, and achieve their goals.

### **Jairo Pinargote, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation**

Mr. Pinargote has been an important figure at Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation and in the lives of its youth since 1993. In addition to his four years of service as a program aide in the afterschool program, he has worked for Cypress Hills' youth basketball leagues, intergenerational services programs, the

holiday toy drive and summer camp. Mr. Pinargote has grown from a participant in the programs to one of Cypress Hills' most responsible employees. Always willing to lend his experience to newer staff members, Mr. Pinargote is the ideal colleague whose kindness and unending enthusiasm has given him a permanent place in the hearts of both students and co-workers.

### **Daniel O'Gallagher, Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center**

Mr. O'Gallagher has been with the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center for four years. He was lead counselor for the Center's Take Action afterschool program for eleven- to fourteen-year-olds, where he is superb at motivating youth and creating a sense of family. Currently Assistant Beacon Director, Mr. O'Gallagher is instrumental in supervising programs for over 1700 youth in the Yorkville and East Harlem communities. Mr. O'Gallagher strives to build the trust of young people and promote in them a sense of responsibility to themselves as well as their community. Speaking eloquently of his work with youth, Mr. O'Gallagher said, "It's tremendously inspiring to have this wonderful event just to honor youth workers. People choose the profession knowing full well they aren't going to get rich, and the last thing any of us expect is an award."

### **Afterschool Champions In Memoriam**

#### **Brenda Robinson**

Brenda Robinson dedicated herself wholly to her work on behalf of children and families. At Interfaith Neighbors, where she worked as the Family/School Liaison from 1987 until 1998, Ms. Robinson left a remarkable legacy of care and

compassion. During those years, Ms. Robinson helped build such programs as the Single Mother's Support Group, Young Women's Voices—an all-girls writing program, and Interfaith's training and technical assistance programs. Working with children and families was both a privilege and a passion and she enlisted parents and teachers as partners in the work of helping children flourish. But her biggest accomplishment was something that Ms. Robinson did every day, many times a day. She made every child feel unique and special.

#### **Sister Mary Geraldine**

Sr. Mary Geraldine was a community advocate who combined the talents of a skillful practitioner with that of all ardent advocate for the families and children of Sunset Park. Along with her co-founder, Sr. Mary Paul, Sr. Geraldine established and ran the Center for Family Life, a nationally recognized community based organization for twenty two years. At the Center for Family Life, a model of family focused and community building programming, Sr. Geraldine enthusiastically involved herself in all aspects of program design and development. Sr. Geraldine is remembered as dynamic, good-humored, and vivacious. She loved Sunset Park with all her heart and was greatly loved and respected in return.

*Our work [as youth workers] is most closely related to those people who plant forests. We are excited when the seed germinates. We revel in the fact the plant reaches a foot—we count and cherish each leaf. Then way, way, in the future, when the forest is grown, we don't remember exactly which tree we've planted. But we take pride in the thought that we had something to do with that vision. And way in the future, when I take my final walk in that forest, this award will be my assurance that someone knew that I was there.*

**Susan Peters**  
PASEsetter Awardee,  
2000

# Rethinking the Concept of Expert

continued from page 1

ents, and communities. In this view, learning is more broadly defined, and, rather than a separate activity that occurs only in schools, PASE believes that learning is inherent in all afterschool program activities.

The training challenge, then, is to provide opportunities for staff to understand the complexities and nuances of the educational, social and even political contexts in which afterschool programs operate. Staff need training that helps them understand the broader contexts of their work and expand their notions of learning. Training also needs to help staff of afterschool programs identify a set of core values and principles that will guide their work. But who are the experts that can provide professional development that links core values, theory and practice?

## A BROADER CONCEPT OF "EXPERT"

PASE believes that the definition of 'expert' must be expanded to include experienced practitioners. As a professional network, one of PASE's goals is to harness the expertise that already exists in the field in order to achieve another goal, which is to strengthen the content, quality and sustainability of afterschool programs. PASE does this by creating opportunities for practitioners to exchange knowledge and skills and learn how to convey what they know. While PASE continues to draw upon the resources of traditional experts, such as

those at universities, we are also committed to promoting the expertise in the field that has had little exposure until now. As such, we are coining a new term: "practitioner-expert" to reflect and validate the contributions of these individuals who not only bridge theory and practice but create theory from practice.

