



# PASE *Setter*

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www.pasetter.com

PARTNERSHIP FOR AFTER SCHOOL EDUCATION

## Understanding the Complex Experience of Immigrant Youth

By Sayu Bhojwani, South Asian Youth Action

**This Issue:**  
*Working with Immigrant Youth*

### FEATURES

2 Letter from the Executive Director

8 Easing the Transition

14 Interview: Lois Lee

16 PASEsetter Awards

### COLUMNS

6 PASE Updates

7 Bulletin Board

15 Off the Shelves

18 In-Sites

19 Funding Alert

I IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES AT AGE 17 from the English-speaking country of Belize, now infamous as the location of Temptation Island. I was born in India and now run a multi-service agency for South Asian youth (from Bangladesh, Guyana, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Trinidad) in Queens. I have spent as much time in the United States as I have spent outside of it, but still, the color of my skin and the Caribbean lilt in my voice marks me as an outsider, even in New York City. In this article, based on my personal experiences and those of the youth I have worked with, I introduce some of the needs of immigrant youth, propose programmatic solutions, and suggest ways of incorporating an immigrant-sensitive philosophy into afterschool programs.

### IMMIGRANT VOICES

At least 53% of New York City's children under age 18 live in families headed by an immigrant.<sup>1</sup> Many of these young people attend afterschool programs or

are in desperate need of these services and do not know how to access them. Immigrant youth new to New York may be English or Spanish speakers from the Caribbean, Urdu speakers from Pakistan, or Russian speakers from the former Soviet Union. Despite differences in cultural, religious, and linguistic background, socioeconomic status and educational level, immigrants often share some common characteristics.

*"I know that I am still Sikh, but I also wish I hadn't disappointed my father by cutting off my hair."*

These are the words of Amrit Pal Minhas, who at the age of 12,



Young people and staff from South Asian Youth Action registered people to vote as part of the South Asian Youth Political Awareness Project, last August at the Pakistani Day Parade in Battery Park.

after being teased about his turban by his peers, finally cut off the long hair that is a mark of his religion of Sikhism. Many immigrants become a "minority" for the first time in their lives when they come to the U.S. They quickly discover that they are located

*continued on page 4*



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#### **PASE in a Nutshell**

**A New York City  
association of youth  
practitioners, funders  
and technical assis-  
tance 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.**

# Letter from the Executive Director

*By Janet Kelley, PASE*

**T**HE WORLD OF PASE HAS EXPANDED this year as our Board of Directors, Program Council, Community Based Organization (CBO) representatives, and staff work together to strengthen programs with young people and their families and increase the visibility of youth serving agencies in New York City and beyond. The ways in which these goals are being met include:

- Launching a PASE-CBO Relations Initiative in which we seek to strengthen ties with the many youth agencies we know and to reach out to others, including emerging and faith-based groups. We want to identify the many talented staff in these organizations who can share expertise with others, plan forums around identified needs, and gain a more complete picture of the “state of the field.” A grant from the Pinkerton Foundation has enabled us to increase staff in this area.
  - Publishing more materials for the field, including a recently distributed 2000 Annual Conference Report, a Guide to Mentoring (thanks to the Bowne, Calder and Pinkerton Foundations), and a Directory of Training Resources (in collaboration with the New York Youth Education Support Network, a project of the Literacy Assistance Center and the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College, CUNY).
  - Expanding the PASE Mapping Project and database, with support from the Guttman Foundation, to include many more agencies and to publish a local Directory of Youth Serving Agencies in a joint effort with the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development.
  - Entering the world of policy advocacy through developing papers on specific issues such as funding streams, school/CBO relations and staff issues, and training CBOs in this area—thanks to grants from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.
  - Continuing forums on important issues, such as immigrant services, the arts in the community, and youth employment; and broadening the reach of our conference May 3-4 to include a national symposium on “Afterschool Education: Measuring Our Success” and various other workshops.
- Building our Staff Development Training Network; working with The After School Corporation, the Altman Foundation, the MONY Foundation and others to design Core Knowledge and Core Elements; and expanding the KidzLit project and our Train the Trainer model. In doing this, we want to always lead with peer expertise and supplement with technical assistance groups and other experts.
  - Sharing our partnership concept with other cities in replication projects—currently with Los Angeles, San Francisco, Nassau County, Westchester, and Atlanta, and exploring areas of the Southeast and Midwest with funds from Vivendi/Universal, Hasbro Children’s Foundation, the Blank Foundation, and the Mary and Charles Grant Foundation.
  - Expanding our knowledge of training needs and opportunities and forging creative relationships with schools and CBOs in the development of after-school programs—all made possible by the generosity of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Annenberg Foundation.
  - Expanding our Model Afterschool Lab at The Community School in Brooklyn to include an elementary school, in Manhattan. Both initiatives provide direct service to youth and training opportunities for agency staff through showcasing of “promising practices” of youth organizations throughout New York City. Funding from the Kornfeld, Hayden, Frances and Edwin Cummings and Sulzberger Foundations, Philip Morris USA, and the Educational Foundation of America have enabled us to do this.

To accomplish these tasks, PASE has expanded its Board, Program Council and staff, and has promoted Linda Lausell Bryant and Jason Schwartzman to Deputy Director positions.

We at PASE would like to offer special thanks to the “ever deepening” field of community youth services.

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*Janet Kelley is the executive director of PASE.*

# Immigrant Students: Getting through the College Admissions Maze

By Rafael Medina, Forest Hills Community House

ONE OF THE MOST DAUNTING CHALLENGES IMMIGRANT YOUTHS FACE IN THEIR CAREERS AS STUDENTS IS APPLYING TO COLLEGE. Because the college admission process varies from school to school, it is easy to become confused or overwhelmed trying to keep track of each school's requirements and collecting the appropriate documents for each application. In addition, immigrant youth often face a language barrier, which complicates the process further.

Afterschool programs can play a significant role in helping students through this college application process. For example, The Forest Hills Community House College/Career Options Program offers individual college and financial aid advisement, SAT classes, college trips, educational workshops, New York City Specialized High School Entrance Exam preparatory classes, programs for young women, and the COPE program, which is a career and self-esteem program for junior high school students.

For several years, we at Forest Hills have worked with new immigrant students who need services beyond the standard college and financial aid application process. We've found that students respond better to the program when they have access to counselors who not only speak their native language but who can also relate to them on a cultural basis. In response, the College/Career Options program has employed, whenever possible, bilingual or multilingual col-

lege counselors, some of whom were also born outside the U.S.

We also help to provide other vital information and services about the college and financial aid application process. For example, we advise students that deadlines for college admission and financial aid may vary from college to college and that it's necessary to check with each college or university individually for admission and financial aid requirements and deadlines. For immigrant students, planning can

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be key since academic documents may have to be requested from abroad and be translated by the consulate or embassy of the country that issued the documents, an acceptable translation service, or a U.S. high school or university teacher. Policy differences may also apply. For example, international students may be admitted under different requirements than new immigrants who have documented status that allows them to "permanently" live in the U.S.

