

Engaging America's  
**Youth**

**Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth:**  
Final Report of a Study of IMLS Youth Programs, 1998-2003



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Printed December 2007

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**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**  
Information not available at the time of publication.

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## Dear Colleague

The mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services is to enhance learning and innovation, sustain heritage, and support professional development for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. We help libraries and museums across the country to engage and help youth build the information, communication, and technology skills critical for success in learning at all levels, in work, and in life.

The need is clear. Young people respond to appropriate structure, positive relationships, and a sense of accomplishment – and they need more than schools alone can offer. Across the country we see major efforts on the part of federal, state, and local government, social services, research, private foundations, and non-profit organizations to provide “extra-learning opportunities” and to understand the impact of learning that takes place *outside* of school and school hours. Libraries and museums help fill the gaps through complementary leadership, rich resources, and effective programs.

This report shares the results of our year-long study of the impact of IMLS grants (1998-2003) through programs that served youth aged 9-19. Nearly 400 museum and library programs were surveyed about their goals, strategies, content, audience, and structure, as well as about their impact, effectiveness, and outcomes. Workshops were held at our IMLS offices with a Youth Action Committee and representatives of select grants to develop a set of case studies that would illustrate effective practices. Companion publications in the *Nine to Nineteen: Youth in Museums and Libraries* series include a practitioners' guide and a policy brief.

Perhaps our most important finding is that everyone benefits when museums and libraries apply positive youth development principles and partner with other organizations that serve youth. Young people gain important life skills, and communities strengthen the learning networks that are essential for youth to thrive. Libraries and museums draw on the vitality of youth to keep them relevant, and to help them build lasting community relationships and sustain their audiences. By working with young people both in and out of school, libraries and museums change the lives of America's youth and the quality of community life for all of us.

I invite you, and challenge you, to take the results of this study to your community – whether you work in research, education, philanthropy, in a museum, library, school or other cultural institution, in a community organization, or in federal, state or local government – and to develop the learning networks, community partnerships, and positive relationships that our youth, families, schools, and communities need.

Sincerely,



Anne-Imelda Radice, Ph.D.

Director

## Acknowledgments

As is always the case with a major undertaking such as a national study of this nature, many people and organizations contributed to this final product. First and foremost we want to thank the people who participated in the study—all the libraries and museums that responded to the Web-based questionnaire and all of the people who were interviewed as part of the case studies (this included the lead libraries and museums, their partners and when possible, participants in the youth development projects that IMLS had funded). The willingness of people to participate in the survey and then to talk to us and share their experiences in more detail was critical to bringing life to this study.

Institute for Learning Innovation researchers played a major role in conducting the study and pulling the final report together. In particular, the authors of the report, Ms. Judy Koke, Project Director and Dr. Lynn D. Dierking, Senior Researcher, spent many hours working on the design, planning, and implementation of the study. They received excellent support from additional Institute researchers including Dr. Joe E. Heimlich, who provided invaluable statistical advice during the development of the questionnaire and the analysis of the data, April Solomon, who contributed greatly to the literature review, Cheryl Kessler, who conducted interviews and wrote up case studies and Jill Stein, who provided excellent copy editing expertise in the final stages of report writing. In addition, two other people assisted the Institute in data management and analysis: Mary Fitzpatrick, who managed and organized the data from the Web-based survey and Liz Danter of E. Danter Evaluation, LLC, who assisted with data analysis.

In addition to Institute researchers, others also made important contributions to this report. The collective expertise of the Youth Action Committee has been invaluable. We are grateful to the entire group — Ms. Francie Alexander, Senior Vice President, Scholastic Education, and Chief Academic Officer, Scholastic Publishing; Mr. John Berry, Executive Director, Network of Illinois Learning Resources; Ms. Ginnie Cooper, City Librarian, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Alan Friedman, Director and CEO, New York Hall of Science; Mr. Doug Herbert, Special Assistant on Teacher Quality and Arts Education, Department of Education; Dr. Julie Johnson, Distinguished Chair of Museum Leadership, Science Museum of Minnesota; Dr. Ioannis Miaoulis, President and Director, Boston Science Museum and IMLS Board member; Dr. Peggy O'Brien, Senior Vice President of Educational Programming and Services, Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Mr. Chase Pickering, Youth Council Fellow, Roots and Shoots Foundation; Dr. Julie Spielberger, Research Fellow, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago; Ms. Sonnett Takahisa, Director of Education, World Trade Center Memorial Foundation and Memorial Museum; Dr. William Tally, Senior Researcher, Center for Children and Technology, Education Development Center, Inc.; Ms. Julie Walker, Executive Director, American Association of School Librarians, American Library Association; Dr. William White, Executive Producer and Director of Education Outreach, Colonial Williamsburg; Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf, Director, Opportunity and Accountability, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University; Ms. Nicole Yohalem, Program Director, Forum for Youth Investment— for the lively discussions during the workshops, and in particular to Alan Friedman and Julie Spielberger for their excellent comments on drafts of the

report. IMLS is grateful to all of these people and everyone else who contributed to this effort.

Thanks are also due to IMLS staff members, two in particular. Karen Motylewski, Evaluation Officer, carefully reviewed the questionnaire and interview protocols as well as the report, providing invaluable feedback throughout the project. And special thanks go to Dr. Mary Downs, Research Officer and Project Liaison. Dr. Downs helped conceptualize and guide the research from beginning to end and reviewed all aspects of the project. Her thoroughness and diligence improved the quality of the research and its products.

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October 2007

# Executive Summary

## Background

The Institute of Museum and Library Services helps museums and libraries preserve our cultural heritage, enhance learning and innovation, and develop staff capacities to provide the best in service to our communities. *Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth* looks at the contributions of IMLS grants from 1998 through 2003 to quality programs and positive outcomes for youth aged 9–19, with four key goals:

- Identify results, trends, and characteristics of these projects.
- Help strengthen programs and community partnerships for youth development.
- Offer models of excellence and practical guidelines for youth programs.
- Understand IMLS projects in a national context of youth development efforts.

The study started with a widely used framework called Positive Youth Development (PYD) (Lerner et al. 2005). The model highlights the internal assets we want for youth—commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity—and the environmental and program features that support and empower youth to develop the assets they need.

An action committee of 15 researchers, educators, funders, policymakers, and practitioners contributed their insight, and 247 IMLS museum and library youth development grantees responded to an extensive survey of project characteristics and goals. Follow-up interviews and two convenings created 15 enlightening case studies that represent the range of geography, disciplines, and sizes of these projects.

## Key Findings

Museums and libraries bring unique assets to youth development. They include dedicated, knowledgeable staff; authentic objects, artifacts, and information resources; opportunities for personalized, hands-on learning; support for cognitive and social development; and experiences to help parents, families, and caregivers make learning fun and rewarding.

*Youth programs work best when they are integral to an institution's mission, with support from staff and leadership; they are most successful in a "web" of community programs.*

*The most effective youth programs*

- include long-term, trusting, supportive relationships between and among youth, staff, and other adults;
- include staff trained to work with participants in their target age groups or train staff to do so;
- partner with community-based organizations and other cultural institutions;

- use an approach supported by the youth development research literature;
- identify and cover gaps in the web of local youth programs;
- identify appropriate outcomes;
- employ, publicly recognize, and/or include other incentives for participants' accomplishments;
- substantively involve youth in program design and decision making;
- include work or service learning that's meaningful to participants;
- build connections to participants' families and communities; and
- regularly assess or evaluate and use what's learned to improve the program and strengthen other youth development efforts.

#### *Sustainable programs*

- build community awareness of project impacts on participants and their community;
- partner with community organizations, groups, and businesses;
- incorporate new sources of funding as programs evolve; and
- ensure continuity of program staff and leadership.

Key observations of this study include the following:

Programs should strongly align institutional focus *and* audience needs, especially by performing needs assessments to inform program selection or design.

Programs should recognize diversity within the category "youth", recognizing audience segments with specific characteristics and needs.

Programs for small numbers may have the greatest impact. Positive youth development literature shows that the greatest gains are often made in programs that serve small numbers of youth intensely.

Programs with extended participation may create the greatest benefit: frequent, in-depth program participation leads to the most substantial benefit for youth.

Programs should expand their strength as community learning environments, and strive for the characteristics recommended by McLaughlin (2000) of being youth-knowledge, assessment- and community-centered.

Programs should strengthen the role of youth beyond that of audience, bringing youth into decision-making at all stages.

Programs need strategies to extend their life cycles; by broadcasting their programs' importance and success to the larger community, they could leverage their ability to develop new partnerships and find longer-term funding.

## **General Recommendations**

- The museum and library communities could benefit from readable, user-friendly publications, online workshops and training, conference presentations, and other resources to build programs grounded in youth development, best practice, and PYD research.
- Targeted grant programs and strategic alliances among national museum and library organizations and other efforts with expertise and commitment to youth development could further strengthen youth and their communities.
- Additional skills to build community support, capture media interest, involve elected and appointed decision makers, maintain institutional support, and develop new partnerships could help library and museum staff strengthen and sustain youth development programs.

Recommendations were also made for IMLS to strengthen its role in serving youth by disseminating positive youth development research, supporting professional development in the youth development field, including building community awareness and encouraging staff exchanges, as well as considering new funding strategies.

## Introduction

The goal of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. Since its inception, IMLS has focused on education, learning, and literacy programs, and has funded museum and library programs that support stronger families and communities; connect children to their cultural, historic, scientific, natural, and artistic heritage; and help develop the information and communication technology skills that youth need to sustain a strong democracy.

IMLS has a long-standing commitment to funding grants and sponsoring research on the subject of how both preschool and school-age children learn, and how museums and libraries support such learning. Grants are awarded through two programs: discretionary and state programs. Between 1998 and 2003, through its discretionary grant programs, IMLS funded an estimated \$25 million in grants that engaged youth aged 9–19 in productive educational activities that improved their skills and relationships. For the same period, through its state program, IMLS funded an estimated \$214 million in programs to support youth services.

In 2006, IMLS undertook the initiative Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth, which will produce a template and lay the groundwork for future analyses of other issues of national concern, such as productive aging, 21st century skills, and early childhood education. The purpose of the Engaging America's Youth initiative was to examine the important role that museums and libraries play in providing quality programming and services to youth aged 9–19. The initiative has four goals:

- Examine what works: Identify results, trends, and characteristics of IMLS-supported projects for youth development.
- Encourage effective programming: Help practitioners and other stakeholders strengthen their youth development programs and become strong community partners in youth development.
- Share best practices: Offer models of excellence in IMLS-funded museum and library youth development programs and practical guidelines for practitioners, policymakers, and other funders about what works with respect to goals, funding, impact, and evaluation efforts.
- Build bridges with policymakers: Understand IMLS projects in a national context of youth development programs and positive youth development literature.

The centerpiece of the initiative was a yearlong study undertaken by the Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI), a nonprofit learning research organization that focuses on understanding informal learning. The study included two major components: a survey of past museum and library grantees, and 15 case studies. A Web-based questionnaire was developed and administered to past grantees (museums and libraries) that had received funding for youth development projects between 1998 and 2003. The parameters of the study were defined as follows:

- Youth (aged 9–19): This is the age group that has gained national attention through initiatives such as Helping America’s Youth and the group whose needs are distinct from those of early childhood.
- Four main grant programs that served youth were included in the study: National Leadership Grants, Learning Opportunities Grants, Native American Library Services, and State Library Program Grants.
- Grants awarded between 1998 and 2003 (grants for which results and final reports were available).
- Programs that served youth either directly or indirectly; that is, programs that focused on development of skills, knowledge, or behaviors in youth themselves, or programs that developed resources—such as curricula, exhibits, or Web sites—or that provided training for people who serve youth.

IMLS identified approximately 450 programs that appeared to satisfy these criteria.

IMLS was particularly interested in knowing more about programs that partnered, were ongoing, showed community impact, used a written framework, and conducted an evaluation.

Fifteen case studies exhibiting effective practice were selected from among the projects surveyed. The selected projects were representative of geography, size, and type of institution. A diverse action committee of researchers, educators, funders, policymakers, and practitioners was assembled and invited to meet with two representatives from each case study project at two separate meetings hosted by IMLS. At these meetings, action committee members contributed a broad, national perspective, as well as expertise and commentary from the particular community that each represented. As each case study was discussed and major themes related to effective practice identified, they contributed vital insights (see Appendix B).

This final report summarizes the purpose of the initiative study, provides an overview of relevant literature, describes the methods used (in particular, the development of the questionnaire and the selection of case studies), and presents major findings, implications, and overall conclusions. To be clear, the results drawn are representative of the programs IMLS funded in the designated time period and are not necessarily representative of the museum and library fields broadly. The action committee helped review this report and develop a strategy for disseminating the results.

## Section One: Relevant Literature

### Positive Youth Development

Empirical research demonstrates that community programs can help youth develop various personal and social assets related to their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development that are critical for a successful transition into adulthood (Eccles and Gootman 2002; Lerner et al. 2005; McLaughlin 2000; Scales and Leffert 1999). This arena of youth development research—referred to by the National Collaboration for Youth Members in 1998 as the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach—is a process that prepares youth to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of youth, in contrast to traditional deficit-based models, which focus solely on youth problems, such as substance abuse, conduct disorders, delinquent and antisocial behavior, academic failure, and teenage pregnancy (De Leon and Ziegenfuss 1986; Friedman and Beschner 1985; Gold and Mann 1984).

PYD marked an important change in approach in terms of how to help youth become productive and thriving adults. Traditional deficit-based efforts focused on responding to crises, such as reducing juvenile crime or trying to transform poor behavior and character in youth (Catalano et al. 2004; Kelley 2003; Weissberg and Greenberg 1997). The PYD field adopted a broader focus to understand the developmental precursors of both positive and negative youth development, with practitioners and the policy community calling for expanding programs and interventions that increasingly involved several social domains (schools, families, peer groups, and others). This coordinated approach has been recognized in forums on youth development, including practitioners, policymakers (Morrissey and Werner-Wilson 2005; Pittman 1991; Pittman and Fleming 1991; Pittman, O'Brien, and Kimball 1993), and prevention scientists (Eccles and Gootman 2002; Weissberg and Greenberg 1997) who have advocated that models of healthy development can hold the key to health promotion and the prevention of problem behaviors.

A more recent framework created by developmental psychologists describes five characteristics observed in positively developing young people, and which successful youth programs foster. They are referred to as the **Five Cs**: cognitive and behavioral *competence* and *confidence*, positive social *connections*, *character*, and *caring* (or compassion). Lerner and colleagues (2005) theorized that when young people manifest these five Cs across their development, they can be described as thriving. In addition, it has been suggested that such exemplary positive youth development results in the emergence of a sixth C—*contribution*—to self, family, community, and ultimately to civil society (King et al. 2005).

In addition to identifying positive youth characteristics, the PYD field, based on McLaughlin's work with youth in urban settings, has also developed four characteristics

for successful community-based learning environments that have potential to foster positive youth development (McLaughlin 2000). Such programs are

**Youth-centered:** They respond to diverse talents, skills, and interests; build on strengths; choose appropriate materials; provide personal attention; reach out to the community to recruit a range of participants; and make youth leadership an integral part of the program.

**Knowledge-centered:** They have a clear focus, provide high-quality content and instruction, embed multiple “hidden curricula” in their activities, and ensure that participating youth have teachers (both adults and peers) from the program and community.

**Assessment-centered:** They have cycles of planning, practice, and performance, giving participants a sense of structure and accomplishment. They offer feedback and recognition, and take stock of a broad range of competencies.

**Community-centered:** They create caring communities and family-like environments in order to build trusting relationships, establish clear rules, give participants responsibilities for the program, and provide constant access to adults and community, including links to leaders, jobs, and other institutions.

## **Effective Strategies in Youth Programs**

It is one thing to identify these four characteristics as important to successful programs but quite another to ensure that they are integrated within an actual program. To this end, the youth development field has used four strategies in its programming: (1) capacity building; (2) partnerships; (3) youth-driven programming; and (4) opportunities for youth to contribute.

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building centers on expanding the scope and effectiveness of youth-serving programs and organizations. Over the past decade, museums, parks, and libraries have increasingly participated in innovative learning programs designed to better meet the needs of youth. National initiatives such as the Museum Youth Initiative, Urban Parks Initiative, Equal Access Libraries, Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development, and Youth ALIVE! have assisted parks, museums, and libraries in building stronger institutional support by increasing staffing levels and upgrading facilities with new technology. Building institutional capacity is essential to the success and sustainability of any youth development program. Research suggests that it greatly benefits the organization as well.

Clearly, there a need for increased staffing, but strengthening the capacity of staff is also critical to ensure that the growing demands of before- and after-school programming for children and youth are met successfully. Ensuring a stable, high-quality workforce is an ongoing need: It requires that staff members serving youth are competent and well supported, and that they choose to stay in the organization. Lack of competitive wages and benefits, and limited time and opportunities for advancement or professional

development all combine to hinder youth-serving organizations' abilities to attract and retain staff and leadership across cities and communities. Available evidence suggests that the best program and policy ideas are unlikely to be effective if they do not include a well-developed infrastructure for supporting staff, including staff development and training to strengthen skills and develop a knowledge base; credentialing; compensation; and advancement along their chosen career paths (Campbell 2000; Cassell and Waither 2006).

Many innovative professional development initiatives exist, but communities, cities, and states must create an infrastructure and a coherent system of support that builds on and weaves together these often disparate efforts. In most communities, high turnover is a common and critical issue. Factors like compensation, professional reputation, training, and advancement are challenges that must be approached strategically and shared across age groups and settings. The staffing issues facing elementary school-age care providers, youth organizations, school-based programs, and others are similar enough that many of the system-building tasks and lessons are relevant across service areas (Forum for Youth Investment 2001). Successful systematic approaches include strategies such as (1) funding collaborations; (2) planning and cooperation among stakeholders; (3) formal links among schools, community, and local government organizations; (4) appropriate school-age program standards; (5) an agreed-upon set of objectives; and (6) designated citywide leadership (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2005).

### ***Case in Point***

#### **Museum Youth Initiative**

Between 2000 and 2004, the James Irvine Foundation supported 10 museums in California through the Museum Youth Initiative (MYI) in an effort to determine whether developing and delivering educational programs after school in cultural institutions could make a difference in how youth learn. The initiative was based on the work of Karen Pittman (2003), who posits that academic achievement and life skills essential for the 21<sup>st</sup> century are dependent on engagement, motivation, behavior, and attendance—conditions that, in turn, are dependent on youth feeling safe and supported. The 10 museums that participated in the effort strived to help their institutions use youth development principles, to become learning environments that provide academic enrichment, and to sustain high-quality program practices and resources over the long term. Additionally, museums involved in the program were hoping to experience an increase in use by young people and families who had not traditionally come through their doors.

It was an ambitious effort, and most of the participating institutions were able to accomplish their goals by using staff competencies and organizational resources to improve their activities in three arenas: as educational institutions, as partners to schools and communities, and as centers for young people. Although approaches varied, struggles were common and results mixed; in every case, the programs ended up galvanizing youth and museums alike. Key findings indicated that building institutional support with the proper financial, human, and technological resources was an important factor in the

design and implementation of the programs. In short, when youth were engaged, their critical thinking and study skills improved, as did their school attendance and overall school performance. All museums involved in the MYI underwent substantial institutional changes, established new ties to their communities, and learned innovative ways of serving youth. Six of the participating museums are continuing their programs without financial assistance from the Irvine Foundation (James Irvine Foundation 2005).

### **Partnerships**

Another effective strategy centers on relationship building among primary and intermediary support organizations that promote positive youth development. In fact, evidence suggests that creating and maintaining partnerships are among the most vital tasks in strengthening out-of-school opportunities for youth (Del Prete and Ross 2003; Steinberg, Almeida, and Allen 2003; Tagle 2003). With the proper organizational structure to develop and sustain partnerships, museums and libraries can benefit from social policies that commit public will, as well as government or private resources, to support relationships with schools, community groups, and other youth-serving organizations.

It remains challenging, however, to build networks and working partnerships within sectors, particularly among public providers such as schools and community-based organizations. But it is precisely the collaboration and shared learning among libraries, museums, and other partners that can result in high-quality programs and measurable outcomes for youth (Metcalf 2001). To be successful, sustained commitment and involvement must be established, with a coordinated effort made to reach mutually beneficial goals and objectives (Costello et al. 2001; Dierking et al. 1997).

While some communities still face an uphill battle to strengthen connections among various stakeholders (e.g., schools, libraries, parks, youth-serving organizations, museums, government agencies, and the workforce), the commitment to sustaining partnerships is equally important to the vitality of youth development programming. If a key staff person moves on or resources dwindle, it may be difficult to maintain momentum or, worse, the program itself may suffer an irrevocable loss. Thus, establishing and solidifying partnerships needs to be a top priority in order to continue offering meaningful learning experiences for the youth of today, as well as tomorrow.

### ***Case in Point***

#### **Youth Access**

Libraries have long been recognized as a safe space for young people, and Libraries for the Future's Youth Access program builds on this fundamental trust to offer programs emphasizing positive development and community involvement. The Youth Access program—with grounding in informal learning and thus less structure than school, as well as the flexibility to adapt to local interests—has been highly successful in several diverse locations, offering libraries a range of creative programs to attract young people

ages 10–18 during nonschool hours. In partnership with the Center for Children and Technology, Libraries for the Future developed *Imagination Place!*, an innovative and interactive computer program to encourage the development of science and engineering skills, especially among girls. In Harlem and Detroit, students used *Imagination Place!* software to design life-improving inventions; inventions that ranged from machines that could clean their rooms or make them cooler to the HouseMaster 2000, a device that could expand an apartment to a mansion (Sonenberg 2005). One nine-year-old girl designed a contraption that could make broken crayons whole after younger siblings broke them; coincidentally, Crayola has since released a similar device.

“When kids understand that they can not only come up with problems, but solutions...it really opens possibilities for them,” said Carol Treat Morton, who directed the Detroit program from 2000 through 2003. “These kids have had very few informal educational experiences. No arts and crafts, none of the ‘silly stuff’ in school. When you see kids discover something new and excel at it, you realize how essential those ‘frills’ really are” (Sonenberg 2005). Youth Access demonstrates how libraries can become active community centers that meet the real developmental needs of young people.

### ***Case in Point***

#### **Loyola University Museum of Art, Chicago, IL**

The Loyola University Museum of Art in Chicago (LUMA) worked with local organizations—including Connection Arts Chicago, the Chicago Area Peace Corps Association, and the Marwen Pre-College Summer Program—to provide opportunities in the arts for Chicago’s youth (Christensen 2006). Through its six-week Young Curators program, LUMA taught eight youth groups, ages 9–13, how to create and curate artwork for an exhibition of their own to be presented to family and friends. With the help of an art therapist from Connection Arts Chicago, youth also learned how to create art inspired by objects from their exhibition and the LUMA experience. In addition, the museum hosted an exhibition containing the artwork of high school students participating in the Marwen Pre-College Summer Program, which targeted those interested in pursuing advanced education in the arts.

### **Youth-Driven Programming**

Youth development programs differ in how much input, daily decision making, and authority is vested in youth participants themselves versus the adult advisors (Hart and UNICEF 1997; Lansdown 2001). At one extreme are programs in which adult practitioners set the direction and run daily program activities entirely, with little input from the youth involved. At the other extreme are programs in which adults play essentially no role in structuring the activities, such as occurs in some teen drop-in centers. Research has suggested that neither of these extremes provides an effective model for facilitating youth development (Stattin et al. 2005).

When programs are balanced in ways that enable youth to become active participants with some choice and control over their activities, evidence suggests that youth become empowered, which promotes leadership skills and meaningful learning. By truly listening to youth and shifting the focus from working “for” them to working “with” them, research also suggests that community change is possible, not only improving the quality of programs and services but of organizations and institutions as a whole. In order to engage youth meaningfully and appropriately, current literature suggests that several elements are essential (Tolman et al. 2002):

- 1) Youth engagement is critical at every level—in programs, in community issues, and in community-level decision making.
- 2) A variety of roles—as planners, decision makers, paid staff, volunteers, board members, frontline youth workers, researchers and “experts”—can and should be available to young people.
- 3) While different sorts of engagement are appropriate for different age groups and populations, all children and youth can play a role.
- 4) Youth participation cannot be segregated as an issue apart from the other tasks facing communities—young people deserve a role in staffing, program quality issues, planning, funding, and the range of other community-wide out-of-school challenges.
- 5) Young people need consistent supports and clear pathways in order to become involved and stay involved.

According to the Harvard Family Research Project, a growing number of after-school and other youth development programs are involving teens in research and evaluation projects related to the design and implementation of youth programming. Such involvement serves multiple purposes that include (1) enhancing the individual development of youth and encouraging their active involvement in the decisions that affect their lives; (2) contributing to organizational development and capacity building; and (3) providing youth with the opportunity to create real community change (Checkoway et al. 2003).

Many initiatives are also creating and expanding employment opportunities for youth, placing them in more visible, meaningful roles within their communities (Spielberger et al. 2005). Compensation, with visible rewards and validation for their input and hard work, helps keep youth involved. In turn, experienced youth who have worked on projects or programs can be encouraged to become mentors, playing important roles in the recruitment and training of younger participants. During the youth panel discussion at the Engaging America’s Youth workshop in November 2006, one staff member suggested, “When youth were given jobs at the library, it changed the way they looked at the library itself and made them actually want to work there. Listening to them, bringing in cool stuff, computers, free things, helped to change their ideas about what the library is and what it represents” (Moyer 2006). One youth panelist also discussed an important factor that goes a long way in not only shaping future programs but the relationship-building process as well—trust: “Remember who you are as an organization and what

you do best, then invite youth in to help shape the programs in order to engage and sustain them” (youth panelist 2006).

A case can certainly be made that involving youth in shaping their own programming—from concept to execution—instills a sense of ownership and empowerment that multiplies benefits far beyond the programs themselves. Such benefits include the development of leadership skills, and meaningful and lasting relationships among peers and adults, which can influence future education, career, or avocation pursuits (Dierking and Falk 2003; Luke et al. 2007).

### ***Case in Point***

#### **Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development, Wallace Foundation**

Currently, youth-driven programming is not as common in museums and libraries as it is in other youth-serving organizations, but a four-year, \$6 million effort, Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development, sponsored by the Wallace Foundation (formerly Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds), offered an unprecedented opportunity for libraries to work collaboratively with teens and community partners to better understand and strengthen their commitment to the positive development of youth.

This initiative challenged nine public library systems across the country to develop innovative, high-quality educational, cultural enrichment, and career development programs for low-income youth during nonschool hours. While the participating libraries differed dramatically in terms of size, staffing, constituency, and organizational structure, each held a common charge and pursued similar strategies. At the outset, they were challenged to listen to young people and to incorporate their ideas and leadership in meaningful ways. One-year planning grants awarded in 1998 allowed sites to seek input in an intentional, sustained way from a variety of youth. Among the frank advice teens offered was the importance of youth involvement in transforming not only the image but also the services offered by libraries. As a result of these collaborative efforts, these libraries reached out to youth and local partners; in turn, youth reached out to the community. In this way, this youth-centered initiative helped to create changes that supported both the individual development of youth and the well-being of their peers, families, and communities (Meyers 1999; Spielberger et al. 2004; Yohalem and Pittman 2003).

### **Contribution**

As described earlier, King and her colleagues (2005) have suggested that successful positive youth development efforts can result in the emergence of a sixth C—contribution—to self, family, community, and ultimately to civil society. One way to ensure that this is an outcome of programming is to purposively build such opportunities directly into programming. Although this strategy is still not common among most museum and library youth development efforts, with grant support from the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health (LPFCH), Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose (CDM) has served youth ages 10–14 for more than three years through a comprehensive after-school and summer program, Discovery Youth. At the program’s

foundation are strong youth development practices, which celebrate youth as resources and acknowledge the importance of adult role models and community figures in their healthy development. Discovery Youth responded specifically to the well-documented needs of this population for structured multiyear programs by providing rewarding roles for youth in the community, opportunities to make decisions about and plan for the program content and activities, and sustained relationships with peers and caring adults.

