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## Special Announcements

### Upcoming BOSTnet News and Events

- **We are finalizing dates for the 4th Annual All Means All Conference** to be held in late September or early October. Please stay tuned for details and a request for presenters!
- **Promoting Positive Behaviors (PPB) in Out-of-School time** - The Promoting Positive Behavior project has culminated for the year with a great many lessons from the field that will be applied to the next year's work. Currently, data is being evaluated to determine what challenges are most prevalent (taken from the sample group) as well as a better understanding as to what resources and procedures programs have available. We would like to thank For Kids Only, the YMCA of East Boston, and Tenacity for working with this initiative as well as to several other sites throughout the city that have piloted the assessment tool and provided feedback. Reflections on the project as well as lessons learned will be presented at the **All Means All Conference** later this year. For further information, contact **Peter Griffin** at 617-720-1290 x230.
- 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:

- **BOSTnet's 2008-2009 Guide to Boston's Before and After-School Programs**  
The new edition of the Guide is here! Our annual Guide illustrates the power of the out-of-school time network in Boston. This edition includes program descriptions, activity types, summer program information, and disability and access information for families with children who have special needs. \*NEW to this Edition: Middle School Program Listing - find out which programs serve middle school students. For programs looking for support in curriculum development, program specialists, equipment, and other resources, BOSTnet includes a Resources for OST Programs section. Contact [info@bostnet.org](mailto:info@bostnet.org) to request a copy of the Guide or ask for them at your local library or family resource center! The Guide is also available online, please [click here](#) for a pdf version of the Guide.
- **BOSTNavigator** - BOSTnet encourages you to review and update your program information on BOSTNavigator ([www.bostonnavigator.org](http://www.bostonnavigator.org)). If you already have your username and password, please login to [www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/](http://www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/). If you need a username and password please contact us at [help@bostonnavigator.org](mailto: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. If you have questions, please call Michael Bennett at 617-720-1290 x240.
- **Build Quality into Your Fall Programming!** Do you want to improve your program activities and provide your children with engaging, hands-on learning projects to improve their awareness and understanding of science and the environment? The Intercultural Center for Research in Education (INCRE) is pleased to provide **FREE materials and training** to programs serving children in grades 2-4 located in the City of Boston for their innovative **Sunflower Afterschool Science Discovery Program**. Beginning on September 30th, training for the 2008/2009 school year will cover 3 units: Human Body, Trash and Air. To get your application, please contact John Zuman at INCRE: [jzuman@incre.org](mailto:jzuman@incre.org) or 781-643-2142; or Michael Bennett at BOSTnet: [bennett@bostnet.org](mailto:bennett@bostnet.org) or 617-720-1290. For more information about this exciting program [click here](#).
- **Teachers Looking for Summer Jobs** - Citizen Schools Boston teachers are looking for meaningful summer employment. If your organization has summer job openings then please contact Ryan McCarthy at [ryanmccarthy@citizenschools.com](mailto:ryanmccarthy@citizenschools.com) or 617-695- 2300 x161.

## Promoting Positive Youth Environments

### ***Adapting Program Environments to Positive Behavior***

It's a persistent problem—a child comes in to the classroom and throws their coat on the floor next to the door. Every day, the child is reminded not to do that. Staff takes the child to the coordinator. The coordinator calls home. The behavior does not stop, and all parties become frustrated. This behavior may have a number of causes from developmental awareness to social or emotional issues within the child's life. Similar cycles of frustration can often play out in OST programs every day, leading to interrupted activities and staff burn out. Staff may focus on changing behavior of individual children, but often the answer is in adapting the program environment. A solution may be as simple as setting a basket by the door and directing all coats there so program staff can focus on more important activities and issues.