Programs and services provided by afterschool programs or

other organizations can play a key role in helping foreign-born students learn how to advocate for themselves in the college admissions process. The following is a list of resources that may be helpful for those who work with new immigrant students:

- The City University of New York (CUNY) has a very friendly policy regarding all new immigrant students. For more information, call CUNY (212)290-5601 and request a copy of The Counselor's Handbook.
- Information in Spanish on financial aid, the College Board as well as educational documents and publications for parents can be found at <http://bkqnclus.unhny.org/hisp.htm>
- Information for international students on financial aid, scholarships, INS, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and more can be found at <http://www.edupass.org/>
- Documents and papers addressing new immigrant issues (education, family, school involvement, and more) can be found at [http://ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/pathways/immigrant\\_issues/imres.html](http://ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/pathways/immigrant_issues/imres.html)

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Rafael Medina directs the College Options program at Forest Hills Community House.

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## Immigrant Youth

*continued from page 1*

within the oversimplified racial hierarchy of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White. The “colorization” or “racialization” process immigrant students undergo may affect their self-esteem and their sense of comfort with their ethnic and cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> For example, shame about their modes of dress, communication, and food often leads young people to abandon traditional clothing, home language, and dietary restrictions. The price of adjusting to their new country is steep, associated with the loss of family and cultural connections that are fundamental human needs and that form the basis for healthy, positive development among adolescents.

*“So, where are you from? No, no, where are you really from? But you don’t look... But you speak English so well.”*

These seemingly innocuous statements by well-intentioned teachers, peers, and youth workers can deeply undermine an immigrant’s efforts to belong to and fully adopt her new homeland of the United States. Immigrant parents and the broader American society often discourage young people from feeling as if they are truly “American,” emphasizing their otherness and discouraging them from feeling that they can have a voice in American civic and political processes.

### UNIQUE ISSUES

Two important factors shape youth adjustment to the U.S. First, many of the cultures to which immigrants belong are collectivist, emphasizing group and community needs over individual interests. In sharp contrast, the dominant American culture is

individualistic. For teens especially, self-fulfillment and family obligations can be in direct conflict. Practically, this may mean choosing the career that parents want them to pursue, attending a city college instead of moving away from home for further education, or marrying a life partner based on parental recommendations. While many American-born school personnel are alarmed by this process of decision-making, students who make these choices say, “My parents know what is best for me. They just want me to be happy. They have done so

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### FOR TOO LONG, POLICY ABOUT

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### OR “INTERNATIONAL NIGHT”

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much for me, and it is my responsibility to take care of them.”

Second, immigrant parents, who are themselves adjusting to their new homeland, are often unable to provide guidance on academics and careers. The United States, with a school system based on choice and electives and a diversity of career options, is befuddling and complex. When you are used to having access to only one television or radio station and are suddenly offered the option of so many, you are likely to choose only what you are familiar with. Often, immigrant parents emphasize professional options such as doctor, lawyer, or engineer, as these are internationally recognized careers.

### THE ROLE OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

As agencies working with immigrant youth, we need to be sensi-

tive to the common needs of immigrant communities, as well as to ethnic-specific concerns. There is no easy formula. What you choose to do as an agency must be determined by the demographics within your catchment area and the resources available to you. I propose a few guidelines to refine, or redefine, the services you provide.

I was blessed enough to grow up in a country where most people looked like me, even though as a Belizean of Indian descent, I was a minority. In the U.S., people of color, and particularly immigrants, do not have enough role models in leadership positions and in the media who look like us. I cannot stress enough the importance of building a generation of leaders among the young people we work with and of validating the experiences of those immigrants who went before us. Programmatic strategies include<sup>1</sup> developing a Youth Council or other advisory body that includes representation by all groups who use the agency’s services, and<sup>2</sup> offering a mentoring program that pairs immigrants with American-born teens or adults who have faced similar challenges in acculturation.

Our agency has also found that media projects, in which young people depict their own stories through photography, video, and writing are powerful tools that validate their experiences and allow others with similar stories to feel validated as well. Young people are often more able to explore issues such as racism, gender discrimination, and domestic violence through artistic means than in workshops or discussion groups. In a video made by youth from our program, a segment covers what youth wished their parents knew: “I wish my parents knew I had a boyfriend, so they could have helped me when he was not being good to me.”

Immigrant parents are particularly disadvantaged at helping

their children gain access to growth-oriented jobs, since they lack the professional and alumni networks to which American-born parents may have access. Similarly, immigrant parents are not familiar with the complex choices available to young people choosing colleges. College counselors in afterschool programs need to pay special attention to immigrant teens much earlier in their high school years, preparing them for the college application process by encouraging involvement in extracurricular activities that enhance the college application and enrolling them in SAT Prep classes. In the case of both academic and employment programs, youth workers need to be sensitive to the needs of undocumented students and to the fact that immigrants who are U.S. residents and citizens may not be familiar with labor laws and workers' rights.

For too long, policy about diversity has been limited to the annual "multicultural potluck" or "international night." That is no longer an adequate way to address the needs of New York City's youth population. Afterschool programs must serve as a safe space for immigrant youth by having a culturally diverse staff who is familiar with and sensitive to the challenges of migration and by ensuring that our leadership is representative and our policies inclusive of the community in which we are located.

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*Sayu Bhojwani is the executive director of South Asian Youth Action.*

<sup>1</sup> Current Population Survey, Urban Institute Tabulations for March 1997, 1998, 1999, Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Rong, X. L., & Preissle, J. (1998). Educating immigrant students: *What we need to know to meet the challenges*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

# Join us at the

## 7th Annual PASE Conference

May 3rd and 4th, 2001

### National Symposium:

**"AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION:  
MEASURING OUR SUCCESS"**

Thursday, May 3, 2001, 1 – 4 p.m.

Columbia University, Alfred Lerner Hall,  
2920 Broadway at 114th Street

### National Conference:

**"PARTNERSHIPS IN LEARNING"**

Friday, May 4, 2001, 8:30 – 4 p.m.

HOSTOS Community College,  
450 Grand Concourse, Bronx

Invited speakers and panelists include: Warren Simmons of the Annenberg Institute on School Reform, Rev. Dr. Raymond Rivera of the Latino Pastoral Action Center, Karen Pittman of the International Youth Foundation, Steve Seidel of Harvard Project Zero, Steve Jubb of the Bay Area Coalition for Essential Schools, Anita Baker of Anita Baker Associates, Carla Sanger of LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program, and others.

Come and learn about the latest developments in the afterschool field. Enjoy workshops facilitated by practitioner-experts on a wide range of topics including literacy, program design, arts, evaluation, management, and more. Plus, a special Youth Agency Marketplace to meet vendors and resource providers, and an afternoon plenary on community-school relations.

**For more information, call PASE at (212)571-2664 or register at our web site [www.pasesetter.com](http://www.pasesetter.com).**

# PASE *updates*

## Professional Development

PASE continues to provide professional development for all staff of afterschool programs funded by The After School Corporation. During Fall and Winter 2000-2001, PASE held Core Knowledge Training for line staff, two all-day events for young adult employees, and a Core Element Training in the area of the arts in afterschool education. In addition, PASE provided workshops and institutes for coordinators, including "Recruiting, Supervising, and Retaining Staff," "Effective Communication," and a two-day "Arts Management Institute." Line staff and assistant directors received training in "Building Safe Havens" and "Working with High School Students." One of the goals this year is to provide more theme-based training and to provide more staff development for staff working with older youth. We have also begun monthly mailings to site coordinators for upcoming events and have begun to send information through email. If you are not receiving information, please contact Vera Tang at (212) 571-2664.