### *Case in Point*

#### **Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose**

Discovery Youth’s overarching goal is the promotion of healthy emotional development of young adolescents by strengthening opportunities for them to participate in meaningful and productive out-of-school-hours programming. Youth are given ample opportunities through service learning and multimedia production (such as video, photography, and acting) to enhance their learning experience by taking part in leadership roles, dealing with intellectually challenging material in health and social topics, and gaining confidence in social skills with peers and adults. Through these activities, youth are able to prove to themselves and adults that they are important resources to the community (Moghadham 2004). Discovery Youth participants share what they have gathered with others by creating digital media projects, producing videos and animations, and facilitating activities for younger children in the museum’s ZOOMZone. Working in teams or independently with adult staff, participants created more than 20 media productions, which were seen by more than 700 youth in the community.

In summary, any discussion of the future of out-of-school time involving cultural institutions needs to assess what can reasonably be expected from such programs, at what cost, and for whom. It important to be clear about what types of impacts one expects from programming, but decision makers must also decide on the degree of impact they are trying to achieve, determine the practical means to achieve those levels, and then come to a consensus as to whether those levels merit the considerable funding involved, especially when compared with other options for using scarce public resources.

Now more than ever, museums and libraries are well-positioned to continue their increased engagement in youth development with innovative programs and opportunities for youth to learn, develop, and make meaningful contributions to self and community. After all, most youth development experiences take place outside of school. According to various estimates, youth aged 10–18 spend about 20% of their waking hours in school, suggesting that a substantial amount of discretionary time is available for out-of-school activities (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1992; Eccles and Gootman 2002). In fact, research indicates that more than half of the science centers and art museums nationwide provide specialized youth programs either after school or on weekends (Association of Science and Technology Centers 2006; Beane 2000; Wetterlund and Sayre 2003).

Clearly identifying key ingredients from the PYD literature that enhance program quality—such as capacity building, partnerships, youth-driven programming, and

contributions by youth back to the institution, community, and society at large—has the potential to make a tremendous contribution in terms of how practitioners in museums and libraries approach their work. It is clear that cultural institutions can play a significant role in positive youth development efforts, but few researchers have examined the impact of youth programs specifically or have documented the extent to which these programs make a difference in the lives of youth, their families, and their communities (for exceptions, see Baum, Hein, and Solvay 2000; Beane 2000; Diamond et al. 1987; Dierking and Falk 2003; Durlak and Weissberg 2006; Luke et al. 2007). Interestingly, this is a need in the field of positive youth development overall. A recent report by the Wallace Foundation (Bodily and Beckett 2005) cites four related needs that the youth development field needs to better understand:

- 1) The state of knowledge about the types of outcomes that participation in out-of-school-time programs are expected to impact and the nature of the impacts observed.
- 2) Determinants of quality in program offerings.
- 3) Determinants of participation and selection.
- 4) Practices that are effective in ensuring that quality programming is available to meet local demand.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services undertook this research effort specifically to fill this knowledge gap. The institutions that we support need to know what works. One of our main goals is to make sure that conversations happen between library and museum practitioners and researchers/evaluators—as well as with policymakers—about the difference these programs make in the lives of youth, their families, and their communities. It is hoped that this is the beginning of a serious dialogue about the practice and outcomes of youth development—and the opening up of rich collaborations between cultural institutions and others who serve youth on a regular basis.

## **Section Two: The Survey**

### **Methods**

The yearlong Engaging America's Youth study included two major components: a survey of past museum and library grantees who had received funding for youth development projects between 1998 and 2003, and the selection of 15 case studies from among the projects surveyed that exhibit effective practice and are representative of a range of geographic areas and different sizes and type of institutions.

### **Questionnaire Development**

The purpose of the Web-based questionnaire was twofold:

1. To gather information about youth development programs and review program type; audience; needs met; planning; goals; strategies; anticipated and accomplished outcomes at the individual, group, and community levels; presence of collaboration; evaluation efforts; sustainability; and dissemination.
2. To identify a pool of programs from which to select 15 programs for in-depth study using research-based criteria.

### *Item development*

Since the questionnaire was the primary tool for understanding the needs, strategies, and outcomes of youth programs at libraries and museums, and for identifying successful programs, the questionnaire's organization needed to reflect a general understanding of the positive youth development literature, specific knowledge of youth development programs in museums and libraries, and trends and best practices that emerge from these efforts. Two steps were taken to accomplish this goal: (1) the focused literature review on youth development programs at museums and libraries, and emergent trends/exemplary practice that was described in the previous section of this report; and (2) a review of Institute for Learning Innovation files on research in youth development and informal learning.

In close collaboration with IMLS project staff, Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI) researchers then created an outline of data categories and subcategories to be included in the questionnaire. Responses would have to include enough background information to enable us to understand the breadth of the programs surveyed and to flag programs that were potential case studies; namely, those that closely aligned with or were designed to incorporate successful program elements as established by research. These categories and subcategories included the following:

- A. Organization/Program Background
  - Program type, years running, size, etc.
  - Institutional information (name, library/museum, type, size, attendance, budget, etc.)
- B. Program Audience

- Who does/did the program serve, how are/were participants recruited, etc.?
  - Does/Did the audience have special needs?
  - How often do/did people participate (frequency)?
  - For how long do/did youth participate (continuity of engagement)?
- C. Program Outcomes and/or Products
- What is/was the original/current intended outcomes?
  - Does/Did the program engage youth directly, or serve them through the development of a product or in professional development of adults with whom they would interact?
  - Is/Was the program based on a needs assessment?
  - What new skills, knowledge, or competencies does/did the program support?
- D. Program Community Connections
- Is/was a partnership involved? If so, what kind?
  - Does/Did the program involve participants in contributing to the community?
  - Does/Did the program involve mentorship?
  - Does/Did the program connect with participants' families? If so, how?
  - Does/Did the program connect participants and their families to the greater community? If so, how?
  - Have partnerships changed over time? Did partnerships impact the program sustainability/institutionalization of the project? If so, how were they used to leverage IMLS funding?
- E. Program Impacts
- Do/Did they use evaluation?
  - If so, was the evaluation formative (process) or summative (outcome-based)?
  - If so, how did they use the results of the evaluation?
- F. Program Sustainability
- Is the program ongoing? Why or why not? Who are the leaders and how long do/did they stay? Do youth participants become leaders or mentors in the program?
  - How long does the program retain participants?
  - Does it engage family and community in perpetuating the program?
  - How has the program changed over time to encourage sustainability?
- G. Contact Info

With input from a senior ILI researcher who is an expert in item development and analysis, questions were developed to explore each of these concepts at least once. In the interest of reducing response time, instrument items related to descriptions of the program or organization were asked only once. Questions related to performance, planning, and outcomes were asked in a minimum of two locations and question types (i.e., open-ended vs. forced choice.) Where possible, drop-down menus were created to reduce the time required to respond to items in the questionnaire. Additional questions

were developed to serve as criteria to identify potential case studies; these are described in the following section.

Given that grantees were scattered around the country; that library and museum grantees would respond to different questions from the outset; and that a diverse range of program types, audiences, and products would emerge from each project, ILI researchers envisioned the need for a complex instrument, or perhaps even more than one instrument. To balance study needs against investments of time on the part of research participants, Institute researchers decided to use a Web-based system, *WebSurveyor*, to implement the survey process in a manner that allowed “logic” to be inserted into the survey instrument. This meant that rather than developing one lengthy questionnaire or several different versions of a questionnaire, a core framework could be built and, depending on the responses grantees made to items, they would be directed to other items that were relevant to them. In other words, their choices would determine the number and pathway of questions they would be asked to respond to, enabling the instrument to be in-depth and inclusive, and at the same time of a reasonable length so that grantees would actually complete it. In the final version of the questionnaire, no research participant was required to answer more than 34 questions. (See the questionnaire in Appendix A.)

#### *Usability and reliability*

The usability, reliability, and validity of the instrument were thoroughly tested. First drafts were circulated to IMLS project team members for comments and suggestions. A revised draft of the questionnaire was completed by nine IMLS program officers, representing different funding programs, to identify questions that were unclear, missing choices from drop-down menus, and other problems. After this third revision, the Web survey was piloted with nine current IMLS grantees who would not be participating in the study itself. Finally, helpful revisions suggested by the federal Office of Management and Budget were incorporated into the final instrument.

#### **Survey Implementation**

In a parallel process, ILI researchers developed the process for actually administering the questionnaire. This process involved five major tasks: (1) developing an initial database of grantee contacts based on information collected by IMLS; (2) making initial contact with grantees and announcing the initiative via e-mail; (3) screening responses to the announcement letter and developing a database of appropriate recipients to receive the questionnaire; (4) creating a survey invitation and a link, with necessary follow-up by e-mail and phone; and (5) compiling, coding, and analyzing the data.

#### *Development of initial contact databases*

IMLS program staff identified the grants they believed served a significant number of youth or for whom youth aged 9–19 were an indirect audience (e.g., grants funding teacher training or Web site development) from which the initial universe of respondents was created. Most of the identified IMLS programs did serve youth aged 9–19 as their target audience either directly or indirectly; programs that considered a third or more of their target audience to be in this age range were asked to complete the questionnaire.

IMLS project staff provided ILI researchers with data on grants funded by IMLS for programs known or likely to contain a youth-related component. Five different spreadsheets with data from the following grant programs and years were provided to ILI, from which a single database was created: Native American Library Services Enhancement Grants from 1998 through 2003; National Leadership Grants from 1998 through 2003; Learning Opportunities Grants from 2003; and State Grants from 1998 through 2000 and 2001 through 2003. Select data from these five spreadsheets were combined into a single database of 534 grantees to be used as a mailing database for an initial announcement of the Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth initiative, with screening questions to determine whether the grant program would be an appropriate study participant. Information in this database consisted of name of program, identification number, project title or description, grant year, institution name, and contact information, including an e-mail address. Among the five spreadsheets, the format and presentation varied (most notably, in the project title or description and, in the state library grants databases, the program name). Once the data were brought into the ILI database, they were standardized—and, in the case of project description, sometimes abbreviated—to produce a database that was consistent among different grant types and years.

*Initial contact with grantees and announcement of the initiative*

A letter was developed from by Dr. Anne-Imelda M. Radice, director of IMLS; it was titled "Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth Study – Announcement and Confirmation." The letter introduced the yearlong study and its four goals, and announced the implementation of a national survey intended to help identify results, trends, and characteristics of IMLS-supported projects related to youth development. The letter was personalized with information specific to each grant: IMLS program and project type, award year, project description, and grant number. Recipients were asked to respond to four screening questions designed to determine whether (1) the grant met the criterion of being a youth development effort (direct or indirect), and (2) the person contacted was the most appropriate person to complete the questionnaire. Recipients who did not believe they had an affiliation with or access to knowledge about the referenced grant program were asked to provide the name and e-mail address of an appropriate contact.

An exclusive e-mail address hosted by the Institute for Learning Innovation was set up to send and receive correspondence related to the study. This e-mail address appeared as the sender's e-mail address for both the initial contact and the survey. The announcement letter contained several references intended to allow for independent verification of the authenticity of the letter and to allay suspicions of "phishing" scams. The letter contained a link to the IMLS Web site, where more information on the youth initiative was available. The phone number and e-mail address of the Institute's principal investigator were provided, along with the information that a non-Web-based alternative for completing the questionnaire was available. A note at the end of the announcement letter stated, "This message has been sent by the Institute for Learning Innovation, a not-for-profit learning research and development organization based in Annapolis, MD. IMLS has contracted with the Institute for Learning Innovation to conduct this survey."

The announcement was sent on June 8, 2006, via Microsoft's Outlook Express to 534 contacts. One hundred and eighteen e-mail messages were returned as undeliverable; a database of these grants and their contact information was transmitted to IMLS project staff for follow-up review. IMLS staff researched the undeliverable e-mail addresses by phone; as updates and corrections were provided to ILI, the announcement letter was e-mailed to those recipients. In addition, as responses to the screening questions provided more appropriate contacts, the announcement letter was sent to these new contacts on a case-by-case basis. To address a lower than expected response rate to the announcement letter, a second e-mail was sent on June 14, 2006, to those who had not responded in any way to the original e-mail. This second contact consisted of the original letter with the following addition at the top, below the letterhead: "It has come to our attention that you have not yet responded to our e-mail of last Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>. For your convenience, we have attached that e-mail below. Please respond at your earliest convenience, as your participation is vital to the success of this project."

The advantages of e-mail and Web-based contact and survey administration have been described, but a few drawbacks to this form of contact are notable for future consideration. E-mail messages that are undeliverable owing to an inaccurate or discontinued e-mail address are usually returned to the initiating mailbox, but the number of messages that do not reach the intended recipient because of screening by a spam filter or delivery to a junk mail folder is unknown. In addition, despite attempts to make the reliability of the message verifiable, an unknown number of messages may have been deleted or ignored because of to increasing concerns about phishing scams that attempt to entice recipients to click on a link in the e-mail message with various negative consequences. Finally, some of those contacted mistook the screening questions for the actual survey and were confused when they received the link to the questionnaire in a subsequent e-mail, believing that they had already completed it.

#### *Screening of responses and development of survey mailing list*

As responses to the screening questions posed in the announcement letter were received, the initial contact database was updated. New fields were coded in the database to indicate response status, answers to the screening questions, forwarding contact information, and any pertinent notes. In addition, updates and changes to current contact information were made in the database as they became available through responses to the announcement letter.

A second Excel database was developed as the survey invitation mailing list. This database consisted of entries for those grants that were determined to be appropriate for participation based on responses to the screening questions and those grants for which there was no response to the initial e-mail announcement. Grants for which the e-mail address remained undeliverable and grants determined to be inappropriate for participation because they were not youth-related as identified by the screening questions were eliminated from the survey mailing list database. The final survey invitation mailing list contained 450 entries. Each grant was assigned a unique numerical identifier to facilitate the tracking of survey responses. Throughout the survey data collection process,

the mailing list was updated with the most current contact information as it became available through telephone or e-mail contact with grantees.

#### *Survey invitation e-mail and follow-up*

The Excel survey mailing list database was uploaded to the *WebSurveyor* online mailing list. The questionnaire incorporated links to the grantee mailing list so that each questionnaire, when received, would be personalized with the relevant grant information and the institution contact information from the database. Those receiving the invitation were asked to complete the questionnaire with only the referenced grant in mind and to provide any updates or corrections to the listed institution contact information.

A brief message inviting recipients to participate in the survey was written by the principal investigator and approved by IMLS. This message was entered directly into *WebSurveyor* and included a link to the personalized online questionnaire. The initial invitation to participate in the survey and the link to the questionnaire were e-mailed to recipients on June 23, 2006. This e-mail was repeated one week later. During the period that the survey was active, responses to the announcement letter and screening questions continued to be received, and the mailing list continued to be updated and links to the questionnaire sent out as appropriate. In addition, a list of grants eliminated by the screening questions was forwarded to IMLS for evaluation; as a result, four additional grants were added to the survey mailing list database and links were sent to them also.

On July 6, 2006, an Institute for Learning Innovation researcher began calling contacts for 244 grants for which a questionnaire had not yet been submitted. The phone calls yielded various responses, with many contacts requesting that the link to the questionnaire be re-sent. These phone calls also resulted in some updated information or redirection of the invitation and link to the questionnaire to more appropriate contacts. A few phone calls revealed disconnected numbers, unreturned messages, and uncooperative contacts. In response to the phone campaign, approximately 100 links to the questionnaire were re-sent. The telephone campaign was terminated on July 13, 2006. On July 20, 2006, a final message was sent to 38 contacts who, as a result of the phoning campaign, had requested that the link to the questionnaire be re-sent but who had not yet submitted a completed questionnaire.

As evidence for the previously mentioned limitations of Web-based surveying, several of those contacted in this final message said this was the first message and link to the questionnaire they had received. Although Web data gathering has its limitations, it is also important to realize that other forms of data gathering (phone, traditional mail, etc.) also have drawbacks. This method supported a good response rate in a very timely fashion (six weeks) and was relatively simple to complete for the vast majority of those responding.

#### *Data compilation and coding*

To ensure the safety and integrity of the data during the period that the survey was being implemented, data from completed questionnaires were downloaded from *WebSurveyor*

nightly to an Excel file stored on a hard drive and to a removable memory stick. Upon the closing of the survey, the data were backed up in a similar manner.

Since use of the statistical analysis program SPSS for data interpretation necessitated that all data be in numeric form, rubrics were developed for all qualitative fields, and all qualitative responses to these fields were coded into numeric form. All quantitative non-numeric responses were also assigned numeric codes and the responses converted to a numeric format. The numeric coding system was designed to distinguish between questions that were skipped because of to the questionnaire's programmed logic and questions that were asked but not answered. An extensive code sheet detailing the codes, field names, and text for each survey question was developed to accompany the database in the analysis phase. The converted database of completely numeric responses was uploaded from Excel into an SPSS database and saved in that format.

### **Case Study Criteria**

The secondary purpose of the instrument was to flag potential case studies for further study. Although the survey's wide distribution and strong response rates provide a broad overview of the funded programs targeting youth, it was only the first step in identifying programs that were particularly successful. A set of case study criteria was developed based on two activities described earlier: (1) the development of a focused literature review, and (2) the mining of Institute research in youth development and free-choice learning. Criteria were based on three proven frameworks, two of which were described in the literature review in Section One.

McLaughlin's work on effective community-based learning environments for youth in urban areas (McLaughlin 2000) suggests four characteristics of successful youth programs:

1. Youth-centered: programs respond to diverse talents, skills, and interests; build on strengths; use appropriate materials; provide personal attention; reach out to the community to recruit a range of participants; and make youth leadership an integral part of the program.
2. Knowledge-centered: programs have a clear focus, provide high-quality content and instruction, embed multiple "hidden curricula" in their activities, and ensure that participating youth have teachers (both adults and peers) from the program and the community.
3. Assessment-centered: programs have cycles of planning, practice, and performance, giving participants a sense of structure and accomplishment. They offer feedback and recognition, and take stock of a broad range of competencies.
4. Community-centered: programs create caring communities and family-like environments for building trusting relationships, establishing clear rules, giving participants responsibilities for the program, and providing constant access to adults and the community, including links to leaders, jobs, and other institutions.

A more recent framework that has emerged in the field is that of the six Cs, which suggests that successful programs should address cognitive and behavioral competence, confidence, positive social connections, character, caring (or compassion), and contribution to self, family, community, and society (King et al. 2005, 94–112).

In addition, in work conducted at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Mancini and Marek (1998) outlined five characteristics of sustainable social programs:

1. Create community awareness of impacts.
2. Develop strong partnerships with community groups or corporate entities.
3. Incorporate new sources of funding after inception.
4. Ensure continuity of leadership.
5. Support continuity of staff.

In addition to acting as criteria to flag potential case studies, instrument items related to these concepts show how IMLS-funded programs fit into the national context of current practice and excellence.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

T-tests were performed to look for significant differences between questionnaire responses from libraries and museums. ANOVAs (analyses of variance) were used to look for significant differences among museums, libraries, and formal educational institutions. Cross-tabulation tables were created for each item to compare data. Where scale-level data were obtained, means, standard deviations, and results of t-tests were reported.

## Findings and Discussion

The administration of the survey was closed on July 27, 2006. Of the 450 grantees who received invitations to participate, 55 were determined to be inappropriate,<sup>1</sup> resulting in 395 questionnaires actually being distributed. Of these, 290 questionnaires were completed (a response rate of 73%). Of the 290 questionnaires completed, some were deleted from the final sample because they did not serve the identified age group for the study, the contact person was not aware of any funding received, or it was a duplicate submission. The final total of responses to the survey was 247. The following findings and discussion are based on the 247 grantees that responded to the questionnaire and are fairly representative of IMLS grantees; further analysis against a full grantee database and all grantees submitting proposals would be necessary to confirm the generalizability of these results.

### Background of Grantees

Institutions from all 50 states and Puerto Rico responded to the questionnaire, with a high concentration of responses from Illinois and New York. Although museums and libraries were fairly evenly distributed in the original mailing list, more museums (52%) than libraries (40%) responded. One explanation for this discrepancy may be differences in the processes by which libraries and museums receive their IMLS funding, as evidenced by the responses of the two groups.

While many libraries compete for grants through proposals to IMLS, others (many of them public libraries) receive IMLS funding through their state library agency's IMLS Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) formula funds. In states that competitively subgrant LSTA funds or use IMLS funds to support a program statewide, libraries that benefit may remember their project as LSTA- or state-funded. In other such cases, the funded program may be such an integral service that it doesn't stand out in memory. Museums receive IMLS funding only through competitive proposal processes, which are likely to leave a clearer institutional "footprint."

This difference was evidenced in follow-up phone contact with those who had not yet responded to the questionnaire. When museums were contacted, representatives were consistently familiar with the IMLS program funded and were able to suggest the staff person best able to complete the questionnaire, even if the program had been completed several years earlier and staff had changed. Conversely, many library representatives contacted by phone were unable to remember the program or the specific funding category, and were unable to find someone on staff to complete the questionnaire. This may indicate the need for different approaches for data collection from these two groups in future initiatives. For example, in the case of libraries that receive IMLS funds through their state library agency rather than directly from IMLS, state librarians may be a better source of data or contact information than the actual funded organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, "unable to be contacted" or "age group served" was not part of the identified sample for this study.

Although more museums than libraries responded to the questionnaire, there were some regional patterns. Museums responded more frequently in the Northeast, while libraries more frequently responded in the South. Data collection from the Midwest and West was fairly evenly distributed between both types of institutions. Figure 1 shows the census regions and divisions of the United States that were used.

Figure 1: Census Regions and Divisions of the United States



Some of those responding to the survey were in the “other” category (8.5% of the total), meaning they were neither libraries nor museums. This category primarily included the formal education sector, such as community colleges, schools, or universities; often they were the administrators of the grant.

The majority of institutions included in the survey (44%) have a large staff (26 or more full-time employees (FTE)) (see Table 1). The other two categories of small (fewer than 5 FTE) and medium (6–25 FTE) were 24% and 31% of the sample, respectively; thus, the sample was composed of a diverse group of institutions as far as size. Size distribution was evenly split between museums and libraries.

Table 1: Type of Institution

	Institution Type			Total (n=247)
	Library (n=98)	Museum (n=128)	Other (n=21)	
<b>Institution Size</b>				
Small (5 or fewer FTE staff)	27.6%	23.4%	9.5%	23.9%
Medium (6–25 FTE staff)	32.6%	30.5%	28.6%	31.2%
Large (26 or more FTE staff)	38.8%	45.3%	57.1%	43.7%
Don't know	.0%	0.8%	4.8%	0.8%
Not indicated	1.0%	.0%	.0%	0.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Audiences Served

Individuals responding to the questionnaire were asked to describe the demographics of the target audience they served through the funded program, appreciating that the primary parameter for participation in the survey was a target audience (participants and/or end users) of which at least one third were in the 9–19-year age bracket. Table 2 shows the minimum and maximum age of participants in the funded programs.

Table 2: Distribution of Participant Age Ranges in Surveyed Programs

(Note: Not all programs targeted youth alone. Some targeted multiple audiences, some targeted adults who serve youth.)

	Institution Type			Total
	Library	Museum	Other	
<b>Minimum Participant Age</b>				
Birth–5 years	38%	43%	33%	40%
Ages 6–10 years	38%	44%	43%	41%
Ages 11–18 years	24%	13%	24%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Institution Type			Total
	Library	Museum	Other	
<b>Maximum Participant Age</b>				
Ages 10–14 years	21%	31%	38%	27%
Ages 15–18 years	59%	53%	57%	56%
Ages 19–25 years	18%	16%	5%	16%
Over 25 years	2%	0	0	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Programs were asked to identify whether they served youth directly (defined as programs in which youth were actual participants) or indirectly; for example, through activities such as teacher or youth leader training for those serving youth, or Web site or curriculum development that produced products that targeted youth. The breakdown of these responses is in Table 3. Programs could also choose “both equally.” Of the 22% of programs that served youth indirectly, 40% produced a product, 30% produced an adult leader outcome, and 30% produced both.

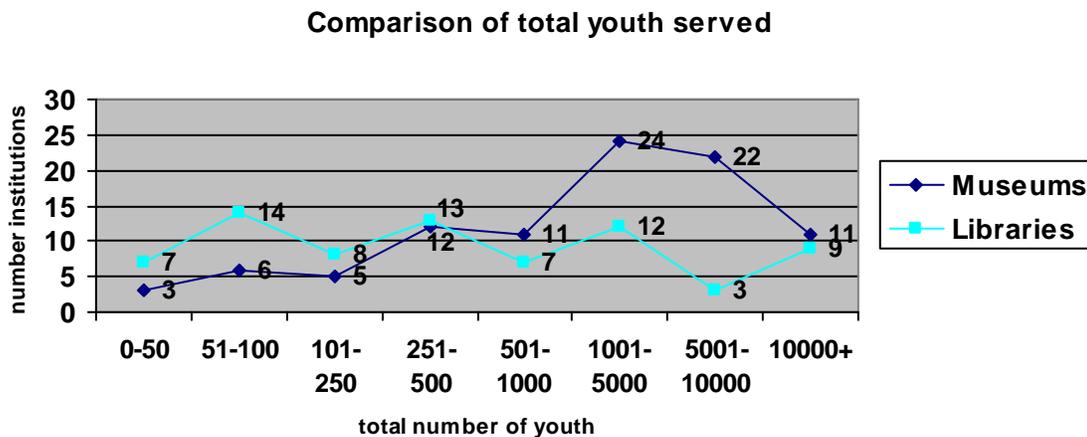
Table 3: Distribution of Service to Youth

	Institution Type			Total
	Library	Museum	Other	
<b>Service Distribution</b>				
Directly	23%	24%	3%	49%
Indirectly	7%	11%	4%	22%
Both	10%	17%	2%	29%

*Number of youth served*

Programs serving youth directly were asked to share the total number of youth served; this number varied greatly. Figure 2 shows the variation in the number of youth served directly by each type of institution. Museum programs had a tendency to reach larger numbers of youth in their programs, with 68 institutions reporting they served more than 501 youth in their programs, compared with the 27 institutions serving 500 or fewer youth. Library programs, on the other hand, were more evenly split between large and small programs, with 31 libraries reporting that they served more than 501 youth, compared with 42 that served fewer than 500 youth per program.

Figure 2: Youth Served Directly



These findings reflect an important, ongoing debate in the youth development community. Many funders demonstrate a positive bias toward programs that reach large groups of youth, since more youth benefit from participation in these programs. However, the research demonstrates that the greatest gains often are made in programs that serve small numbers of youth intensely. This is a policy issue that IMLS may want to consider in future funding strategies.

*Typical groups of youth served*

Individuals responding to the questionnaire were asked to describe the typical youth audience that their program served, using two or three adjectives. This was an open-ended question, which explored the special needs programs were designed to fill. The

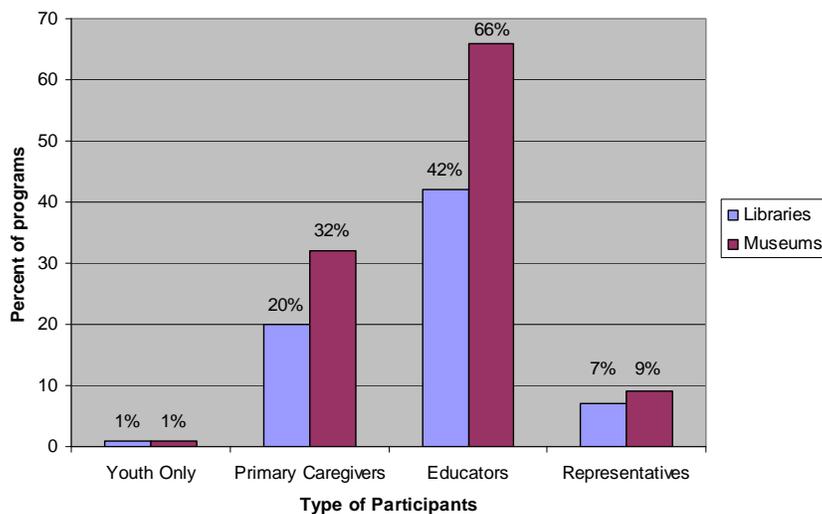
responses were coded into categories that included the following: a specific ethnic or racial group; a specific need-based group (at risk, English as a second language, teen parents, low income); special interest (science-minded, teachers interested in primary sources); middle school students; elementary, junior, senior, or after-school youth; families; rural youth; and cross-cultural diversity. A final category was labeled “simple descriptive” for respondents who described their youth with adjectives such as “interesting and engaging” or “high energy.”

