

Email any comments or additional information for the BUZZ to buzz@bostnet.org

BOSTnet Information

BOSTnet BUZZ Special Edition: Middle School

Why Middle School?

According to the 2005 US Census estimates, there are approximately 27,000 Middle School age youth living in Boston. (source: US Census)

How well is Boston's OST field serving these Middle School age youth? In this edition of the BOSTnet BUZZ: find out about free professional development opportunities to better serve Middle School youth and to strengthen programs; learn about featured Middle School OST program, ASPIRE, specializing in therapeutic programming; and gain perspective on the landscape of Boston's OST programs serving Middle School youth.

Strengthening Programs...

Stuck in the Middle: Strategies for Working with Middle School-Age Youth

BOSTnet's Middle School Network will devote three Leadership Roundtables to sharing promising practices in serving Middle School youth within before and after-school programs. The first Middle School Leadership Roundtable will take place September 14th.

Please join BOSTnet to share and learn promising practices from the field and to network with other OST leaders. Providers will also be given the opportunity to join a virtual Middle School Network where you can find tools and discussion on serving Middle School youth.

Getting them in the Door!

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Middle School Students in Out-of-School Time Programs

September 14th, 2006 at the Tobin Community Center from 9:30 until 12:00.

Tobin Community Center, 1483 Tremont Street, Mission Hill, 02120

Save the Date for the following sessions of the Middle School Series

October 5: **Planning to Succeed! Creating Curriculum and Programming for Middle School Students**

November 2: **Let Them Lead! Creating Leadership Opportunities for Middle School Students**

ASPIRE After School Program: Connecting Youth, Families and Schools

The youth at ASPIRE After School Program continually redefine what the ASPIRE program name represents. Recent meanings include “Achieve Success - Persevere, Imagine, Reach, Excel,” and “After School Programs Impact Real Experiences.”

ASPIRE After School Program’s mission is to support 7-8th grade youth academically, socially, and emotionally. The name ASPIRE was chosen by the youth and they periodically develop a new slogan around the letters in the name. This reflects Director Susan Lovett’s focus on youth participation when working with Middle School youth. Lovett advises, “As much as possible, include the youth in decision making and program planning. The students will feel more empowered and ultimately, more invested in the outcomes. At ASPIRE, we have students evaluate the activities and give suggestions for future activities. Our students also help to plan and implement special events.” Lovett, a licensed social worker by training, has directed ASPIRE almost since its inception.

ASPIRE After School Program was piloted in Spring 2005. It is part of Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention’s (AIP) Therapeutic After School Program, which uses an integrated approach in serving youth. AIP participates in BOSTnet’s LOYD program (Lead to Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities), receiving support and technical assistance on improving inclusive practices in the program.

Operating in the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Dorchester, ASPIRE works closely with school staff to improve youth outcomes. Lovett also serves as Director of Community Partnerships at the Frederick school-facilitating communications between the school and after school programs such as Metrolacrosse, Tenacity, La Alianza Hispana and Massachusetts College of the Arts. This connection enables teachers to make more effective referrals. Most of ASPIRE’s slots are filled from referrals by school staff of students that are at risk of academic failure, have family issues, or are otherwise struggling. Frederick school students interested in ASPIRE offerings may join without a referral. Once referred, youth and their guardians are invited to an intake session with ASPIRE staff. The staff then devises a mini service plan for each student that includes recommended after school activities such as Tutoring, Drama, Life-skills workshops, etc.

Program activities are offered Monday through Thursday from 3:25 (school dismissal) to 6 pm. ASPIRE also runs a Before School Tutoring Program from 8 am to 9 am, Monday through Friday.

Regular programming consists of 1 hour of Homework time, 1 hour of Enrichment Activities Arts, Drama, Dance, Sports, Filmmaking, Baking, etc., and Life-skills Workshops Decision Making, Drug Abuse Prevention, College Preparation, and Summer Jobs. Many of these activities are provided through partnerships. For example, Project Right has run Drug Abuse Prevention workshops. As middle school youth are at a stage of development where they need to see tangible outcomes of their work, the enrichment activities are geared toward the development of a product that the student can take home.

Through Mentoring Groups, ASPIRE exposes students to positive older mentors in a small-group setting of no more than 7 youth. Mentors face challenges with students who may have had a bad day at school or are becoming disengaged from academics. Mentors must remain creative in finding new ways to motivate youth. The mentors call each student’s family weekly to provide updates on both positive and negative news about youth. The weekly call establishes a strong connection between the program and families. ASPIRE’s alliance with families is critical when the time comes to address problems.

A model family engagement program, ASPIRE also holds Family Nights, offers Parent/Guardian volunteer

opportunities, and sends home resources.

To provide better services to youth and more information to families, ASPIRE invests in the following activities: A weekly Teacher's Report for each ASPIRE student, noting the student's current grade in the class, conduct, and any missed homework assignments; Scheduled meetings with teachers if a student needs clarification on homework or a subject; and Attendance at regular meetings with school staff to identify issues with students at school.