PASE is pleased to be able to expand its professional development offerings to the afterschool field. Thanks to a generous grant from the Altman Foundation, PASE is offering training that is open to all PASE participants and is organized according to target audience. Nearly 60 participants recently completed the three-session "Foundations in Child-Centered

Practice," which focused on areas critical to quality child/youth-centered practice: conflict resolution, developmentally-appropriate practices, and classroom management. We plan to repeat this series in the spring along with expanded workshops that will provide opportunities to explore these issues further. PASE is also working on the content of the programs in our series "Foundations in Creative Programming." The first topics to be explored include literacy, meaningful collaboration between teaching artists and assistants, and tips for effective programs, such as energizers and lesson plans. The interest in these events has been extremely positive. Look for continued offerings for both line staff as well as young adult employees and management.

## Public Policy and Advocacy Project

The Public Policy and Advocacy Project will bring the cumulative experience of PASE's membership network to bear in the development of public policy surrounding quality afterschool programs for youth. Early this year PASE held a dynamic focus group that helped us home in on key public policy issues that will be addressed in a State of the Field Report, to be published later this year, and in a series of policy papers on afterschool funding, staffing, and school-CBO collaboration. A team of graduate students in the Urban Planning Program at Hunter

College is assisting PASE in developing these policy papers. PASE distributed and is currently reviewing applications from CBOs that will participate in group training sessions to prepare them to undertake community-based assessment and mobilization for improved afterschool services.

## National Afterschool Training Assessment

PASE conducted a national assessment of the afterschool professional development opportunities that are available to practitioners. Key findings include:

- Opportunities to access professional development resources vary across cities, but in every city, the need for training outstrips its availability. Practitioners not only want more opportunities to access more varied training, but also seek a "one-stop" information clearinghouse so that they might better utilize existing resources.
- Major training gaps include how to integrate academic standards with youth development when designing afterschool programs, and how to create effective collaborations between schools and community-based, youth-serving organizations.
- The best resources for afterschool education training are often experienced practitioners. Therefore, strategies that enable organizations to over-

come internal barriers that prevent expert staff from working with other organizations would rapidly increase the number of trainers and technical assistance providers available to the field.

- The role training plays in valuing and engaging staff should not be underestimated, and many afterschool programs around the country believe training both contributes to long-term staff retention within the afterschool field.

PASE is collaborating with a number of groups in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Atlanta who are interested in expanding the web of supports available to afterschool staff. Activities include broadening the availability of training opportunities, enabling programs to visit one another and establish peer mentoring relationships and the implementation of successful innovative arts and literacy programs that may be adapted by agencies. Useful and informative resources are also being created for the field.

## Resource Directory

With great excitement, PASE is proud to offer the New York Afterschool Professional Development Resource Directory. The Directory is a product of the National Afterschool Training Opportunities Assessment initiative, launched by PASE, in collaboration with the Charles Steward Mott Foundation. The goal of the initia-

tive was to assess the need for training and compile an inventory of training opportunities. According to survey results from afterschool practitioners in New York City, professional development ranked in the top three priority areas of need in the profession. In the Directory, each training resource has been listed in a detailed fashion so that practitioners can identify trainers best suited to meet the needs of their programs. Trainings are organized by target audience, type of training, and type of organization providing training. The New York Afterschool Professional Development Resource Directory contains close to 100 training organizations. The Directory also includes an appendix of program management, parent involvement, classroom management, and Internet resources. This project was a joint effort of PASE, the Literacy Assistance Center, and New York Educational Support Network. If you would like a copy of the New York Afterschool Professional Development Resource Directory, please call Cynthia Hood (212)571-2664 or email [pase-mail2@pasesetter.com](mailto:pase-mail2@pasesetter.com).

### **CBO Relations Initiative**

PASE has begun a new project, the CBO Relations Initiative. The CBO Relations Initiative will act as a liaison to community-based organizations (CBO'S), informing those in the PASE network of current programs and initiatives and introducing PASE to new and emerging agencies. The CBO Relations Initiative will serve as a point of entry to the PASE network by reaching out to agencies that can benefit from PASE's services and connecting those agencies to other resources. With the CBO Relations Initiative, PASE hopes to further identify expert practitioners, model programs, emerging community-based leaders, and new after school practices.

# Bulletin Board

### **Nonprofits Unite at 501Click**

501Click, located on the Internet at [www.501click.com](http://www.501click.com), is a comprehensive online resource for nonprofit professionals. Leaders and managers of nonprofit organizations, regardless of size, mission, budget, or location, will find a wide range of useful information and tools designed just for them. 501Click helps nonprofit professionals manage their organizations more efficiently while saving them time and money, so they have more resources to fulfill their critical missions. Services include a "Management Toolkit," where nonprofits can find guidance and solutions for a wide range of management issues; "Marketplace," where nonprofits can purchase the products they need most while saving time and money; and "501(c)ommunity," where nonprofit professionals share solutions and support about managing their organizations.

### **Free Stuff! Materials for the Arts**

Materials for the Arts, a program of the City of New York, provides surplus office equipment and supplies, furnishings, art materials, and other donated items to nonprofit cultural organizations and art programs free of charge. The City of New York, through the Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Sanitation, and Board of Education, operates this program as a service for the cultural community and to reuse materials that would otherwise become waste. Nonprofit community organizations are eligible to receive free materials. For information, call Materials for the Arts at (212)255-5924.

### **High Culture/Low Fees: High 5 Tickets to the Arts**

It's Spring—a great time for young people to discover the arts in New York City through High 5 Tickets to the Arts, the organization that brings teens the widest variety of arts and entertainment in New York City, all for \$5 a ticket or less. Tickets are currently on sale for events through May 31, 2001. Events include "DanceAfrica 2001" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, "Urban Tap" at the New Victory Theatre, "Cinderella" at the American Ballet Theatre, "Amateur Night" at the

Apollo, and many more. For more information, pick up a High 5 catalogue at bookstores or public libraries throughout the five boroughs and selected sites in New Jersey; at participating Ticketmaster outlets (which include HMV Records, Tower Records, The Wiz, and other stores) or in the lobby of High 5's executive offices at 1 East 53rd Street during business hours. Many tickets may be purchased online at [www.high5tix.org](http://www.high5tix.org). For current listings of events, call High 5's hotline, (212)HI5-TKTS, or email to [info@high5tix.org](mailto:info@high5tix.org) with "Newsletter" as the subject.



### **Neighborhood Leadership Institute**

The Citizens Committee for New York City supports self-help and civic action that improves the quality of life in the city and its neighborhoods. Through the Neighborhood Leadership Institute, the committee offers several workshops that are useful for afterschool program staff. Workshops offered in April include Public Speaking, Grassroots Media, Immigrants: New Neighborhood Partners and Coalition Building. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. For more information or to register for a workshop, call the Citizens Committee at (212)989-0909, ext. 312.