The practitioner-expert is at the core of PASE's approach to professional development. Our framework is built on the following assumptions:

- Professional development must be part of the formula for good afterschool programs. This professional development needs to be comprehensive, serving a range of staff abilities and employing a variety of entrypoints.
- Afterschool education is a blend of many fields, including, but not limited to education, social work and youth development. Professional development must draw upon these fields.
- In training afterschool practitioners, both theory and practical applications are important.

## CURRENT PASE OFFERING

Afterschool education is diverse with respect to the many fields represented and the degree of formal training and field experience. In response, PASE has developed a menu of training opportunities to enhance the management and programmatic capacity of youth agencies by providing on-going professional development opportunities for staff, from the executive director to young adult employee. The following are some of our current offerings:

For program directors and managers:

- *New Afterschool Manager's Institute*. A week-long institute has been designed to help new managers understand their new roles, the contexts in which they are operating programs, and the skills they'll need to be successful.
- *Management Workshop Series*. On-going professional development for managers that includes key topics such as staffing, supervision, and developing a program plan.
- *Reflections on Practice Series*. Program directors and managers seldom have the opportunity to reflect on their everyday practice. The Reflections series provide a forum for networking and an exchange of best practices.

## LINE STAFF:

Direct service staff are a diverse group. They range from high school students to seasoned public school teachers. They also include community residents, artists, and volunteers. In order to address the diverse needs of line staff, PASE has designed a multi-layered approach:

- *Foundations in Child-Centered Practice*. Covers what PASE considers the core areas of knowledge that youth workers need in order to be successful. The curriculum consists of topics such as developmentally appropriate practice, group management, and conflict resolution.
- *Training in program-specific areas*. This training is intended to strengthen the content and delivery

of afterschool activities.

- *Train the Trainer*. This offering is designed for seasoned line staff and program directors who may be responsible for training others at their programs and also are ready to start presenting their work at conferences and professional events.
- *Young Adult Employees (15-21)*. The PASE training for young adult employees covers the basic topics in the world of work, foundations of child-centered practice, and designing engaging activities.

Executive directors are often overlooked when we plan professional development. PASE is currently developing a series of Networking Groups for executive directors. These group will provide an opportunity for executive directors to exchange knowledge and resources among their peers.

The best part of being involved in professional development is that we are able to remain active learners. Over the course of two years, in our work with youth practitioners and in training hundreds of staff of The After School Corporation's funded afterschool programs, we have learned a great deal about staff development and training needs and how to better design and deliver training for different audiences.

As PASE moves forward, incorporating new knowledge and techniques into our professional development initiatives, one constant remains: our belief in the importance of investing in the people who invest in our youth.

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Linda Lausell Bryant is the Training Director at PASE

# Drawing from what we know: “Train the Trainers” Approach to Staff Development

By Yvonne Brathwaite

**I**N THIS GROWING FIELD OF AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION where staff development opportunities are in such high demand, Train the Trainer approaches become ever more important. But what does a Train the Trainer approach look like?

In a Train the Trainers approach, there are two audiences that you have to account for: 1) the trainers of the new trainers and 2) the practitioners who are being trained to be trainers. The trainers themselves need to receive training and support on staff development and training techniques. In turn, they are then responsible for teaching the youth practitioners who then will become trainers. Elements of this training include both understanding content and staff development techniques such as adapting materials for different audiences and different workshop formats.

The PASE/Developmental Studies Center After-School Literature (ASL) Project includes a Train the Trainers component. The project is a national collaboration with the Developmental Studies Center, based in Oakland, California, that brings quality literature, curriculum and staff development to afterschool programs. Twenty-nine sites at afterschool programs in New York City were selected to implement ASL during the first two pilot years and there will be continued expansion each year. Because of this, there has been a need to pull from the youth field to find potential trainers to help programs implement the curriculum.