Generally, libraries and museums designed their programs for youth with specific needs or interests, such as “poor reading skills” or “high science interest.” However, a significant number of programs were designed for youth generally, as an audience segment, and not to address a specific need. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the research in the youth development arena and provides excellent support for helping museum and library staff understand the various groups of youth for which programs can be offered.

*Participation by others*

The positive youth development literature also demonstrates that successful youth programs engage participants’ families and work closely with youths’ school and community representatives. Figure 3 indicates that museums and libraries are working to include these important groups—only 1% of programs engage only youth. However, discussions with case study representatives at the two fall meetings indicated that libraries and museums could probably develop stronger skills in engaging youth’s families and representatives of the community in deeper, more meaningful ways. Although programs reported involving others, these discussions often demonstrated that the involvement was superficial. Both family and community audiences are important elements of successful programs for youth and can contribute greatly to the sustainability of these programs.

Figure 3: Breakdown of Participants Involved in the Program



Note: Percentages may not total 100%. See detailed table in Appendix F.

### *Length of time in the program*

The length of time participants remained active in a program was largely short term or less than six months. Fully 29% of museum programs and 11% of library programs were designed as one-time-only events. Only 27% and 19% of library and museum programs, respectively, engaged youth for more than a year. Also, 33% of the museum programs and 27% of the library programs were designed for “random” or at-will attendance, indicating a lack of important relationship building with youth and their families. Only 24% and 17% of library and museum programs, respectively, offered weekly programming for youth. These findings are corroborated by the research literature; they illustrate the great need to disseminate PYD research findings and program suggestions that encourage more frequent and in-depth participation by youth in museum and library programming. This is also a consideration for IMLS in terms of its future funding strategies—the organization may want to consider supporting longer term funding of projects.

### **Products Emerging from Projects**

Some programs’ sole focus was the production of materials or tools to support youth in this age group, such as Web sites, electronic educational media, professional or K–12 education curricula or tools, and, in one case, an assessment tool. The most common product at both libraries and museums was creating a work of art or a public structure, followed by creating a Web site or Web resource (which in museums tended to be tied in with a K–12 education curriculum or an instructional tool). Museum programs that serve youth but also develop a product tended to develop K–12 instructional tools (60%), present workshops or learning programs (55%), or create a Web site or Web resources (49%). Libraries also tended to develop K–12 instructional tools (53%) and Web sites or Web resources (38%).

In the effort to reach a broader audience—and one that tends to be tech-savvy—programs that engaged youth or served youth directly were definitely maximizing their Web presence. Fully 45% of all programs that served youth, directly or indirectly, had a Web-based presence. Further research on and analysis of these products could tell us more about their impact and use.

### *Focus of program or products emerging from projects*

The programs offered and the products created by libraries and museums tended to focus in their areas of expertise or, in the case of museums, on the topics of their collections. Thus, youth programs in libraries tended to focus on literacy—either reading (34%) or general information literacy through the use of technology (20%). Some libraries also offered programs developed around arts and humanities themes (15%). Museums offered programs from their area of expertise as well, with the most frequent being arts and humanities (excluding history; 34%), STEM (science, technology, engineering and math; 30%), and history (15%). This distribution is entirely expected, since organizations must align programs with their institution’s mission in order to ensure institutional support.

## Program Need Identification

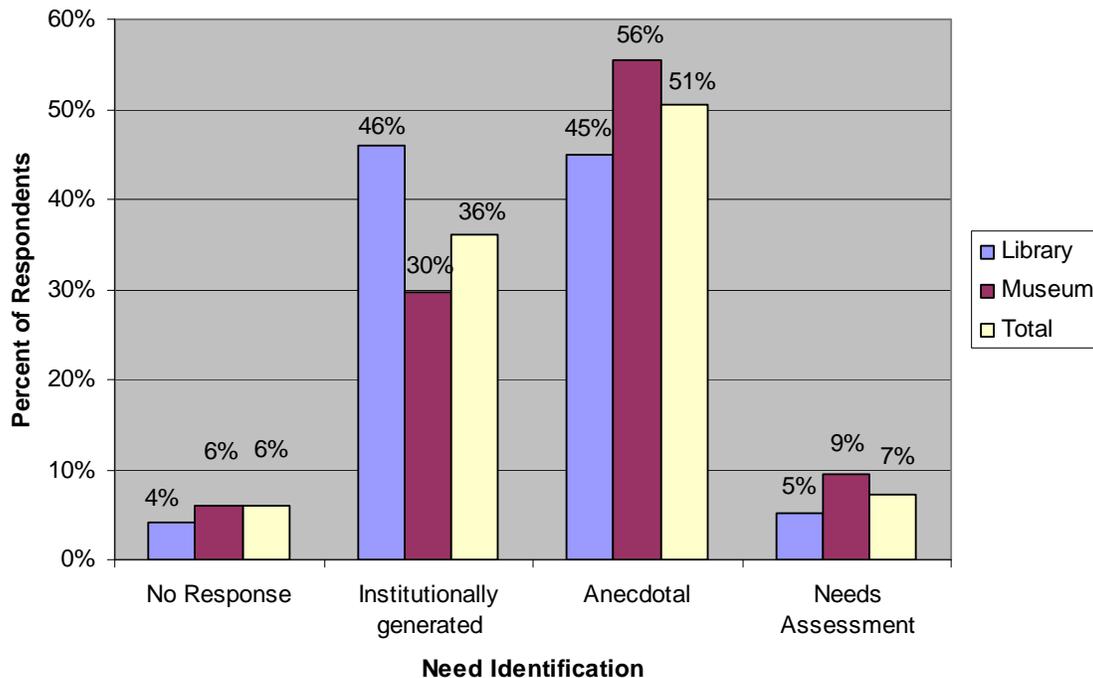
Respondents were asked, “How was the need for your program or product identified?” This open-ended question was later coded into four categories:

- 0 Absent response
- 1 Institutionally generated (using internal experience, opinion, or research)
- 2 Anecdotal (informal community or teacher input)
- 3 Performed needs assessment (or combination of community input and research)

Note that the type of needs assessment was not specified. Only a small number of organizations used the actual term; most described a process of research and community involvement that was coded as needs assessment by researchers.

Figure 4 reflects the methods respondents reportedly used to identify program need. A combination of methods was used by most institutions, with institutionally generated needs and anecdotal needs commonly driving the choice of programs. Very few institutions (only 5% of libraries and 9% of museums) used a needs assessment process to determine the type of programming needed.

Figure 4: “How was the need for your program/product identified?”



Note: Percentages may not total 100%.

This finding illustrates an excellent opportunity for IMLS to improve professional practice. The finding underscores an important need in the community for education and tools in the area of needs assessment—scaleable to organization size—to support the identification of youth needs in specific communities. In addition to anchoring programs

in specific audience needs and outcomes, such assessments would increase the ability of museums and libraries to communicate the importance of their programs to their communities in order to garner financial and other support.

### **Use of a Written Framework**

One tenet of strong youth development programming is that the program is designed and carried out using a written outline or framework. This ensures that the program is reproducible and sustainable if leadership changes and that it has an organization and cohesiveness that is clear to its participants. Fully 77% of the youth programs funded by IMLS that responded to the questionnaire were using a written framework, a sign of effective programming that still suggests room for improvement.

To explore which philosophies or education theories museums and libraries use in their practice, the survey asked whether these written frameworks were based on a specific research model. Thirty percent of all the institutions responding indicated that their program frameworks were based on a specific research model (19% of libraries, 37% of museums, 39% of other types of institutions), but respondents had great difficulty describing the model. The most frequently named model was Experiential Learning (Brookfield 1995; Kolb 1984), which was also one of the two examples provided. The frequency of this response, coupled with a high number of people who chose to skip this question, demonstrates the level of difficulty of the question. Further studies may need to explore the issue more qualitatively in order to better inform institutional decision making.

### **Program Elements That Contribute to PYD**

As the literature review demonstrated, research in the PYD field has identified some key elements of successful youth programs. Those responding to the questionnaire were asked to rate the extent to which their program or product included the following elements. A five-point Likert scale was used, with 1 indicating “not at all” and 5 indicating “a lot.” Respondents were asked to rate the following program elements:

- Facilitated networking with each other (team building).
- Provided access to key resources and materials.
- Established levels of accomplishment.
- Officially recognized accomplishments with a badge, certificate, or other symbol acknowledging completion.
- Engagement with community professionals/mentors.
- Engagement with families.

Keeping in mind that the methodology—a Web-based questionnaire—is a form of self-reported data, some key elements of youth development program design were being used consistently in museum and library practice. It came as no surprise that libraries and museums rate themselves highest in the provision of access to key resources and materials. This rating was validated in the case study interviews. Museums and libraries also have incorporated engagement with community professionals and mentors, as well

as engagement with families, into their program design. The areas in which libraries and museums could be encouraged to expand their efforts are creating opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities, designing programs that offer the opportunity for youth to network with each other, and offering some form of official recognition for completion of specific tasks or levels within a program.

### **Outcomes and Evaluation**

Many of the programs funded before 2000 had not yet been exposed to the IMLS program on outcome-based evaluation. To level the playing field for case study selection, multiple instrument items were assigned to the question of program outcomes, with different language used to ensure that participants who received funding later did not have an unfair advantage over participants funded earlier by scoring higher on this important question. In all cases, the items were open-ended and were coded by ILI researchers. It is important to note that before IMLS's introduction of outcome-based methodology in 2000, many organizations were engaged in evaluation, although programs were not *required* to define or evaluate outcomes.

A scaled, four-point coding rubric was created to categorize responses related to program outcomes. The coding rubric was as follows:

- 0 Absent response.
- 1 Weak outcomes: did not describe a change in participant but rather what the institution would do or provide.
- 2 Acceptable outcomes: described the desired changes in participant.
- 3 Well-developed outcomes: multiple measurable outcomes for different audiences, written in audience language, linking outcomes to impact, etc.

Examples of statements relating to each category are provided below. Note how responses are more closely related to the audiences' experience at the higher end of the rubric.

Outcomes rated as Weak:

*"Increase access to museum collection."*

*"Provide computer software and laptops to participants."*

Outcomes rated as Acceptable:

*"Strengthen teacher ability to use historic newspapers in the classroom."*

*"Increase the availability of non-fiction science resources at the library; strengthen teacher and student ability to use Web-based materials; provide valuable online curriculum resources to teachers; improve performance in reading and core-curriculum subjects."*

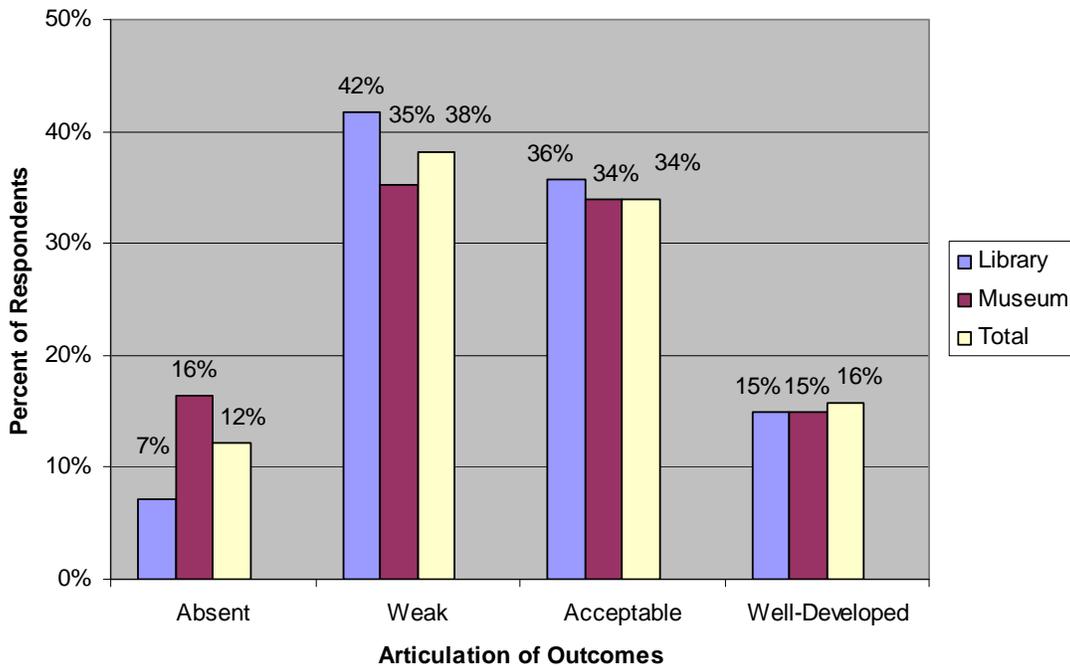
Outcomes rated as Well-developed:

*“Target families are more aware of and comfortable with the museum as a resource for free-choice learning. Target families use museum resources to meet their free choice learning needs. Teachers in partner schools and youth coordinators in community-based organizations use museum resources to support their teaching. There is increased communication and capacity within the community to support lifelong science learning.”*

*“Increased computer skills; improved social skills; increased intergenerational activities; improved self-esteem for youth and program participants; changed community attitude about the library and its role with technology.”*

The results of this series of items indicate that half of those responding to the questionnaire either declined to respond to this question (12%) or gave a weak response (38%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Outcome Articulation



Note: Percentages may not total 100%.

To explore the concept of outcomes without using outcomes language (to avoid privileging later grants), respondents were asked later in the questionnaire if youth participants “changed” as a result of their participation in their program.

Respondents found this a much easier question than the first question on outcomes and gave wonderful examples of outcomes, both individual and group. Responses to this question included the following:

*“One youth went from being considered an at-risk youth to winning a statewide award recognizing his service to the community, becoming an officer on the student council, and prom king. In addition, skill levels increased, adults changed their perception of youth in the community, knowledge increased about computers, and youth changed their perception of the library and of the adults in the community.”*

*“The biggest changes we saw were in self-esteem and cooperative behavior as a team.”*

The narrative responses to this question were coded into categories of IMLS’s outcome types: a change in attitude, skill, knowledge, behavior, or status. Generally, museums considered themselves effective in supporting changes in knowledge (33%) and attitudes (27%), while libraries emphasized attitudes (28%) and skills (24%). When respondents were asked how they knew this change had occurred, 40% reported having used some evaluation and 15% had input from external sources, such as teachers and parents.

This particular line of questioning continued in the following two items, which asked respondents if participation in their program had resulted in a change first in the youth’s immediate community (peers and families) and then, in another item, if participation had resulted in a change in the larger community. In both questions, respondents were asked how they knew this change had occurred. The items became increasingly more difficult for grantees to answer, as indicated by the number of items left incomplete.

Less than half (43%) of all respondents answered in the affirmative to the question: Did your program /product change individual youth’s immediate community (family, peer group, etc.)? Libraries were more likely than museums to answer this question affirmatively: 52% of libraries compared with 38% of museums. These qualitative responses were coded by ILI staff into categories that emerged from the data. The categories were:

- New connections (5%)
- Acquisition of new skills/knowledge by immediate community (30%)
- Diminished barriers to use of the institution (22%)
- Community development (20%)

Some respondents were quite articulate about the impact of their program on families and peer groups, as evidenced by the following responses:

*“Families learned how to incorporate math concepts into game formats for educational family fun; children got excited about math; parents gained knowledge of new ways to reinforce math skills at home other than just helping kids with homework assignments.”*

*“The parents of the youth would come into the next program asking questions and telling of the things they did together and the help they receive from each other now.”*

*“The teen participants found companionship among their book discussion groups and regularly attended sessions. Teens incorporated reading techniques with their children. Writing component of book discussion culminated in a poetry book published for teen mothers and families to share.”*

Other respondents were able to articulate community outcomes, as seen in the following examples:

*“Increased participation in library services and resource offerings by a huge percentage. In 2003, the library had 1,100 patron visits with very few youth; in 2006 (Jan.-May), the library had over 3,000 patron visits, with ~50% being children and youth.”*

*“As our faculty has taken a more process-oriented approach to integrating research skills into their courses, many students have engaged in more complex research tasks and seem to have a better grasp of the process.”*

*“Libraries were encouraged to partner with local Head Start, WIC programs, and local schools. Some of those partnerships happened. In one case, there were books in the waiting room at two local immunization clinics. In another instance, the local library reported that special education classes from the local school were coming to the library on a regular basis.”*

Impacts of the program on the greater community were coded into categories that emerged from the data. These categories included the following:

- Youth contributions to community (15%)
- Change in status that impacts community (21%)
- External scores reflect change (18%)
- Community improvement in PYD (38%)

Respondents knew that these changes in the greater community had occurred largely through observation and self-reporting. Only a small number of organizations (20%) reported using evaluation to support this claim.

Finally, in a third item, respondents were asked to rate, on a five-point Likert scale, the extent to which their project *intended* to change or create each of IMLS’s six categories of outcomes<sup>2</sup>. These categories, compared with the outcomes grantees described in their

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<sup>2</sup> **Attitude** (ideas or feelings about something): positive identity, tolerance, self-confidence, interest, etc. **Skill** (ability to do something): technology, literacy, decision making, leadership, cultural competency, etc. **Knowledge** (facts or understanding about something): concepts, theories, how to apply them, etc. **Behavior**

programs, demonstrate alignment between intentions and outcomes. Museums and libraries perceive their strength to be in the support of the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes. These outcomes can work, in the longer term, to support changes in behavior, status, and condition.

Museums and libraries have no difficulty describing the change in participants as a result of participation in their programs, and many (27% of libraries; 48% of museums) use some form of evaluation to support those claims. However, libraries and museums have more difficulty linking those changes to the participants' immediate and general community. Only 43% of all respondents could articulate a change in the immediate community and 14% in the greater community. Yet, PYD research indicates the great importance of engaging youth's families and friends in addition to the youth, and the literature on social program sustainability underscores the importance of being able to articulate and promote the resulting community benefit in order to build community support for program sustainability.

### **Program Evaluation**

All but six (2%) programs reported having performed some kind of evaluation during the design and implementation of their programs. Program evaluation is one area in which a statistically significant difference between museums and libraries was evident, most likely related to differences in funding—museums engage in evaluation generally and make use of external evaluators specifically much more often than libraries do. Museum programs tend to be funded through competitive proposals to funding agencies such as IMLS, the National Science Foundation, and the Wallace Foundation, all of whom require some form of outcome evaluation to demonstrate the results of their investments. Over the past 10 to 15 years, this has created a culture of routine evaluation in museums across the country, with varying degrees of quality. Left to their own devices, the majority of museum educators would, in all likelihood, prefer to invest the full sum of the grant into the program offerings to reach more youth or reach the youth more often. The change in culture has arisen in response to demand from funding agencies. Libraries, on the other hand, receive their IMLS funding through block grants, which do not always require a competitive process. Thus, evaluation is not required by an external agency as frequently as it is for museums. Future IMLS funding should possibly include a requirement for more routine evaluation among libraries and, if this is deemed important, guidance regarding the mechanisms by which it might be accomplished.

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(habits, patterns, ways of being or doing something): reduced risky actions, volunteering, social choices, etc. **Status:** high school graduate, successful college applicant, certified babysitter, etc. **Condition** (health, physical, psychological): symptom-free, healthy, nonsmoker, drug-free, etc.

Table 4: Use of Evaluation  
 To what extent was evaluation conducted for your program/product?  
 (Scale 1–4; 1 = never, 4 = continuously.)

<b>Institution type</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Library	2.92	98	.846
Museum	3.19	128	.839
Other	3.24	21	1.044
Total	3.09	247	.868

When respondents were asked to describe how their program was evaluated, the method mentioned most frequently was for a staff member to design and implement the evaluation. In most museums and libraries, this is the same person who conceived and implemented the program. These staff members are most strongly invested in determining how the program is affecting participants and how it can be improved, but they are also the least likely to be objective about the findings. Museums and libraries often operate in a climate of reduced staffing and budgets, and external evaluators are often unaffordable. IMLS might consider asking grantees to identify someone besides the program director to be the internal evaluator, encouraging staff to act as evaluators for each other’s programs when funds are not available for an external evaluator. Additionally, because objectivity is ensured largely through a study’s methodology, online classes in survey design and methods might help museums and libraries incorporate more and higher quality evaluation into their programs.

The evaluation method of choice continues to be feedback sheets distributed at the conclusion of a program. This is an evaluation method that library and museum staff members are familiar with and one that is easy to implement. When asked to describe the extent to which their programs were modified in response to any evaluation performed, museums are again significantly different than libraries in their ability to more frequently incorporate evaluation findings into practice.

### **Program Sustainability**

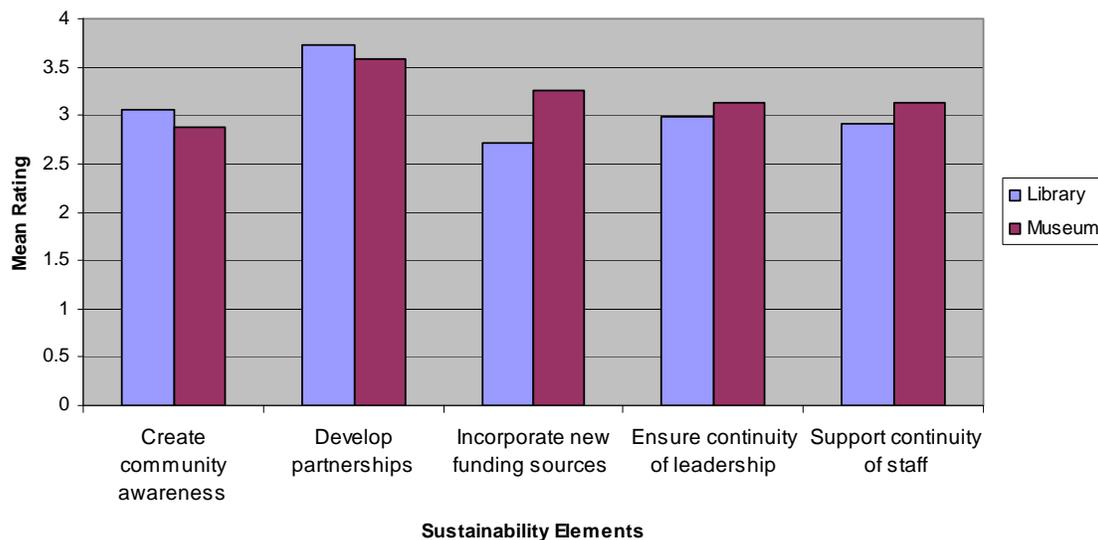
#### *Partnerships*

Partnerships are an important tool that organizations can use to leverage their ability to provide programs to the community, create sustainable programs, and increase organizational learning and community connections.

Libraries report that their most frequent partnerships are with schools, community organizations, and museums. Museums report that their most frequent partnerships are with the same groups: schools, community organizations, and libraries. Notable is the lack of partnerships with media organizations (newspapers, radio stations, etc.) that could help libraries and museums build community awareness and support for their programs. Museum and libraries partner with other organizations primarily to acquire participants and expertise. By developing programs for preexisting groups of youth, museums and libraries leverage their ability to provide services to more youth. Again, museums and

libraries form partnerships less often for publicity and funding, which are critical for creating sustainable programs. The cause of this less frequent partnering with media was not identified by the survey; it may be due to a lack of awareness on the organization’s part or, more likely, a lack of practice on the part of the media. One of IMLS’s national partnerships—with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—was designed to encourage museums and libraries to work with local broadcasting entities to address community needs. A number of the supported programs targeted youth.

Figure 6: Mean of Self-Reported Incorporation of Sustainability Elements  
 “To what extent did your program work to...?” (Scale 1–5; 1 = not at all, 5 = a lot.)



*Program continuity*

Respondents were asked, “Is your program/product still ongoing?” An astounding 85% of responses were in the affirmative. In further exploration during the case studies, it became apparent that while some piece of the program or product was still active, the program had usually changed in scale, name, or content area to meet the needs of a new funder, a new institutional focus, or a reduced budget. It can be assumed, however, that the investments IMLS makes in these programs continue to influence the grantee organizations long after the funding is complete.

The most frequent reason cited that a program had continued was institutional support, which indicates the role IMLS is playing in supporting organizational growth and capacity. For libraries, while institutional support was important, community support was the strongest reason that programs continued.

When programs did not continue, the most frequent reason cited was a lack of funding or completion of the funding cycle. Many grant periods are two years, which often gives program staff sufficient time only to develop and implement the program, and less time to demonstrate its value to potential funders. Finding new funding sources is often not the program staff’s strength but rather the development department’s, which often has many

competing demands for time and attention. Longer funding cycles, the creation of support materials to help libraries and museums build community support (e.g., how and when to send a press release, how to encourage media attention), and tools for building corporate interest would help these organizations learn how to better support themselves.

## **Section Three: The Case Studies**

The next component of the Engaging America's Youth study was a series of case studies drawn from respondents who had completed the grantee survey. The Institute for Learning Innovation had three reasons for pursuing a case study design:

1. To develop a deeper understanding of IMLS's contribution to the field of positive youth development.
2. To better understand support systems and challenges for successfully implementing PYD theory.
3. To highlight practices that other programs might learn from.

To meet these needs, ILI researchers implemented a two-stage process. First, 15 case studies were chosen from among the projects surveyed. These cases exhibited effective practice and represented a range of geographic areas and different sizes and types of institutions. The development of case studies is an effective research approach and is used when specific contextual issues are considered important to understanding a given situation or phenomenon. They work well when trying to document the complexity and interaction among variables being explored in a study (Stake 1995; Yin 2003). The purpose of the case studies in this project was to explore how successful programs operated, how they overcame barriers common to the field, and how their efforts connected to the PYD literature, and to determine the role IMLS funding played in supporting their programs.

Second, to inform and advise the project, IMLS convened a panel of experts in the field of museum and library practice, youth development, research, policy setting, and media. This group participated with representatives from each of the case studies in two two-day workshops to discuss specific issues identified by the survey and the case study research. This section of the report describes the selection process for the cases and summarizes the case study and workshop discussions. The case studies themselves are in Appendix D.

### **Case Study Selection Process**

Case studies were selected from the original grantee survey sample. Grantees were flagged for this deeper investigation by a multitier process, including the following criteria:

1. They showed strong use of elements of successful youth programs that promote PYD as demonstrated through existing research.
2. They showed strong use of McLaughlin's (2000) elements of sustainable youth social programs (youth-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered).
3. Collectively, they represented the full spectrum of IMLS youth programs and were representative of geography, institution size, program type, and program content.

By creating an algorithm that scored all 247 responses on 14 key items (detailed below), the researchers developed a list of the highest scoring programs for these identified items. From that list, 15 programs were chosen to broadly represent all IMLS programs by geography, organization type, program type, and audience. Each case study selected agreed to identify three interview candidates for 45-minute telephone interviews and to send two program representatives to participate in the workshops.

The following items of the questionnaire were used as criteria for identifying potential case studies. Scoring demonstrates selected case study item scores compared with scores of the entire sample.

Item 1: If your program had clearly articulated outcomes for youth, please describe them.

The narrative responses were coded using a four-point scale:

- 0 Absent response
- 1 Weak outcomes: did not describe a change in participant but rather what the institution would do or provide.
- 2 Acceptable outcomes: described the desired changes in participant.
- 3 Well-developed outcomes: multiple measurable outcomes for different audiences, written in audience language, linking outcomes to impact, etc.

The average score on this question for the sample as a whole was 1.53, while the average for the grantees selected for the case studies was 2.06. Table shows the distribution of codes.