### **"Choosing to Participate," An Exhibit**

Facing History and Ourselves, an organization that helps students find meaning in the past and recognize the need for participation and responsible decision making, is sponsoring a multimedia exhibit called "Choosing to Participate" at the New York Historical Society. The exhibition celebrates the power of individual citizens to make a difference. It features dramatic stories of ordinary Americans who took a stand in their own communities and shows how their everyday choices affected the course of history in large ways and small. The exhibit runs through May 27, 2001. The New York Historical Society is located at 2 West 77th Street at Central Park West. For more information, call (212)873-3400 or visit the website at [www.nyhistory.org/exhibits.html](http://www.nyhistory.org/exhibits.html).

# Easing the Transition: How the Polish Slavic Center Serves New American Families

By Jolanta Olechowski, Polish Slavic Center



Children in the Polish Slavic Center Afterschool Program learn a traditional Polish folk dance.

**AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY'S LIFE BY PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND ASSISTANCE TO THE WHOLE FAMILY.**

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN A SITUATION WHERE EVERYTHING THAT IS FAMILIAR IS GONE: your favorite room where you've spent your entire childhood, most of your close relatives, your best friends, teachers you've known for years, the streets you're used to walking, the community you've always known. In addition, people around you speak a different language, your school peers behave in unfamiliar ways, and your parents—who used to be authorities and a stabilizing force—seem as confused and helpless as you are. If you are able to imagine this, then you are probably able to understand and empathize with the ordeal of an immigrant child.

The stress associated with immigration is incredibly high and very disturbing psychologically—to both children and adults. Children lose their cultural identity, and it takes significant time until they are able to find a

new one. Behavioral misconduct such as aggression or withdrawal, and/or failing grades are just a few of the signs that a child is trying—and perhaps not succeeding—in coping with the stress. Meanwhile, parents are facing their own stresses associated with immigration.

Afterschool programs can play a crucial role in an immigrant family's life by providing a safe environment for children and assistance to the whole family. The Polish Slavic Center's afterschool program, "Colony for New Immigrant Children," has a mission to assist immigrant children and their families in the Greenpoint neighborhood, a traditional "first stop" for immigrants from Eastern Europe and other countries. Over the years, we have worked with hundreds of immigrant families and discovered several essential elements that can make a program like ours successful:

1. *A bilingual approach.* It is imperative that at least some of the counselors speak the same language as immigrant families, so that the children can be spoken to and taught in their native language and so that communication with parents is eased. This is especially important in the first phase of immigration.
2. *Literacy projects.* Learning English is the most difficult barrier for new immigrants to overcome. Our afterschool program promotes English literacy programs and tutoring help through-

out the year. Last year we implemented *KidzLit*, a reading project sponsored by PASE and the Developmental Studies Center. This program has been a challenge for our immigrant children as well as our immigrant staff. It has been rewarding, however, to watch staff and children sharing the frustrations and successes of overcoming language problems together, and in the meantime, reading wonderful English-language children's literature.

### 3. *Multicultural activities.*

Immigrant children respond extremely well to multicultural activities, especially arts and crafts and dance. Thanks to the City Council grants that we've received at the recommendation of councilman Kenneth Fisher, we provide a lot of those activities. Government funds are also provided through the Department of Youth and Community Development. The New American Youth Initiative is designed to help community based organizations like ours support immigrant youth by offering services, such as ESL tutoring and social and recreational activities, and by encouraging cross-cultural awareness and multicultural programming. For example, last November our City Council member co-hosted the Multicultural Thanksgiving Celebration at the Polish Slavic Center. As he welcomed immigrant youth, he

expressed his deep appreciation of diverse cultures and their value in American society. Several immigrant groups from the New York area presented artistic programs, including Polish folk dances, a Russian circus, and Spanish theater. The event demonstrated how easily you can cross cultural barriers and find common understanding through art, dance, and theater.

4. *Serving ethnic food.* We try to serve as many ethnic foods as possible.
5. *Community events.* We organize and co-host several community events during the year, involving as many parents, children, and other volunteers as possible.
6. *Trips.* Through planned trips during holidays and summer programs, we expose children to new cultures. We also participate in Project Cool Culture, which allows all families admission to cultural institutions of New York free of charge.
7. *Social services.* We are fortunate to have social services and bilingual social workers on site. We believe it is imperative to provide social services to the whole family.
8. *Education.* We offer ongoing education to parents and children through workshops, newsletters, and individual meetings. Topics include child abuse prevention, health issues, employment, and citizenship orientation. Parents complete our "Parent Questionnaire" to indicate what kind of topics they like the most.

The ultimate goal off all of these program elements is to help immigrant families become self-sufficient and well-adjusted. However, we have discovered there is a huge difference in the way adults and children adjust to

immigration. For example, we have observed that despite the initial shock, children seem to adjust fairly quickly to a new environment. They learn English almost instantly, they absorb new culture without prejudice, and they "Americanize" with ease. Their parents, on the other hand, resist new culture and hardly, if ever, "Americanize." It is not unusual to see parents speaking Polish to their children, who then respond to them in English. It is common to see parents and children drift apart culturally, linguistically, and eventually emotionally. Even though most parents make every attempt to make their children bilingual and bicultural, some children adhere to those wishes and some openly rebel, feeling pressured to fit into the American mainstream. In many cases, there is a visible growing culture gap between immigrant parents and children.

Our afterschool staff encourages parents to learn English and aspects of American culture so that they can understand their children better. At the same time, multicultural activities and an inclusive environment supports families in maintaining their culture. We have learned that bilingualism and biculturalism do not exclude possibilities to achieve fluency in English and upward mobility.

We make an attempt in our program to help families maintain close ties and remain healthy and productive despite the difficult challenges of immigration. We see dysfunction, crisis, suffering, and misery. And we also witness hope, strength, perseverance, and success.

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*Jolanta Olechowski is program director of the Polish Slavic Center.*

## CURRENT FUNDERS

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# Lawyers Alliance Provides Free and Low-Cost Legal Assistance

By Deborah Widiss, Lawyers Alliance

*Do you have questions about the local, state, and federal regulations that may govern your work with kids?*

*Do you know how to distinguish between independent contractors and employees?*

*Do you have a curriculum or other educational materials you would like to license?*

*Would you like to create a new organization?*

**L**AWYERS ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK would like to help your organization with these other non-litigation business law needs.

## A PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE

For more than thirty years, Lawyers Alliance has provided legal services to nonprofit organizations in New York. We have become increasingly aware that many of our clients (and countless other nonprofit organizations) are leading efforts to improve the education received by students in New York City's public schools. Last fall, we launched a Public Education Initiative to better serve the needs of these organizations. Through the project we are actively reaching out to after-school programs, charter schools, mentoring programs, parent associations, and other nonprofits with public education agendas. We are also developing expertise in the liability and regulatory issues that are particularly important for organizations working in the education field.