We began in New York with five outstanding afterschool education practitioners who attended a training institute conducted by DSC. These practitioners were selected based on their extensive experience working with youth in afterschool programs. Practitioners were also selected based on their familiarity with literacy and/or staff development. The institute not only provided trainers with background information and hands-on experiences with the curriculum, but also began introducing trainers to techniques for training other youth practitioners.

In addition to providing training in New York City, ASL trainers have also been called on by the Developmental Studies Center to conduct training on a national basis for the YMCA of USA and L.A.s BEST. Moreover, trainers have been asked to assist with the planning and implementation of workshops at a variety of national conferences.

A Train the Trainers approach succeeds if participants are able to take the information they have learned and creatively pass it on to other afterschool education practitioners. Additionally, success can also be attributed to on-going support and professional development, in this case provided by a collaborative working group of executive directors and technical assistance providers, as well as the Developmental Studies Center.

A Train the Trainer approach needs to be a continuous cycle that draws from the field and raises the bar for practitioners. Some things we've learned over

the last two years include the fact that it takes a commitment to training and the fields of youth development and afterschool education on the part of administration who have to sacrifice staff time in order for them to be able to attend training. Another is that there is a great benefit when colleagues come together to share ideas and develop staff development workshops.

Given the nature of the afterschool field, this approach has proven and will continue to be an extremely important vehicle to move the field forward. It provides an opportunity for program directors to learn how to provide staff development in order to train line staff, thereby building program capacity. This approach also develops the field at large, creating a widening network of practitioners who achieve new professional levels.

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*Yvonne Brathwaite is a Program Director at PASE.*

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## The needs of young employees in afterschool programs: An Interview with Wendell Ramsey, Beacon Director at the Valley, Inc. Beacon at the Wadleigh Secondary School

*Sara Hill: When you work with the young employees in the after-school program, what are some of their special needs in staff development and support?*

Wendell Ramsey: I think there's a need to improve a young person's ability to maintain their job. It's not just enough to prepare them for the interview, how to dress for it, how to shake hands and to ask questions. But once they're actually on the job, what are some of the workplace etiquette they need to know such as how to speak on the telephone, calling in when you're going to be late, problems with absenteeism, the protocol when dealing with supervisors as well as colleagues?

*Sara: When you hire young people to work with the other youth, what are some of the skills that you want to teach them besides showing up on time, calling in, that kind of thing?*

Wendell: A lot of our young people, unfortunately, communicate with people in a manner that is not appropriate for the workplace. They are either very loud when speaking to young people, or they may use inappropriate language when speaking to young people, so communicating is one of the larger things that I've found we need to address. You have to act, not so much as a role model, but more like a mentor. As someone who demonstrates what type of behavior they should be exhibiting.

*Sara: So, there's a lot of coaching that goes on? That's what the supervisors do?*

Wendell: Coaching takes place every day, from the moment they walk through the door, there's a Valley staff person who's making a visual assessment. And it's not just to see what that they're wearing, but to see what type of mindset this young person may be in. For two weeks you may have a young person who comes in very jolly and upbeat. And then one day that child comes in sullen and appears to be withdrawn. Well, our staff is trained to notice those types of things. And it's consuming from a supervisory standpoint, but I think it's something that we signed on to do when we took these jobs.

*Sara: When you took the kids on as workers...*

Wendell: We have to prepare them to get through the remainder of their day to make it back tomorrow. Get them through the weekend and get them back on Monday, to get them through the summer, to get them through the school day and the rest of their lives.

*Sara: So it sounds like you're tying in some of the principles of youth development...*

Wendell: Yes. The Valley is one of the leaders in youth development, and we try to encompass that philosophy with our young people when they're in our care. Yes, they're working. Yes, they have jobs and responsibilities, but we are also responsible for their overall development.

*Sara: What are some of the ways that you capitalize on some of the strengths that youth bring to your program?*

Wendell: Giving them meaningful work. Giving them work that requires them to be objective and analytical. Giving them responsibilities that are important, that makes them feel good about themselves. They may be asked to compile information for our monthly reports, assisting us in not only typing but the preparation of reports and memos. It is important to give them meaningful tasks that they can take out of here to use in their daily lives.

