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BOSTnet Information

February 28, 2008

"Promoting Positive Behavior"

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Special Announcements

Upcoming BOSTnet news and events:

- **Leadership Roundtable: *Let's All Play! Making Sports More Inclusive***
Thursday, March 6, 2008
10am - 12noon
Curry Student Center, Northeastern University, Boston, MA.

An expert panel discussion will include Eli Wolff, Director, Center for the Study of Sport in Society; Susan Tufts, Executive Director, Outdoor Explorations; George Kent, Director of Organizational Development, Special Olympics of MA (SOMA); Joe Siegel, Southeast Sectional Director, SOMA; Chenine Johnson, Director of Recreation & Laura Morabito, Assistant Director of Recreation, East Middlesex ARC; Gary N. Siperstein PhD, Founder and Director, The Center for Social Development & Education. [Click Here](#) for Directions. [Click here](#) for parking information. Contact BOSTnet for more information or to RSVP at info@bostnet.org or 617-720-1290 x232.

- **Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs - A Free and Powerful Marketing Tool!**
BOSTnet's Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs is a comprehensive listing of Boston's Out-of-School-Time (OST) programs.

- Detailed Program Information: You may include contact information and detailed descriptions of programming, accessibility, ages served, etc.
- Widely Distributed Printed Guide: Thousands of copies of the Guide reach families and service providers through distribution in 145 Boston Public Schools and Parent Information Centers, Libraries, and Community Centers.
- Online Guide Entry: Once you enter information online, your program's information is automatically included BOTH online and in the printed Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs.

How Do I List My Program in the Guide?

You may go through the new BOSTONavigator site, www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/ for an easy link to enter your program information online. Please call 617 720-1290 x210 for your login information.

Please update soon - this is a grace period!

- **New State of the Field Report!** BOSTnet has published its most recent State of the Field report, "*Chasing Standards: Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Accreditation.*" This report examines the National Afterschool Association's quality improvement and accreditation process through the experience of the Boston After School Quality Initiative. As programs staffs know, there are many different systems of quality measurement that can add a significant administrative burden on their programs. While there are clear needs for rigorous standards in OST programming, many questions about the current accreditation process remain. What outcomes are we trying to achieve? What are the incentives for programs to become accredited? Is the process too cumbersome for most programs? Do the benefits justify the costs? Are the current national standards relevant to local needs and conditions? Can national standards effectively address the heterogeneous nature of out-of-school time? [Click here](#) to read this report.
- **Revised BOSTnet Leadership Roundtable and Half-day forum schedule:** Please note that there are a few changes to our calendar as we finish up the 2007-2008 academic year. To view the updated calendar, please [click here](#). To RSVP for one of the Roundtables or Half-day forums, please call 617-720-1290 x232 or info@bostnet.org.
- **Please visit BOSTnet's [Community Resources & Events](#) and [Community Job Postings](#) webpages** to view the latest in events and career opportunities in the OST field!

Out-of-School Time Field Announcements:

- **Notice to Programs** - BOSTnet encourages you to review and update your program information on BOSTONavigator (www.bostonnavigator.org). If you already have your username and password, please login to www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/. If you need a username and password please contact us at help@bostonnavigator.org. Your help will make this new tool the place for parents and families to find youth opportunities in the City of Boston.
- **Free Training is still available for the Sunflower Science Curriculum** - An innovative, hands-on science curriculum developed especially for afterschool programs by the Intercultural Center for Research in Education (INCRE). Designed specifically for children in grades 2-4, the Sunflower Science Discovery Curriculum is fully bilingual and highlights the accomplishments of Latino

scientists. To take part in this wonderful opportunity, contact John Zuman at INCRE (jzuman@incre.org; 781-643-2142) or Michael Bennett at BOSTnet (bennett@bostnet.org; 617-720-1290 x 240).

Policy Update

Afterschool & Youth Advocacy Day!

Thank you to everyone who helped make Advocacy Day a success. An estimated 300 participants took part in events this year at the Grand Staircase of the Massachusetts State House. Gwynn Hughes, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP) served as the master of ceremonies and got the event rolling by reminding us of the important work that we all do for children and youth. Gwynn was followed by three young women who spoke to the value of afterschool in their lives. An overview of their remarks can be found below.