## DIRECT LEGAL SERVICES, WORKSHOPS, AND PUBLICATIONS

Lawyers Alliance provides non-litigation business law services to nonprofit organizations. Our

staff includes twelve full time attorneys who specialize in New York nonprofit law, as well as areas in which our clients are active, such as education, child care, affordable housing, and economic development. We leverage our in-house expertise by facilitating relationships between our clients and volunteer attorneys at firms and corporate legal departments. When work is done primarily by volunteer attorneys, Lawyers Alliance staff attorneys remain actively involved as a resource for clients and lawyers. Through the efficiency of our pro bono network, Lawyers Alliance annually delivers over \$10 million worth of legal services to over 430 nonprofits.

Lawyers Alliance also provides training workshops for managers and directors of nonprofit organizations and the lawyers that serve them. Topics include incorporation and tax exemption, fundraising regulation, and rules affecting nonprofits that use the Internet. We also offer nineteen publications that provide substantive discussions of nonprofit law and model documents such as by-laws and fiscal sponsorship agreements.

## SPECIAL HONORS: THE CORNERSTONE AWARD

Lawyers Alliance regularly honors volunteer lawyers who have

made outstanding contributions to their clients with our Cornerstone Award. The Cornerstone Award recognizes and pays tribute to several members of the legal community whose pro bono service has had a positive and far-reaching impact.

More than six years ago, Lawyers Alliance helped Project Reach Youth (PRY) establish a relationship with Adam Gale and other lawyers at Debevoise & Plimpton. Since then, Adam has worked with both PRY and PASE on a range of legal needs, including contracts, personnel, corporation status, and real estate. Adam has gone far above and beyond the bounds of the customary client-attorney relationship. He truly represents the legal profession at its best.

The Cornerstone Award ceremony will be held May 17, 2001 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. If you would like to attend, please contact Lemont Leige at (212)219-1800, ext. 225.

For more information about Lawyers Alliance and its services, visit our website at [www.lany.org](http://www.lany.org), or call Deborah Widiss, at (212)219-1800, ext. 232.

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*Deborah Widiss is a staff attorney of Lawyers Alliance.*



PASE is happy to announce the launching of a new feature to our website at [www.pasesetter.com](http://www.pasesetter.com). You can now search for afterschool programs and see these programs located on maps throughout New York City. Parents can find afterschool programs for their children, afterschool programs and schools can find other afterschool programs for referral and collaboration, and funders can find programs serving every community in New York.

PASE is also creating a directory of over 1,200 afterschool programs! 50,000 copies will be distributed throughout the city in schools, banks and community based organizations. This is the perfect time to add your agency's name to the growing number of youth-serving agencies throughout the city. Please take the time to fill out this survey and return it to PASE. Please answer for your site only.

**GENERAL AGENCY, PROGRAM & ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Board \_\_\_\_\_ School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. WHAT TYPES OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS DO YOU OFFER? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Cultural                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling/Group Work           | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service             | <input type="checkbox"/> Math & Science                  | <input type="checkbox"/> GED  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation/Sports             | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring                       | <input type="checkbox"/> ESOL   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intergenerational             | <input type="checkbox"/> SAT Prep & College Counseling   | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Leadership/Peer Education                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homework Help/Tutoring        | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Involvement              | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Education (HIV/AIDS/Substance Abuse/Pregnancy Prevention) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution           | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy & Reading Enrichment | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Preparation/Career Training |   |

Get on the map! Join the directory!



**2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST REPRESENTS YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

- Arts  Multi-service  
 Literacy  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Youth leadership \_\_\_\_\_

**3. HOW DOES YOUR AGENCY IDENTIFY ITSELF?**

- School-based  Sub-contractor (e.g., “programs for hire”)  
 Faith-based  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Community-based \_\_\_\_\_

**4. WHAT TIMES OF THE DAY, DAYS OF THE WEEK AND TIMES OF THE YEAR DO YOU OPERATE AFTERSCHOOL & YOUTH PROGRAMS? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

**a) School Year**

	DAY	AFTERNOON	EVENING
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			
FRIDAY			
SATURDAY			
SUNDAY			

**b) Does your agency offer programs in the summer? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_**

**5. DOES YOUR AGENCY OPERATE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN MULTIPLE SITES? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_**

If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the names of those sites: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**6. HOW MANY YOUTH DO YOU SERVE?**

**a) Grade Level                      Number of youth served**

- Elementary                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Middle School                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 High School                      \_\_\_\_\_

**b) How many youth can your agency serve *within your site* (i.e., what is your site’s total capacity)? \_\_\_\_\_**

**c) Do you have any youth on a waiting list? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_**

**If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_**

**7. WHO IS THE PERSON PASE SHOULD CONTACT FOR MORE AGENCY INFORMATION?**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position/Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you so much for your time!*

Please return this survey to: PASE, 120 Broadway Suite 3048, New York, NY 10271

Or Fax this survey to: (212)571-2676

# PASE Quarterly Forum Addresses Immigrant Youth Issues

By Eric Gurowitz, PASE

ON JANUARY 26, OVER 200 AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM PROFESSIONALS GATHERED for a PASE Forum at the historic El Museo Del Barrio to explore the topic, “Working With Immigrant Youth: Building Your Agency’s Capacity.” The topic was both important and timely. As panel speaker Andrew White, Director of the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School University, pointed out: 53% of New York City’s children live in families headed by immigrants and two-thirds of the city’s population are immigrants and children of immigrants.

Carmen Vega-Rivera, PASE Program Council Chair, opened the forum with her own personal story of growing up in an immigrant family on the Lower East Side. She recalled how her feeling of “being different” was turned into a positive experience when she became a part of an after-school program at Henry Street Settlement.

Sayu Bhojwani, Executive Director of South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) and PASE Program Council member, agreed with Carmen’s point, and commended PASE for showing a commitment to working on issues of importance to immigrant youth.

Bhojwani introduced two youth speakers, Nadia Khalid of SAYA and Anna Burkhadza of Forest Hills Community House. Both young women eloquently expressed how important their afterschool programs have been to their own personal and social development. Khalid said that her afterschool counselors “seem more understanding and relate better” to immigrant youth than some school staff. Burkhadza

reflected upon her relationship with one of her counselors, saying she can “tell her anything, and that’s really important.”

Following the youth speakers, PASE hosted a panel focused upon “Needs, Strategies and Funding Sources.” White gave an overview of the local picture, explaining the growth in immigrant populations and the trends of shifting populations.

Heddy Mills, Director of Immigrant Programs for Project Reach Youth (PRY), described how PRY draws more young people into its program by offering important services for the entire family, such as English as a Second Language programs, parenting groups, computer instructions, and counselling.

Rini Banerjee, Program Officer for the New York Women’s Foundation, and Carlton Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), presented some resources and ideas for funding programs that work with immigrant youth. Banerjee explained that the Women’s Foundation gives grants mostly to smaller programs for general operating support. Mitchell discussed the Beacon Schools program, the major afterschool initiative of DYCD, as well as a new Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Program.

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*Eric Gurowitz is a consultant for PASE and editor of the PASEsetter.*



*Students from the African Dance Ensemble of Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation perform at the Third Annual PASEsetter Awards on March 8, 2001.*

## **FOLLOWING THE PANEL DISCUSSION, PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED ONE OF FOUR WORKSHOPS:**

### **1. Key Issues and Resources for Immigrant Youth in Your Program**

Topics included:

- Developing cultural sensitivity in staff
- Using buddy systems for new kids;
- Getting parents involved with children’s lives;
- Creating leadership opportunities within the organizations.