*Sara: So, you're expecting more from young youth workers.*

Wendell: Absolutely. We had young people work in our Preventive Service Office. They were reading case notes and commenting on some of the outcomes. A young person may be able to point out the true meaning of what someone said or the actions of another young person.

*Sara: Can you tell me about the staff development that you offer young workers?*

Wendell: We have a premier staff developer, Shelton Jones, who works with youth. He's an expert in the field of employment, and he has tapes and literature, and a record of success. We also require potential workers to attend an orientation. That's a time when they learn about the program and the requirements, and it's also a time when we determine whether or not that young person will move into our employment.

*Sara: So the orientation is a screening process?*

Wendell: Sure, because if you're

late to the orientation, if your attitude and behavior is negative and it wears on the other staff people who are trying to lead the orientation or you're a distraction to your colleagues – we can only assume that you would take that into the workplace.

*Sara: If you were going to identify one of the biggest challenges in having young workers, what would it be?*

Wendell: That they don't lose sight of what their responsibility is. That if we're going on a trip that they don't say, "Excuse me, can I go in the store?" No, you can't go in the store because you

have fifteen or eighteen young people, students for whom you're responsible. So, just keeping them focused on what the job entails is important.

*Sara: You talked about your biggest challenge. What would be your biggest success?*

Wendell: To see them begin to focus, to hear their ability to communicate improve, watching their relationships with colleagues and the young people they're responsible for go to another level. That they are receptive to instruction, receptive to criticism. And we know we've reached young people

when on a Friday, a day they're not paid for, they come and volunteer their services. It says so many things — that they're committed to something, that they're comfortable here in their work environment and would like to give something back.

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*Wendell Ramsey is the Beacon Director at the Valley, Inc. Beacon at the Wadleigh Secondary School. He attained a BA at Winston Salem State University in Business Administration.*

*Sara Hill is the PASEsetter Editor.*



## Off the Shelves

### BOOKS FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Carter, M. and Curtis, D. (1994). *Training teachers. A harvest of theory and practice.* St. Paul, Minn: Red Leaf Press.**

This manual is a valuable tool when thinking about and designing staff development opportunities. It combines both a philosophical framework for working with children, and practical approaches for working with staff. Included are topics on issues of diversity, teaching and learning styles, and developing child-centered curriculum. Another valuable section is one specifically for trainers, covering issues of materials, presentation and organization.

**Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers. Successful teachers of African-American children.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.**

An in-depth ethnographic study of several teachers of different ethnicities who are considered successful teachers of African-American children. The author identifies what are common characteristics of these teachers, and of what culturally-relevant teaching consists. An excellent book for thinking about the intersections of culture and educational environments.

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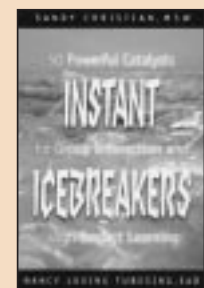
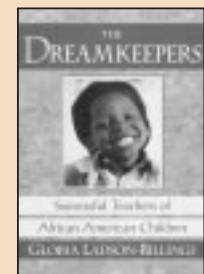
*Many of these materials can be ordered through major bookstores such as Amazon.com or Barnes and Nobles. In addition, materials can be ordered through specialized catalogues such as School-Age Notes (1-800-410-8780).*

**Christian, S. and Tubesing, N. L. (1997). *Instant icebreakers. 50 powerful catalysts for group interaction and high-impact learning.* Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates, Inc.**

Understanding group process is key to successful professional development activities. This book provides a plethora of icebreakers that help to introduce group members, build group cohesion, and promote self-awareness. A great book to have in a staff developer's toolbox.

**Lee, Enid, Menkart, Deborah, and Margo Okazawa-Rey (eds.) (1998). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development.* Washington, D.C.: Network of Educators on the Americas.**

This is a valuable book filled with essays and articles, staff development and training ideas, curriculum and activities on the topic of how to create a learning environment that respects and celebrates diversity. In addition, the text includes ways of incorporating issues of diversity and equity into content areas such as mathematics and science and how to incorporate the uses of technology.