The three featured speakers of the event, Senate Chairman Robert A. DeLeo, Senator Thomas McGee, and the Commissioner of Cambridge Police, Robert Haas all spoke of the opportunities and challenges facing young people today and the unique role that high-quality OST programs can play in preparing children and youth to be productive, engaged citizens. Despite the less-than-ideal acoustics of the room, we left with some very positive news from MAP legislative consultant Cathy DeVento that a large number of legislative offices sent staff to the event. That is a good sign that our message is being heard at the state house. Perhaps most inspiring, however, was watching groups of people organizing themselves and preparing to go speak to their legislators!

NOW is the time to act! The House is currently debating and preparing their FY2009 budget for a release sometime in April. We are all disappointed with the Governor's budget that flat-funds the DOE's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Grants at \$2 million while increasing funding for Expanded Learning Time from \$13 to \$26 million. There is still time to call, write or visit your legislator to advocate for more equitable funding. We are asking for a \$31 million investment in the future of our children:

- Increase afterschool opportunities for children and youth at the Department of Education by increasing the ASOST quality grants - **\$14 million.**
- Reduce the waitlist by 20% for school-age child care at the Department of Early Education and Care - **\$10 million.**
- Support the development of older youth and violence prevention programs at the Department of Public Health - **\$7 million.**
- Support the establishment of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council.

Can we count on you?

Youth Voice!

To break up the talk of this year's budget requests and legislative talking points, several youth from Massachusetts afterschool programs approached the podium yesterday morning to let us know the importance afterschool has had on their lives. And as with all experiences, nothing speaks with the same compelling persuasion as first-hand testimony. Marquese Roberts from Teen Empowerment rapped to us about the negative influences that often exist for teens like him, but underscored how afterschool programs have helped him not only develop his artistic side, but also cultivate a desire to make healthy lifestyle choices overall. Samantha Soto and Wiselene Dorceus, both of Girls, Inc. of Lynn, proudly identified

themselves as *products* of the Lynn Afterschool program. Samantha, a 17 year old, states that through her involvement with Girls, Inc., she has established a core life goal: to better her community through teen involvement. Samantha realizes her motivation and perspectives were nurtured at Girls, Inc. and that "no teen will get this experience by staying home (after school everyday) and watching tv!" She emphasized her commitment to spreading the word about afterschool by saying, "I wouldn't be standing here today if I didn't think this was important."

As a participant in afterschool programs since the age of six, Wiselene Dorceus recognizes that her mom found piece of mind knowing that she was safe in the hours after school let out each day. Girls, Inc. is just such a program in Wiselene's eyes because it's a place where everyone comes together, works together and is comfortable and safe in the hours from 2pm-6pm. "Yes, education is key", as Wiselene says, "but there are other healthy decisions that you don't learn how to make in school alone." Youth need good, quality afterschool programs! As a result of Girls, Inc., Wiselene has learned the value of giving back to her community and educates youth on substance abuse issues, among others. "*Youth teaching youth*" - an amazingly powerful tool.

Kimberly Jacques of Northshore Recovery High School in Beverly knows that its important for her to stay busy in order to not slip into the same unhealthy habits and activities that used to fill her after school hours. In her current afterschool program, Kimberly runs an AA program for students and is serving as a positive role model for those around her. In addition, students like her have the opportunity to learn aspects about running their own programs and businesses, further elevating their sense of self-worth and value in their communities. Afterschool programs have taught Kimberly the importance of having structure in life and this is helping her maintain her sobriety.

The poise and articulation from these student speakers demonstrates the positive influence that quality and diverse afterschool programs can have on our students. We are very proud of our youth and we entreat everyone to continue to push for state and federal funding to support these, and all afterschool programs across the state. As Senator Thomas McGee concluded, "The young people spoke loud and clear" -- their rich experiences do not come from the classroom alone. Afterschool programs are vitally important - "*this is an investment that everyone in the Commonwealth needs to understand and be a part of.*"

Strengthening Programs

Promoting Positive Behavior in Afterschool Environments: Five programs engaged in BOSTnet's innovative model

Over the past five years, reports of children with problem behavior from afterschool and out of school time program staff have significantly increased. A number of factors may be contributing to this rise in reports, including the increased numbers of children with special needs in OST programming and inadequate training for staff in behavior management. Those working in the OST field know that disruptive behavior can destabilize even the best planned afterschool activities.

