



Out-of-School Times

"working for 19 years to build a rich network of out-of-school time opportunities that challenge, reward, and inspire children and youth."

Winter 2006

BOSTnet Leads Family Involvement in After School Programs

BOSTnet is proud to announce the beginning of the Engaging Families Leadership Institute Pilot (EFLIP) - an intensive training certificate program aimed at strengthening the capacity of after school programs to increase the levels of involvement, engagement, and leadership opportunities for the families they serve. Over the course of the pilot program, EFLIP participants attend multiple training sessions and receive a training guide - with content directly derived from the best practices learned over the four years of the Engaging Families Initiative (EFI).

EFI was developed to support the capacity of after school programs to increase Black and Latino family involvement in their children's after school program; it was found that increased family involvement directly correlated with an increase in children's academic success. As EFI drew to a close, BOSTnet recognized the importance of family engagement to the out-of-school time field; thus, we began working to create a sustainable replication model



Youth dance at Grace Renaissance Academic Studies Program at Full Life Gospel Center - an Engaging Families Initiative grantee. (picture courtesy of John Kennard)

for promoting the best practices and implementation strategies learned in EFI. Part of this replication model includes a **how-to guide, Focus on Families! How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School**, that BOSTnet co-authored and published in conjunction with the Harvard Family Research Project and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. ▷ continued on page 3



Half-Day Forum on Youth Development Proves to be a Huge Success

The Half-Day Forum on Youth Development took place on January 5th, at The Boston

Foundation, and included 60 directors and other after school professionals. Based on evaluation responses, the forum was a huge success. 86% of the participants stated they learned the basic concepts of youth development. 74% of those attending said they learned "hands on" programming ideas on youth development that they could easily take back and implement at their programs. Additionally, 64% of the participants found networking with other programs to be very helpful - especially in comparing effective ideas and methods implemented in other programs.

BOSTnet has long been the leader in professional roundtables, continually providing training and networking opportunities over the past 9 years. Last year, approximately 125 program directors participated in the roundtable series. ▷ continued on page 3

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A word from Maryellen Coffey, Executive Director

BOSTnet has begun the new year newly energized, thanks to both the tireless commitment of staff and veteran board members, as well as an infusion of energy and expertise from our five newly elected board members. Each new board member promises to bring diverse expertise to our mission, and we are happy to welcome them aboard.



We have also re-worked our external communication network, with the launch of our newly designed, information-packed website. Please visit www.bostnet.org to see the range of resources we have available, including program listings, upcoming provider training opportunities, and more. *We also now give visitors the opportunity to support our work by making a donation online!*

We are currently hard at work on **our 2006-2007 Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs. The 17th edition** will once again provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive listing of out-of-school time services available in Boston. What's new this year is a collection of neighborhood maps, to help families find programs nearby and throughout the city.

The out-of-school time field has also been newly energized by the recent release of new reports. The Massachusetts After School Research Study's *Pathways to Success for Youth: What Counts in After School* has identified key quality indicators for programs impacting positive outcomes for youth. The Department of Early Education and Care's *Workforce Development Plan* presents standards for core competencies and skills, and a plan for building a development and credentialing system for out-of-school time professionals. Both reports have implications for how resources in the field should be allocated. Contact **BOSTnet** if you would like information on how to obtain a copy of either report. Additionally, **BOSTnet** has recently partnered with Harvard Family Research Project and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay to publish **Focus on Families: How to Build and Support Family-Centered Practices in After School**. This guide to family involvement is based on the best practices learned from **BOSTnet's** Engaging Families Initiative. Please, visit our website to download a free copy of this publication.

In the near future, we look forward to the release of recommendations from the legislative Commission on After School and Out of School Time, which will set the public policy agenda for building out-of-school time resources statewide. We will send updates on the Commission recommendations to our network, via the **BUZZ, our e-newsletter**. *(If you are not already a subscriber, you can become one by sending an email to buzz@bostnet.org. There is no charge to subscribe.)*

Look for our next print newsletter in the spring, with more updates on the work we are doing on behalf of families and the out-of-school time professionals who serve them.

Executive Director

Policy Update: Still hard at work, the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP) has been holding regional meetings to develop a plan for after school funding and to pass on regular updates about the After School and Out-of-School Time Legislative Commission. **BOSTnet** is proud to lead the Boston Region meetings, and Maryellen Coffey serves on the Executive Committee for MAP.

Lobby Day: On Thursday, February 16th, **BOSTnet** coordinated and hosted the Boston Regional Network meeting for MAP. 74 people attended the meeting at The Boston Foundation to learn how to get involved in advocating for after-school and youth programs. At the meeting, 40 individual "pledge" sheets were filled out by after school and youth work professionals pledging to either attend "**After School and Youth Program Advocacy Day**" on **March 23rd**, to visit state legislators at their offices, and to write or email their legislators. Other participants pledged to write letters to local papers, host family events at their programs and to testify at public hearings on important after school and youth issues. Gwynn Hughes presented MAP budget priorities, Cecilia Ugarte gave a presentation on the state budget process in Massachusetts and effective ways to contact legislators, and Maryellen Coffey kept the group on task and facilitated neighborhood working groups. **BOSTnet** will continue to inform the out-of-school time field of statewide advocacy efforts and MAP's budget priorities.