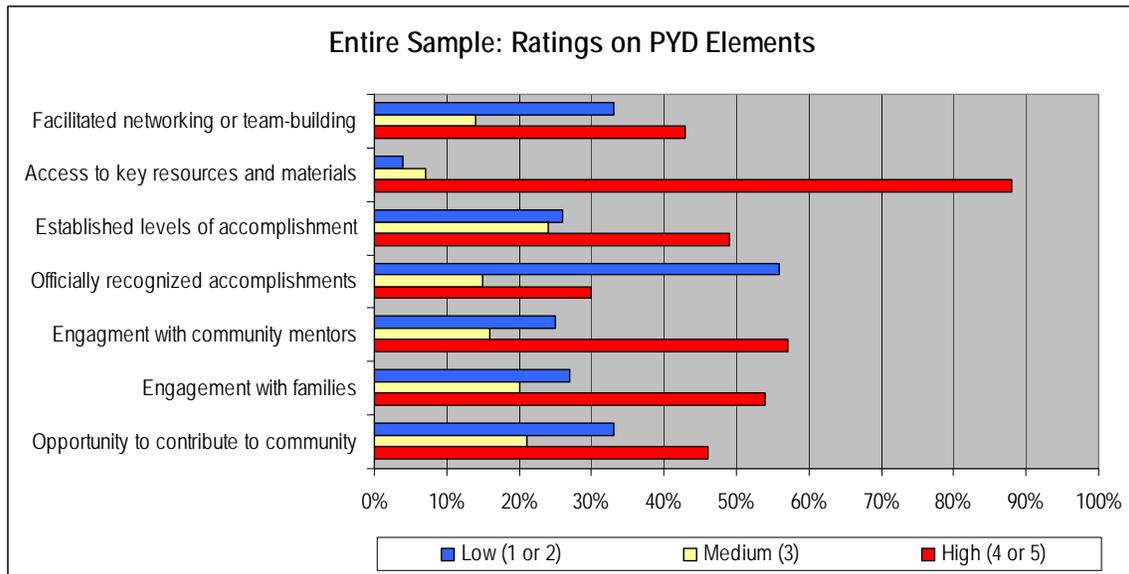
Table 5: Coded Responses for Participant Outcomes

<b>Sample Type</b>	<b>Coded Responses</b>			
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Entire Sample	12%	38%	34%	16%
Case Studies	-	33%	27%	40%

Item 2: To what extent did the program/product include the following elements (identified by PYD research) for youth audience(s)? (Scale 1–5; 1 = not at all, 5 = very much.)

For each element in Figure 7, respondents gave a rating on a five-point Likert scale.

Figure 7: Ratings on PYD Elements



**Item 3:** Was your program designed and/or carried out using a written outline or framework?

Programs were categorized based on whether a framework had been used in designing them or carrying them out. The responses are detailed in Table 7.

Table 6: Use of Framework in Program Design

Sample	Response	
	Yes	No
Entire Sample	77%	23%
Case Studies	80%	20%

**Item 4:** How was the need for your program/product identified?

The narrative responses to these questions were categorized based on the following coding rubric:

- 0 Absent response
- 1 Institutionally generated (using internal experience, opinion, or research)
- 2 Anecdotal (informal community or teacher input)
- 3 Performed needs assessment (or combination of community input and research)

Table 7 details the responses to the way program need was determined in both sample types.

Table 7: Determination of Program Need

Sample Type	Coded Responses			
	0	1	2	3
Entire Sample	6%	36%	51%	7%
Case Studies	-	7%	67%	27%

Item 5: To what extent was evaluation conducted for your program/product?

(choose one)

1 = never 2 = occasionally 3 = often 4 = continuously

Table 8: Evaluation among Case Studies

Sample Type	Response		
	1	2	3 or 4
Entire Sample	3%	26%	71%
Case Studies	-	7%	93%

Item 6: To what extent did your program or product...

For each element in Table 10, respondents gave a rating on a five-point Likert scale.

(Scale 1–5; 1 = not at all, 5 = a lot.)

Table 9: Program Elements

Element	Rating		
	1 or 2	3	4 or 5
<i>Create community awareness of impacts</i>			
Entire Sample	34%	37%	28%
Case Studies	7%	20%	73%
<i>Develop partnerships with community groups or corporate entities</i>			
Entire Sample	21%	20%	59%
Case Studies	-	-	100%
<i>Incorporate new funding sources after inception</i>			
Entire Sample	36%	22%	42%
Case Studies	-	27%	73%
<i>Ensure continuity of leadership</i>			
Entire Sample	36%	25%	40%
Case Studies	7%	27%	66%
<i>Support continuity of staff</i>			
Entire Sample	37%	18%	45%
Case Studies	13%	20%	67%

## **Case Study Instrument**

Three representatives from each case study program were designated by the case study organizations. This ensured that a broad spectrum of perspectives was represented. For example, the group often included the staff person who developed or administered the program, a youth or adult participant, and a member from a partner organization. Interviews required 45 minutes to an hour to complete and detailed notes were taken. Case study reports were written to describe the overall program, its goals, and its audience, and to highlight the elements of PYD and sustainability that the program had incorporated. The interview guide for these in-depth interviews is in Appendix C; the case study reports are in Appendix D.

## **Case Study Results**

In addition to providing excellent program models, resources, and rich examples of effective practice, the case studies helped to illuminate issues originally identified through survey results. These issues provided a framework for discussion at the two workshops held in Washington, D.C., in October and November 2006. These two-day workshops were designed to explore questions of effective practice, challenges and successes, the role of partnerships, sustainability, funding, and community. Case study representatives shared their practical experience and wisdom in conversations with IMLS project staff, ILI researchers, and the Youth Action Committee. The practitioners brought crucial expertise and experience about the design of programs, staffing, audiences, community impact, and real life challenges to these discussions.

## **Youth Action Committee**

The Youth Action Committee (YAC) is a group of experts convened by IMLS to represent the broad fields of museum and library practice and administration, research, policy, youth development, media, and government. The group brought years of expertise in their respective specialties. They read each of the case studies, asked penetrating questions, participated in discussions, and provided many valuable resources to enhance the study, including additional literature, frameworks, and projects to consider.

The purpose of the workshops was to bring together researchers, policymakers, administrators, and practitioners with IMLS staff, ILI researchers, and case study representatives to discuss issues and possible implications for designing and implementing effective youth programs. The results of these discussions are already informing IMLS discussions and directions for the future.

## **Key Findings**

The national survey, case study research, and workshop discussions identified the following issues as being relevant to the design and implementation of effective programs for youth: (1) community partnerships; (2) program sustainability; (3) supporting and communicating outcomes; (4) building institutional support; (5) staff retention and development; (6) ongoing IMLS funding; (7) including youth in design and

implementation; and (8) potential tools and resources that IMLS could develop. Each of these is detailed below.

### **Community Partnerships**

Many funding agencies consider partnerships an effective strategy for reaching audiences, leveraging resources, and building organizational capacity. Workshop participants discussed effective approaches to museum and library partnerships that could serve as models for the field. Specifically, Partnerships for a Nation of Learners (Corporation for Public Broadcasting and IMLS 2003) and New Visions for Public Schools (New Visions for Public Schools 1989) were described as effective models and sources of information from which the field could learn.

As illustrated by the survey findings, most libraries and museums recruit partners who have strong relationships with potential audiences of interest and can bring expertise and additional staffing to youth development efforts. One suggestion was that museums and libraries need to think more broadly about the range of assets partners can provide, including tangible resources (space and materials), intellectual resources, time, community credibility, and expertise (generational, language, cultural, proximity/logistical, institutional).

An issue that came up repeatedly was the lack of communication and partnership between the PYD field and cultural institutions. Some discussants cited a divide between youth development programs and arts organizations. It was suggested that the two groups do not know enough about each other and that partnership should be less about the work each group does and more about sharing common outcomes, goals, and approaches to working with youth. These participants suggested that art museums in particular should be encouraged to build relationships with the youth development community. Other discussants believed that this divide exists between museums/libraries and youth development generally.

Participants warned that partnerships need to be respectful of youth and that youth should be included in decision making. Partnerships also offer an avenue for providing work opportunities for youth. In addition to supporting traditional library and museum program outcomes, partner organizations can emphasize the life skills youth need to develop, as supported by evidence (see Pittman 2003).

Partnerships only work if missions between partners align or, as discussants suggested, if there is an intersection of missions. Organizations can forge coalitions around the intersection of common interests, complementing each others' strengths. Potential partners should be identified through contacts and in-depth conversations; it is important to engage multiple potential partners in conversation before identifying the few who are appropriate for partnership.

Discussants recommended that early in the partner-building process, a framework or working agreement for accountability should be written that includes roles, milestones, program goals, and outcomes. Potential partners need to see each other as partners and

promote ongoing communication, continually revisiting the partnership to ensure that collaboration is working. Relationship building is time consuming and needs time to develop. Collaborative projects need realistic time frames. Again, museums and libraries should consider youth as partners in this process.

Participants suggested that partnerships can also support staff development. Many cities have nonprofit organizations that conduct staff development for youth-serving organizations. Thus, museums and libraries do not necessarily need to create their own or additional training opportunities but can reach out to the youth development community for expertise. In fact, they may want to consider working in close partnership to collaborate or share staff resources, with each group's staff bringing its expertise to the design and implementation of the program.

IMLS could support partnership building on a national level, possibly with a joint program between national museum and library associations or with teacher/library/museum organizations that could facilitate the process at the local level. IMLS could also gather existing resources on its Web site to support the field in creative thinking about different types of partnerships and partners. In addition, museum and library staff could benefit from professional development or training to prepare them for engaging in partnerships.

### **Program Sustainability**

An important point discussed by case study and workshop participants was that not every project can or should be sustained. One YAC member pointed out that it is impossible to sustain every program. A discontinued program is still valuable if it is well documented and lessons are learned and *shared*. Even if an entire program cannot be maintained, an effective key element of the program might be sustained in other programs or as a stand-alone effort. By embracing this broader view of sustainability, museums and libraries can deal with the difficulty inherent in closing down programs.

Library and museum staff members often associate sustainability simply with the availability of funding. But research demonstrates that sustainability is the product of multiple efforts, in addition to the integration of new funding sources, after a program's inception. Other sustainability issues include course correction and learning from evaluation efforts, supporting continuity of staff and leadership, the development of community partnerships, and the creation of community awareness of the program and its impacts.

Funding agencies tend to stress innovation and the next new project; however, the field can educate funding agencies that it is not always what is new that should be financially supported but rather what *works* based on evidence and long-term impact. Discussants raised the issue: "In what other business would you support funding for research and development and pilot implementation, only to stop that funding halfway through?"

Museum and libraries are seriously understaffed in this area, to the point that they are often just barely able to implement programs. There is no time for, and little expertise in,

building community awareness about programs and communicating their importance for youth and for the larger community. Case study representatives explained that the research to substantiate such claims, either existing or required, is not accessible to most staff; thus, many feel uncomfortable making claims that seem grandiose or unsubstantiated. Other participants suggested that development departments have conflicting demands for their time and attention, and usually an individual program is not a priority. Program staff could benefit from tools to build community awareness about the youth programs they offer, from basic strategies—such as how to engage the media—to how to access to summaries of research on impacts.

### **Supporting and Communicating Outcomes**

The case study research findings reinforced the survey results and underscored the difficulty many libraries and museums have with communicating the importance and impact of the youth programs they offer, particularly impacts at the community level. Measuring longer term and community impact is difficult, and usually requires a professional evaluator. This adds expense to projects already stretched for resources. Workshop participants suggested that it may be worthwhile for IMLS to consider supporting a larger empirical study investigating the long-term impacts of the programs it has funded. This study would particularly benefit smaller institutions, since larger organizations can more easily afford to do evaluation and research. A national study of impact would allow smaller organizations to be included. Other participants reminded the group that much research has already been done and that a synthesis of such work would be of more immediate benefit to museums and libraries.

A number of participants suggested that IMLS might consider longer term funding of key projects to explore both the outcomes of participation in the programs and the longer term impacts of such funding. But the relationship between communicating impacts and funding are complex. One IMLS-funded case study project, Project Dragonfly in Haines, Alaska, has managed to garner significant community support, which has allowed the library to more easily obtain other grants from other sources. But the opposite side of the coin is that their governing body, the borough, now expects the library to be successful in raising funds on its own. The library is considering a new strategy: it is beginning a campaign to fund the program through a program endowment or an endowed staff position. This example triggered a discussion on the use of endowments and the need for a tool to help organizations, such as libraries and museums, develop the skills to successfully solicit this type of funding. The conversation explored how different kinds of funding (e.g., short-term grants versus endowments) influence planning cycles. One discussant asked, “If we ask people to think about what a long-term legacy is going to be, would they begin to plan for the longer term?”

Workshop participants also stressed the importance of board support and of recruiting that support through the active involvement of the organization’s leadership. It is also important to recruit support from community leaders generally and to keep those leaders aware of what is happening in the program.

Yet another thought was that IMLS could add a forum for posting and celebrating successful programs. Stories of success—on both the program and individual youth participant level—could inspire others to support the work. Such an effort could enable a program to send out a press release that IMLS has featured the community or program on its Web site. Another thought was that since museum and library staff members are not skilled at lobbying, perhaps youth from the program could serve as spokespeople or ambassadors, thereby drawing media attention. Both project staff and youth participants would benefit from media training.

Library participants talked about the lack of public relations efforts in the library world, where community support is generally strong but unfocused. Library representatives suggested that IMLS could require grantees to develop a PR strategy and budget, so that the work would be supported institutionally. This is an area in which IMLS could provide support—creating a template for a press kit that could be tailored by each program and helping project staff understand the potential in the field of social marketing. A great deal of information about how to communicate important messages has been published and is available online. As a case in point, PBS recently hired a social marketing firm to help it identify new markets and determine how best to communicate with them. To build relationships with these communities, PBS has begun by helping them meet their public relations needs; for example, with public service announcements, community workshops on topics of interest, and community kits.

This discussion also pointed out the benefits of libraries and museums offering their physical spaces to organizations in the community—for example, to hold Saturday morning classes or a session to map out possibilities for upcoming summer activities. Because the human touch is very important and many families and other community members may not have access to or feel comfortable with the institution, opening one's doors to communities for *their* purposes rather than one's own mission can be an effective way to develop community support. Museums and libraries are also encouraged to build a high profile with their local planning departments in order to get programs on the city "map" (Web site, pamphlets, etc.), since new families and other residents moving into an area may use these materials to orient themselves to their new community.

### **Building Institutional Support**

Case study research suggested that a significant challenge libraries and museums face is that programs are often developed and implemented by individuals who are passionate about the program and whom community members associate with the program and its success. When these staff members move on to new positions, the program often falters and has difficulty maintaining momentum and community support. One small group discussion focused on strategies to move programs from the hearts of individuals to the heart of the institution, so they are identified with the institution rather than the individual and supported by the organization over the long term.

Suggestions included ensuring that organizations show how a program supports the institution's mission and including this question into future evaluation studies to build a body of evidence. Program staff members should also turn to their organization's leader

(CEO, president, or director) to be the public face in media when publicizing programs. This creates community awareness for the project, and the leader develops a sense of ownership. In particular, libraries are encouraged to ensure that city council representatives are present at media events. Museum and library staffs are often isolated, and the effort to serve communities is stretched across an already thin staff. Discussants recommended cross-training project staff with other staff where possible, so the program becomes part of the fabric of the institution.

### **Staff Retention and Development**

Case study research indicated that staff turnover, a lack of strong leadership, and little funding for professional development are key issues in maintaining high-quality programming. Since the conditions influencing these issues are unlikely to change, the question of what tools or strategies IMLS could develop in response to these challenges arose. Many participants spoke from personal experience with these problems. The first recommendation was simple and practical. If the organization loses the person who has the project in his or her head, the knowledge is lost. Thus, a written framework, a list of contacts, and details (e.g., where supplies are ordered from) need to be documented. A logic model would provide documentation of the goals and intended outcomes that could be passed on to future project staff.

Another suggestion was that IMLS should encourage grantees to build raises into grant proposal budgets, an item often forgotten by those writing proposals. Guidelines could be established for grant writers, including appropriate salary ranges for potential staff roles to retain staff and minimize turnover.

The discussion returned to the need to build museum and library staffs' confidence and abilities to do this work. Many staff members are nervous or feel underqualified to work with youth; there is a need to better communicate the impact working with youth can have on the institution. For example, the Dallas Public Library found that when it hired youth at the library, it changed the way other youth viewed the library. (Interestingly, as library staff paid attention to youth recommendations for changing the physical environment to make it more youth-friendly, and more youth came into the library, some adult patrons and staff were increasingly uncomfortable.)

IMLS could encourage grantees to identify the skill sets required to support the success of each program and then to explicitly build these into the grant. Most professional development in libraries has been an in-kind rather than courses or workshops. Sometimes successful past grantees act as mentors to a current program. To support staff development, IMLS could create (or identify existing) online courses for simple certificates and could possibly foster an online community through which individuals or groups with similar audiences or programs could connect. IMLS might also create a video or online program designed to help project staff better use the expertise of youth. The video could feature youth talking about youth programs and about the roles and responsibilities they have taken on; this might help museum and library professionals think differently about the role youth can play in programs.

## Ongoing IMLS Funding

As a group, case study representatives and the Youth Action Committee discussed ideas they believed could inform IMLS funding strategies in the future. Recognizing the importance of mentorship in the area of youth development, IMLS could require that some funds in a grant budget be allocated for financial support of mentorship with another organization that has demonstrated success. This would build capacity quickly and enable organizations to build on each other's successes. One participant described receiving funding from a large corporation that covered twice-yearly professional development for all grantees. The funding allowed for networking among the principal investigators (PIs) and enabled the funder to address specific skill gaps. This comment led to a discussion of the potential benefits of convening IMLS grantees to share their activities and lessons learned. Some participants believed that convening them at the beginning of projects was most effective, while others said that convening them at the end of their work was more useful; the group did not reach consensus on this topic.

The group also discussed IMLS leveraging its own work by entering into partnerships with complementary organizations. One example mentioned as a potential model was the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society. Led by the U.S. State Department, this effort included IMLS, the National Science Foundation, and the Departments of Commerce and Education, and explored the role of the Internet in a global society. Each organization's perspective and agenda was enriching for the others, and a great deal was accomplished. Perhaps IMLS could lead a similar summit to promote cross-organizational dialogue on youth programming and initiatives. Other examples mentioned were the Wallace Foundation's Conference on Out-of-School Time in New York City, the Mayors' Institute on City Design, and the National Conference of Mayors.

One expert said that if IMLS simply spent every dime recruiting youth into museum and library careers, it would be money well spent, as it would increase diversity in these organizations and ensure their ongoing health.

The group discussed the tension between depth and breadth in programming and the fact that programs that are considered stellar often reach only a small number of youth very deeply. Others expressed concern that this leaves many youth who need help and ignores the moral responsibility to reach as many youth as possible. IMLS was encouraged to provide funding for organizations that were trying to scale up successful programs, such as the Holocaust Memorial Museum, which is taking a small, strong youth program national.

## Including Youth in Design and Implementation

Many excellent resources can help practitioners who are interested in more actively engaging youth in the design and implementation of their own programs; some of these are included in the companion practitioners' guide, *Nine to Nineteen: Youth in Museums and Libraries*. The following suggestions were made for working *with*, rather than *for*, youth:

- Be completely honest—youth know immediately when something is false.
- Invite youth into decision making, but create safe parameters within which the decisions can be made.
- In good collaboration, power and decision making are shared, but program leaders are still leaders. It is important to communicate that to youth. Any suggestion that everyone is equal is not honest.
- It takes time to demonstrate that an institution cares. Time spent building relationships with youth participants may be more important than how many staff participate.
- Many museums and libraries start with a teen council to suggest and select the kinds of programs youth prefer. These councils, created to support youth programming, often become an integral part of the organization over time.
- Youth feel challenged to become responsible global citizens. The challenge for museums and libraries is to offer them meaningful opportunities to develop those skills.
- Library and museum staffs need to become more knowledgeable about youth development and behavior through youth sensitivity training, just as teens need to be taught how to work with adults.
- One demonstration of the value of youth input is financial compensation; this can help relieve youth of the need to earn necessary income, which may make participation difficult.

## Potential Tools and Resources

A number of suggestions emerged from the case study interviews and the four days of workshop discussions for tools IMLS might develop to promote success in youth development efforts. Many of these have been mentioned earlier; they are compiled in this list:

1. A handbook/pamphlet about the development and maintenance of strong community partnerships.
2. Access to resources for evaluation services. What types of questions should be asked of a consultant? When do you need a consultant? When should an outside evaluator be used? What perspectives do evaluators have?
3. Suggestions and strategies for qualitative evaluation.
4. Recommendations for which output data to track.
5. A matrix to evaluate whether a program should be sustained or retired.

6. Pamphlets that underscore the importance of youth program and the unique role museums and libraries can play in those programs, to be used to raise community support and funding.
7. A tool or framework for libraries and museums to use when talking with community groups about employing youth.
8. Development of a challenge grant category to encourage libraries and museums to partner with local corporations and funding agencies with a vested interest in local youth.
9. Tools to build awareness of and support for the development of endowments for staff or programs.
10. Tools to support social marketing of youth programs in museums and libraries.

## **Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations**

According to the Carnegie Corporation's *Great Transitions* report (1995),

Most American adolescents navigate the critical transition years from ten to eighteen with relative success. With good schools, supportive families, and caring community institutions, they grow up to meet the requirements of family life, friendship, the workplace, and citizenship in a technically advanced, democratic society. Even under difficult conditions, most young people grow into responsible, ethical, problem-solving adults. For others, however, the obstacles in their path can impair their physical and emotional health, destroy their motivation and ability to succeed, and damage their personal relationships. At least one quarter of all adolescents are at high risk for engaging in behaviors that threaten their health and long-term prospects.

Although it is a difficult transition in any era, today's youth are faced with an adolescence complicated by the contemporary context. A combination of factors has weakened the community support once available to young people (Eccles and Gootman 2002). The nature of family support has changed as geographically dispersed families, single parents, and working parents have increased in number, so that adolescents spend less time in the company of caring adults than they used to. More of their time is spent alone, with peers, or in front of the television set or computer. The skills required to find well-paying jobs are shifting in the knowledge-based economy, making a high school diploma inadequate to ensure financial security.

Youth enter puberty an average of two years earlier, while longer periods invested in education and later marriage means that the gap between sexual maturation and the assumption of adult roles and responsibilities is lengthened. The media play an ever-increasing role in youth's lives and profoundly influence their fears and expectations of the future. The country they are growing up in is itself experiencing profound change as it becomes ever more diverse and multiethnic, and the accompanying tension is felt by all—especially by youth in this age group as they try to make sense of their future in perplexing times.

Adolescents—both those who appear to be making a reasonably successful transition to adulthood and those who are not—are the concern of socially conscious adults in all walks of life. Today's adults have great intentions and strong motivation, but the skills these adults used to make this important transition in their own lives are no longer sufficient to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **IMLS-Supported Projects in the Context of PYD**

The many inspirational success stories demonstrate that libraries and museums make an important difference in the lives of today's youth. A significant number of their youth-focused programs would not have existed without IMLS funding to develop and establish them. At the same time, this study suggests that challenges to optimally serving this audience continue to exist in the museum and library worlds and in the context of their funding.

More than half of science centers and art museums nationwide provide youth programs either after school or on weekends, as do libraries and many other kinds of museums (Association of Science and Technology Centers 2006; Wetterlund and Sayre 2003). They do this both to fill an important societal need and to engage future audiences and patrons. IMLS has successfully supported a number of innovative and fledgling youth programs, helping museums and libraries build their capacity to serve this important audience. Additional integration of the recommendations from PYD research would help library and museum programs contribute even more powerfully to youth as they grow toward adulthood.

Key observations of this study:

1. **Programs should strongly align institutional focus and audience needs.** Most libraries and museums do not perform needs assessments to inform program selection or design. Instead, their youth programs tend to focus on unique institutional content areas, strongly aligning program design with organizational mission. There is a need for education and tools for needs assessments—scaleable to organization size—to support the identification of youth needs in specific communities. Such assessments would more strongly anchor programs in specific audience needs and outcomes, and increase the ability of museums and libraries to communicate the importance of their programs, to garner financial and other support.
2. **Programs should recognize diversity within the category “youth.”** Libraries and museums offer programs to support youth, and many programs focus on important needs or interests (such as “poor reading skills” or “high science interest”), but most programs are designed for youth as a general audience rather than as multiple audience segments with specific characteristics and needs. When the various groups of youth for which programs can be offered are well understood, museums and libraries can build programs that attract and sustain greater participation, and strengthen impact.
3. **Programs for small numbers may have the greatest impact.** Museum and library programs tend to be extremely efficient, serving a large number of youth using minimal staff and resources. Many funders demonstrate a positive bias toward programs that reach large groups, in the belief that greater numbers mean greater benefits. However, PYD research shows that the greatest gains are often made in programs that serve small numbers of youth intensely.
4. **Programs with extended participation may create the greatest benefit.** Only 24% of library and 17% of museum programs offer weekly programming for youth. PYD research indicates that frequent, in-depth program participation leads to the most substantial benefits for youth.
5. **Programs should expand their strength as community learning environments.** Libraries and museums are moving toward a full embodiment of McLaughlin’s four characteristics of successful community-based learning environments for youth—that they be youth-, knowledge-, assessment-, and community-centered (McLaughlin 2000). These institutions focus on a love of learning and knowledge. They teach important skills and content in safe, caring environments that build trusting relationships with adults.

Museum programs are building needs assessments and ongoing evaluation into their practice, and libraries are beginning to integrate evaluative thinking into their efforts. Substantive inclusion of youth in program design and implementation, and stronger networks with additional community organizations, will further strengthen these powerful resources for youth development.

6. **Programs should strengthen the role of youth beyond that of audience.** For the most part, museums and libraries perceive youth as an audience for whom programs are developed and delivered. Libraries and museums need to reframe their thinking to include youth in decision making at all program stages: conceptualization, development, recruitment, implementation, evaluation, and building community awareness. When museums and libraries begin to program *with* youth rather than *for* youth, their institutions will change at the core, and they will understand youth not only as an audience but also as a source of strength and expertise.
7. **Programs need strategies to extend their life cycles.** Because most funding agencies favor short-cycle programs, the vast majority of program leaders scramble every two years to find funding sources. This scramble means that programs may change to meet the priorities of a new funding agency, and it limits the long-term and gradual growth necessary to develop expertise in a new field or practice. Libraries and museums need to acquire the skills to broadcast their programs' importance and success to the larger community. In so doing, they could leverage their ability to develop new partnerships and find longer term, possibly ongoing (endowment), funding.

### **IMLS Support for the Effort to Serve Youth**

Youth programming in libraries and museums could benefit greatly from a firmer foundation in the proven elements of successful youth programs. However, these organizations—often understaffed and overcommitted—typically have little or no time to become familiar with the PYD literature. They often rely on traditional program formats and content, which can be developed and implemented quickly and efficiently. Helping to make PYD concepts more easily accessible and providing strong incentives to integrate them into programming could gradually result in more effective incorporation of this research into museum and library practice.

This report contains many recommendations, small and large, interspersed throughout the discussion of findings and the case study and workshop discussions. Stepping back, these recommendations can be encompassed in the following five overarching ideas:

1. **IMLS can play an important role in disseminating what is known in the PYD research** into successful youth programs through publications, online workshops and training, conference presentations, and so on. Creating readable, user-friendly material summarizing these findings and their implications, and publicizing how to easily access these important ideas will allow motivated staff to more easily incorporate the ideas into their practice.

2. **IMLS can encourage staff who are less internally motivated to integrate important PYD practice into their organizations** by changing grant proposal requirements to demonstrate familiarity with and incorporation of PYD elements into funding requests. To create buzz and build momentum, IMLS might consider strategic alliances with other organizations—such as the American Association of Museums, the Association of Children’s Museums, the American Library Association, the Forum for Youth Investment, and the Institute for Learning Innovation—to create a series of programming and evaluation guidelines that are endorsed and supported by all organizations. IMLS could invest in the future staffs of museums and libraries by disseminating these materials through degree-granting programs for librarians and museum educators.
  
3. **IMLS could help library and museum staff acquire the skills necessary to build community awareness and support for their programs.** Such an effort would necessitate a better understanding of PYD research; it would provide simple frameworks for how to reach out to media effectively, involve local government and politicians, build institutional support for programs, and develop new partnerships. Findings from this study indicate that the majority of library and museum staffs have stronger skill sets in program development and implementation than in publicizing and building sustainability for their programs.
  