In response to overwhelming demand for assistance from the OST field and at the request of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), which reports behavioral support as the top requested training need of licensed afterschool programs, BOSTnet launched a year-long, EEC-funded, pilot project to create a new behavioral support model specifically designed to meet the needs of afterschool and out of school time programs. Informed by the pilot year, BOSTnet developed Promoting Positive Behavior in Afterschool Environments (PPBAE); an innovative model that is focused on prevention of behavioral issues and sustaining a positive environment over the long-term.

Currently five programs from the Boston area are participating in the initial implementation of the PPBAE model. They will be engaged in a series of steps that are customized to the particular environmental issues in their respective programs.

- Step One: Promoting Positive Behavior and Resiliency Assessment Tool
To assess the strengths of the program environment and to guide needed environmental changes, programs use the tool as a first step in a process of transformation that leads to sustainability of a pro-social environment and assists in creating individualized interventions such as space, programmatic, relational and behavioral modifications. The tool helps assess staff needs, program content and child behavioral support in programs. Issues such as levels of staff self awareness, presence of behavioral supports and enrichment structure and delivery are explored.
- Step Two: Program Transformation
After assessment, customized action plans are developed for programs. Possible recommendations may include group trainings, site observations and individualized technical assistance, trainings focused on social-emotional development, program structure and communication tools. These plans all utilize a comprehensive approach that focus on children's needs, while also providing essential supports and tools for the staff members.
- Step Three: Resources and Collaboration
PPBAE will help programs identify outside resources and collaborations that help support behavioral issues through the appropriate interventions. It is recognized that all issues cannot be addressed by environmental change and access to appropriate resources is essential in not only supporting the child but also the program and staff. In addition, trainings in problem identification and on site interventions will be offered.
- Step Four: Evaluation and Sustainability
PPBAE seeks to evaluate, adjust and integrate practices into program infrastructure that can be sustained over time. Evaluation will help inform replicability strategies in order to meet the growing need for behavioral supports in the field.

Through PPBAE, BOSTnet hopes to empower programs to start with a preventative approach to behavioral management. Traditional behavioral management views an individual as a problem and seeks to "fix" him or her by quickly eliminating the challenging behavior. PPBAE aims to focus on children's behavior in the context of the program environment and adapt that environment when possible to set children up for success. By adjusting program philosophy, structure and activities, and staff attitudes and interactions with children and youth the atmosphere can be changed to create an engaging, pro-social environment that fosters positive youth development. In most cases, learning environments are improved with relatively simple modifications along with providing resources for times when more complex interventions are needed.

Participate in this innovative project!

While there are just five programs participating in the full PPBAE model, there are still opportunities to get involved and benefit. BOSTnet is currently offering opportunities for programs to participate by completing the Emotional Support Assessment Tool developed by PEAR and BOSTnet. The first twenty-five respondents to contact BOSTnet will receive this tool and professional evaluation for free. Your program will benefit from this individualized action plan as you identify ways to lower behavioral issues at your site, reduce expulsion from problem behaviors, and create a training strategy that will unlock the potential of staff to promote positive behaviors. Support and tools designed for school age and middle school. If you are

interested in more information about PPBAE, please contact Peter Griffin at 617-720-1290 x 230 or Patricia Stahl at 617- 720-1290 x 241.

To access more Community News, Events, Resources and Job Listings, please visit our website, www.bostnet.org, to view our Resources Page.

Quick Links

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BOSTnet just finished celebrating twenty years of helping families obtain a rich network of out-of-school time opportunities that challenge, reward, and inspire children and youth. We need your support to continue working toward our mission to enhance the quality and increase the capacity of out-of-school time programming for Boston's youth! **Please consider a [donation](#) today.**

Contact Information

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