### **2. Gender Issues with Immigrant Youth**

Topics included:

- Using different strategies to work with different groups;
- Building young leaders in context of home culture;
- Building trust with parents;
- Balancing youth-centered focus with parent involvement.

### **3. Legal Rights of Immigrant Youth**

Topics included:

- Issues of foster care children;
- Resource Organizations;
- Advocates for young people in schools and other institutions.

### **4. Building Literacy among ESL Students**

Topics included:

- Connecting work to young people’s experiences;
- Creating a literacy-rich environment;
- Preserving culture and language;
- Integrating ESL principles in arts/drama.

# An Interview with: **LOIS LEE**

By Eric Gurowitz, PASE



Students from the Chinese-American Planning Council's Afterschool program in Flushing, Queens pose with the 2001 Chinese Lunar New Year stamp after performing at the stamp's official unveiling.

**L**OIS LEE CREDITS THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS of the 1960's for shaping her belief that it is her responsibility, and also her privilege, to work tirelessly to serve the communities she came from.

Born to Chinese immigrant parents and raised in Chinatown's Smith housing projects, Lee moved to Flushing, Queens when she was in junior high, long before it was the diverse orchestra of 54 languages it is today. Lois remembers how her family was the first Chinese family to move to the neighborhood in the early sixties. And they weren't exactly welcomed.

"People came to our house and threw garbage into our driveway and cursed at us," she remembers.

Later, other Chinese families followed them to Queens, along with many other types of immigrant families. Lois saw many people struggle to get out of New York's poorer neighborhoods, only to find themselves missing some of the culture those enclaves provided.

"The funny thing was, here I lived in Queens, and I desired to go back to the Chinatown neighborhood where I grew up, to give back," she says.

For more than thirty years now, Lois has not only given back to her own community, she has enriched the lives of thousands of families from all backgrounds as Director of the Chinese-American Planning Council's (CPC) School Age Day

Care. Lois sees afterschool programs as places where young people can connect to their culture and to other cultures, develop self-confidence and creativity, and receive support that addresses academic issues as well as other needs.

For Lois, her own cultural identity as a Chinese woman grew strong as a result of the social justice and empowerment struggles of the 1960's. After graduating from Queens College, she attended a conference on Asian American issues and discovered the power of standing proud and seeking both knowledge of culture and self.

Lois works to spread this love of learning and community among the young people in her program. She sees many of their issues, including academic struggles, as a result of low self-esteem and a lack of support.

"The first word the Chinese students learn, what I always hear come out of their mouths, is the word 'stupid.' Why would they pick up those words? Because this is what they hear," she says.

But at CPC's afterschool program, young people are hearing much more. Through work with the afterschool literature project *KidzLit*, conflict resolution, thematic projects and more, Lois and her staff enrich the lives of their students. Lois feels that a unique strength that afterschool staff have as educators is the freedom to be creative and incorporate young people's interests into the program activities.

For example, after working in

migrant camps in Mexico one summer, Lois brought back slides and memories and created a thematic learning project. CPC Kids exchanged letters and drawings about peace with young people in Mexico through a program called "Peacemail." It is this kind of creative energy that keeps kids at CPC engaged. One example of Lois' ability to spontaneously develop exciting program activities was in 1997, when a boat of refugees beached on the New York coast. Lois took her students to an exhibit of the refugees' artwork, "Fly to Freedom: The Art of the Golden Venture Refugees," and created a thematic project based on that experience.

"You can't plan these things into your curriculum. You have to keep your eyes open and see how something is relevant," she explains. Other projects have included performing annually at the unveiling of the United States Postal Service's Chinese Lunar New Year Stamp and doing extensive thematic projects based upon the Olympic games.

Even when teaching more traditional subjects like math or spelling, Lois advocates for using non-traditional means, such as first-aid or cooking projects that integrate academic skills.

"The topics that we choose are always something relevant to their lives. ... We really take the students' feelings into consideration and all of their opinions and all of their ideas," she says.

Lois is a bit dismayed with the current focus on standards and testing. She feels that it is

**"IF YOU GET AWAY FROM  
THE PRESSURES OF TRYING  
TO MEET THE ACADEMIC  
STANDARDS, THEN EVERY  
LITTLE BIT OF LEARNING  
THAT THEY DO IS RELEVANT."**



# Off the Shelves

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT YOUTH

too focused on building certain academic skills and is particularly unfair to immigrant students. For students who enter school with little knowledge of English, or who come from countries where they did not have access to formal education, “it is not a level playing field,” she says.

By focusing on connecting students to their communities, Lois sees her students thrive: “If you get away from the pressures of trying to meet the academic standards, then every little bit of learning that they do is relevant.”

To make those connections, Lois helps staff develop Oral History Projects, so the young people explore their own cultural histories. She also makes a point to hire a staff that culturally reflects the population of young people CPC serves. For young people of color, Lois values providing role models and mentors who are from their communities.

“They see plenty of Caucasian teachers. They need to see more teachers who look like them,” she says.

For Lois, creating dynamic and engaging programs for young people is fundamentally about respect—for the staff, the students, their families, and their communities.

“We respect the students and in turn we get that respect back,” she says, “We don’t have to pull teeth.”

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*Eric Gurowitz is a consultant for PASE and editor of the PASEsetter.*

### ***Know Your Rights: A Guide to the Legal Rights of Immigrant Students & Parents in the New York City Public Schools (2000)***

**Advocates for Children, Immigrant Students’ Rights Project (212)947-9779**

**[www.advocatesforchildren.org](http://www.advocatesforchildren.org)**

**T**his guidebook addresses the practical issues that immigrant students and their families face in navigating the New York City Public Schools. In a clear and easy-to-use manner, it deals with topics like enrolling in school, school choice, services for students learning English, promotion and graduation policy, discipline, records, and discrimination. This is an excellent resource for parents, programs, and anyone who wishes to serve as an advocate for immigrant youth in the public schools.

### ***Achieving the Dream: How Communities and Schools Can Improve Education for Immigrant Students (1993)***

**National Coalition of Advocates for Students**

**[www.ncas1.org](http://www.ncas1.org)**

**T**his manual is designed to help community organizations, concerned educators, and parents as they work to improve local public schools on behalf of immigrant students. Each chapter focuses on central elements of quality schooling from the perspective of the young immigrant.

### ***The College Board International Student Handbook 2001 (2001)***

**College Board, Theresa Carroll Schweser**

**Available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) or major bookstores**

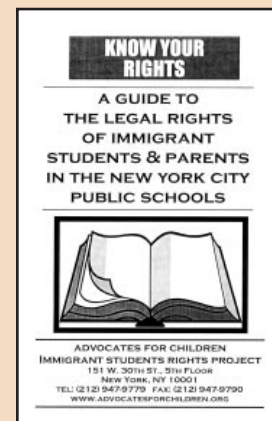
**T**his is an excellent resource for helping immigrant students apply to and succeed in college. The College Board also publishes a handbook for financial aid and many other resources.