# PASE Annual Conference—2000

## Afterschool Education in a New Environment: Challenges and Opportunities

By Terry Donovan



Warren Simmons of Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, Speaking at PASE Symposium, May, 2000

“THIS WAS THE BEST PASE CONFERENCE EVER!” exclaimed

Alison Overseth, President of the PASE Board of Directors. “There was something for everyone – Executive Directors, managers, line staff, in-school educators, youth, parents – they were all here, and they all walked away knowing more about what makes this field so exciting, creative, and powerful.”

More than 600 people attended the Sixth Annual PASE Conference, Afterschool Education in a New Environment: Challenges and Opportunities. Held on May 4th and 5th, the event attracted leading thinkers and practitioners in both the afterschool and in-school education fields.

The conference opened with a panel of youth development and education experts discussing how to develop harmony between higher academic standards and youth development outcomes. Dr. Warren Simmons, Executive Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, explained the history and complexity of the standards movement. He cautioned that students should not be punished for lack of learning opportunities to reach standards level work. Schools and community organizations must work closely together to develop the capacity to provide sufficient and rich learning opportunities for all students.

Jane Quinn, Assistant Executive Director at the Children’s Aid Society in New York City, worried that the new

standards have been adopted without paying attention to child development and without developing commensurate opportunities to learn. “In other words, we have clarified the outcomes without making much of a change in the inputs.” Quinn suggested that youth workers respond by developing afterschool programs that harmonize the principles of best youth work practice with the best of the standards. Combining the ingredients of a quality youth development program with the New York City Third Grade Promotion Standards, she illustrated how a third grade cooking club could meet both the principles of best youth work practice and address academic standards in language arts and mathematics. She stressed that any typical afterschool offering can be aligned with academic standards while maintaining a primary focus on youth development.

Dr. Eric Schaps, President of the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, California, stated that while he likes the new standards, he doesn’t like the fact that they are focused on academics only, and he’s not a proponent of standardized tests. He believes they have little to do with what is important to learn and be able to do. High stakes testing results in an impoverished education for most children attending the schools that teach to the test. And while academic success is critical to a young person’s future, Dr. Schaps urged that afterschool programming preserve for low-income students that which they don’t experience during in-school hours.

On Friday, May 5th, the conference convened at Hostos Community College. The morning plenary session featured keynote speaker Karyn Kusama, writer and director of *Girlfight*, a Sundance Film Festival award-winning movie about a teenage girl from Brooklyn. The Honorable Adelaide Sanford, Regent at Large, State University of New York, presented the Conference Address. Dr. Eric Schaps spoke about the Afterschool Literacy Project (ASL) recently piloted in 30 sites throughout New York.

Kusama focused on the urgent need for adults to provide the mentoring and support that young people need to find their place and realize their potential. “My biggest concern is something that I imagine all of us in this room are grappling with – and that is the tremendous pressure young people face to conform to the norms of their environment, no matter how limiting or destructive those norms may be. As a storyteller, I want to make films that look into the gulf where we all might have fallen without the human resources to get through life. We have to help translate the terrible obstacles of our daily life into a language that makes some sense to young people, into a language that can reach out and not alienate us from our best selves.”

Regent Sanford received a standing ovation driving home the point that it is youth workers who help New York City’s children see themselves as confident, wise, ethical, moral, and integral people. She indicted the

political and educational systems for too long describing children as “low-achieving” rather than referring to schools as “low performing.” She illustrated the uncaring nature of the culture we live in, pointing out schools staffed by uncertified teachers with poor libraries, leaky roofs, and vermin-infested rooms. She held New York State accountable for never having designed a system to educate all people and for not ensuring that teachers are not culturally competent or comfortable with diversity.

After the Plenary, more than 50 hands-on workshops were held throughout the day, providing youth workers with tools for creating or improving youth development programs. Topics included Arts, Literacy, Youth Leadership, Technology, Staff Development, School/CBO Collaboration, Program Planning, Evaluation, and Fund Development. Will Stewart of the Forest Hills Community Center said of one of the workshops, *Literacy Delight—Connecting Hip-hop Culture into Afterschool Literacy*, “Many youth workers don’t like this music and resist it. The workshop helped people open their minds. Now maybe some will be willing to try it. This is a good way to know our kids.”