4. **IMLS should consider new funding strategies.** IMLS may want to earmark a portion of available resources to support longer term funding of programs chosen to explore one of three identified needs:
  - Longer term funding for a few successful programs, with the intent of conducting longitudinal evaluation and research on longer term outcomes and outcomes resulting from increased exposure through in-depth contact.
  - The opportunity for carefully chosen successful programs to explore whether it is feasible (and, if so, what would be required) to ramp up their programs to reach larger numbers of youth effectively.
  - Longer term funding of successful program models to serve as replication institutes or mentors to other organizations that are interested in and willing to reproduce the program in their communities.

Future funding decisions could be designed to support a gradual change in youth development practice in the fields of museum and library work. For example, funding could favor programs that incorporate salaries for youth employment in museums and libraries or that integrate youth into all aspects of program development and implementation.

5. **IMLS could sponsor paid internships for experienced PYD staff from other youth organizations** to develop and implement a “visiting youth expert” residency or position in two or more community locations (museums and libraries) for a year. Much like a visiting professorship, this exposure of museum and library staff to new ways of thinking and implementing youth programs would build organizational capacity and foster community connections to other organizations.

In summary, IMLS has a strong presence in the national field of youth programs. Museum and library programs are being developed and implemented by dedicated and committed staffs in an effort to meet the needs of youth. However, IMLS could have even more impact on both the museum and library fields, as well as on the youth of this nation, by better incorporating PYD research and practice into its funding policies and investing in the education of professional staff members focused on youth development in their respective fields.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Questionnaire

Because the questionnaire was administered in online format, and some questions were routed to respondents depending on the response to previous questions, it is not possible to reproduce the survey exactly in print. We have formatted the survey for this Appendix to give readers a sense of what respondents saw, and have indicated questions that were used to route responses, as well as the questions provided depending on responses.

#### Survey:

Welcome to the online survey of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth Initiative. This national survey is being conducted to examine the impact and results of programs funded by IMLS during 1998-2003 that were designed to directly or indirectly impact youth aged 9-19.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- This questionnaire should take you approximately twenty minutes to complete if done in one session. If you choose to leave the survey before it is complete, you will have the option to start over or resume where you left off when you return. Once you click the "Submit Survey" button, the system identifies you as having completed the survey.
- This questionnaire is designed to explore youth-based programs broadly, and may contain some questions that do not pertain to the particular program at your institution.
- IMLS is interested in hearing about the impact and results of the entire project or program, not just the portion of it funded by IMLS. For instance, if you received a start-up grant from IMLS in 2000 and the program is still ongoing, please consider the current ongoing program in your responses.
- In the survey, "program" and "project" are used interchangeably. Program is typically a longer-term investment in terms of budget and staff investment, while project typically is responding to a more immediate need and is viewed as finite.
- Published reports of aggregated data will not contain identifying information; responses and identities of individual respondents will be kept private to the extent permitted under law.

If you have any questions or problems with this survey please contact us at [IMLSyouthsurvey@ilinet.org](mailto:IMLSyouthsurvey@ilinet.org).

Thank you in advance for your interest and assistance in this important effort.

This survey has been authorized under OMB clearance # 3137-0064 (expiration: June 2007) in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

**Note: Your response to this survey will pertain only to the following IMLS program:**

**IMLS Grant Program:** [Grant specifics provided to respondent]

**IMLS Grant Project Type:** [Grant specifics provided to respondent]

**IMLS Grant Award Year:** [Grant specifics provided to respondent]

**IMLS Description:** [Grant specifics provided to respondent]

1. **What position do you presently hold at your institution?** [Open-ended]
  
2. **What was your relationship to the specified program?** [Check all that apply]
  - I developed or helped develop the program
  - I delivered the program
  - I administered/supervised the program
  - Other (please specify)
  
3. **Which of the following best describes how your program was designed for youth audiences aged 9-19?** [Choose one]
  - Primarily delivered services directly to youth audiences
  - Primarily served youth audiences indirectly (developed capacity, website, etc.)
  - Both of the above, equally
  - No youth were served
  - Youth served were younger than 9
  
4. **What were the approximate age ranges for the youth audience served directly and/or indirectly through your program's efforts?** [Fill-in]

Minimum Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Maximum Age \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. **Describe the "typical" youth audience that your program served using two or three adjectives:** [Open-ended]
  
6. **Which of the following did your program develop?** [Choose one]
  - Primarily skills, knowledge, or other outcomes for adults that work with youth
  - Primarily a supporting product (such as website or curriculum)
  - Both of the above equally
  
7. **Other than youth, who participated in your program?** [Check all that apply]

*NOTE: Does not include program staff.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Only youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth leaders
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Librarians
<input type="checkbox"/> Families	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum educators
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> School library media specialists
<input type="checkbox"/> Caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Local government representatives

- Providers of youth services       Community association or organization representatives
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**8. What kind of products did your program create?** [Check all that apply]

- No products developed
- Web site or Web resource
- Professional education curriculum or instructional tools
- K-12 education curriculum, or instructional tools
- Workshop, institute, or other learning program
- Exhibit
- Publication
- Work of art or public structure
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**9. [If Web site checked] Please provide the current URL.** [Fill-in]:

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. In total, approximately how many youth were served through your program?**

[Choose one]

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-50        | <input type="checkbox"/> 251-500          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100      | <input type="checkbox"/> 501-1,000        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 101-250     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,001-5,000      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5002-10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  |   |

**11. In total, approximately how many non-youth were served through your program?** [Choose one]

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-50        | <input type="checkbox"/> 251-500          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100      | <input type="checkbox"/> 501-1,000        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 101-250     | <input type="checkbox"/> 1,001-5,000      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5002-10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know  |   |

**12. On average, approximately how long did a participant remain in your program?**

[Choose one]

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-6months         | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 1 year, but less than 2 years  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-12 months       | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 2 years, but less than 5 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know.                              |

**13. Approximately how often did participants attend your program?** [Choose one]

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everyday                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Every season/term            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every week                | <input type="checkbox"/> One time only                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every month               | <input type="checkbox"/> randomly (no fixed schedule) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every quarter ( 3 months) | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know                   |

**14. Please provide the following demographic information for the youth audience(s) served by your program’s efforts.** [Choose one in each category]

*NOTE: These items may have estimated percentages. Total for each category should equal 100%.*

**Gender:**

- Male
- Female

**Ethnicity/Race:**

- American Indian or Alaska native;
- Asian;
- African American or Black;
- Hispanic or Latino/a;
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander;
- White;
- Other or Unknown.

**Home Community/Neighborhood:**

- Rural;
- Urban;
- Suburban

**15. If your program had clearly articulated outcomes for youth, please describe them.** For example: develop a personal connection to history; improved information literacy skills; strengthen teacher ability to use Web-based materials; increase confidence in science process skills. [Open-ended]

*NOTE: IMLS defines outcomes as benefits to people: specifically, achievements or changes in skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition, or life status for program participants.*

**16. To what extent did the program/product include the following elements for youth audience(s)?** [5-point Likert scale, “not at all” to “a lot”]

*NOTE: \* “Officially” recognized connotes a badge, certificate or other such symbol of completion.*

Not at all      A lot

- |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Facilitated networking/communication with each other (team-building) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Access to key resources and materials                                |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Established levels of accomplishments                                |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Officially* recognized accomplishments                               |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Engagement with community professionals/mentors                      |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Engagement with families   |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | Opportunity to contribute to the broader community                   |

**17. What was your program's/product's main content focus area(s)?** For example: Arts and humanities, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), literacy, etc. [Open-ended]

**18. Was your program designed and/or carried out using a written outline or framework?** [Choose one]

- Yes  
 No

**19. [If yes] Was that framework based on a specific research model?** For example: experiential learning, positive youth development, etc. [Choose one]

- Yes  
 No

[If yes] **Please specify:** \_\_\_\_\_

**20. How was the need for your program/product identified?** [Open-ended]

**21. To what extent was evaluation conducted for your program/product?** [Choose one]

- Never  
 Occasionally  
 Often  
 Continuously

**22. How was your program evaluated?** [Check all that apply]

- Hired an evaluation consultant;  
 Staff member designed and implemented evaluation plan;  
 Handed out feedback sheets at conclusion of program session;  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**23. To what extent was your program/product modified in response to evaluation?** [Choose one]

- Not at all  
 Somewhat  
 A great deal

**24. Please give us an example of how your program/product was modified in response to evaluation:** [Open-ended]

**25. How did individual participants change or grow as a result of your program?** [Open-ended]

**26. How do you know these changes occurred?** [Open-ended]

**27. Did your program/product change individual youth's immediate community?** (family, peer group, etc.) [Choose one]

- Yes
- No

28. [If yes] **Please describe that change.** [Open-ended]

29. **How do you know these changes occurred?** [Open-ended]

30. **Did your program change individual youth’s greater community?** (i.e., youth literacy rates improved, drop-out rates decreased, etc.) [Choose one]

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

31. [If yes] **Please describe that impact.** [Open-ended]

32. **How do you know these changes occurred?** [Open-ended]

33. **To what extent did your program or product** [5-point Likert scale, “not at all” to “a lot”]

Not at all      A lot

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Create community awareness of impacts                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Develop partnerships with community groups or corporate entities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Incorporate new funding sources after inception                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ensure continuity of leadership                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Support continuity of staff                                      |

34. **If you developed partnerships, with whom did you develop partnerships?** [Check all that apply]

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library                       | <input type="checkbox"/> State Government       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate entity       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Community organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |   |

35. **If you developed partnerships, what assets did the partner(s) bring?** [Check all that apply]

- Staff
- Funding
- Participants
- Expertise
- Research
- Venue
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

36. **Is your program/product still ongoing?** [Choose one]

- Yes, it is still ongoing

No, it has been discontinued

**37. [If yes] Which of the following best describes the main reason why your program/product has continued?** [Choose one]

- Has not yet reached its goal (still needed)
- Continued funding
- Continued community support
- Continued institutional support
- Continued leadership

**38. [If no] Which of the following best describes the main reason why your program/product has not continued?** [Choose one]

- It reached its goal (no further need)
- Lack of funding
- Lack of community support
- Lack of institutional support
- Lack of leadership

**39. Please ensure the following information is correct:**

[Provided data in record for respondent]

Name of institution

Institution Address

City

State

Zip

Website URL

**40. If the above information is not correct, please indicate changes in the box below.**

[Open-ended]

**41. How would you characterize your institution?** [Choose one in each category]

**Number of Full Time Staff:**

- Small (less than 5 FTE)
- Medium (6-25 FTE)
- Large (26 or more FTE)
- Don't know

**Annual Budget:**

- Small (under \$250,000)
- Medium (\$250,000 – 1 million)
- Large (over 1 million)

**Type of Institution:**

- Library
- Museum
- School or University
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**42. Annual Attendance** [Fill-in] [Category dependent on response to question 40, type of institution]

[If library] Size of population served annually: \_\_\_\_\_

[If museum] Annual attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Youth Action Committee**

The Youth Advisory Committee is a group of experts convened by IMLS to represent the broad fields of museum and library practice and administration, research and funding policy, youth development research and practice, media and government. The group brought years of expertise in their respective specialties, and consisted of the following individuals:

Ms. Francie Alexander, Senior Vice President, Scholastic Education and Chief Academic Officer, Scholastic Publishing, New York, NY

Mr. John Berry, Executive Director, Network of Illinois Learning Resources, Sugar Grove, IL

Ms. Ginnie Cooper, City Librarian, Washington, DC

Dr. Alan Friedman, Director and CEO, New York Hall of Science, Queens, NY

Mr. Doug Herbert, Special Assistant on Teacher Quality and Arts Education, Department of Education, Washington, DC

Dr. Julie Johnson, Distinguished Chair of Museum Leadership, Science Museum of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Dr. Ioannis Miaoulis, President and Director, Boston Science Museum, Boston, MA

Dr. Peggy O'Brien, Senior Vice President of Educational Programming and Services, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Washington, DC

Mr. Chase Pickering, Youth Council Fellow, Roots and Shoots Foundation, Arlington, VA

Dr. Julie Spielberger, Research Fellow, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Ms. Sonnet Takahisa, Director of Education, World Trade Center Memorial Foundation and Memorial Museum, New York, NY

Dr. William Tally, Senior Researcher, Center for Children and Technology, Education Development Center, Inc., New York, NY

Ms. Julie Walker, Executive Director, American Association of School Librarians, American Library Association, Chicago, IL

Dr. William White, Executive Producer and Director of Education Outreach, Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA

Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf, Director, Opportunity & Accountability, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University, Providence, RI

Ms. Nicole Yohalem, Program Director, Forum for Youth Investment, Washington, DC

## Appendix C: Case Study Interview Guide

Please note: Questions 11 and 12 are appropriate for programs that served youth directly in some capacity. Some programs are no longer in operation and will need to be questioned in the past tense.

1. What is your relationship to this program? [position, length of relationship, current or historic, etc.]
2. In your own words, what is the purpose and/or intended outcome of this program?
3. What is the best thing about your relationship with this program?
4. In your opinion, what would improve this program? Are there barriers to those improvements? Tell me about those.
5. Tell me about the program's leadership. [stable, visible, involved, etc.]
6. What would you say are the key requirements to be an effective leader or staff person in this program?
7. What training or staff development helps—or would help—this program be successful?
8. How are participants recruited into this program?
9. How do participants understand their path in this program?
10. How do participants develop a sense of accomplishment or success in this program?
11. Describe the typical leader-youth interactions in this program.
12. Are you aware of any examples of youth participants becoming leaders in the program? Has that been effective?
13. [If appropriate.] The survey indicated that the participants in your program are involved in the community. Tell me about that. Has that worked well? How would that part of the program be improved?
14. How are leaders for the program recruited and trained?
15. [If appropriate.] How is the philosophy or framework on which the program is based [from the survey] “lived” in the actual implementation of the program?
16. How is the program situated in the organization in which it is housed?
17. How is the program supported in the organization?
18. [If appropriate.] The survey indicates that you have developed the following community partnerships: [name them]. Tell me about how those came to develop. Who or what was the catalyst for developing those relationships? How are the relationships sustained?
19. What explicit efforts did you or other staff make so that your community came to value this program?
20. Tell me about how the program might continue in the future.
21. What were the largest barriers that your program had to overcome to be successful? How were they overcome?
22. What were some key lessons you learned from the development and implementation of this program/project that you can apply to future programs?
23. What resources could IMLS provide to help programs such as yours be more successful?

24. How did the program use the IMLS funding to leverage other funding? How were the IMLS funds used to support the program over the long term from a financial perspective?

## Appendix D: Case Studies

- Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY  
*Museum Learning Initiative*
- The Newark Museum, Newark, NJ  
*Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative*
- Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME  
*Maine Memory Network*
- Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA  
*Latino Community History Project*
- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham, AL  
*Birmingham Cultural Alliance Partnership (BCAP): Making Cultural Connections in Education*
- The Florida Aquarium, Tampa, FL  
*From the Source to the Sea: An Innovative Program for Homeschool Families*
- North Suburban Library System, Wheeling, IL  
*Reading: Pathway to Empowerment*
- South Carolina State Library, Columbia, SC  
*Statewide Initiative: Summer Reading Program*
- Athol Public Library, Athol, MA  
*On the Same Page*
- Fort Ligonier Association, Ligonier, PA  
*250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program*
- Chilkoot Indian Association / Haines Borough Public Library, Haines, AK  
*Dragonfly Project*
- Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block, Tucson, AZ  
*Working Smart with Art*
- East Iowa Community College, Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center, Davenport, IA  
*Connected by a River: Plants, Animals, and People*
- Pacific Science Center, Seattle, WA  
*Technical Assistance and Training for Informal Science Education*
- Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX  
*Teen Center*

## **Albany Institute of History and Art—Albany, NY**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 2001

Amount: \$162,821

Program: *Museum Learning Initiative*

### **Overview of Program Activities**

The primary goal of the Museum Learning Initiative (MLI) is to strengthen and expand the extent to which schools in the Upper Hudson Valley Region use museums and cultural organizations as educational resources. The Albany Institute of History and Art (AIHA) led this unique and ambitious opportunity to encourage partnerships with more than 60 area organizations whose educational offerings included options for school groups to utilize object-based learning. To this end, the project developed four key programs:

1) An Object-based Curriculum Model Clearinghouse: AIHA established and promoted a clearinghouse for the development of object-based curriculum models from 69 different museums or historic sites, from more than 14 counties. The centralized MLI served to expand and strengthen the integration of school programs among these regional organizations. These materials were available in both hard and electronic copies. The online directory is an offshoot of the AIHA's website with its own address. Each organization has its own listing and, where applicable, a "hot link" directly to their website. A link from their website to the MLI is also encouraged. These data are presented in a manner that offers individual narrative information about specific offerings and organizations, as well as standardized options for searching by a variety of criteria, including services, content area, and grade. This program continues today.

2) Professional Development: In collaboration with multiple partners, AIHA sponsors multiple teacher workshops at the museum, at partner sites, and in regional schools. These workshops focus on developing skills in teaching from primary source materials such as art works, documents and artifacts, as well as on the creation of object-based activities and assignments for youth in grades 4-10. Teacher participants were encouraged to create assignments for their classes, and three were shared among all participants. This program continues.

3) Coordination of available resources: AIHA staff collected all the necessary information from regional cultural organizations to identify and support potential collaborations and joint initiatives that may not have been evident prior to the creation of the MLI. This information was utilized in large group discussions with community partners including museum educators and administrators, as well as a diverse group of teachers and school administrators. Recommendations for future strategies and collaborations were presented. These recommendations will help this initiative move forward, pending future funding.

4) Distance Learning and Video-conferencing: AIHA currently offers video-conferencing lessons to schools throughout New York state and as far away as Texas. Participating cultural organizations and educators utilizing the MLI will be encouraged to offer their lessons via video-conference to increase their reach and support an exchange between individual educators and classrooms. The funding for this program terminated in June 2006.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes*

To increase access to the resources (fieldtrips, online, curriculum materials, etc.) currently offered to schools in the Upper Hudson region.

- 1) To increase access and use of primary source materials provided by museums and similar organizations in the Upper Hudson region.

- 2) To design professional development opportunities for teachers in the Upper Hudson region that are collaborative efforts of regional museums and cultural organizations.
- 3) To identify the best strategies for building effective museum/school collaborations.
- 4) To promote research that will study the impact of museum learning on youth school achievement.

#### *Audience Served*

The Museum Learning Initiative served approximately 100 K-12 educators and, indirectly, their students, across 14 counties of the Upper Hudson Valley.

#### **Program Successes**

The *Museum Learning Initiative* developed through ongoing funding and a number of small, in-depth museum/school partnerships, including a multi-year Empire State Partnership with the Albany School District. This partnership was a particularly positive learning experience for all involved. AIHA connected to the community with and through several other cultural organizations. Through the Empire State Partnerships, AIHA had a direct impact on students' learning. Students created the Rainbow Museum, curated exhibits, and participated in distance learning. The experience led to the idea of a central, physical place to promote museum-based learning, measure impacts, provide professional development, and encourage participation in museum learning.

Ideally, the goal was to have museum learning play a major role in classroom curricula, and to integrate museum resources as more than a “frill” or last minute thought – the idea that museum learning would be part of the regular school day. While the program had strong support internally, recruiting participants and leaders from the community proved to be challenging. At the same time, technological advances of the Internet changed the focus from a physical place to the development of navigational tools to access online resources. Ultimately, AIHA established partnerships with 69 museums and cultural organizations in the Upper Hudson Valley region and now serves 14 counties focused on a variety of topics.

#### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

##### *Access to Key Resources and Materials*

This program prepared teachers to facilitate their students' access to key resources and materials, as offered by the many cultural organizations in their area. As the *MLI* did not directly serve youth, there are as yet few direct examples of how youth were impacted. However, one fifth-grade teacher at the Albany School of Humanities used museums on a daily basis and featured an “object of the month” in her classroom. At one point, she introduced a handwritten essay by a 16-year-old boy living in Albany in the 1880s. The essay was inspired by Jules Verne and centered on what Albany would look like in the year 2000. The teacher was worried that her students would not respond well to written documents without any visual materials. She thought it might need to be transcribed to provide better access. Her students, however, wanted to see the document as it was and dove into the text. They even created illustrations for the essay. Because these students were primed to look at original objects, they saw value in having access to an authentic document.

##### *Facilitated Networking or Team-Building*

This project developed strong and important networks between museums and teachers. These networks resulted in new awareness of community resources, teaching techniques in the humanities, and in professional relationships between and among education professionals. Over time, it became obvious that this network was particularly important for the member cultural

organizations themselves, as the Boards of Education and school administrators were focused on different agendas. This program would definitely benefit from a stronger commitment from the school districts.

For youth, this program developed the ability for classrooms to participate in “virtual” fieldtrips, increasing students’ access to primary source materials and object-based learning opportunities.

### **Strategies for Sustainability**

#### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

A strong network of like-minded organizations came to understand the potential inherent in working together, and mechanisms by which they could collaborate, rather than compete, for school-based visitors. They better understood how to integrate primary sources or arts into their teaching, as well as integrate museums into their practice, both with traditional fieldtrips, and through the utilization of Web-based programs.

#### *Incorporate New Funding Sources*

Importantly, IMLS funding provided the initial investment that this program needed to begin, and a “stamp of approval” or prestige that the program had value, and should be funded by alternative sources. In addition, a strong relationship with General Electric was developed, which supported the program not only with additional funding but also with access to technical specialists. The corporation is very interested in supporting arts education in schools, as they believe it enhances individual creativity. General Electric did, however, hope to see measurable results of impact, which were essentially beyond the scope of this project. This program also went on to receive funding from the New York State Council on the Arts.

## **The Newark Museum—Newark, NJ**

Learning Opportunities Grant, 2003

Amount: \$150,000

Program: *Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative*

### **Overview of Program**

The *Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative* is a multi-faceted program of onsite and offsite exhibitions and programming supported by a strong network of Chinese community members and museum staff. Parallel to the museum's mission and long-range plan to serve diverse audiences throughout New Jersey and increase visitorship, the program seeks to increase arts participation in New Jersey's growing Chinese population – a community that did not regularly visit the museum because of distance, apprehension about the urban setting, and a general lack of awareness of museum resources. Utilizing the museum's extensive Asian arts collection and staff well versed in Chinese history and culture, the museum set about to create pathways to and from Middlesex, Bergen, Morris and other counties within a 30-mile radius where large numbers of Chinese and Chinese-Americans reside.

Using marketing strategies to identify specific segments of the Chinese community and their arts needs and interests, Wei Zhou, Marketing Manager at the museum, developed an extensive and ongoing plan to engage Chinese community leaders to come to the museum, see the resources, and work with the museum to provide arts education programming for their community. Wei Zhou's Chinese heritage was an advantage in gaining access to community leaders, as well as a key component in helping the Museum staff understand Chinese cultural norms. She provided a bridge between cultures and communities, which allowed for a smooth building of relationships to more quickly engage Chinese community families in the arts.

The program was guided by a general philosophy to broaden, deepen, and diversify relations with the Chinese community. Educational programs are based on New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and most programs provide experiential learning – or learning by doing. The program also follows the tenets of constructivist learning theory, which argues that everyone comes to a subject with their own base of knowledge: "We build on that. They might have their own view of culture, but the projects make them see new things, make them more proud."

Program components included exhibits, festivals, and workshops: *The Bride Wore Red: Chinese Wedding Traditions*, a major exhibition exploring Asian wedding traditions; a contemporary art exhibition featuring Asian artists; seasonal family festivals, such as the Asian Heritage Festival in the spring and the Harvest Moon Celebration in the fall; special culturally-related workshops for the exhibition, *Once Upon A Dime: The World of Money*; an Artist in Residence program; and, satellite exhibits and resource packets for loan to community centers, schools, and libraries. A Chinese advisory board was also developed to help the museum make programming decisions, plan for community events, and jointly support community, program, and museum missions. The relationship between the Chinese community and the museum has deepened so that each now views the other as a cultural resource.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes of the Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative*

- 1) Increase understanding of Chinese art, history, and culture among children from Chinese-American communities in the New Jersey/New York metropolitan area.
- 2) Deepen and expand art and cultural educational experiences for all youth.
- 3) Build access and cross-cultural participation among youth of diverse backgrounds from the city of Newark and surrounding communities.

### *Audience Served*

To date, more than 10,000 K-12 school children have been served through public, school, and outreach programs, major exhibitions, an Artist in Residence program, and satellite exhibits in schools and libraries. In addition, more than 10,000 museum visitors were served by the Chinese-themed exhibitions and education programs at the Newark Museum, with a significantly higher than average proportion (approximately 65%) of these visitors representing Chinese-American families. The museum recorded an increase in new memberships by Chinese families, which, combined with an increase in Chinese visitors to non-Asian related exhibitions and programs, demonstrates a deepened commitment to supporting the museum. In addition, this program served the greater community by developing and supporting a collaborative relationship between the Newark Museum and multiple museums, libraries, schools, corporate entities and community organizations.

### **Program Successes**

Children and their families from the Chinese-American community have deepened their relationship with the Newark Museum and now view it as a vital cultural resource. Not only has the Chinese community participated in Asian-themed initiatives, but they are increasingly participating in non-Asian related exhibitions and education programs offered by the museum. Parents noted that their children's interest in learning about their culture increased after seeing Chinese culture exhibited at the museum, and parents also noted that the exhibits and education programs served as a complement to what their children were learning at local Chinese language schools.

By seeing their culture expressed to the general public through museum exhibitions and programs, youth of Chinese heritage became more interested in their culture and expressed pride in family traditions and customs. In addition, highlighting Chinese art and culture encouraged youth to engage in cross-cultural discussion with their peers and classmates. The Chinese community so heartily embraced the initiative that they often found world-renown Asian performers and master artists to participate in events and performances at the museum. It is not unusual for these "rock stars" of the Asian arts to work directly with children attending programs, providing important connections to traditional learning with a master. As some of these masters are also local community members, the opportunity also opened doors for additional learning and mentorship. In addition, youth may choose to become active in their community and learn about the work of the Chinese Advisory Board, which is made of 25-30 community and business leaders. The generosity of the Chinese community is rooted in the pride and honor they feel by having a non-traditional outlet to share their culture.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Opportunity to engage with and contribute to community*

This program provides opportunities for Chinese youth to learn about and share their culture with their peers and non-Chinese audiences, interact with local and international Asian masters of the visual and performing arts, and interact with other cultural communities. These opportunities help youth to support and sustain their Chinese culture, develop a sense of pride in their heritage, and identify connections with other cultures.

According to Kristin Curry in the Development Department at the museum, Chinese- American parents have expressed to the program staff that seeing Chinese culture presented to the general public has increased their children's interest in learning about their own culture. Many parents also shared that the exhibits and education programs provided through the initiative are a

“wonderful complement” to what their children learn in the Chinese language schools they attend. In addition to cultural events at the schools, local community events often coincided with events at the museum. Program staff saw an opportunity to promote the museum at these events by becoming participants and providing arts activities. Highlighting Chinese art and culture within the community and at the museum encourages youth to engage in cross-cultural discussions with their peers and classmates and provides positive cultural identity.

#### *Facilitated networking or team-building*

Developing youth programs for older Chinese youth will help to continue their understanding and use of museum resources. Similarly, integrating youth from other communities with which the museum works, such as the Latino or African-American community, will strengthen the connections between cultures while providing opportunities to highlight unique customs, language, and arts. Youth programs such as these often provide a deeper level of mentorship, help youth understand the variety of academic and career options available in arts education and community engagement, and build strong social connections at a time when youth may feel isolated or unsure of themselves.

Identifying cross-cultural connections is another aspect of the program that supports positive youth development and program sustainability. Kim Robledo-Diga, Manager of Family Programs at the museum, witnessed what she calls the “perfect storm” of cross-cultural fertilization. On the same day that Latino youth were exhibiting Asian crafts they had made at a museum art program, the Chinese community was visiting the exhibit, *Great Pots: Contemporary Ceramics from Function to Fantasy*, which featured several works by Chinese artists. “Somehow, all of these Chinese people found the Latino show and they were talking with the Latino families. Neither group spoke much English, but they found translators within the groups.” As they stood around drinking punch and chatting, the Chinese families shared more about the art of their ancient crafts and Latino families shared their experience of making and interpreting Chinese art and culture. Latino youth learned firsthand about a craft that the Chinese have been doing for centuries. Kim was amazed at how the two cultures connected around pottery – each community sharing its knowledge and experience with the other.