### ***How Immigrants Fare in U.S. Education (1996)***

**George Vernez, Denise Quigley, Allan F. Abrahamse**

**Available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)**

**T**his book is the first comprehensive analysis of the performance of immigrant children and youth in U.S. schools.



# PASEsetter Awards

**W**ith over 400 young people, afterschool professionals, civic leaders, foundation and community based organization representatives in attendance, the third Annual PASEsetter Awards ceremony was an amazing evening. The first of their kind in the afterschool field, the awards were presented to five outstanding youth professionals on March 8th at the Puck building. In addition to the joy of celebrating the awardees and their accomplishments, the event was also graced by the presence of such notable presenters as Teresa Weatherspoon of the New York Liberty, Max Gomex of NewsChannel 4, Warren Simmons of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Horace Hagedorn of the Scotts Company, and recording artist Oscar Brand. Two youth groups, TADA Musical Theatre & Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. African Dance Ensemble thrilled the audience with their performances.

“This year’s winners represented a broad range of programs and eloquently represented the commitment, talent and depth of the youth serving field. The presenters were inspirational, funny, kind and, for the newcomers, blown away by the award winners and the youth serving community represented at the ceremony,” said Alison Overseth, President of the PASE Board of Directors. The PASEsetter awardees for 2001 were nominated by their colleagues and young people in their programs and selected by a committee of their peers. Corporate underwriting of this important celebration was generously provided by Bank of America; Morgan Stanley Dean Witter; PricewaterhouseCoopers; Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom; and the Scotts Company. The following are this year’s PASEsetter Awardees:



2001 PASEsetter Award winners (from left to right): Heddy Mills of Project Reach Youth, Aziza of Def Dance Jam Workshop, Margaret Donghyang Lukoff of Double Discovery Center, Steve Pullano of Forest Hills Community House and Michael Tucker of Hell's Kitchen AIDS Project.

## **AZIZA** **Def Dance Jam** **Workshops**

As an activist, choreographer, professional dancer, performer, and teacher, Aziza’s work has long focused on developing community-based art, and she has been particularly dedicated to working in Harlem. As a public school teacher, she witnessed the

erosion of arts education for African-American children and particularly the absence of programs for the physically disabled. Influenced by a public television program featuring deaf dancers, she decided to learn sign language and founded Def Dance Jam Workshop (DDJW) in 1994. She began DDJW with ten young women, five who could hear and five who could not. The hearing

members learned American Sign Language (ASL), and working with the deaf members, combined it with Hip-Hop, African dance, rap, and poetry to create and perform original works. The group has now expanded to 30 members, male and female, ranging in age from 8 to 65. The students spend two to three afternoons a week together, doing homework, tutoring, journal writing, holding “rap sessions,” and rehearsing. Aziza is committed to involving the children in DDJW’s decision making as a way to increase self-esteem and prepare them for independent lives. In 1997, Aziza announced the formation of the DDJW Community Service Fellowship to provide scholarship funds and work experience to a DDJW graduate who is about to enter college. DDJW has performed at the United Nations, Aaron Davis Hall, and Six Flags Great Adventure. In her acceptance speech, Aziza said, “I’ve recently been questioning why we do the work we do. One of my students told me that we do this work to provide a safe space for young people so they can work

on themselves and make a difference in the world.”

### **MICHAEL TUCKER** **Hell’s Kitchen AIDS Project, Inc., St. Clare’s Hospital**

Nominated by youth in his program, Michael Tucker has been a leader and partner in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS among adolescents for over 12 years. As the founder of the Hell’s Kitchen AIDS Project/Hell’s Kitchen Action Programs (HKAP), he has provided comprehensive health education and HIV prevention programs for young people living or going to school in School District Two. In addition to doing direct health outreach in the schools, Tucker established a youth employment initiative, which hires young people from the community to provide afterschool and Saturday homework help, and to distribute health education materials monthly to sites around the neighborhood. With Tucker’s guidance, the young people in the program have also created a neighborhood food pantry, which delivers food to needy families in Hell’s Kitchen. Tucker is committed to including health education in every aspect of the program and to empowering young people to take care of themselves and others in their community. HKAP takes a holistic approach to HIV prevention and young people, stressing total physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness. By supporting youth in all aspects of their lives, HKAP empowers them to make good decisions and lead healthier lives. Tucker is also particularly proud that the program has helped five of its young people secure full scholarships to Marymount Manhattan College. A young person at HKAP sums it up well by saying, “He has taught us the value in helping others.” As for Tucker, in his acceptance speech, he said with good humor, “This is one instance when I am happy to be on another agency’s mailing list.”

### **MARGARET DONGHYANG LUKOFF** **Upward Bound, Double Discovery Center**

Margaret Lukoff has touched the lives of countless students, parents, and col-

leagues through her years of devotion to Double Discovery Center’s (DDC) mission to serve first generation college-bound, low income youth. Lukoff first joined DDC’s Upward Bound summer program in 1988 as a residential teaching assistant (RTA) and returned to serve as an RTA and later as Upward Bound Saturday Class Manager while holding full-time employment as program coordinator for a campus community outreach organization. In 1991, she was hired as a DDC Talent Search program counselor advising seniors about college, careers, and academic planning. Then, as Senior Counselor, Lukoff supervised and trained academic teachers and established collaborative relationships and vital linkages with community-based organizations for DDC. Lukoff assumed the position of Upward Bound program director in the summer of 1994. Under her leadership, DDC has become a model for Upward Bound programs throughout the country. She has redesigned the program’s academic curriculum, developed special student outreach programs, organized parent workshops, and developed productive relationships with target schools and the New York City Board of Education. “Our greatest success is empowering students to see the possibilities in their futures and making those options a reality,” Lukoff said.

### **HEDDY MILLS** **Project Reach Youth**

As Director of Immigrant Services for Project Reach Youth (PRY), Hedy Mills has helped shape the direction and focus of the agency for over a decade and has shaped a comprehensive program of immigrant services in Brooklyn. Mills immigrated from Argentina and quickly secured a master’s degree from Hunter College, bringing an array of credentials and experience to her job. Her creativity, innovation, and outstanding teaching skills have enabled PRY to successfully respond to a growing population of immigrant families in Brooklyn neighborhoods. Her ability to captivate, motivate, and develop skills in young children, teens, and adults has resulted in the establishment of model pre-school and toddler classes; recognized teen programs; and adult language, citizenship and career development programs. She has trained

other agencies in Brooklyn, New York state, and Puerto Rico to do similar work. “It is the little things I see week after week that have kept me enthusiastic, very involved and such a passionate advocate for comprehensive services for immigrants in this city,” Mills said.

### **STEVE PULLANO** **The Forest Hills Community House**

Steve Pullano began work with the Forest Hills Community House as the organization’s first outreach worker for a new program entitled Hot Spots Teen Outreach. In the fall of 1984, he and a colleague began going into the streets to see who was out there, where they were hanging out, what they wanted to do, and what their concerns were. Nineteen years later, under Pullano’s direction, the Hot Spots Teen Outreach program has become a multifaceted comprehensive youth development program including street outreach, counseling and peer counseling, and youth employment that has an intergenerational focus. The Teen Outreach program has a staff of more than 50 adults and young people and serves 1,800 youth each year. In the almost two decades that Pullano has been with Forest Hills Community House, Teen Outreach has reached approximately 15,000 young people. It also serves as a model for other youth development agencies across New York City and was even chosen by the national Hungarian association of neighborhood youth centers as their model for street outreach in Budapest. In addition to Pullano’s dedication to his work at Forest Hills Community House, he teaches full-time at Russell Sage Junior High School 157. Pullano is a passionate advocate for young people and has devoted much of his life to the youth of central Queens. Pullano ended his speech with a favorite quote, “A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because I was important in the life a young person.”



