



## The Cross-Cities Network for Leaders of Citywide After-School Initiatives

The Cross-Cities Network is composed of 25 leaders of citywide after-school initiatives in major cities across the United States. The Network brings leaders together on a regular basis to explore common issues and develop personal relationships to sustain their work. The project is staffed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In addition to bi-annual meetings, NIOST provides staff support for the following Network activities: weekly email updates from members; topical briefs on requested issues; research reports; and a database of initiative members.

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**ISSUE 3:  
Emerging Roles  
in the Field**

# After School Issues

## New Roles Are Emerging

**Will Practitioners Soon Have a More Expanded Career Menu?**

**F**inding and keeping good staff members is clearly one of the major challenges facing after-school leaders. Over the past several months, we conducted interviews with a number of after-school leaders from across the country to identify successful strategies for addressing staffing issues. It has become clear from these discussions that there are a growing number of new career options being created for staff in many cities. This publication of *After-School Issues*, therefore, features in-depth information on this new trend as a way of offering readers fresh ideas for meeting staffing challenges.

### The Staffing Challenge

After-school leaders across the country are experiencing the pressure of trying to achieve multiple goals simultaneously—goals which can often be in conflict with each other. Funders, politicians, business leaders, and other community members want programs to execute ambitious plans for rapid expansion. At the same time, they also want programs to maintain—or enhance—their level of quality so that they will contribute to broader social goals, such as increased academic achievement, decreased delinquency and substance abuse, and greater community and parental involvement.

The pressure to simultaneously increase the size, scope, and impact

of services has left many after-school programs facing personnel shortages. Many administrators are having difficulty not only in finding enough staff to reach desired adult/youth ratios, but also in finding staff members with the skills and experience needed to help programs achieve a growing list of expected outcomes.

Persistent staffing issues endemic to the after-school field, such as the part-time nature of the work, low wages, and the limited number of opportunities and choices for advancement and professional growth, have only exacerbated the challenges facing administrators who are trying to attract and retain staff in the current climate.

## Change is in the Air

**W**hile staffing continues to be a difficult issue, there may be a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Widespread expansion in the field has led to new opportunities. New after-school roles are emerging in initiatives around the country, many of which are providing staff members with full-time jobs and the opportunity to advance in their careers. At the same time, professional development systems, career incentives, and specialized training approaches are being established to help prepare staff for both traditional and emerging roles. The result has been the creation of a richer and more varied career path for a growing number of practitioners.

The sheer size of after-school initiatives in some cities has resulted in a steady expansion of full-time positions in order to help manage day-to-day services and ensure internal standards of quality across dozens of sites. In many locations, expanding after-school services has also led to unprecedented levels of coordination and collaboration amongst a widening circle of players. This interweaving of organizations and their mutual goals has resulted in the sharing of staff members, dual staff roles, and the creation of a whole new range of full and part-time career opportunities for staff members. In an increasing number of cases, the creative melding of organizational needs has allowed staff to assume full-time positions with benefits.

### What are some of these new opportunities for staff?

Through our conversations with over one dozen after-school leaders from across the country, we have discovered a diversity of new roles emerging from the field.

For example, in California, **L.A.'s BEST** has a cadre of **Traveling Activities Specialists** who serve as mentors and consultants to their 70 sites, offering staff and site coordinators the benefit of their guidance and expertise in curriculum design, staff development, and staff-child relations.

In Texas, the **YMCA of San Antonio & the Hill Country**, through its School Beyond School initiative, has created **campus-based Program Directors**. These Program Directors operate on the school

campus and work in tandem with public school teachers in order to enrich students' learning experiences and connect academics to real life and future vocations. The YMCA provides experiential learning activities related to the school day curriculum during school, after school and on school holidays.

In Kansas City, as an outgrowth of the **Caring Communities Initiative**, nearly one dozen full-time **Neighborhood Services Coordinator** positions have been created. These "community mobilizers" provide leadership training to local citizens and promote neighborhood involvement in, and support of, before and after-school programs.

**While the creation of new roles alone will not remedy the field's staffing problems, the examples that follow highlight a trend that is already making a difference in cities around the country.**

## FACILITATORS, TRAINERS AND APPRENTICES

### Spotlight on Philadelphia BEST

**Nature of position:** Primarily part-time opportunities to serve as BEST facilitators, trainers and, potentially, apprentices

**Main funding source:**

Private foundation grants and a mix of local public and private funds

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“Before BEST,” explains Elaine Johnson, Director of the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work at the Academy of Educational Development, “many sites had trainers coming into their programs as ‘the experts.’ These outside trainers had no idea what youth workers do. They had no clue about the realities programs were facing—for example, they couldn’t understand that it is a common occurrence for a youth to arrive at a program with four younger siblings in tow—BEST has changed all that. We know now that the most effective trainers are, or once were, youth work practitioners themselves.”