**BOSTnet is pleased
to announce our
2006 Board of Directors:**

Deirdre Hobson, Board President
Meg Flanigan, Board Treasurer
Christine Green, Board Clerk

Mary Baker
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*Denotes a New Board Member

Through BOSTnet's Community After School Initiative, Bowdoin Street After School Program Serves a Greater Number of Students

BOSTnet's Community After School Initiative (CASI) participants are entering a second year of increasing after school opportunities for Boston's youth and children. Through CASI, programs are strengthening management practices and developing long term plans for sustainability. CASI's work with community-based programs has been a unique focus in the out-of-school time field.

The Bowdoin Street After School Program at St. Peter's Parish has been providing quality homework assistance in the after school hours for the past four years. Through their work with CASI over the past year and a half, the program has seen a nearly 30% growth in the number of children who attend the program. "With increased numbers of children attending, we really needed to implement better systems that allowed us to effectively serve all our children," says Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Program Director at Bowdoin Street After School Program.

"BOSTnet's CASI really allowed us to create and implement effective systems. Additionally, CASI provided us with a network of other community-based programs. It has been extremely beneficial to meet with the other programs and hear what works well in their programs."

Homework help has always been one of the most important aspects of the Bowdoin Street After School Program. "Parents want to know that their child is coming to the after school program and getting their homework done - and getting it done correctly," says Nicole. When a smaller number of children attended the after school program, staff found it easier to maintain communication with each student's teacher. However, increased attendance in the after school program made individual communication with each teacher a struggle for after school staff and teachers, alike. Through the initiative of two teachers at St. Peter's School, Daisy Kumer and Katie Barnes, an effective and innovative solution to the problem was discovered. Teachers and after school staff are able to use an online system to track students' homework. This allows after school staff to have up-to-date information and catch any problems students may be having before they are a major issue. The system also allows teachers to print out grades and send them home to parents - keeping the parents attuned to their children's progress as well. As one goal of CASI is to highlight and develop Best Practices as programs expand enrollment, the online homework tracking system is of particular interest for further exploration.



Valdir Mendes, a counselor at Bowdoin After School, poses with kindergartener Madesyn Monteiro (picture taken by Delmira Monteiro, 7th grader who attends Bowdoin After School Program)

"Overall, our program has benefitted immensely from the training and networking opportunities we've received from BOSTnet," gushes Nicole. "It has really enabled us to realize our strengths, improve our weaknesses, and generally create a stronger program to better serve the kids who attend." □

(continued from page 1) **EFLIP** training began in January and includes 12 participants from 9 different organizations that serve Boston's youth in out-of-school time: Boston Community Learning Centers, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, Boston Public Schools, Black Ministerial Alliance, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Dotwell, Ellis Memorial, Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, and the YMCA of Greater Boston. After completing the pilot, they will have the knowledge and resources to construct a viable plan to increase family involvement in their program(s). BOSTnet will provide assistance for programs while they are creating their plans and at various stages of the process, including implementing the plan. For more information, please, contact info@bostnet.org. □

(continued from page 1) **HALF-DAY FORUM** At the conclusion of the 2004-2005 roundtable series, out-of-school time directors expressed a need for training on Youth Development. To address this need, BOSTnet hosted this half-day training on youth development. In addition to BOSTnet staff presenters, two presenters from the BEST Initiative helped with the training. The Department of Early Education and Care generously funded the forum, and everyone who participated received a certificate for 3 EEC training hours.

BOSTnet will sponsor a second Half-Day Forum on March 2nd entitled "Promoting Positive Behavior". BOSTnet will not endorse any particular methodology of behavior management, but will provide resources and general strategies to promote positive behavior for all youth. □

Upcoming Events

BOSTnet's Directors Roundtables/Youth Directors Roundtables: April 6th: 2nd Annual Summer Resource Fair, held at Franklin Park Zoo. **May 4th:** "Pathways to Increasing Family Involvement and Engagement in Out-of-School Time," held at the Children's Museum.

For more information on roundtables, please, contact Tania Buck-Ruffen (buck@bostnet.org).

March 2nd: *Promoting Positive Behavior Forum - FULL*

March 23rd: School Age Lobby Day at the Statehouse *(contact BOSTnet for more information, info@bostnet.org)*

DONATIONS WELCOME

Please, add your support to our mission to improve out-of-school time!

Contributions to BOSTnet are tax deductible.

Checks made payable to BOSTnet can be sent to:

11 Beacon Street, Suite 1000, Boston, MA 02108.

Or visit our website (www.bostnet.org) and click on the "donate" link in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage. All donors will be acknowledged in BOSTnet's Annual Report.

Thank you for helping to directly support our work!

The Catalogue for Philanthropy Recognizes BOSTnet

BOSTnet is proud to have been chosen as one of a select group of local non-profit agencies to be included on the website of the *Catalogue for Philanthropy* - a listing of Massachusetts non-profit agencies. The *Catalogue for Philanthropy* recognizes non-profits with a reputation for excellence, cost-effectiveness, creativity, and practicality. The intention of the web site is to provide philanthropic agencies with an organized information system through which they can learn about philanthropy in Massachusetts, and find charities that fulfill their giving priorities.

"The *Catalogue* has been an important information resource for Massachusetts funders for nearly ten years. Our participation in the *Catalogue* website is an exciting opportunity to raise BOSTnet's profile," says Maryellen Coffey.

BOSTnet's information will be available on the *Catalogue* website in late February; look for our listing at www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org.



Build the Out-of-School Time Network

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BOSTnet envisions a future in which all families have a rich network of out-of-school time opportunities that challenge, reward, and inspire children and youth.

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