ASPIRE's critical family engagement activity is its biweekly individualized newsletter to each family called, "Connections." This newsletter provides teacher contact information, announcements from ASPIRE, resources, and an individual report of a student's progress. The newsletter equips parents with the information they need to be more active participants in their child's development and education.

Understanding the unique needs of middle school youth, their families and teachers, ASPIRE connects these 3 groups to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for middle school youth. _ _ _



Out-of-School Time Landscape...

Out-of-School Time Landscape: Programs Serving Middle School Youth

BOSTnets 2006-2007 Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs provides information on Middle School youth served by OST programs. Of 362 programs that reported ages served, 87% of programs reported age ranges that included 11-13 year olds. Because programs many times list broad age ranges, it is difficult to understand to what extent they may actually serve 11-13 year olds.

To address this issue, BOSTnet also requests information on the number of children and youth served under each age category. With 216 programs responding to this question, about 172 programs (80%), reported that they served youth ages 11 – 13 years of age. **Only 41% of the 216 reporting programs serve 10 or more middle school students.**

Of the 172 programs serving middle school youth, 70 programs are licensed by Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC). Of the total 172 programs, only 29 focus exclusively on middle school age youth.

Programs reported that the majority of middle school youth attended non-licensed programs with an average of 47 youth per non-licensed program versus 9 youth per DEEC licensed program.

Want to learn more about the make up of the middle school youth population in Boston's Out-of-School Time field?

Attend BOSTnet's "*Stuck in the Middle: Strategies for Working with Middle School-Age Youth*", a three part training series starting September 14 and learn more about the ways that the OST field is serving the middle school population and gain new tools that will help you better serve this population. To learn more visit www.bostnet.org, open the attached flier, or contact Kambiz Maali at maali@bostnet.org



The Departments of Education and Early Education and Care, are offering a new grant program to provide students in grades K-12 with access to high quality after-school and out-of-school time programs and services during the school year and over the summer months. To see the Request for Proposals (RFP), and get more information on this grant opportunity, please go to <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants07/rfp/530.html>

Letters of Intent are DUE to the Department of Education by Monday, August 28th, 2006. Email your Letter of Intent to asostrfp@doe.mass.edu.

Final Proposals are DUE to the Department of Education by Monday, September 11th, 2006. Please see the RFP for more details at <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/grants07/rfp/530.html>

There will be an RFP Question and Answer Summary Sheet on the Department of Education website at www.doe.mass.edu/asost/. A total of \$950,000 is available, with \$100,000 must be expended for services that actively include students with disabilities in after-school programs that also serve non-disabled students and for services that include students for whom English is a second language. Through this program, funds may be used for:

staff and coordinator salaries;

contracts/subsidy payments with provider agencies;

professional development activities;

stipends for professionals and students actively involved in the delivery of services;

family involvement; additional costs related to serving students with disabilities and/or students who are English Language Learners (Expenditures for serving students with disabilities or students whose first language is not English may include increased per-child reimbursement rates, additional staff, specialized training, and technical assistance.); transportation; and program materials. No more than 10% of the total budget may be used for program

coordination and administration. Indirect costs are not an allowable expenditure under this grant.



BOSTnet

welcomes Elaine Donnelly to our team

Elaine Donnelly joined BOSTnet in August 2006 as a Project Director to lead the Facilities Initiative, Engaging Families Initiative (EFI), and Research and Policy efforts. Elaine previously worked for GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) initiatives in Lowell, MA, where she oversaw after school programming for four local schools and worked with students, administrators, teachers, families and community-based organizations across the city. Additionally, her prior experience includes teaching, tutoring, mentoring and serving as a Peace Corps volunteer. Elaine holds a BA from Boston College and an EdM from Harvard University.

BOSTnet announces the first round of Faces of the Field

Please visit our Faces of the Field Gallery at www.bostnet.org to read more about the accomplishments of “Faces from the Field,” **Jamion Brown** (youth) and **Jenelle Holder** (staff). Congratulations to both of them for representing the very best of Boston’s Out-of-School Time field.



Haitian Multi-Service Center Have you always wanted to learn a second language? Haitian Multi-Service Center offers language courses in Fall 2006 Language Courses. For more information, [click here](#).

Register to Vote! August 30 is the last day to register to vote for the State Primary Election held on September 19. Any changes such as party enrollment and address must be made by that date. Mailed applications need to be postmarked by Aug 30. www.cityofboston.gov/elections.

Help Find a Cure for Breast Cancer The new Massachusetts Cure Breast Cancer License Plate is very close to reality. We need only 80 more completed applications to bring the total to 1500 - at which point the Registry of Motor Vehicles will begin issuing the plates. Today - please go to www.curebreastcancerplate.org to download an application! Senator Jack Hart sponsored the legislation to establish this plate to honor the memory of Diane Connolly Zaniboni, who lost her battle with breast cancer in 2000, at only 39 years of age.