In 1996, as an outgrowth of the success of their Advancing Youth Development curriculum, the Academy for Educational Development created a national initiative called BEST (Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers) with funding from the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds. BEST awards funding to fifteen cities to help them build their local capacity for

training youth workers. BEST is also designed to help communities promote and develop “youth work” as a profession. One of the most fruitful outcomes of BEST has been the creation of career opportunities within the infrastructure of BEST itself.

Philadelphia, one BEST-funded site, has maximized the career opportunities inherent in BEST by creating strategic alliances with other initiatives and organizations.

To launch youth workers on their career path, Dr. Cheryl Oakman explains, “BEST has created a partnership with Community College of Philadelphia so youth workers can apply their AYD

training towards a Youth Worker Certificate. This certificate can then be applied towards an Associates Degree. We’ve even made incentive grants and scholarships available to help youth workers pursue this certificate.”

As a sequel to their introductory BEST courses, qualified youth workers in Philadelphia are given the opportunity to take a “Train the Trainers” course. Completion of this course and successful completion of the trainer certification process qualifies participants as BEST facilitators. Some BEST facilitators

are now employed full-time as Youth Development

Specialists by the United Way’s Center for Youth Development, providing technical assistance to over 180 sites in the Philadelphia area.

Recently, Philadelphia has sought funding through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Apprenticeship Program to allow youth workers paid opportunities to gain their Youth Worker Certificate.

*“There is a gap between what happens on the ground and where we want to go with respect to quality. To help close that gap it is absolutely critical that we build the skills of our staff as well as expand our pool of trainers. I think BEST will continue to be an effective vehicle for doing that.”*

– Ellen Tichenor, Director for Youth Development, Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements

**Other BEST sites:**

Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Hampton, VA; Jacksonville, FL; Kansas City, MO; Milwaukee, WI; New Haven, CT; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Pinellas County, FL; Portland, OR; St. Paul, MN; San Francisco, CA; Springfield, MA; Washington, D.C.

## AFTER-SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS

### New York City

**Nature of position:** Full-time, year-round

**Main funding source:**

U.S. Department of Education Community Technology Centers Grant

**For more information contact:**

Judith Beville, Director of School Age Programs and Community Technology Centers, [Judithb@childrensaidsociety.org](mailto:Judithb@childrensaidsociety.org)

Technology. It has become as integral to our daily lives as eating breakfast or carrying in the mail. Placing a high value on technology is nothing new to the Children's Aid Society, which operates over a dozen after-school programs and Community Technology Centers throughout New York City. According to Judith Beville, the School Age Program Director, "technology skills are as essential to a basic education as learning to read, write or do arithmetic." As evidence of this strong belief, beginning in 1999, the Children's Aid Society created Technology Teacher positions at five of their after-school sites.

"It's important to understand that the Technology Teacher position was never viewed as 'let's recruit some computer whiz to act as an outside specialist,'" explains Beville, "Technology Teachers have always been key members of our after-school teams."

In fact, nearly all of the Children's Aid Society's Technology Teachers started out as regular after-school teachers. "One of our Technology Teachers start-

ed out as a school custodian," recalls Beville. "He had this strong interest in computer technology and what it could do for kids. He gradually became one of our after-school teachers, and eventually, our Technology Teacher. He was recently nominated for an Excellence Award, a prestigious recognition given by the CEO's office." Other Technology Teachers have also come from the practitioner ranks, including those holding such dual roles as a morning Early Childhood Teacher and an afternoon After-School Teacher.

*"Technology skills are as essential to a basic education as learning to read, write or do arithmetic."*

– Judith Beville, Director of School-Age Programs and Community Technology Centers

Through creative links with schools and the Children's Aid Society's own Community Technology Centers, three of these Technology Teachers are now full-time. Explains Beville, "They teach basic computer skills to adults from the community in the morning. They offer classes to after-school and regular education teachers in the evenings. And, during the afternoons they teach children in the program some of the most sophisticated technology skills out there. Robotics. Animation. PowerPoint. You name it!"

Beville's success with the Technology Teacher positions has fueled her power for creative thinking when it comes to building career opportunities for after-school staff. Earlier this year, the Children's Aid Society began seeking funding for another new full-time position entitled Education Enrichment and Literacy Coordinator. Beville believes that this new in-school/out-of-school time liaison position is "critical to helping ensure that our programs can translate regular school curriculum goals into appropriate after-school learning activities."