### **Strategies for Sustainability**

#### *Ensure continuity of staff and leadership*

Internally, strong and committed leadership from multiple departments has been key to weaving a strong support network for program staff. For example, Valerie Reynolds, Curator of Asian Art, has given generously of her time and expertise in Asian art and culture to brainstorm program and exhibition ideas to insure authenticity. Assistant Director of Youth, Family, and Adult Programs, Linda Gates Nettleton remained open to the ideas and needs of the Chinese community. Marketing Manager Wei Zhou shared the “subtle cultural nuances” of the Chinese with her colleagues to ensure that cultural protocols, such as holiday greeting cards with a token gift, were adhered to. The museum staff maintains an open-mindedness and flexibility, so that it can engage the Chinese community in ways that are interesting and accessible. For large programs, such as the Asian Festival, which attracted 2,000 visitors, the museum recruited Chinese language volunteers – students from Rutgers and New York University – to act as interpreters for the Chinese community. Security staff is also trained on procedures for interacting with large audiences and to be culturally sensitive.

Maintaining any multi-component program beyond its grant period is always a challenge, but there are added layers of complexity when the program is linked to a community with important yet subtle cultural customs. Retaining core staff, who have been involved with the development

and implementation of the initiative, who are well versed in Chinese customs, and who have extensive experience with Chinese arts and culture, will certainly provide stability. Continued support from museum leadership and the inclusion of all departments will further institutionalize initiative programming potentially to the point where Chinese programming becomes seamlessly interfaced with all museum programming.

*Create Community Awareness of Impacts*

Externally, the Chinese Advisory Board plays an integral role in developing programs that will preserve their heritage, open doors for staff to promote program events, and recruit volunteers, artists, and performers directly from the Chinese community. The development of strong networks with the Chinese community presents a solid base from which the *Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative* can grow to further inform museum programming and board development. The museum has already welcomed an advisory board member as a museum trustee. The initiative has succeeded in involving the Chinese community to the point where they are regular visitors to the Museum.

Perhaps most important to the stability of the *Chinese Cultural Engagement Initiative* is to continue to strengthen the relationship by involving the Chinese community in efforts to build relationships with other communities. Sharing their model of engagement with other museums and youth programs offers opportunities to include the advisory board members, community groups, teachers, and youth to promote positive youth and community development.

## **The Maine Historical Society—Portland, ME**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 2002

Amount: \$441,050

(also awarded a Learning Opportunities Grant in 2003 for \$149,110)

Program: *Maine Memory Network*

### **Overview of Program**

The *Maine Memory Network* ([www.mainememory.net](http://www.mainememory.net)) is a statewide digital museum that grew out of the Maine Historical Society's (MHS) desire to improve public access to their vast historical collections. Founded in 1822, the MHS has one of the largest and most important collections of historical material in the state, including maps, photographs, letters, journals, diaries, official records, manuscripts, and much more; the historical society was also aware of how difficult it is for most people in Maine—a large and primarily rural state—to see, use, and benefit from its resources. While developing the Web site for the digital museum, it became apparent to MHS staff that Maine Memory could serve an even greater function: it could also enable Maine's local historical societies (more than 225), museums, archives, public libraries, and other organizations with historical collections to share their collections electronically, thereby becoming a centralized place for the public to explore Maine history. All of these organizations have their own rich historical resources, but significant logistical obstacles make it extremely challenging for the public to see and use these materials in person. *Maine Memory*, which was launched in 2001, has been a great success to date: 160 organizations representing every corner of the state have contributed images of more than 10,000 historical items from their collections to its ever-growing database, and many educational opportunities have emerged through its implementation.

The development of *Maine Memory* was paralleled and supported by several other key initiatives in Maine. In the late 1990s, the Maine Cultural Affairs Council—a nationally-recognized consortium of seven statewide cultural organizations including MHS, Maine State Library, Maine State Archives, and Maine State Museum, Maine Arts Commission Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and Maine Humanities Council—conducted a statewide assessment of cultural resources and needs. The Main Humanities Council identified a need to improve access to resources that would help increase Maine residents' awareness of their heritage, and provided critical early funding through the New Century Community Program that was funded by the State Legislature. Also paralleling the development of *Maine Memory* was the distribution of laptop computers to all middle-school students and teachers in Maine through the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI), a program of the Maine Department of Education. MLTI ensures that all students have easy and reliable access to the resources shared through *Maine Memory* and has become an important partner.

From its inception, MHS staff grappled with the question of how to provide context for the individual historical items in its database. Each item is accompanied by a detailed catalog record and brief description but, for a variety of reasons, it is not feasible to provide full interpretation for each individual item. Facing that issue, MHS applied to IMLS and received a National Leadership Grant in 2002 to create interpretive content for *Maine Memory* that would enable teachers, students, and the general public to explore and understand historical items in greater depth. In essence, the goal was to transform *Maine Memory*'s digital archive into a full-fledged online museum.

MHS developed a two-pronged plan for developing these online resources. First, they developed an infrastructure and system that allows MHS staff, contributing partners, and even students to

create and share online exhibits. The online exhibits—of which approximately 60 have been created to date—are based on rigorous research conducted and/or reviewed by a project historian, and are designed to help the general public, teachers, and students explore Maine history. The second prong was to develop curricular resources that would help Maine teachers and students better teach and study Maine history. One of the key items developed is a resource called *Finding Katahdin Online*, which is based on and accompanies a recently-published Maine Studies textbook created by the University of Maine Press. With the incorporation of this resource, *Maine Memory* now provides online access to hundreds of primary sources keyed to each chapter and section of the book. As important, it also provides free online access to a major 500-page resource guide that was developed by University of Maine Press to complement the book but that had not been printed and distributed. *Finding Katahdin Online* also includes more than 60 fully-developed lesson plans that are tied to State Learning Results and can be easily downloaded in a free PDF format.

*Maine Memory Network* also provides innovative training workshops for teachers, students, and community members to research, prepare, scan, and upload historic materials from their own communities and for their own purposes, such as to learn about and preserve knowledge of their individual communities. The *Maine Memory Network* has become so well respected that it is now a pre-placed bookmark on the 39,000 laptops distributed through the MLTI. In this way the *Maine Memory Network* promotes the notion that technology can be leveraged to allow youth to be “keepers of the flame,” while also teaching necessary technology and research skills to prepare future professionals.

Initial development of the *Maine Memory Network* was supported by funding from a state initiative and a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Funding from two IMLS grants supported the hiring of staff for program training, implementation, and promotion. Today, program staff includes a full-time curator, part-time project cataloger, and outreach consultants, and receives extensive support from MHS’s Education, Library, Museum, Digital Services, and other departments.

#### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for Maine Memory Network*

- 1) To facilitate the use of primary documents and *Maine Memory Network* in Maine classrooms.
- 2) To enable Maine students to learn about local, Maine, and U.S. history through the eyes and experiences of their own communities.

#### *Audience Served*

- More than 10,000 4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Maine students and teachers.
- Diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities in Maine.
- Maine community organizations such as libraries, historical societies, heritage councils, and city planners.

#### **Program Successes**

*Maine Memory Network* provides innovative training workshops for teachers, students, and community members to research, prepare, scan, and upload historic materials from their own communities for their own purposes, namely learning about and preserving their individual communities. The *Maine Memory Network* is a powerful community development tool that allows a community to select and upload resources that are interesting and useful to them. The network provides the tools and support through training workshops that focus on the demonstration of online resources to show participants all of the possibilities. Participants determine specific resources that connect with their interests, while *Maine Memory Network* staff

provides technical assistance, teaching materials, and historical society resources. The program is promoted at teacher in-service and professional development days, library conferences, through the Maine Council for Social Studies, and by word-of-mouth.

Students, teachers, and community organizations learned skills and techniques for using online resources to discover and share their history with local, state, and global audiences. Evaluation studies indicate that participating youth developed a deep interest in their community's history and became involved with the preservation of that history and how it informs present-day decisions for city planning and development.

Furthermore, strong relationships were developed between myriad community organizations around the state and the historical society, as well as between community organizations and schools, to preserve and engage in local and state history.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Opportunity to Contribute to Community*

The *Maine Memory Network* has become, in part, a community-centered program that includes a strong emphasis on involving middle- and high-school age youth. While it provides specific training and materials for teachers, at its core was the idea of encouraging youth to learn about and become involved in their communities. Mentors like Laura Richter, a former social studies teacher and current technology integration specialist for the Skowhegan Area Middle School, worked with four other teachers to create a local history course that guides youth to explore community history, research topics of interest to them, make connections within the community, and use online resources and media to share their research through online exhibitions and narrative interpretation. Students meet once a week for at least an hour to conduct research and work on individual and group projects. Laura shared that students who are not in the local history class are always asking about the history projects and often ask to be in the class based on what they hear from their classmates. The class often has guest speakers who talk about local history, and this year a language arts teacher has included the class as an option for her students. Students, teachers, and community organizations worked together to develop online exhibits and accompanying text.

MHS Director of Education Steve Bromage was contacted by the Skowhegan History House for assistance in digitizing their collection. The students enrolled in Laura's class examined the photos and archival material wearing white cotton gloves and began to ask questions – who is this person? where is this building? whatever happened to this place? One building that the students recognized was the Grange Building, which still stood in the town. When it was rumored that the city had plans to demolish the building to allow for development, one student decided to take action. He confirmed with the local bank that the building was indeed set to come down. He then began writing letters to the editor and short pieces for the newspaper about the history of the building and what the building meant to the community. He and other students became outspoken advocates for the preservation of city history and began attending and presenting at heritage council meetings and eventually began a junior historical society, which still meets monthly.

Throughout the class, students build a portfolio of their work, including any public presentations they may do. At the conclusion of a project, students may do a presentation at the local library or meet with town planners who provide feedback. In this way, students learn to see through the lens of town planners and develop a working relationship with adults in the community. Students also mentor each other as older students who have been involved with the program help younger and

newer students in the program learn basic research skills and techniques for working with collections and online technologies.

#### *Facilitated Youth Team-Building*

The students have become so active that the town now seeks them out for input in local projects. One project with the Skowhegan Heritage Council focused on developing signage for a walking tour of the Flat Iron District. The district is under development as a tourist destination and project planners were looking for places of interest to include on the tour. They asked students to select and research 25 places of historical interest around town, scan all pertinent materials, and present them for the heritage council's final selection. Over the course of two years, about 18 students participated in this project, utilizing both online and human resources available through the *Maine Memory Network*. In 2006, students worked on the production of a city documentary for which they had already conducted in-depth research.

#### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

For Jim Moulton, an Education Consultant for MLTI, the focus on project-based learning creates a "classic synergy" for learning. He sees the program as a series of concentric circles with students in the center learning about and supporting their communities at a grassroots level. One circle out are teachers and educators who gain through access to primary resources and professional development by guiding students as they uncover and explore local and state history. In the next circle out is the community at large, which gains the next generation of knowledgeable citizens who can build on their involvement as youth, and thereby preserve existing history and inform community decisions in the present and future. In the outermost circle is the global community, which can access youths' work and, ideally, communicate with them in an information exchange to better understand the links between places, people, and culture.

### **Strategies for Program Stability**

#### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

From the beginning, the Maine Historical Society has supported *Maine Memory Network* with a strong institutional commitment. MHS has had important institutional partners – seven leading cultural organizations working to raise funds and support the project's grassroots efforts. One hundred and sixty organizations have contributed their materials to the project and given it strength as a reputable educational resource. These connections distinguish *Maine Memory Network* from other online resource programs and help to provide an ongoing support base.

Maintaining existing support and continually adding new organizations will assist in the stability of the program. Finding ways to add "more people on the ground," through stipends for regional staff would also be helpful for sustaining current community participation and bringing other communities into the program. Candidates for regional staff should have a teaching background and understand both the possibilities and the realities of using technology in the classroom. They should have demonstrated technical skills and be committed to using the tools and resources available through *Maine Memory Network*. They need to listen, empathize, be passionate about history – personally and professionally – and have a holistic understanding of what education is about.

#### *Create Community Awareness of Program Impacts*

Continued flexibility and openness to teachers' needs will aid in the integration of *Maine Memory Network* classroom materials and student participation. Younger students hear about the network through older siblings and friends and look forward to their chance to use network resources for school and community projects. The more stability there is in teacher training, the more teachers

will turn and return to the network for resources that their students are primed for and interested in using.

Summer programs where teachers can come together to share experiences and learn about tools can serve to inspire others. Keeping abreast of current and up-and-coming technology and being thoughtful of how such technology may or may not fit in with the needs of the network's audience will also be important in maintaining the technical stability of the program. IMLS could play a role in this area by providing workshops or sessions that showcase technologies in the field.

Purposefully expanding the community of youth involved in this program will go a long way toward maintaining and expanding the program as well as supporting civic engagement in the state of Maine. Maine is a mostly rural state where communities are often isolated from one another. The sharing of the state's history can bring residents together and create forums for discussing current issues so that citizens can make informed decisions, including those pertaining to continued support of programs like the *Maine Memory Network*.

## **Oakland Museum of California—Oakland, CA**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 2000

Amount: \$207,926

(also awarded a Museum Leadership Initiatives Grant in 1998 for \$50,000)

Program: *Latino Community History Project*

### **Overview of Program Activities**

The *Latino Community History Program* was a National Leadership Grant project funded by IMLS in 2000 and continuing through 2003 (an extension was approved to modify the award period). The program was designed to address concerns expressed by local Latino community leaders and educators about the need to collect and preserve 20<sup>th</sup> century history of the Latino community in the San Francisco Bay area. It was fashioned after a pilot effort in 1998 that was also funded by IMLS. In addition to the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA), two other partners participated: the Spanish Speaking Citizens' Foundation, Youth and Family Services (SSCF) in Oakland, and the Puente Project, University of California, Office of the President in Hayward. Museum staff were able to procure additional funds from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and the East Bay Community Foundation to support the two phases of the program.

To address the need voiced by the Latino community, youth historians (ages 14 to 18), were mentored by Latino historians and anthropologists, as well as by museum professionals. They learned to conduct original historical research, collect oral histories from Latino elders, and identify photographs and artifacts for the museum's permanent collections. Based on their research, they created posters, as well as traveling and online exhibits. Their original historical research contributed to an anthology of community stories for use by schools, libraries, museums, and community organizations.

The project developed and piloted two separate youth programs. The first program was held in 2001 for Oakland Latino youth as a summer jobs program. The second program was implemented as an after-school program in 2001-02 for Puente students at Hayward High School. Project activities also included a paid internship for the youth who completed the program, in which the interns created exhibitions and assisted with conducting public programs organized by the museum's Education Department.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for the Latino Community History Program*

- 1) To address an urgent need to collect and preserve primary source materials on the history of the Latino community in the San Francisco Bay area, particularly in Oakland and the East Bay.
- 2) To inspire community members, particularly young people, to see themselves as history makers—contributors to and stewards of their community's cultural heritage.
- 3) To acquire first-person accounts and identify photographs and artifacts for the museum's permanent collections that will promote further documentation, preservation, and exchange of community history by teaching high-school youth to research, collect, and preserve local Latino history and culture.
- 4) To produce and distribute educational resources on collecting Latino community history for broad use by schools, libraries, community organizations, and the general public.

An external evaluation was also conducted after the program ended and the evaluation group, Ceres Policy Research, chose to explore two additional social outcomes that were informally mentioned in the *Latino Community History Program* proposal and also in evaluation planning

conversations with key staff members: (1) teach new job skills and expose youth to new career options; and (2) strengthen youth's ties to the Latino community.

### *Audience Served*

Fifteen low-income, inner-city youth participated in the two programs; eight students were from Oakland and seven from Hayward. In addition to the youth, the program engaged their families and community members, particularly elders. The project produced several educational products that reached many additional audiences: 1) an educator's handbook for how to engage youth in collecting community history, *Collecting Community History: A Training Handbook for Educators*; 2) a publication focused on lessons learned, *Latino History Project Case Study: Recommendations for Project Directors*; 3) an anthology of collected oral histories, *Life Stories: Voices from the East Bay Latino Community*; 4) a series of educational posters; 5) a Latino history web site; and, 6) traveling exhibitions that visited schools and community centers.

### **Program Successes**

Evaluation was an integral part of the program and was a continuous process. First, the focus of the program emerged from real needs identified in (**or by?**) the local Latino community and an initial pilot in 1998 formed the basis for this expanded effort. Formative evaluation was conducted throughout the planning, development and piloting of the project, and a thorough external evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of the program on its participants including: content analysis of youth products; interviews with youth and key staff members; and a set of measures that corresponded with skill and knowledge areas in the *Latino Community History Program* that overlapped with California content standards for history and social studies, English and language arts, and visual and performing arts.

Summative data indicated that the program was very successful. All youth increased their knowledge of Latino history, including one student who had a solid foundation prior to participating in the project. The program reinforced, fulfilled or supplemented a range of U.S. history and geography content standards. Several sources of data also indicated that the program improved youth's archival research, note-taking, and research topic development skills. They also improved their skills in using the resources of the library and community planning offices in the city.

However, even more interesting were the social impacts. Youth felt that they had gained new career experience and an awareness of career options they had not known before. Youth also strengthened their ties to their community in three ways: They developed 1) an increased sense of pride and respect for their community, 2) a new sense of leadership, and, 3) new relationships with adults, particularly elders. Eight out of 13 of the youth involved in the evaluation felt that new relationships with adults were helping to shape their college and career goals. During an hour-long interview with Barbara Henry, Project Director, she mentioned on several occasions the deep and powerful responsibility youth felt in collecting and communicating the stories of the trials and tribulations and survival experienced by elders, including many who had escaped the Mexican Revolution: "They felt great pride and respect for what the elders had accomplished. It inspired a sense of community, cultural pride, and patriotism they had not experienced before."

In addition, the program had a positive effect on individual youth's immediate community, particularly family members. Families came to visit the exhibition and parents commented that the project opened up dialogue about their heritage. Youth even began to collect family histories: "I didn't really care when I was younger...Until the Latino History Project, that's when I got really interested in everything and I heard everybody's lives and how they were so amazing. That's what made me ask, you know, my parents."

Community members also have been influenced by the project. The Latino community was able to use it “to reunion” and celebrate their heritage and culture. Yolanda Garfias Woo, an artist and anthropologist working with youth in the program, felt that the program changed the entire relationship that the Latino community had with the museum: “The museum now has the respect of the community. [This program] changed the attitude of the community to the museum—[it said] our history is important.”

## **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

### *Access to Key Resources and Materials*

The major goal of the program was to teach youth how to conduct historical research, including the collection of oral histories from Latino elders, identify photographs, and artifacts for the museum’s permanent collections, and create traveling and online exhibits and educational posters. In order to accomplish these tasks, youth had open access to the resources and materials of the museum, library and, ultimately, elders in their community. Yolanda said that initially youth were not sure that this experience was any different from school: “The program started out very academically. They are used to that. Initially it was very “school-ey,” but then they realized these are real histories, that old person they pass on the street was related to the story. After that, well they were so excited. When they found an artifact, they’d say, ‘You’ll never guess what I found!’”

### *Established Levels of Accomplishment*

Imbedded within this program were a number of levels of accomplishment. First, youth were paid to participate in the program—this reinforced in a concrete way that their role was valuable, and was also critical in recruiting these students to participate, so as not to compete with their real need to work. Also, any skill that they were developing, such as research skills, could be directly correlated to tangible evidence of accomplishing the skill. In fact, Barbara Henry shared that one important lesson that youth discovered in conducting original historical research was “how long it could take to find something” that they needed either to fill in a story or to provide a visual image. She said they would “literally come screaming back from the library when they found something—they were so excited.”

Another important aspect of this project, which fostered a tremendous sense of accomplishment in youth, was that youth used *their* research to create *real* products for the public. They created educational posters and conducted tours of the exhibitions they helped to create. The exhibitions also traveled to other sites. For example, the exhibition created by Hayward youth, *Uncovering Hidden Roots: Latinos in the East Bay*, which featured posters created by Oakland and Hayward youth, was displayed in Hayward City Hall. The posters youth had made also traveled to the State Capitol and were on view in the Governor’s office and the restaurant.

### *Engagement with Community Professionals/Mentors*

A key component of this program was intensive interaction with mentors of all kinds, including community historians, elders, and museum professionals. Barbara Henry, the Project Director, said that it was critical to hire program staff from within the community—she insisted that “all historians were Latino.”

### *Opportunity to Contribute to Broader Community*

Probably the most important outcome of this program was an appreciation on the part of youth for their role as community historians and leaders within their community. As Barbara shared, the youth felt “a tremendous sense of responsibility” in this regard. The program helped students

appreciate elders as important holders of community heritage and at the same time improved their own self-respect and cultural esteem. Summative evaluation results suggested that most students also gained a new interest in making a difference within the Latino community in the future.

### **Strategies for Program Sustainability**

Sadly, this program no longer exists. Barbara Henry, Project Director, felt that this was primarily due to a lack of funding to support the necessary additional staff. She commented that the project was:

“very complex and all-consuming because...we were creating and testing new lessons and program activities while working with youth who had a lot of rough things going on in their lives and engaging community members in the process. And we were also producing multiple products simultaneously... [Consequently], the program was exhausting. To do [projects like this] well—requires dedicated staff to work closely with the youth, not staff siphoned [into other activities]...It is difficult for our regular staff to be dedicated to one project of this complexity on an ongoing basis, given the multiple communities we are serving.”

The benefits of the program continue on in that the project helped the museum build and sustain community relationships; produce a model curriculum that other educators and community members are using; and provide new resources on 20<sup>th</sup> century Latino history. The *Collecting Community History Training Handbook* has been included in other online educational resources produced by the museum. Barbara Henry feels that the program still has a strong presence at the museum and in the community; staff members are aware of it being a model project and community members recommend that individuals inquiring about Latino history contact the museum.

She also said, “We know we have had an impact. Youth visit individuals here and come back to participate in museum programs.” Several students have gone on to college, one of them having never thought of that as an option, and others continued working at the museum. The project also lives in other ways. “As a result of this project we now have the lessons learned and activities that we can apply to other endeavors.”

## **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute—Birmingham, AL**

National Leadership Grants for Libraries, 2000

**Amount:** \$216,580

Program: *Birmingham Cultural Alliance Partnership (BCAP): Making Cultural Connections in Education*

### **Overview of Program**

The Birmingham Cultural Alliance Partnership (BCAP): Making Cultural Connections in Education project is a collaborative effort between seven museums and the public library in Birmingham, Alabama. The partners include the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham Public Library, Sloss Furnaces, Southern Museum of Flight, and the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame (since IMLS funding ended, McWane Science Center has also become a partner). BCAP develops, implements, and disseminates an integrated learning program that introduces low-income youth and teachers to innovative, participatory educational activities that highlight the collections and resources of each of the cultural institutions. Youth enrolled in after-school programs at two middle schools spend two weeks at each institution, visiting seven each semester. They learn and participate in activities that focus on African-American achievements in science, visual arts, history, horticulture, and so on. In order to accommodate two groups of students from the two schools, there is a session each fall and spring semester. As the program has evolved, a summer component has also been added.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes of Cultural Connections in Education*

- Enhance learning by exposing youth to participatory activities that integrate diverse learning styles.
- Build self-esteem by helping students gain awareness of their cultural and artistic heritage.
- Expand services to an underserved audience, thereby cultivating lifelong patrons committed to the preservation of the arts, written and oral histories, the environment, and cultural heritage.

Priscilla Hancock Cooper, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute's Project Coordinator of *Cultural Connections in Education*, described three additional outcomes in her own words: "We want students to:

- Appreciate that these institutions belong to them—even if they visit as part of a school trip, that does not seem to always be communicated. We want to create more in-depth experiences that also encourage youth to think about the topics they are exposed to as career possibilities.
- Understand that learning can be fun—the program was designed to respect diversity in learning styles and to include writing and arts activities, for instance, so everyone "gets to shine."
- Encourage family participation."

### *Audience Served*

To date, between 500 and 1,000 8th-grade youth and teachers enrolled in after-school programs at two inner-city middle schools serving low-income communities have participated in the program. The two participating schools are on opposite sides of town in very different neighborhoods, and the youth would likely not have interacted or known one another if not for the program. One

participant interviewed indicated that this was an important aspect of the program: “We met other kids who were different with different attitudes.”

In addition to youth participants, families were involved through a closing program at each site in which youth shared their experiences by performing, engaging in science activities, acting in plays, and so on. Prompted by families’ requests of, “When are you going to do this for us?” the program also offers Cultural Sampling Tours one Saturday each semester, in which families from each school spend the day visiting four different cultural institutions.

Partners also created a *Cultural Connections in Education* curriculum to expand the impact of the after-school program by providing teachers with information to incorporate related activities into their regular classroom teaching. Approximately 200 teachers in the Birmingham area have been trained to use the community’s cultural resources to enhance student learning.

### **Program Successes**

Partners in the *Cultural Connections in Education* program take evaluation very seriously and it is a continuous process. After a year of planning and identifying real needs in the community, the evaluation program was set up through meetings involving the local school systems and cultural institutions.

Formative evaluation was conducted throughout the planning, development, and piloting of the project, and a thorough external evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of the program on its participants. During summative evaluation, educators, students, and parents were asked their opinions of the program and post-tests were administered to students (pre-tests had been administered prior to youth participating). Summative data indicates that the program is very successful, with student post-test scores increasing, and with changes in self-esteem, cultural-esteem, and cultural knowledge observed among students. Teachers report that more than 85% of the students who participated in *Cultural Connections in Education* activities improved their academic performance, homework preparation, and classroom participation. One teacher noted that 7th-grade students at one of the schools had a 150% improvement on the Direct Writing Assessment (a student assessment required by the state). Parents also indicated that students were more interested in cultural matters, and with the learning process in general, and reported that youth were more interested and willing to engage in open conversations with them at home.

In addition, the program had a positive effect on individual youths’ immediate community, particularly family members, by exposing them to cultural resources within the community. Parent involvement at the participating schools also increased. There is also a great deal of word-of-mouth that promotes the program. The Project Coordinator indicated that siblings in families of participants are “waiting to get into 8<sup>th</sup> grade” so that they can participate in the program. Other schools have also expressed interest in getting involved in the program.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Access to key resources and materials*

The major premise of the BCAP program is to expose youth and their families to the extensive cultural resources of Birmingham, particularly lower-income urban youth and families who may not have used these resources before, other than on school field trips. As Shirina Davenport, Project Facilitator at one of the middle schools, explains below, this is one of the outcomes she has observed over the six years of the project that excites her most:

“The joy of taking a student who would never have or only have a slim chance of ever visiting such a place and to see their excitement and ability to engage in an educated conversation about what they are seeing. And you can see it on paper. There was a pre-test and there would be *no* answers and then you look at the post-test and the questions are all answered. You feel good that you have been able to show them something. And it is not just the kids who are joyful about learning—their parents are excited also. It is so heartwarming to hear a child say, ‘Come Momma—let me show you this...’”

The activities and strategies used to engage youth and their families were equally as important as exposure to the cultural resources. In Ms. Davenport’s words; students “can do things [in this program] that they can’t do in schools.” This perspective was also conveyed by a former participant who is now in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. She talked about how different the experience was from school: “We did lots of stuff. It was not like school—sometimes we would think, oh no it’s going to be another lecture, but then it wasn’t. [To interest us it needs] to be fun and it was.” Priscilla Hancock Cooper, the Project Coordinator, said that was a critical aspect of the training and feedback to partners: “We took evaluation very seriously—experiences had to be interactive. We observed the program at each site and we ultimately spent less time at the institutions that were less interactive.”

#### *Established levels of accomplishment*

A major component of the project includes a closing program at each site to which families are invited. Every youth participates in the event, which is specific to the nature of each site. The activities in which the students participate might include performing in a play and/or dancing at the Jazz Hall of Fame, or displaying a quilt made up of individual quilt squares created by each student at the Birmingham Museum of Art. The closing program provides a focus and a sense of accomplishment for the participants, as the event serves as an official recognition of their accomplishments by the program staff, their families, and the community at large.