# In-Sites:

## BUILDING A SAFE HAVEN FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES: FLATBUSH HAITIAN CENTER

By Meghan Armistead, PASE

**“When I came here in 1973, I was put in a classroom with all the other non-English speaking students in my junior high school. It was tough; really it was a matter of survival. I wish that there had been a program like this for me then.”**

*—Margarette Tropnas, Assistant Executive Director, Flatbush Haitian Center.*

Coming to a new country and learning a new language and culture can be a formidable challenge. Being unable to communicate and struggling to fit in are difficult for anyone, but for a young person, the immigration experience can be especially traumatic. Even for young people who come to the country when they are very young, or who were born here to immigrant parents, living in an immigrant community can hold special challenges.

How can an afterschool program help young people from immigrant families cope with some of these difficulties? The Flatbush Haitian Center’s afterschool program combines a holistic approach to working with young people and their families with a deep understanding and connection to the larger community.

“All together, it just works,” says Tropnas. “Underlying every-

thing we do is our belief in our young people. We constantly stress that they are special and that they have options. It’s then our job to show them those options.”

The Center’s youth program works with a model developed by Dr. Michael Carreras, a City College professor who continues to provide technical assistance and support to the program. The Center runs a comprehensive afterschool program, funded by the Robin Hood Foundation, for 40 young people a year—most of whom are children of immigrants or immigrants themselves—that includes family life and sex education, career awareness programs, academic assessment and tutoring, self-expression activities, sports, health services, counseling services, and trips. The program works with the same group of young people over a prolonged period of time, making a long-term commitment to help them improve their

quality of life. By offering young people and their families multiple services, the Center allows their members to explore different interests, seek help with school when they need it, and receive critical health and employment services, among others.

Given all of the challenges facing young people in Flatbush, particularly immigrant youth, parent involvement has been critical to the program’s success. Often times in immigrant communities, communication between parents and children can break down as children become more involved in the new culture. Young people are often in the position of balancing parental expectations and cultural norms within the family with attempts to please their peers and fit in. Parents may work long hours and have little family time. Attitudes towards education and school are often different here than in a parent’s home country. Parents some-

**YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OFTEN IN THE POSITION OF BALANCING PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CULTURAL NORMS WITHIN THE FAMILY WITH ATTEMPTS TO PLEASE THEIR PEERS AND FIT IN. PARENTS MAY WORK LONG HOURS AND HAVE LITTLE FAMILY TIME.**

times feel unable to advocate for their child or are unaware of the importance of their involvement. In addition, they may not speak English or may have problems with literacy.

The Flatbush Haitian Center provides trainings and forums that help empower parents to participate in all aspects of their child's life. Trainings have included explaining report cards, understanding graduation requirements and helping children prepare for them, and teaching alternative methods of discipline, among others. The Center also provides adult services high in demand among parents, such as English as a Second Language and Basic Education in Native Language, daycare for young children, and vocational training. Demand for these classes is high and providing them helps build and strengthen relationships between parents and the Center.

The Haitian Center's program was started in 1992, and many of the first class' alumni are currently preparing for college graduation. One alumni of an early class now works at the center, a testament to the incredible resource and support the Center has provided and continues to provide to young people in the Flatbush community.

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*Meghan Armistead is a consultant for PASE.*

# Responding to New Demographics

*By Robert Hansen, PASE*

**N**EW YORK CITY IS UNDERGOING A FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION. It's hard to miss: Take a walk through Flushing, a trip out to Brighton Beach, or visit any number of communities in the Bronx, and you'll encounter a wonderful tangle of new languages and cultures. In the 1990's over a million new immigrants joined the city, and a quarter of these new arrivals were under 18 years old. It is now estimated that 53% of New York City's children live in households headed by first generation immigrants.

Various private and public institutions that fund and support organizations are responding to these demographic changes. Here are two initiatives by one private and one public funder:

**The New York Women's Foundation**, in keeping with its mission, is addressing the needs of one subset of the new immigrant population: girls and young women. Presenting at PASE's Quarterly Forum on January 26, Rini Banerjee, a program officer at the foundation, explained that they fund small and emerging organizations capable of bringing positive youth development models to life for immigrant girls and young women.

The New York Women's Foundation values a high degree of youth participation in the planning, design, and evaluation of programs (which is great because so do we!). If your program offers girls' programming that meets needs and builds competencies within specific culture contexts, consider contacting them. (It's an added advantage if your organization and/or program is run by women.) The foundation issues a Request For Proposals (RFP) in August and funds in October, but the sooner you initiate a dialogue the better. Grants tend to be for one year and can be either program specific or general operating support. In addition, smaller grants are made available for technical assistance. In writing the grant proposal, pay careful attention to your budget and your evaluation section (not that we'll admit these sections could ever be weak!).

Contact information:  
The New York Women's Foundation  
120 Wooster Street  
New York, NY 10012  
Tel. (212)226-2220  
Fax (212)226-3854  
[www.nywf.org](http://www.nywf.org)

**New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** is

divided into Youth Development and Community Development sections. At the most recent Quarterly Forum, Deputy Commissioner Carlton Mitchell discussed the Community Development section's Citizenship NYC (CNYC) program. CNYC exists to help New York City immigrants navigate the naturalization process and become citizens. The program offers comprehensive multi-lingual services to immigrants, providing support in all aspects of the naturalization process at offices in the five boroughs.

For youth-serving professionals, Mitchell stressed the importance of understanding how the justice system can impact the naturalization process. He pointed out that for a young person 16 or older, a criminal conviction can permanently prevent the individual from becoming a citizen and he/she could face deportation. Furthermore, he stated, the court has the power to regard 13 to 16 year-old young people as adults.

For further information on these and other immigration issues please contact:  
Citizenship New York City  
(888)374-5100

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*Robert Hansen is the development director of PASE.*

# FUNDING alert!



# Resource List

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**New York Immigration Hotline** (general immigration questions, referrals, multiple languages) – (718)899-4000

**Catholic Charities, Immigration Services** (general) – (212)371-1000 ext. 2260

**Advocates for Children** (school-related issues) – (212)947-9779

**New York Association for New Americans** (general) – (212)425-2900

**The Door** (youth & immigration) – (212)941-9090

**Covenant House** (youth & immigration) – (212)330-0513 in NJ (973)286-3402

**Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund** – (212)966-5932

**Safe Horizons** (immigration legal services) – (718)899-1233

**Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund** – (212)739-7400 / (800)328-2322,  
[www.prldef.org](http://www.prldef.org)

**National Immigration Law Center** (policy & legal issues) – (213)639-3900  
[www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org)

**Immigration and Naturalization Service** – [www.ins.gov](http://www.ins.gov)

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