Of equal importance, this new position would enable after-school and regular school staff to communicate more effectively around the needs of individual children and youth. Explains Beville, "The Education Enrichment and Literacy Coordinator will be that one central person whose job it is to ensure that those kids that are struggling get the resources and support they need to succeed academically and socially."

## YOUTH ADVOCATES

### Salt Lake City, Utah

**Nature of position:** Full-time (9 months)

**Main funding sources:**

21st Century Community Learning Center and state funds administered through the Office of Child Care, Department of Workforce Services

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Colleen Croudy, Youth Development Specialist, colleen.croudy@slc.K12.ut.us

All kids need a caring adult in their lives. The need is even greater for young adolescents who, more than any other age group, may require a stable adult relationship during the often turbulent middle school years. To address this need, the Salt Lake City School District has implemented a unique role, Youth Advocate, in all five middle schools. Youth Advocates work both during and after school to provide positive, individual attention to students who might otherwise fall through the cracks. "Without this attention," explains one Advocate, "students may fall into negative peer groups, irresponsible activities, and destructive habits—places where they can get attention, albeit negative."

**So how do Youth Advocates help students?**

The primary approach used by Youth Advocates is to provide one-on-one mentoring and support for referred students. "Often this starts out with Advocates sitting down with students to find out: Who do they hang out with? What are their strengths? What are their interests?" explains Colleen Croudy, Youth Development Specialist and Coordinator of Youth Advocates for the Salt Lake City School District.

Next, the Advocate, the youth, and the youth's parent/guardian work together

to construct an Individualized Plan, which is connected to the student's regular school Student Education and Occupation Plan (SEOP). The Advocate then sees to it that youth becomes more positively integrated into his/her regular and after-school environments. This might be accomplished by helping them join clubs, engage in life skills training, participate in arts and other enrichment activities, or by getting involved in school-to-work experiences. Advocates also ensure that youth receive the counseling, health services or tutoring that they may need in order to be successful.

One key ingredient to the success of the Youth Advocate position is the high level of cooperation that has been established at many levels. Advocates are key members of both school and after-school staff teams. They coordinate regularly with parents, teachers, principals, after-school staff and outside agencies. While they do not provide counseling directly, Advocates work very closely with and under the direction of School Counselors. "In many schools," explains Ann Sasich, Administrator for Community

Education, "School Counselors have come to utilize Advocates to support their role and even share office space."

This constant communication flow enables Advocates to assess students' ongoing needs, set goals, and monitor progress as well as help students develop meaningful connections between day and after-school programming.

"Advocates also lead social skills groups for kids—how to deal with anger, become a team member, or build relationships with peers.

Some of our Advocates do a whole curriculum around bully-proofing," reports Croudy.

The Youth Advocates' work has made, and continues to make a difference for students.

Meeting and planning regularly with Youth Advocates helps students improve their attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

Through the process of developing individualized plans connected to the Student Education and Occupation Plan, students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Salt Lake City's Youth Advocate position has been so successful in making a difference for students that plans are already in the works to expand the role to 10 elementary, and all 4 high schools beginning Fall, 2001.

*This profile was adapted from an article by Ann Sasich and Colleen Croudy entitled "Youth Advocates: Making a Difference for Kids" which appeared in the Winter 2000 issue of the Eccles/Annenberg "In Action" Newsletter.*

*"Advocates are trustworthy adults who have helped out students through difficult times, connecting them with services they need to ensure a positive middle school experience."*

— Salt Lake City School administrator

# THE TRAINERS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (TAP)

Seattle, Washington

**Nature of position:** Nine month, part-time, paid apprenticeship

**Main funding source:** Corporate contributions and private foundation grants

**For more information contact:**

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"The initial impetus for the Trainers Apprenticeship Program (TAP) was to expand the size and diversity of our trainers' pool," recalls Janet Frieling, Associate Director of School's Out Washington in Seattle. "We had several culturally-specific after-school programs—Somalian, Chinese, and Hispanic—that we were trying to support. It was a real challenge for us to find trainers that could really meet their unique needs. We thought TAP would be one strategy for helping us be more effective in bringing about program improvements. What we discovered along the way was that TAP was also a powerful staff retention tool."

## How does TAP work?

The School's Out Training apprenticeship Program (TAP), now in its 3rd year, matches practitioners and Site Coordinators of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds with seasoned trainers. During a 9-month period, trainer apprentices receive 40 hours

of intensive mentoring, coaching, guided training and site work, along with direct instruction in adult learning and quality standards. Apprentices are paid for their participation. One of the hallmarks of the TAP program is how it provides a highly individualized professional growth experience for its participants. One of the tools used to do this is the TAP Career Action Plan that is developed jointly by each apprentice and their mentor. The plan lays out how they will build on the apprentices' existing strengths, while developing the skills and experiences they will need to become trainers and effective agents of change when working with site staff on program improvements.