#### *Engagement with families*

Families are integrally involved in this program. In addition to the closing program, more opportunities were created to involve parents. One is a Saturday “sampling program” during which family members can visit four of the partner sites. This has opened the eyes of the youths’ families to the diversity and richness of the cultural resources available in Birmingham. Shirina Davenport noted that one of the parents who visited the Art Museum had worked two buildings away from the Museum for years and said, “I pass this place every day; but I didn’t know what was inside!” Such experiences have even led some families to hold portions of their family reunions at participant sites.

### **Strategies for Sustainability**

#### *Ensure continuity of leadership and staff*

This program is now in its sixth year and staff members who were interviewed agree that it is still on-going because of continued leadership. Many of the staff currently at the participating sites are the same individuals that began working with the program six years ago. Shirina Davenport said staff members are “like family—the network is awesome.” In fact, the program has helped to facilitate bonds with other teachers and schools in general by offering advice, materials, and resources, even when they do not pertain specifically to the program.

#### *Incorporate new funding sources after inception*

From its inception, the *Cultural Connections in Education* program has incorporated and sought

new funding to sustain and enhance the program. For example, staff has supplemented IMLS funding with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center monies and other state funding. In addition, as funding has become tighter and transportation more costly, Priscilla Hancock Cooper said that most of the partner institutions have “stepped up to the plate,” subsidizing the program with their own money and staff resources. They have also adapted the program to accommodate shortfalls by reducing the length of the program at some sites and choosing the most effective aspects of the program to share at each site.

## **The Florida Aquarium—Tampa, FL**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 2003

Amount: \$121,022

Program: *From the Source to the Sea: An Innovative Program for Homeschool Families*

### **Overview of Program**

*From the Source to the Sea*, a three-year program partnership between the Florida Aquarium, Lowry Park Zoo, Nature's Classroom (a Florida-based environmental studies program), and the Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA), provided local Tampa Bay-area homeschool youth with environmental science learning opportunities focused on understanding the importance of the Hillsborough River Watershed. While the partners had a regular slate of school programs in which homeschoolers participated, together they sought to fulfill a specific need within the homeschool community for science education. The free program consisted of field and classroom-based activities and materials geared toward strengthening science skills and knowledge, creating awareness of natural resources, related preservation and conservation issues, as well as building homeschool parents' science education teaching skills. Program materials included K-12 education curricula, instructional tools, workshops, and learning programs for parents.

Led by two instructors and assistants from the aquarium, zoo, and nature center, the program served homeschool youth and parents during the academic year. The Hillsborough County FPEA regional district director, who acted as a liaison between the homeschool community and program partners, recruited homeschool families through an e-mail invitation to 500 families in four counties. The invitation described the program and invited homeschool families to send a completed application, which included a written essay component, to the Florida Aquarium for consideration. Approximately 100 applications were received for the 60 available spots. Prior to the program, parents and youth attended an orientation.

Throughout the program, parents acted as chaperones, provided transportation, and encouraged youth as they worked on projects. Instructors provided parents with regular e-mail updates on youth's progress, answered parents' questions, and provided youth with ongoing verbal and written feedback in the form of notes in youths' journals, which were reviewed periodically. At the end of the program, instructors highlighted each youth's accomplishments in the program before awarding a certificate of completion at a family barbecue hosted by the partnering organizations.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes of From the Source to the Sea*

- 1) Increase homeschool youth's skills, knowledge, and interest in science.
- 2) Increase homeschooling parents' opportunities and ability to assist in their child's science education.
- 3) Increase homeschool families' use of informal science learning centers.
- 4) Increase homeschool youth and parents' awareness of their community's conservation issues.
- 5) Increase the number of homeschool students who volunteer at informal science centers
- 6) Increase homeschool youth's awareness of career opportunities available at science centers.

### *Audience Served*

- Each month for twelve months of the year, this program served approximately 60 homeschool youth, ages 11 to 14, with an interest in science.
- The Tampa Bay area homeschooling community.

### **Program Successes**

*From the Source to the Sea* positively impacted Tampa Bay homeschool families in a number of ways. First, by offering a program focused on the local watershed it created a common point of interest about a natural resource that directly affects the community. Having knowledgeable staff who were passionate about the environment supported participants' learning and promoted teamwork and the idea of working together to address important issues. It assisted youth in building skills for doing science; instructors connected the "how" to the "why" and then extended the scope of the "why" by including the bigger picture – the interactivity of watersheds. This approach was as useful and interesting to youth as it was for parents. One homeschool parent said that in addition to learning exactly what a watershed was, she "developed an appreciation for the environment and now tries to be more thoughtful when making decisions that may impact the local and global environment." She added that the program allowed her and other parents to learn things that "we either never learned or didn't retain" during their own school years.

Within the homeschool community, the program was successful in bringing together families from different counties, bolstering youth and parents' confidence in doing science on their own and, perhaps most importantly, created a sense of acceptance of homeschool education in the larger education community. One parent shared that the fact that an educational program was funded specifically for homeschool families "validated homeschool education and helped me feel accepted in society." She added that because homeschool is so flexible, it is often easier to stay inside and do book learning than to plan activities out of doors. The *From the Source to the Sea* program provided "motivation to get my son out there and get his hands in to learn a little bit more." This is key given that the majority of homeschool families take a relaxed or eclectic approach to education and tend to shy away from programs that require accountability – such as a weekly commitment to attend or to complete assigned homework – or do not allow youth to direct their own learning. An awareness of homeschool's "experimental" approach was well known to the project partners and they worked hard to design a program that would attract the broadest range of homeschool families.

Another parent recalled how her family often "bumped into" other families around town who had participated in the program. She liked the personal connections she made with the program educators whom she often saw at other education programs. Based on their interaction with the program, parents realized how great the need was for support in the teaching of science in their community. As a result, two parents – Dina Fox, former English literature teacher, and LaWanda Sutherland, a past FPEA district manager and liaison for the program – brought a HomeLink Education franchise to the area and have been providing science education programming for the homeschool community since the *From the Source to the Sea* program ended. They report that many of their youth were participants in the program or wanted to be. One parent said, "I still get feedback from families that were involved in the program. My kids are still talking about this. My son learned so much in that class and asks 'can we do it again?' Several families, who weren't involved, ask me 'can we do it again if they [the program partners] do it again?'"

For the Florida Aquarium, the program was an opportunity to do a long-term, rather than the usual "one-shot" program. The aquarium has provided onsite programming for homeschoolers for years, but the *From the Source to the Sea* offered a chance to fulfill a need in the community that resulted in a deeper and broader connection to the community at large. The program, overseen by

Debbi Berger, Vice President of Education, also brought to light the importance of hierarchy among program staff for insuring continuity in leadership, as well as smooth and transparent program operation. In addition, the museum staff learned important lessons about the homeschooling community and how to develop programs that meet its unique needs.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Program Based on a Well-Developed Outline or Framework*

A great deal of effort went into developing the curriculum and framework for *From the Source to the Sea*. This effort resulted in a well-organized program that staff considered fun to implement. The program was launched with an overview orientation session that staff, parents, and youth all found very helpful. At the orientation, youth completed a short pre-test, received program materials (handouts, binder, journal), and gear (backpacks, tee shirts). The orientation served as both an introduction to the program, as well as an opportunity for participants to learn what was expected of them, how to achieve those goals, the feedback process, and logistical information.

Topic sessions connected well with each other, and with the partner sites. Each month's work included a lecture session at the Aquarium, and a field trip to a partner site, which emphasized hands-on application of the content learned in the classroom session. Take-home activities and journal entries were reviewed by instructors and returned to students with praise and suggestions. These materials also reinforced the concepts of the month. Participants completed pre- and post-tests to demonstrate what they had learned. All participants received a certificate for participation at the program's conclusion.

#### *Engagement with Community Professional and/or Mentors*

Many of the field trips to community sites, such as the wastewater treatment plant and Nature's Classroom, involved contact with the professionals at those sites. This allowed youth to engage directly with professionals in their community and broaden their understanding of science at work in their community.

#### *Engagement with Families*

This program was designed to engage homeschooled youth and their parents, so that youth would actively engage in science learning, and so that parents committed to homeschooling would learn science education skills that are transferable to other content areas. Family groups participated in the program, which strongly supported the extension of the experience into the home environment.

### **Strategies for program stability**

While the Florida Aquarium has applied for additional funding for this program and having IMLS funding was a plus for their efforts, no new funding has appeared. However, the stability of a program such as *From the Source to the Sea* requires finding and retaining knowledgeable and passionate staff, an awareness of group dynamics, a sensitivity to adolescent issues, the ability to provide fee-free programming, and sharing results of work.

From the homeschool community's view, strategies for stability focus on hiring and holding onto knowledgeable, passionate staff who create a sense of trust and comfort for youth. This is a challenge for the target age range for the program, 11-14 years; in addition to science knowledge it would be helpful for staff to have some experience, background, or training in working with adolescents. Developmental and gender issues should also be addressed for this age group. One parent suggested dividing the program into two age groups – 11- and 12-year-olds separated from 13-year-olds and older. Another parent suggested separating boys and girls, as she observed that

adolescent boys often did not appear to take female instructors as seriously as male instructors. She explained that sometimes boys do not want to interface with women because they are embarrassed about the way they look or feel, while other boys may be overly interested in being around women, especially during the summer months when field attire tends to become shorter or more revealing. She suggested having one male and one female instructor to avoid any gender issues for adolescent youth.

Continuing to offer free learning opportunities is certainly a strategy for attracting and retaining the homeschool community. Homeschool families, perhaps more than other families, seek out and participate in fee-free programs on a regular basis, especially if there are options for participation. They like to pick and choose from a menu of offerings that fit into and complement their flexible, often youth-driven educational plans.

Program stability may also come from sharing the experience with the community and thinking creatively. For example, LaWanda Sutherland wrote an article about the program for the FPEA quarterly newsletter and presented it at quarterly board meetings. Dina Fox wondered about the possibility of FPEA or HomeLink working with the aquarium on funding proposals for future programs. Having opportunities to share program models and experiences through homeschool Web sites or IMLS workshops might also play a role in sustaining programs like *From the Source to the Sea*.

## North Suburban Library System—Wheeling, IL

Library Services and Technology Act State Grant, 2000

Amount: \$67,750

Program: *Reading: Pathway to Empowerment*

### Overview of Program Activities

The *Reading: Pathway to Empowerment* program involved staff from five libraries in the North Suburban Library System (NSLS), collaborating with an Evanston, Illinois not-for-profit organization, Literature for All of Us (LFAOU), who in turn partnered with social service agencies in their communities to provide weekly book group circles for at-risk female teens, between 16 and 19 years of age, many of whom were mothers. The NSLS staff developed and oversaw the project, including facilitating the initial research and recruitment of libraries, serving as the conduit between participating NSLS libraries and LFAOU, providing meeting space for training, and offering staff and financial assistance, as well as completing all paperwork required by the IMLS.

Book group leaders from the libraries participated in a three-day LFAOU training session. They then spent three months implementing the program under the guidance of trained library staff and other team members, before gradually transitioning to overseeing team members on their own. Weekly book group sessions included a mix of literature discussion and poetry writing exercises, held for the most part at libraries and community centers. Participants received adult and children's books to read and keep, as well as journals in which to write their reflections. Some of the book groups also participated in cultural field trips, which included attending plays related to the literature or visits to bookstores for poetry readings. Four young women from the Evanston Public Library book group attended a reading by Alice Walker at the North Suburban Library Foundation and were able to meet her in person. Poems generated by each book group were typed up and printed in book form for teen mothers and their families to share. Participants also had opportunities to read their poetry in public, such as at bookstores or local benefits.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes of Reading: Pathway to Empowerment*

- Build self-esteem by helping young women process their own ideas and questions of value, self-worth, abuse, addiction, parenting, and friendship.
- Build positive relationships with each other, the facilitator, their child, and most importantly with themselves, by participating in a community of support leading to positive change and growth.
- Develop communication skills, which lead to improved self-confidence and school attendance,
- Develop regular habits of reading alone and to their children, and enhanced parenting skills.

This project was specifically designed to align with Goal 3 of the Illinois State Library's long-range plan, which states: "To enrich the quality of life for the citizens of Illinois by advocating the pleasures of reading, the ability to read and the importance of reading." Staff of NSLS also indicated the following desired outcomes: introduce library staff and services to teen mothers; explore reading and writing through weekly book group discussions and poetry writing assignments; and acquaint teen parents with children's literature and reading activities.

### *Audience Served*

Although libraries have worked to make their institutions neutral, free, and open to all, this is not a reality in all communities. Many low-income individuals, who often have not had positive

educational experiences, never think of the library as a useful and perhaps even enjoyable place for gathering information, education, or recreation; or a place where mothers can participate in programs with their children and borrow materials for themselves and their children to read. Five libraries in the NSLS participated in the *Reading: Pathway to Empowerment* program in order to better serve diverse groups in their communities, particularly low-income individuals: Des Plaines Public Library; Evanston Public Library; Indian Trails Public Library District (Wheeling); Wauconda Area Public Library District; and Zion Benton Public Library District. The program targeted at-risk female teens, primarily African-American and Latino women, many of whom had dropped out of school because of pregnancy and accompanying problems in their home environment. Most were from low-income families, but there were also a few middle-class girls from a group home and residential facility for emotionally troubled youth. Approximately 100 youth were served by the program.

Although the LFAOU model suggests that book group sessions be held at social service agency sites or community centers, the model was flexible enough to accommodate the needs of individual communities with unique situations. For example, the Wauconda Public Library District led book group sessions in a group home for young women who had been appointed by the court to live there as they rehabilitated from drug abuse. The Des Plaines Public Library held their book group in a residential facility for emotionally troubled youth.

### **Program Successes**

The *Reading: Pathway to Empowerment* program, based on the the 10-year-old LFAOU model, was extremely successful, enriching the quality of life of the participating teenage girls and, for some, their children. In some cases, the benefits even extended to additional family members and friends. Evaluation, particularly formative evaluation, was conducted on occasion, and provided useful feedback to LFAOU staff regarding the effectiveness of their training session, as well as to group leaders as they transitioned into leading groups on their own.

A summative evaluation of the project to assess its impact on participants was not conducted; a number of positive outcomes related to the intended goals of the project, however, were described on the questionnaire and through interviews with two of the group leaders, Pat Brennan from Wauconda Area Public Library District, and Gigi Galich from Evanston Public Library. Impacts were observed both for the participants themselves, but also for the participating libraries generally and the individuals leading book groups specifically. According to these two group leaders, a major outcome for young women participating in the program was the sense of accomplishment derived from actually reading a book, talking about it, expressing themselves in poetry, and then receiving a published book that included *their own* poetry at the end. Sharon Ball at NSLS also indicated that, “Participants became actively involved in program activities and became more frequent library users.”

There were also benefits to the community of libraries participating and the staff who implemented the program. Both Gigi and Pat felt that their libraries had not built relationships with at-risk, low-income, or troubled teen mothers, and that the program built capacity within their organizations to better serve such groups. Gigi shared: “Without meaning to, we had not made these young women feel welcome [in the library.] This project made us more aware of a part of our community we should be serving. We learned some new ways of interacting with them.” Pat said that she had also gained personal skills: “For me, I learned that with the right program—you can really excite and empower young women who have not had such opportunities before.”

## Effective Practices for Youth Audiences

### *Facilitated networking or team-building*

A major goal of this program was to foster communication skills by engaging young women in discussions about what they were reading. Sharon Ball felt that an important outcome was the companionship fostered among book group participants. This community of support extended beyond individual sessions; even when participants read and wrote alone, they were still a part of the community. Pat Brennan said staff members and volunteers working in the home would comment about enjoying Monday evenings (book group was held each Monday afternoon); “We really like Monday nights—it is so quiet and easy those evenings. It was so gratifying to know that after I leave it is still going on. [It] didn’t just happen in the room.” She also thought a sign of positive impact was the fact that they never had to formally recruit new members for the group. New young women would arrive on Tuesdays and fairly quickly they became curious about what the other residents were doing reading books and writing in journals: “The new girls could not wait until Monday afternoon when they could join the book group too.”

### *Access to key resources and materials*

Another major goal of this program was to expose teen mothers and their families to the pleasures of reading and self-expression. To accomplish this goal, young women received free copies of all the books they read, as well as nice, bound journals in which to write. If they were teen mothers, they also received a set of children’s books. This access to books and journals was an important aspect of the project and was highly valued by participating youth (and their families), as a comment by Pat Brennan indicates: “Since girls could keep the book they would often give them to their moms, aunts when they were done [reading them].” She overheard family members visiting the group home saying, “Hurry up and read the book so I can.” She felt that this aspect of the program was what made it so successful: “They enjoyed the books, the journals—a 19-cent lined journal would not have meant as much. I think they enjoyed writing in the journals because they got to select a blank journal from among several attractive choices, one that spoke to them personally.”

### *Established levels of accomplishment*

Participating in the program required that young women actually read a number of books, talk about them with one another, express themselves in poetry, and then receive the product of their work, a published book of poetry. Gigi Galich described this sense of accomplishment well: “[They] read a whole book—a *fat* book and talk about it. They express themselves through poetry and have a book of poetry at the end that they contributed to. It is a sign of recognition and value.”

### *Engagement with families*

Families were integral to this program. Most participants were teen mothers and although they read adult books themselves, they also received children’s books and assistance in how to read and use books as resources for their children. Gigi felt that another accomplishment of the program was that these women learned the value of play, for themselves and their children: “These young women for the most part are from backgrounds where play was not encouraged. We talked about how doing laundry and cooking can be playful and how they can encourage their kids to play also.”

### *Strategies for Program Sustainability*

Sadly, the *Reading: Pathway to Empowerment* program no longer exists (although LFAOU continues its efforts). In talking to two of its group leaders and Karen Thomson, executive director of LFAOU, some reasons emerged. First, it was an extremely labor-intensive program.

Karen commented: “It takes a lot of effort to use the tools. Lots of intense work.” And there is a great deal of front-end work required on the part of the participating institution, be it an individual library or other agency (in this case NSLS), particularly in identifying the right people to be group leaders. Karen added: “We have learned that recruitment of the right people is critical; you need people interested in knowing who these kids are.” In fact, given the importance of this aspect of the program, her organization has developed a tool with which organizations can evaluate potential group leaders based on assessing the person’s qualities, attitude, skills, and behavior.

The program is also relatively expensive per participant, given its time intensiveness and the fact that youth receive free copies of all the books they read and journals to write in (as well as a set of children’s books if they are teen mothers). Transportation was also costly at some of the sites, a challenge for many youth development efforts nationally.

Gigi provided some additional insights into why this program was not as sustainable as participating libraries had hoped, shedding light on the whole enterprise of youth development. She felt that at least in their community, there are so many programs offered by cultural institutions and social service agencies that they are often competing for funding to provide services to the targeted individuals. She also felt that these programs are competing for time in a youth’s busy life, which in this case may include attending school, taking care of young children, and potentially also working. Her observation was that the “easier” a program is for the youth, the better. She thought the most successful programs were located in places where youth already were, providing an infrastructure for childcare and transportation. One other related issue was mentioned by Karen Thomson in relationship to funding: “You can’t build a sustainable program by just having one program that comes in and then leaves. But often funders are looking for the next good idea rather than supporting a program that has been proven to be successful.”

## South Carolina State Library—Columbia, SC

Library Services and Technology Act State Grant, 2002-2003

Program: *Statewide Initiative: Summer Reading Program*

### Overview of Program

The South Carolina State Library receives Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding annually and uses a portion of its allotment to support South Carolina's statewide *Summer Reading Program*. Since the program is ongoing, this case study examines the program in general, but focuses on the years 2002-2003. LSTA funds enabled the South Carolina State Library to continue funding the position of Youth Services consultant, held by Jane Connor. She is responsible for coordination of the statewide *Summer Reading Program*, including development and production of program materials for summer reading participants and training materials for librarians throughout the state. She also mentors librarians who are participating in the *Summer Reading Program* for the first time.

Literacy is a significant issue in South Carolina where there are many poor rural counties with extremely low literacy rates. The need for a summer reading program was identified through collaborative partnerships between schools, public libraries, and community organizations that focus on the educational and social needs of youth in local communities. In most of these communities, youth have few options for educational activities during the summer. The *Summer Reading Program* encourages youth to visit the library, discover the resources there, and read without the pressure of tests or book reports. Cathy Pruett, Children's Librarian in Marion County, one of South Carolina's poorest counties, likes to give children "the freedom to read whatever they want. I can share the fun of books, the pleasure of reading."

The program components include library displays, posters, and bookmarks; performances or events; maintaining reading records, in which youth document the books they have read; and reading awards. Once a theme is chosen, a handbook of activities and ideas is developed by the Youth Services consultant, with an advisory team, and presented to local librarians. The state and local libraries promote the program in a variety of ways, such as through local newspaper, television or radio, banners at the library, or visits to schools and/or teachers. Youth sign up for the *Summer Reading Program* and receive a reading record in which to document their summer reading. Libraries can choose to have youth record either the number of books they read or the amount of time they spend reading. Jane Connor encourages libraries to have youth record the time they spent reading since "three Harry Potter books equals a lot of reading time." Posters and flyers at the library are used to inform youth about how the program works, specific goals for reading, and rewards for reaching particular benchmarks. Youth present their reading record to the Children's Librarian when they visit the library and receive their reward, which might be a bookmark, coupon, or book, depending upon the benchmark achieved and the library system.

Prior to the development of the statewide program, library summer reading programs had been developed individually by public libraries throughout the state. The LSTA funding provided an opportunity to have a statewide theme for the program and streamlined material preparation and promotion. Jane Connor recalled, "When we developed the statewide theme, libraries would get the handbook and the materials for quality programs. With 46 county libraries, [that saved] employees from each library having to prepare materials." Beginning in 2001, the theme for the *Summer Reading Program* came out of an annual meeting of a five-state collaborative (Mississippi, Georgia, Virginia, South Carolina and Alabama), which Jane and a public librarian attended to represent the ideas and interests of South Carolina libraries. While the theme and materials are unified, the training handbook provides a variety of ideas, from which librarians can

choose for implementing the *Summer Reading Program* at their library. This provides librarians the flexibility to meet the needs of their community youth.

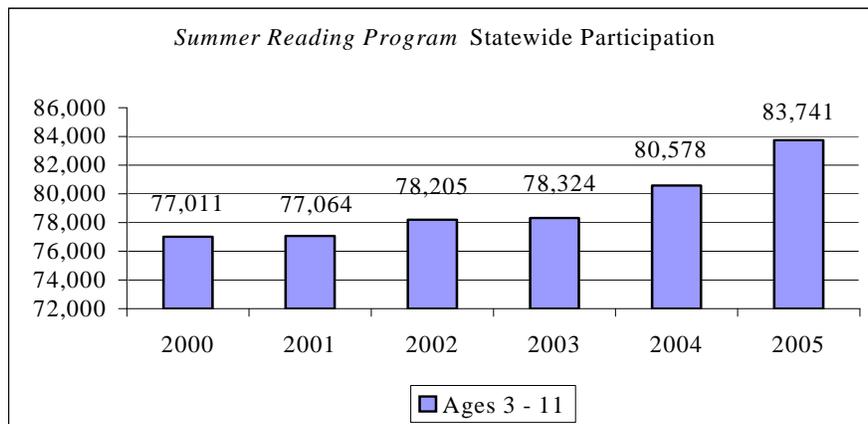
In 2006, the South Carolina State Library joined a 45-state library collaborative, the Collaborative Summer Library Program, which will serve to further streamline the coordination of the *Summer Reading Program* and allow Jane to work more one-on-one with branch libraries around the state.

*Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for State Initiative: Summer Reading Program*

- To facilitate retention of reading and writing skills and other study habits gained during the school year.
- To keep kids engaged in learning.
- To encourage regular use of the library.
- To instill a love of reading in youth.
- To promote lifelong learning.
- To foster literacy in children.
- To encourage children and their parents to share reading experiences.

*Audience Served*

- Statewide children (ages 3 to 11), teenagers, older elementary- and middle-school youth of various socio-economic backgrounds and races/ethnicities.
- Rural, urban, and suburban youth.
- Teen registration is averaging just over 7,000 per year with an average of 2,200 completing the program activities.



**Program Successes**

For Guynell Williams, the LSTA coordinator, the best thing about the *Summer Reading Program* is that it gives minority and low-income children something to do in the summer. “For some of them, library programs are the only thing available. It does make a difference here.” Anecdotal information and survey feedback provided by local libraries, teachers, and parents indicate that the *Summer Reading Program* resulted in children developing a love of reading and increased their use of the library and its resources. Children have become excited about participating each year and look forward to adding another reading medal or ribbon to their collection. Teachers reported that repeat participants in the *Summer Reading Program* improved their academic performance. Parents said they spent more time with their children reading and that children expanded their community social network through the library program.

## **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

### *Access to Key Resources and Materials*

During the month of May, Marion County holds a community festival that includes a parade. To create visibility for the library and promote the *Summer Reading Program* theme (“Books Ahoy”), library staff dressed up as pirates and walked in the Fox Trot parade. Through twice-monthly bookmobile outreach efforts, library staff passed out program flyers and signed youth up for the program. The program was also promoted to and served daycare centers, summer recreation programs, and summer school programs where teachers brought youth to the library.

### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

To introduce youth to area businesses, Cathy Pruett has invited local professionals to be part of the *Summer Reading Program* activities at her library. “We’re a rural county and we want kids to have interactions with people different from the area.” For example, Cathy invited a staff person from Benateau USA, a local sailboat manufacturer, to talk with youth for the “Books Ahoy” theme in 2003. He explained how boats are made and how he became interested in sailing through reading books. Cathy also did a promotional video with puppets and singing that served to connect youth with a “face” at the library. “It went out to all schools in the county on their closed-circuit television and kids recognized me – they’d say ‘you were in that video!’”

For Cathy, it is “a privilege” to talk with youth about reading for pleasure and what that experience can mean in their lives. Providing one-on-one mentoring for teens, Cathy has “discussed college and what they’ll need for that. I’m not the mom, not the teacher, but I can speak from experience. It’s a privilege for me.”

### *Officially Recognized Accomplishments*

When youth complete the *Summer Reading Program*, they receive a certificate from the State Library as well as other prizes selected by the branch library. In Marion County, Cathy Pruett has youth record the amount of time spent reading and offers a certificate from the state library for the completion of three hours of reading, a paperback book of their choice for six hours, and a gold medal for nine hours of reading. “Kids keep those medals,” Cathy said, “and they can tell you all about the reading they did to get it.” Last year, Cathy Pruett added carnival tickets as a reading award and volunteered for the “Dunk the Librarian” booth.

## **Strategies for Program Stability**

### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

On the state level, support for program stability comes internally from staff of the South Carolina State Library’s Library Development Services Department and externally from entities such as the South Carolina State Library Foundation and the South Carolina Center for the Book, both of which support a variety of programs that focus on literacy and children (e.g., *Every Child Ready to Read* and *Letters About Literature*), which supplement and complement the *Summer Reading Program*. The South Carolina State Library also partners with South Carolina’s *First Steps to School Readiness*, a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative. At the local level, some libraries partner with local schools, school districts, and teachers to bring classes out to launch the *Summer Reading Program*. Libraries have also partnered with their Friends of the Library groups for support and have developed partnerships for “reading rewards” with local community leaders and businesses.

In Marion County, the library orders books in the spring and summer to support the local school districts’ summer reading program. Cathy Pruett sits on several advisory boards, including the

local First Steps board. “We try to be out in the community in a lot of ways,” Cathy said, “We’ve tried the past couple of years to have a book fair in conjunction with the Fox Trot Parade.” There is also a group of volunteers – Friends of the Summer Reading Program – that consists of community members who support the program financially or by promoting the program.