Five sites involved with BOSTnet's Promoting Positive Behavior initiative have received on-site

Five sites involved with BOST*net*'s Promoting Positive Behavior initiative have received on-site support where BOST*net* staff have conducted observation and interviewed staff. Along with this work, there have been a number of sites that have participated in the project via correspondence with BOST*net*. Central to all this work has been the Behavior and Emotional Support Self Assessment Tool used by site staff to reflect on what assets, behaviors, mental health services, and staff self care their program has. In a preliminary review of correspondence and on site work, it appears that programs need increasing support in mental health services (such as developing a referral system in place for children to be assessed for counseling) while the challenges programs face appear to be around childhood aggression, interpersonal issues, and delinquency. When on-site staffs are asked to name behaviors, there is a tendency to name individual children rather than to think generally about the program environment and the ways that behavior is shaped by that environment. Our work on this project certainly highlights a need for more intensive mental health support for many children in afterschool and OST. However, for the majority of children and youth, behavioral issues fall within a normal developmental spectrum and are best addressed through an emphasis on positive relationships and intentional environmental change.

## **BOST*net*Benefits - Build Your Network**

"hands on strategies learned" at the conference that they would use in their programs. Conference goers found the Handouts and Tools useful for "sharing with other staff," "reference materials," and "very useful tools that I can use," among other reasons.

Families Matter! 2008 was a high-energy event that highlighted the best of the field with panelists and attendees lending to a dynamic environment of sharing, learning, networking and passion for serving families. We look forward to continuing to engage the field in discussion around family engagement through our online network.

Please visit [BOSTnet's Family Engagement Network](#) to download tools, connect to others, and find the latest research, news and events on Family Engagement.

Read more about the conference at United Way's blog [inspire4life](#).

*We're pleased to have the support of the **United Way** and the **Ludcke Foundation** for this Initiative.*

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### ***Increasing Family Access to Cultural Institutions***

If you weren't able to attend our June 6th *Families Matter!* Conference and missed hearing about all the great Family Engagement opportunities that are offered by Boston-area museums and cultural institutions, then here's your chance to get the scoop. We had representatives from the **Museum of Science (MOS)**, the **Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)**, the **New England Aquarium**, the **Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA)**, the **Children's Museum** and the **Harvard Museum of Natural History** talk about the special activities and promotions that they provide to get families in the door. Art, science and learning should not intimidate families and these institutions have devised fun and interactive ways for youth and families to get the most out of their visits and take advantage of informal learning.

Museums recognize the shift over the last couple of decades in what the typical profile of a museum visitor looks like. Gone are stuffy and monothematic displays designed to pique only the interest of a scholarly few. Instead, what you will find at the ICA and MFA are Open Houses and moving art productions, Family Fun Nights at the Children's Museum, and chances for parents and youth to learn together on a self-guided tour at the MOS or the Aquarium. The intimidation factor has been removed and families of all backgrounds are finding interesting, and perhaps more importantly, relevant learning opportunities on their visits. Museums welcome families of diverse cultural backgrounds and recognize that families often face time, financial and accessibility limitations that can discourage their perceptions of museums as being feasible places to spend quality family time.

Boston-area cultural institutions are, by and large, quite accessible via public transportation and many offer reduced or free entry to families on certain days of the week. Another key to family engagement that museums want to highlight is the value of repeat visits. These institutions are chock full of things to see, feel, learn and experience; families shouldn't feel pressured to try and "see it all" in one visit - consider purchasing an annual membership, which often pays for itself after one or two visits by a family of four, and motivates families to schedule follow-up visits, equating to more meaningful family time together! [Click here for a Museum listing](#).

## Research & Information

### ***OST's Unique Role to Play in Inclusion***

After BOSTnet's March Roundtable on Inclusion in Sports Programs this past spring, I cornered one of our panelists, Gary Siperstein, and asked him if he thought afterschool and OST programs were better at fostering inclusive behaviors in youth than schools. Visibly excited, he said, "YES! Give me a pen and I will show you why!" Flipping over a stack of papers he was carrying, he wrote in big, block letters one word-**FUN**. Dr. Siperstein is Professor and Director of the Center for Social Development and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. His most recent book, *Promoting Social Success*, focuses on improving the social competence of children in the classroom. The meaning of those 3 letters was clear-children are more likely to engage in pro-social peer relationships with children of all abilities when they are having fun in non-competitive, non-academic environments. As a developmental setting, OST has inherent characteristics that can more successfully address issues of inclusion and social competence.