*"TAP has given our participants a way to share their tremendous knowledge and expertise with others. It has helped them see themselves as leaders."*

— Janet Frieling, Associate Director, School's Out Washington.

"We knew we had all these really talented people out there—but they didn't see themselves as being able to take that leap into being trainers. TAP has given them a way to 'test the waters' and discover their potential."

## The Power of TAP

While most TAP graduates remain at their jobs, their apprenticeship experience allows them to expand their professional lives and salaries. Most TAP graduates become School's Out trainers and On-Site Technical Advisors, helping anywhere from one to half a dozen sites per year. Others go on to become approved STARS trainers, as part of Washington's state-funded career development initiative, conducting workshops that are now required for lead teachers and directors. Still others focus much of their new talents on improvement work at their own site, perhaps taking on occasional consulting projects such as curriculum design work.

## Resources

Currently, a broad range of local, state and national efforts are underway to advance the skills and professional status of school-age staff and youth workers. These varied initiatives, many of which are still in the pilot phase, include credentialing, career development ladders, compensation initiatives, and large-scale professional development projects. The following represents just a few examples of such initiatives.

### Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW)

CCW is involved in a wide range of activities designed to improve wages, working conditions and the professional status of child care staff members. Recently, CCW released "Creating Better School-Age Care Jobs: Model Work Standards." This guide is available through their website: [www.ccw.org](http://www.ccw.org) or can be ordered by calling 1-800-UR-WORTHY.

### U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship Programs

The U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration is offering competitive grants in support of apprenticeship programs designed to build staff skills and improve retention. For more information on [The Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship Program](#), see the D.O.L. website at: <http://wdsc.doleta.gov/sga/sga.asp>

### U.S. Military Staff Development and Compensation Initiative

The U.S. Military has developed a career ladder and compensation initiative to improve staff development and retention. A full description of this initiative, which includes opportunities for credentialing, can be found in an article entitled "Be all that you can be: Lessons from

the Military for improving our nations child care system" (April 2000) by Applebaum, J. Campbell, C. Duff, N. Martin E., Martinson, K. Available through the National Women's Law Center web-site: [www.NWLC.org](http://www.NWLC.org)

### Washington State Career and Wage Ladder Pilot Project

Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services has developed a career and wage ladder project in order to maximize the potential for building staff skills and promoting staff retention. The key aspect of this project is that the state reimburses childcare and youth workers \$.50 per hour for each educational increment that they have beyond the minimum required by licensing standards. Total reimbursement across the state came to \$3.3 million in 2000. For more information, contact Denise Halloran, Program Manager at: 360-902-8042.

### Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives

The Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives (*formerly the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education*), conducts field-based research and promotes state-wide efforts related to the leadership and career development of early child care and education staff. The Institute offers a wide range of research reports, articles, videos, and tool-kits related to this topic as well as a list-serv dedicated to career development trends and issues (ECCAREER-L). Recently, the Institute distributed a national survey to gather information on early childhood and school-age career development efforts. Preliminary findings are available on their web site (<http://institute.wheelock.edu>), which will also feature updated survey findings throughout 2001. For more information contact Kim Elliott at: [kimelliott@wheelock.edu](mailto:kimelliott@wheelock.edu)

*(Cont. on next page)*

## Resources *(cont.)*

### **The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)**

NIOST provides leadership for several national projects, including MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time). Each of the MOST cities (Boston, Chicago and Seattle) have experimented with innovative efforts to support staff in career development and compensation.

### **MOST Contacts**

In **Boston**, contact Marta Gredler at:  
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### **Publications available through NIOST include:**

*Credentialing in Out-of-School Time Programs.*

G. Morgan. 1998.

*Building a Professional Development System that Works for the Field of Out-of-school Time.* J. Costley. 1998.

*New Perspectives on Compensation Strategies for School-age Programs.* A paper by Gwen Morgan, Anne Mitchell and Brooke Harvey, to be published by the National Institute on Out- of-School Time, July, 2001.

*On the Road to SAC Professionalism: Emerging Models, Trends, and Issues in Credentialing: A Working Paper.*  
E. Nilsen. 1999.

*Proceedings of a National Youth Policy Forum: the Realities of Staffing and Financing.* To be released by NIOST, September, 2001.

*Professional Development Systems: The State of the States.*  
E. Gannett, J. Nee, D. Smith. School Age Review, pg. 26-31. Spring 2001.

*Status of SAC Credentialing.* E. Gannett. 2000.

For more information, see NIOST's web-site:  
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## Additional After-School Leaders Interviewed for this Publication

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