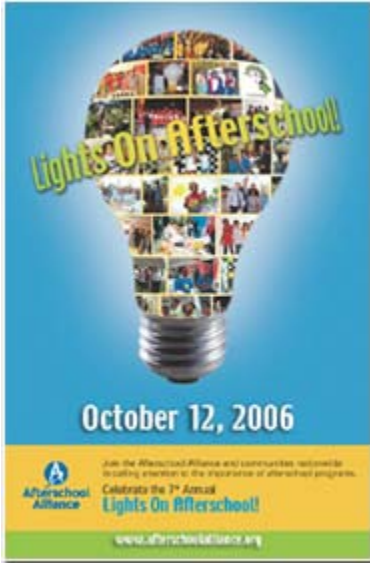
Farmers Market The Food Project runs a seasonal market (June - October 31) at Dudley Town Common (Corner of Blue Hill & Dudley) on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 4-7pm. It features produce grown in the city, on 4 lots in the Dorchester/Roxbury neighborhoods. The market is run by members of the Youth Program – so many young people from the neighborhood play a large role in the Market. Additionally, WIC Farmers' Market coupons, Food Stamps (EBT Machine) & cash are accepted. Are staff is bilingual and we are able to communicate with all our customers. Special events including art activities, musical performances and cooking demos are held on the last Thursday of each month.

The Bard College DotWell Clemente Course Returns! A chance to STUDY the great MASTERPIECES of philosophy, literature, art, and US History AND receive intensive instruction in writing. Open House Information Sessions: Wednesday evening, September 13th from 7:00pm – 8:30pm, Wednesday evening, September 20th from 7:00pm – 8:30pm, 450 Washington Street – Codman Square, Dorchester. Visit our [bulletin](#) for more information.

City-Wide Dialogues on Boston's Ethnic and Racial Diversity: Want to have a REAL discussion about Boston's diversity? Residents of all Boston neighborhoods are invited to participate in a new group of the City-Wide Dialogues on Boston's Ethnic and Racial Diversity. The Dialogues consist of four two-hour sessions with 15-20 racially and ethnically diverse residents and two trained facilitators. Over 700 residents have already taken part in over 40 local dialogue series across the city. The project is engaging Bostonians in candid but respectful discussions, going beyond the superficial to increase understanding, break stereotypes, and build trust, relationships and friendships across racial and ethnic lines. Participation is free and advance registration is required. The next group begins Tuesday, July 25 and continues for four Tuesdays until August 15. 6:15- 8:15pm at a central Boston location close to public transportation. If you're interested, please register online or by phone. For more information or to register, go to www.BostonDialogues.org or call 617-442-4519, ext 226.



***Lights On Afterschool* is coming on October 12!**



Please join us in celebrating the **7th Annual *Lights On Afterschool!***

Let's show the country what can - and should - happen after school. Participate in *Lights On Afterschool*. Hold an event at your program, or partner with others in your community.

Whether you partner with others or hold your own event, make sure you let us know - [click here](#) to update your information for *Lights On Afterschool* (to sign up multiple programs [click here](#)). You must respond in order to be promoted on our event website, and to receive Event Planner Email Alerts and *Lights On Afterschool* posters.

Our voices have grown stronger but the gap in afterschool resources is still large. In the U.S. today, 14.3 million children are alone and unsupervised after school.

Last year more than 7,500 *Lights On Afterschool* events attracted 1 million Americans. I hope you'll help us reach even more Americans with our message in 2006.

Access *Lights On Afterschool* **planning tools on line** at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_on/index.cfm. You will find sample media materials, timelines, case studies and more.

As always, we invite your comments and ideas on *Lights On Afterschool!* Email us anytime at lightson@afterschoolalliance.org.

Sincerely,
The Afterschool Alliance

CALL TO MASSACHUSETTS ARTISTS

VORTEX: A JURIED EXHIBITION



HOSTED BY BLUE MAN GROUP AT THE CHARLES PLAYHOUSE

Seeking submissions of original, exciting work that explores the dynamics of **interconnectivity**.

BLUE MAN GROUP TWO AGE CATEGORIES: 12-17 AND 18+ YEARS OLD

Cash prizes, unveiling party and yearlong exhibitions at the Charles Playhouse and Boston Children's Museum.

- no entry fee, one entry per artist
- submission deadline October 2, 2006

For submission guidelines and a downloadable entry form, please visit blueman.com/vortex.

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Patience of Nantucket

By Robert Johnson Jr., Directed by Akiba Abaka

September 7-23, 2006

Press Opening Saturday, September 9th @ 8:00 p.m.

Plaza Black Box Theatre at the Boston Center for the Arts

Up You Mighty Race launches its 2006-2007 season with the world premiere performance of *Patience of Nantucket* by Robert Johnson Jr., UMass Boston playwright and historian. *Patience of Nantucket* is a dramatization of the tragic life of Patience Cooper, an African-American woman in nineteenth century Nantucket, who was wrongfully convicted of killing a white shopkeeper.

About Up You Mighty Race:

Via the mediums of movement, theatre, song, and poetry, Up You Mighty Race utilizes the arts as a catalyst for social awareness and change. For more information visit www.upyoumightyrace.org

About Boston Center for the Arts:

Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) is an urban cultural village, incubating and showcasing the performing and visual arts and artists of our time. For more information, visit www.bcaonline.org."