In a recent article in *Exceptional Children* ("A National Study of Youth Attitudes Towards the Inclusion of Students with Intellectual Disabilities," Vol. 73(2007), p435-455), Siperstein and his colleagues discuss findings from a nationwide survey of nearly 6,000 middle school students. Somewhat surprisingly, they found a preponderance of negative attitudes toward peers with intellectual disabilities (ID), particularly in relation to academic competence. Despite the efforts to promote and advance inclusive classrooms, schools have failed to improve attitudes toward children with disabilities because they tend to highlight dissimilarities rather than similarities. Clearly, their competitive nature, hierarchical structure and the increasing emphasis on academic achievement make it difficult to develop pro-inclusive attitudes in youth. Contact alone will not change attitudes; it is the type of contact that provides an opportunity for youth to experience competence of youth with ID.

Significantly, Siperstein and other researchers at the University of Massachusetts are turning their attention to inclusive programming that takes place outside of the school environment-specifically, summer recreation programs. Their findings are proving to be important for the field, as a recent unpublished paper suggests:

*"Although there are increasing opportunities for children with ID to attend such programs, the benefit to the social relationships of children with ID has been thus far overlooked. We believe that this type of setting is conducive to the social inclusion of children with ID because first, it provides children with ID a "fresh start" away from the classroom setting where they are likely to experience rejection and isolation. Second, because most summer programs of this nature are focused on recreational activities and fun as opposed to academic performance, they are more likely to facilitate social relationships than the classroom setting, where the academic limitations of children with ID are most evident. There is also evidence to suggest bringing children with and without ID together outside of the classroom, such as in after-school programming or peer buddy programs, can promote greater social acceptance of children with ID."*

As we continue to advocate for high quality afterschool and OST programs that support healthy youth development, it is important that we keep in mind that the impact of a strong system of OST programs can have broad societal implications. Keeping these programs distinct and separate and understanding that they play a unique role in the lives of children and youth is critical to their continued viability.

## Advocacy

The state budget process is nearing its completion and we expect some resolution from the Conference Committee by the end of the month. The Committee-comprised of **Senators Panagiotakis, Brewer and Knapik, and Representatives St. Fleur, DeLeo and DeMacedo**-are charged with resolving differences between the House and Senate budgets and sending a final proposed FY09 budget to Governor Patrick. As we have reported, all our efforts have paid off this year and we expect some significant gains in funding for afterschool and out-of-school time programs. *You can still make a difference* by contacting your legislator or members of the Conference Committee. Stay tuned for more information.

We were fortunate to attend a MAP Advisory Team meeting that included an overview of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Grants by Donna Traynham of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The DESE is currently preparing the RFP for a release sometime in late June. With the grant set to increase significantly, we discussed a number of potential changes to the RFP, including increasing the 10% cap on administrative costs, increasing the maximum funding beyond \$75,000, and including grant proposals for community infrastructure development. It is unclear at this point whether any of these suggestions will be adopted by the DESE. It is clear, however, that for FY09, the DESE will look for balanced regional distribution and program mix that includes public and non-public schools, community-based organizations, school year and summer programs and a mix of content areas that build quality in both academic and non-academic focused programs. There will also be streamlined process for FY08 recipients who are seeking continued funding in FY09.

There will be a 4-5 week turn around for proposals after the RFP is released. Programs should expect to have their proposals finalized by late July or early August. Successful proposals will probably be identified by the end of September 2008. Please check the **DESE website** for announcements for the RFP over the next 2 weeks.

## Quick Links

- [BOSTnet website](#)
- [Newsletter Archive](#)
- [BOSTnet Publications](#)
- [Connecting You to Resources](#)
- [Donate](#)

**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.**

**To access more Community News, Events, Resources and Job Listings, please visit our website, [www.bostnet.org](http://www.bostnet.org), to view our Resources Page.**

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