The power of this year’s Annual Conference proves the importance of creating a forum where afterschool and in-school educators can collaborate to meet youth development and educational goals. By working together, we can, in the words of Karyn Kusama, “...communicate, engage and enlighten the people in this world who need it most, and this is not a fight worth giving up.”

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*Terryl Donovan is Director of Education at PASE*



## In-Sites:

### PIUS XII COMMUNITY SERVICES –“ANTY JED”

**P**ius XII Community Services in the Bronx is a multi-service center offering recreation, education, counseling, and other programs at the North Bronx Family Service Center as well as in two elementary schools and five high schools. At all these sites, Pius XII has made two commitments: to offer high quality youth development services and to employ youth workers from the communities served. These two commitments aren’t always compatible, because many of these youth workers are employed for the first time, few with professional training or experience with children. They can’t deliver high quality services without training and development themselves. That’s when Pius XII came up with “Anty Jed.”

Anty Jed is not an escapee from *The Beverly Hillbillies*. It is the initials of several program directors who several years ago began meeting to address the issues created by the commitments mentioned above. Rather than have each program handle its own training requirements, program directors determined common needs and how to set the same high standards throughout programs. Anty Jed collectively has strengths that each program would not have if it did its own training. These strengths include:

- A common language for talking about children;
- Opportunities for inter-program cooperation and problem-solving;
- Flexible trainings that are responsive to real staff needs.

All youth workers at Pius XII participate in training designed by Anty Jed before they begin their actual work with youth. In addition, Anty Jed offers three in-service trainings during the year. Altogether, each staff member working with children receives a minimum of eighteen hours of training during the program year. Meetings are scheduled so as not to conflict with programs. The best days are school staff development days – buildings are open, but the children aren’t there – and Saturdays and the winter break.

Because Anty Jed meets on a regular basis, they keep on top of staff needs and issues that arise in programs. No matter what Anty Jed offers, staff always ask for more group management training. In response, Anty Jed makes sure that each training emphasizes skills in this area. Whether the workshop topic is communication, learning styles or sensitivity, all connects to youth workers’ concerns about managing their group.

While Anty Jed and staff at Pius XII have experienced some real benefits, there are challenges to be faced. One is how to continue training senior staff while incorporating senior workers in Anty Jed’s training. We also need to train staff who work with teens. These and other challenges feed back into the next round of planning and training. And yet, these changes will only add to Anty Jed’s collective wisdom and strengthen the overall training program.

# Bulletin Board

**Coro LeaderShops** are experiential training sessions that provide professional development opportunities for trainers, teachers, and caring adults who work with young people in New York City. Some LeaderShop topics include: Effective Facilitation of Diverse Participants; Using the City as Classroom, and Public Presentation and communication skills. For more information on Coro LeaderShops, call Daughtry Carstarphen at 212-248-2935.

**The New York City Math Exchange Group (MEG)** is composed of practitioners who meet regularly to exchange ideas and resources on

math teaching strategies and resources. A splinter group has formed to address teaching high school level mathematics and preparation for the GED 2002. Anyone interested in joining, contact Solange Farina, 212-673-3373.

**Victim Services** is holding a series of trainings on a variety of topics that may be of interest to staff working in community-based organizations with children and families. Some of these workshops include Workplace Diversity, Advanced Management Strategies, and Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse. For more information or to register, call 212-

577-1276 or email [christinachoi@mailgateway.victimservices.org](mailto:christinachoi@mailgateway.victimservices.org).

**The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** is a federally-funded food program aimed at serving the children of NYC nutritious Free Meals during the summer in New York in hundreds of public schools. All children under 18 are eligible. There are no forms to fill out, all a child has to do is show up at any one of the neighborhood locations to receive two meals on any weekday in July and August. Breakfast is also available. For more information on locations in your neighborhood call: 718-729-6100 or 212-894-8079.

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