## Athol Public Library—Athol, MA

Library Services and Technology State Grant, 2003

Amount: \$75,000

Program: *On the Same Page*

### Overview of Program

*On the Same Page* is a community reading program designed to engage elementary, middle-, and high-school students, teachers, family members, and the larger community in reading a book or a series of books with a common focus. In its first year, the program focused primarily on two books written by local authors about the history and heritage of the Quabbin Reservoir, a body of water located in the immediate vicinity of Athol, MA. Components of the program included evening book discussions at the library, local bookstores, and churches on the books *Someday* by Jackie French Koller, and *Letting Swift River Go* by Jane Yolen; audience-specific discussions related to the books' themes (for instance, a mother-daughter discussion group related to the *Someday* story), in addition to other programs presented by local authors and community leaders. A component that served elementary and middle-school youth directly was the Community Reading Day. The program, which had been supported for many years by a local bank and administered through the Alliance for Education, was picked up by the library in 2003. Supported through IMLS funding for the *On the Same Page* program, the library was able to extend the Community Reading Day program and its local theme – the impact of the Quabbin Reservoir – into elementary and middle-school classrooms. The Community Reading Day invites community members, including local business owners, a minister, a senator, a newspaper reporter, retired teachers, high-school honor students, parents, school officials, library staff, and the book authors, to read aloud and discuss book chapters with youth. *Someday*, a fictional account of the evacuation of four towns in western Massachusetts to make way for the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1930s, was chosen as the Community Reading Day book for elementary and middle-school students.

Located roughly 10 miles south of Athol, MA, the reservoir is closely linked to area residents and their history and heritage. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the water needs of Boston were increasing along with the city's population. By 1927, the State Legislature had declared that the Swift River valley, located 100 miles from Boston, would be flooded and maintained as a reservoir to meet the state's increasing need for water. In the process, residents of four "discontinued" towns – Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott – were relocated (along with the dead buried in town cemeteries) to other nearby towns, including Athol. Homes in the evacuated towns were bulldozed, factories demolished, and many acres of trees were destroyed to build the nearly 40-square-mile reservoir named after a local Native American chief, Nani-Quaben, which translates as "well watered place."

For Community Reading Day, the library recruited approximately seven community readers per grade level to read a chapter or two from *Someday* during middle-school language arts classes on a single day in the fall semester. Each reader conducted class discussions about the book, their own relationship to the Quabbin story, and the importance of reading and writing in their personal and professional lives. Author Jackie French Koller presented a slide show on the Quabbin Reservoir and the research she had done for *Someday*. Senator Stephen Brewer shared his experience of reading the last 30 pages of *Someday* with his teenage daughter "on the town common of Enfield which is above [reservoir] waterline. The ghosts of those towns are almost palpable, it was very emotional." At this point in the book, the grandmother of the main character has made the decision she knew she would have to make "someday" – to find another place to live. As the family's belongings are auctioned off, the young granddaughter witnesses the selling

of the sleigh where her grandfather proposed to her grandmother for \$30. When the young girl goes to comfort her grandmother, she finds that she has passed away watching the auction from her rocking chair on the porch. Reflecting on this scene, the senator emphasized to students the importance and power of the printed word to paint vivid and emotional pictures of our society and of places and people who “can never go home again.”

Mike Deasy, one of the school district’s Title I teachers, appreciated the general promotion of literacy by exposing students to a good story that brought the community together and that showed youth that adults like and support reading. He also liked that *Someday* created a strong sense of place for youth, generated positive feelings about where they live, and increased the level of partnership between the library, schools, and community. He noted that not only did the library take over running Community Reading Day but it also extended the program from the elementary school to include middle- school classes. He recalled finding a strong willingness on the part of the teachers to have a Community Reading Day. Inviting the guest readers to the Language Arts classes has worked well.

Library staff chose the books for *On the Same Page*, developed an advisory board to identify specific audiences for the program, and identified representatives for reaching those audiences. The program was advertised in the local newspaper and promoted in a photo campaign that “caught” people reading around town. For the Community Reading Day, the library assembled an informational packet that included a number of activities and resources for expanding or extending the Community Reading Day, such as then-and-now maps of the Quabbin Reservoir, period vocabulary from the book, and other useful materials. Readers received these materials while attending an hour-long evening training session at the library prior to the Community Reading Day. The library continues to provide these packets to anyone interested in conducting a book discussion, to promote community reading groups, as well as to continue to connect Athol residents with their rich heritage.

#### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for On the Same Page*

- Promote a culture of reading in Athol
- Encourage closer ties among community members through the shared experience of reading and discussing the same book
- Increase literacy in the Commonwealth
- Create a strong sense of place for youth and generate positive feelings about their community
- Increase community/school partnerships

#### *Audience Served*

- Over 1,500 elementary and middle-school students
- Teachers
- Community members

#### **Program Successes**

*On the Same Page* was successful in promoting an interest in local history and reading as well as creating a sense of place for youth. For Jackie French Koller, author of *Someday*, “it was really gratifying to have the entire community feel as strongly and passionately about the history of this area as I do.” During her classroom presentations, she shared her process of doing research for the book, experiences interviewing elderly residents of the evacuated towns, and the trials and tribulations of being a writer. Senator Stephen Brewer enjoyed sharing his passion for reading and the close connection he feels to the community nearby to where he was raised. “When I talk

to students I say if you get sand in your computer, well you've got a problem. Sand in a book? Shake it out and go on. You can take a book with you. This particular book, for this particular community, connected community to their heritage. There are buildings around town that were moved from those four towns that reconnect the north Quabbin region to this [town's] heritage – civil war monuments, expatriated remains at the cemetery.”

The program brought the community together around a central theme of place that had an impact on long-time residents as well as newcomers. Learning about the area's past through discussions with peers and adults, all of whom had read the same book, provided a “sense of place [and] created positive self-image” for youth. Mike Deasy noted that teacher feedback from the Community Reading Day reflected how they could “almost see the kids sitting up tall and showing a sense of pride. In Athol, we look to Boston for a sense of culture and history, but this [experience] shifts the focus back to us.”

The story of the Quabbin Reservoir persists three years after it was the theme of Community Reading Day. Classroom sets of the book have been purchased for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and students now read the story as part of their Language Arts curriculum. Along with reading the book, classes view the documentary “Under the Quabbin.” For the 2006-2007 school year, a seventh-grade science teacher applied for and received a grant for a student field trip to the Quabbin Reservoir.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Opportunity to Contribute to Community*

The selection of *Someday* and *Letting Swift River Go* as books for the *On the Same Page* placed local history with all of its drama, tragedy, and renewal at the forefront of community dialogue. A first step to contributing to any community is understanding its roots and progression from native peoples and first settlers to business development and political decisions that, in this case, severely altered an entire region of Massachusetts. Having the opportunity to learn from and discuss this history with community leaders has the potential to help youth think critically about community issues as they arise. Asking questions and having conversations with adults in a safe and comfortable setting supports youth in speaking out on issues in their community, on their future, and on the town's sustainability. High-school honor students who were readers for the event are evidence that, having experienced Community Reading Day as elementary school students, they now feel compelled to volunteer to help other students understand their community's history.

On another level, students from one 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts class created a PowerPoint presentation for their classmates about the Quabbin. Students researched historical photos and text using Internet resources and created dioramas of the Swift River valley towns before evacuation and in its present state. With the help of a computer instructor, another group of students prepared questions, filmed, and edited Jackie French Koller's classroom presentation. The film was then shown on AOTV, a local television station.

#### *Engagement with community Professionals and/or Mentors*

Teachers reported that the guest readers' strong sense of community, and interest in reading and learning made a positive impression on students. Readers easily fit into the flow of the school day and youth had interactions with them as they discussed their personal and professional connection to the Quabbin and their love of reading. In addition to interacting with community leaders in the classroom on Community Reading Day, teachers from each classroom selected one or two youth from their class to escort each reader from a central staging area to their classrooms. Students were instructed on how to greet readers and how to be “professional” while escorting readers. In

the short period of time it took to walk to and from the classroom, these students had an opportunity for personal conversation with the guest readers.

### **Strategies for program stability**

#### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

Through the *On the Same Page* program, the Athol Library strengthened its relationship with local schools and raised awareness of library programs and resources with community leaders who were readers for the Community Reading Day. The expansion of the Community Reading Day program to include middle-school students created awareness among library staff and teachers of partnering possibilities. Public librarians also supported local school libraries by advocating for filling the middle-school librarian vacancy created by a lay-off two years ago. The positive experience that many community leaders have had being a part of the Community Reading Day created a positive connection that brought them back year after year for Community Reading Day. This awareness and positive connection is the foundation for potential future partnerships between the community, school, and library. In fact, as a result of the publicity and interest generated by the *Someday* project, a local company, L.S. Starrett, sponsored the next Community Reading Day in celebration of their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary by purchasing the necessary books. In 2006, the Rotary Club is sponsoring *On the Same Page* in honor of their international literacy project.

Community Reading Day and the *On the Same Page* program are usually two separate programs. The first year with the grant (2003), the Athol Public Library used the same book and connected the two programs, creating a cohesive, town-wide effort. It worked very well because of the subject of the book *Someday* and its connection to local history. The library notes that they have not found another book or topic that would work quite as well as this one did.

## **Fort Ligonier Association—Ligonier, PA**

Learning Opportunities Grant, 2003

Amount: \$150,000

Program: *250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program*

### **Overview of Program**

Fort Ligonier is a private, non-profit museum, reconstructed/restored fort and historic site that preserves and interprets the cultural heritage of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century western Pennsylvania and colonial America. Located 50 miles east of Pittsburgh, Fort Ligonier is full-scale, located on the original site, and consists of subsurface stabilized and above-ground reconstructed features. It comprises eight acres, including the fort, with eighteen buildings, and a 15,000 square-foot museum, housing a collection of art and 130,000 artifacts. The Education Department has designed special programs to enhance the existing school curriculum in Pennsylvania history for the period of the French and Indian War. Programs can be adapted to meet the needs of individual grades and classes. Fort Ligonier offers several educational programs ranging from self-guided tours to in-depth, hands-on experiences that give students an opportunity to learn about colonial life on a frontier fort. New exhibitions are opening each year, 2004-2008, through the 250th anniversary.

In recognition of the fact that the years 2004 through 2010 mark the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War, Fort Ligonier's director, Martin West, with other local history site directors, participated in a meeting in Pittsburgh of some 100 diverse stakeholders. Related history sites of all sizes and affiliations (National Parks, State sites, private sites, and local historical associations), as well as other entities such as public television stations and local foundations, gathered to discuss opportunities to collaborate and create momentum around this little-known but pivotal time in American history. The resulting consortium incorporated into a separate 501(c)(3), French and Indian Wars 250 Inc., that allows the group to apply for joint funding, market the multiple sites, and disseminate curricula and educational materials from a central source. In fact, the group raised the funds for, and was instrumental in, the development of a PBS special *The War That Made America*, first broadcast in January 2006. The consortium pools resources, adds new talents, and strengthens the capabilities of each site to thrive in a changing environment.

As part of Fort Ligonier's commitment to the special anniversary programming, and to fulfill a key aspect of its existing long-term plan, the museum applied for and was awarded an IMLS Learning Opportunities grant to plan and develop a broad educational package that includes an "ed site" on the Web site, grade/age specific tours and activities, teacher workshop and training, and docent training. This expansion of the Educational Department and offerings, while initially funded by the IMLS grant, is now a permanent addition covered by operational funds. This improved service to teachers and the educational community at large, results in a rich and all-encompassing experience for all youth, whether they attend as part of a school field trip, a scout group, or with their families. To some degree, IMLS funds leveraged the fort's participation and leadership in the consortium process.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for the 250th Anniversary Program*

- To reinterpret, revise, and supplement this period in history in correlation with national standards.
- To greatly expand educational services via technology through the Web site to foster and sustain the project.

### *Audience Served*

- More than 10,000 mainly rural youth via school fieldtrips, Web materials utilized in classrooms, and informal learning groups such as scouts, 4-H, etc.
- More than 250 educators from the surrounding school districts who teach this period in history.

### **Program Successes**

First, the program has met and is continuing to support its goal of expanding the educational products and services Fort Ligonier offers to the community. Several new tours and curricula have been developed for youth in direct connection to the National History Standards, as well as ancillary materials for pre- and post-visit use. Professional development workshops for teachers are offered for Continuing Education Credit, and tour leaders, many of whom are former teachers, are continuously recruited and trained, both in the history of the period and in presenting the materials in an engaging and effective manner. The number of school field trips has increased significantly, thus reaching more youth. The surrounding community, both educational and recreational, has improved access to information about the network of sites exploring this theme, and how they relate to each other. In response to teachers' requests, new programming was developed so that teachers could incorporate math and art skills into the history lessons provided by the fort.

Secondly, the local community of museum educators, working together to create complementary materials at multiple sites, has developed a professional network that is a form of professional development, and supports individual museum educators on a weekly basis. Previously, the relationship between sites, although cordial, was somewhat distant, with each site working independently to develop site-specific materials in isolation. As a result of the French and Indian War 250 Consortium, multiple sites are now working together in a very collegial and complementary manner, allowing for professional growth and sustained professional relationships.

Finally, the consortium has allowed the sites to accomplish a number of projects, such as the PBS special, that could not have been accomplished individually. Many different types and sizes of sites, as outlined above, all come to the table as equals with a shared goal. The consortium works closely with Ms. Debra Corll, of the Allegheny Conference for Community Development, the oldest economic development agency in western Pennsylvania, which usually works in the area of business development. The history arena was new to the Conference, but was considered important since tourism is the second largest sector of the local economy. Ms. Corll was hired specifically to work on this project, and brought with her specialized skills in advertising, public relations, and business development. Despite the fact that her term is limited (until 2009), in addition to the stewardship of the French and Indian Wars 250 project, Ms. Corll is working to develop materials useful to the sites, such as "how to write and disseminate a press release" for ongoing use. The consortium's Web site is being designed so that individual sites can update their own sections, and so that it will require very little upkeep in the future, to ensure sustainability of the group identity after 2008. The Allegheny Conference, while skilled in business development strategies, has learned much from working with new audiences and clients in the Pittsburgh area.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Access to Key Resources*

Each of the historic sites has its own unique collection of materials that tell part of a larger story of the French and Indian Wars. Visitor interviews indicated that the general public knows very little about this important time in history. Teacher surveys indicated that supportive materials,

curricula, and related field trips were greatly needed. Fort Ligonier's ability to address both these needs through multiple venues (tours, Web site, ancillary materials, the PBS program) ensures a much greater access to more and improved materials. Additionally, situating Fort Ligonier in the larger community of historic sites allows visitors to create a more complex and comprehensive understanding of their community within the larger picture of the French and Indian Wars specifically, and its impact on the shaping of the United States more generally.

### **Strategies for Program Stability**

#### *Leadership Continuity*

One of the key benefits of the consortium model is that the relationship between organizations is formalized, and not dependant on individual commitment or interest. Each partner in the consortium has an institutional commitment to the umbrella organization and hence, even with individual site changes in leadership, the relationship is ongoing and sustained.

#### *Create Community Awareness of Impacts*

Fort Ligonier's participation in the consortium has created an enhanced opportunity to communicate the value of the site and the educational products to the greater community. Local media have become more aware of the importance of these historic events and now have a central group to contact for information. French and Indian Wars 250, Inc. will refer media requests to the appropriate historic sites, and send printed and Web materials to local journalists. As a result, history is being given more attention in the local media. Fort Ligonier's Education Curator, Penny West, remarked, "Today we had a Pittsburgh newspaper call to ask for information about a somewhat obscure date in November. I thought if this date is now getting attention from the media, that's terrific!"(On November 12, 1758, George Washington was almost killed by friendly fire at Fort Ligonier. Intelligence from prisoners soon enabled the capture of enemy-held Fort Duquesne, but late in life Washington recalled that in this incident he "never was in more imminent danger.")

#### *Incorporate New Funding Sources after Inception*

As a result of the IMLS seed money to create an additional education staff position and the infrastructure to support expanded educational materials, museum director Martin West has been able to find permanent, additional funding to support this position in the future. Demonstrating the value of this work, combined with receiving the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" that IMLS offers, allowed Mr. West to present a strong and successful rationale for private funding of this work. Thus, IMLS funds were leveraged into an ongoing benefit for youth and the general public.

## Chilkoot Indian Association / Haines Borough Public Library—Haines, AK

Native American Library Services Grant, 2003

Amount: \$142,922

(also awarded a Native American Library Services Grant in 2001 for \$127,333)

Program: *Dragonfly Project*

### Overview of Program

The *Dragonfly Project* serves the community of Haines, Alaska, by inviting community youth (both Native and non-Native) to teach adults and tribal elders how to use computers. The library, which acts as a community center in Haines, designs and implements regular computer classes, as well as drop-in, one-on-one computer tutoring, and provides general and specific computer services to businesses around town. Community youth are recruited as mentors primarily through word of mouth, flyers, newspaper ads, and radio spots. These youth receive one-on-one training from library staff and then conduct computer classes or tutoring for anyone who is in need. Gregory Stuckey, Tribal Administrator for the Chilkoot Indian Association, a *Dragonfly Project* partner, explains that the program “takes kids and hones their technology skills. Then they get to teach older adults to use computers, which is an empowering experience for them.” Skill levels increase, adults change their perception of youth in the community, and youth change their perception of the library and adults in the community. Learning computer skills from youth gives adults a sense of pride in these youth, as well as in themselves. The support of youth at the library results in community synergy between youth and adults in need of building computer skills. The library provides a safe place for both groups. In a small town like Haines (pop. 3,000), helping even one youth to find opportunities is “a big thing.” Lisa Carter, a counselor at Lynn Canal Counseling Services, has seen several youth who were “socially alienated, had low self esteem,” and were in need of direction. The *Dragonfly Project* has given them a chance to explore ways in which they could be leaders. Lisa and her clients benefit from the program by using its services in her professional practice. Group computer instruction provided through the program allowed her clients “access to services that for income reasons or disability [they had] not been privileged to know what technology could do for them.”

Mike Rudd, one of the first *Dragonfly Project* mentors, described the early days of the program as fairly experimental. “We started out with a curriculum that the student mentors created themselves. The mentors were taught how to teach questions that people have during the class – ‘what happens if I do this?’ – in order to get the fundamentals across. Class themes or topics were advertised two weeks in advance when mentors with specific experience were scheduled. The classes consisted of lectures in the form of a slide show that introduced and reviewed specific steps or information, which was followed by on-the-spot tutoring. During the slide show, mentors would have one-to-one interaction with people – suggesting ideas and answering questions. “It really works,” Mike said, “no one was disappointed.”

Additionally, the infrastructure created by the library technology coordinator and the *Dragonfly Project* course provide access to technology that did not otherwise exist for the Chilkoot tribe. In this way, the program builds capacity for the entire community.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for the Dragonfly Project*

- Increase computer skills for community youth and elders
- Improve social skills for youth mentors
- Increase inter-generational activities
- Improve self-esteem for youth and program participants
- Improve community attitudes about the library and its role with technology

### *Audience Served*

- 100 middle- and high-school age youth
- Native youth and elders
- Community businesses
- Computer savvy youth and computer-challenged elders

### **Program Successes**

For project partners, the *Dragonfly Project* has proved very rewarding. Greg Stuckey, Tribal Administrator for the Chilkoot Indian Association, said the *Dragonfly* program is “the most successful thing I’ve been a part of. It teaches children computer skills, children teach elders, jobs are developed, kids go to college.” Mike Rudd is one of those youth who graduated from high school and now attends the University of Alaska in Anchorage. Another early mentor, Heidi Berry, completed college and is now employed full-time at the library as a technology coordinator. Both Greg Stuckey and Lisa Carter remember that Heidi’s interest in library work developed as a result of her involvement with the *Dragonfly Project*.

Success can also be seen in the positive impact of the mentoring aspect of the program on the students. Lisa Carter explained that “a lot of kids who were not connected with available activities and would hang out on the street corner.” Risks for these youth included low self-esteem, under-achievement, and possible substance abuse. Some of the kids who got involved in the *Dragonfly Project* “were kind of heading in that direction,” according to Lisa, “others were isolated kids.” Mike Rudd echoed that perception. “It definitely kept me out of trouble. Being known by every single person in Haines, I couldn’t get away with anything!”

The program also created a sense of pride in the library. “I’m now a library connoisseur,” Mike shared, “I’m in Anchorage now at college and I’m stunned at how great the Haines library is. The small town atmosphere is consolidated in the library.”

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Opportunity to Contribute to Community*

The *Dragonfly Project* provided a truly unique opportunity for youth in Haines, many of whom are geographically isolated or socially alienated, to share their computer knowledge and skill with community elders. Knowledge in Haines is traditionally passed from elders to youth. Youth’s participation in this program gave both youth and elders new confidence and a sense of accomplishment. The entire community acknowledges youth’s achievements in a public way. Mike Rudd, one of the first youth mentors, recalled being constantly praised by everyone in Haines; “Mostly, it was just walking on the street and having people say ‘that was a great class’.” Mike also received high school work-experience credit for his *Dragonfly* participation.

“I started when the program started, right when I was going into high school. Someone came up on the street; it was Linda [Moyer, Education Coordinator at the library]. I didn’t know who she was.” Under Linda’s guidance, Mike created curricula for teaching computer skills. During the first year, library staff worked with Mike as he reviewed computer programs to learn how they were used, what questions people might have, and made materials easy to read. “Then we started teaching,” Mike recalled. The final curriculum includes beginner-level Word and Excel programs, advanced programs like Adobe Photoshop, and other graphics programs for making holiday greeting cards and even more advanced programs such as Microsoft Access and Dreamweaver. Nearly a dozen of these curricula and PowerPoint presentations are available to download on the

library Web site, <http://haineslibrary.org>, which also features several youth projects. One of the projects, “Telling Stories about Native Traditions, Beliefs, Language, Arts, and Culture with Digital Media” features five short films on Tlingit culture produced by Haines youth.

#### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

Throughout the Haines community, mentors responded to the needs of business owners and professionals. Lynn Canal Counseling Services is a good example of how the *Dragonfly Project* served the community by engaging more than one level of a business. Lisa Carter recalls “a major collaboration” they worked on with *Dragonfly* staff and mentors to support women doing artwork in her art therapy group. “The women wanted to publish a holiday journal with their artwork. I contacted Linda [Moyer] and she agreed to let us use the library scanner and provide a tutorial in the computer program we needed. Printing the journal in color on their color printer made producing the journal affordable.” For the business itself, *Dragonfly* staff helped with technology issues as they came up. As a small, grant-funded agency with little technology, Warren Johnson, *Dragonfly* Technical Coordinator, acted as a technical consultant for the agency. Lisa recalled, “We had a grant for new computers and he spent some time with the office manager to help figure out what to get. Other times something would go wrong so we’d call over to the library and they were always nice about helping us.”

Teamwork among library staff and mentors developed confidence in youth for problem-solving. Mike Rudd remembers Warren Johnson and Linda Moyer working with him and other mentors for every class session. Working as a team, they presented, guided students, and answered questions. “Between the three of us, we almost always had an answer, or two of us worked together to figure it out while the third person went on teaching the class.” Library staff served as positive role models for mentors with their good interpersonal skills, ability to be creative and spontaneous, and being good problem-solvers. For Mike Rudd, being considered knowledgeable gave him a sense of humility. “It’s astonishing how much you learn when you’re supposedly the expert. I learned a lot every time we had a meeting.”

#### **Strategies for Program Stability**

Continued expansion of library services has extended and maintained the community services provided by the *Dragonfly Project*. As tribal members share their needs with the Tribal Association, the library responds. Greg Stuckey and Dan Coleman, the library director, often discuss ways in which the library can help community members. Recently, the library responded to one community member’s request for assistance in completing a GED by “finding a way to have 240 hours of tutoring for GED at the library.” In Greg’s mind, the partnership between the library and the tribal association has become “the catalyst for other programs.”

Strong leadership at the library level supported the continuation and expansion of the program. Library staff – including the technology coordinator, education coordinator, and director – was involved in every level of *Dragonfly Project* programming. Their commitment and willingness to respond to community needs and mentor training resulted in quality learning opportunities. While mentors’ skills and interests varied from youth to youth, those who “got really hooked in” and were committed to the program were supported in that commitment and given responsibilities appropriate to their skill level.

With the overwhelming success of this program, Lisa Carter worries that the community does not fully appreciate that their support of the program is necessary for stability. Community support includes educating people about “the boundaries of funding” and clearing up the misconception that the library has ample funding to support the *Dragonfly Project* indefinitely.

### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

Several interesting and exciting partnerships have developed for project partners, as well as for the community members they have served. The Chilkoot Tribal Association is working on a partnership with the elementary school derived from the library youth activities, which has brought the elementary school closer to the tribe. They are also working with the library and the local public radio station to develop a project to build radio skills among community members. While both partnerships are in the initial stages of development, Greg Stuckey feels very positive about the possibilities: "I've had long conversations with the principal at the school and it looks really fantastic. [The] radio project looks to be going in [the] same direction."

Ample interaction between Lynn Canal Counseling Services and the library has also developed. For example, past and present staff members from both organizations participate on each others' boards and the counseling service also advises library staff on discipline issues at the library. Additionally, the director of the counseling service is an advisor for the developing radio station project. At the community level, the counseling service has created a lending library of self-help and psychology books that will be available at the library for the community at large.

### *Create Community Awareness of Program Impacts*

Word of mouth has been the most prevalent and successful means of communicating program impacts throughout the Haines community. As community members started attending classes and came away with new skills and knowledge, they told other people who, in turn, signed up for a class. The library also advertised quite a bit in the newspaper, on the local radio station, and in the library itself. The Haines Public Library serves as a community center with most of the community "passing through" at some time or another. Being named the Best Small Library in America by Library Journal and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation brought local and national recognition of the library's service to the community. Now "everyone in Haines knows about it."

## **Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block—Tucson, AZ**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 1999

Amount: \$49,400

Program: *Working Smart with Art*

### **Overview of Program**

The Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block partnered with Howenstine High Magnet School (a magnet school focused on service learning), as well as other elementary and middle schools, to create an educational, service project for their students. Howenstine High School regularly partners with community groups to provide service learning opportunities for its students, always ensuring that the project offers a balance of valuable service and learning. The Tucson Museum's former director contacted the school about a courtyard that lies between the museum and a building that houses the museum's education department, which the museum shares with other community-based organizations. Bringing together various community artists, University of Arizona graduate students in landscape architecture, photographers, and others, the school and the museum supported a two-year project, *Working Smart with Art*, which resulted in a transformed physical space that brings pride to the community. In addition, the program consisted of two other components: 1) an elementary school mentoring program and 2) an after-school component.

Today, the previously neglected and unattractive courtyard is filled with indigenous plants, researched and selected by students; straw bale benches; murals; a large snake sculpture that pre-schoolers can play on; as well as mosaic tiles. *Working Smart with Art* engaged 10 community artists who worked with a total of 188 students, and 8 graduate student interns. Adult community members complementing the Howenstine teaching staff were a lead artist, two landscape architects, and an architect. Six grammar school teachers and 15 high school instructors participated during the course of the project. The total number of contact hours between grammar school students and artists was 320 hours. The high school group was at the museum three hours each week for a total of 45 weeks, which included 25 special needs students.

The courtyard project was designed to begin with a semester of information gathering and model-making. Subsequent semesters involved increasing work towards the final goal of a completed courtyard. The first semester, the high-school students were involved in lectures, field trips, demonstrations, tile-making workshops, and research, all related to teaching students what they would need to know in order to work in design teams. Each team then drew up plans and made models of their proposed courtyard changes, which were then presented to the "client" (the museum staff, teachers, and some invited guests). The second semester, students continued the research, design, and then production of the materials for the installation. In the final semester, the infrastructure was built, plant materials were added, and art pieces were completed. This final semester ended with an "Unveiling Ceremony" in which the students were honored for their contributions.

The elementary school portion of *Working Smart with Art* was designed to bring K-5 students to the Tucson Museum of Art for three consecutive semesters to learn about and participate in public art works, to develop a sense of community involvement on the part of the students' families, and to facilitate shifts in attitude for both teachers and students regarding ways in which visual arts can be integrated into the delivery of core curriculum subjects. Students developed holiday ornaments that were hung from street lights downtown and produced other non-holiday sculptures that actually caused controversy among local residents. Finally some middle-school age students from two schools were recruited to produce public art pieces and to be mentored by

the Howenstine High School students, a part of the project that the project directors did not consider especially successful.

#### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for Working Smart with Art*

- To provide a service learning experience that supports authentic learning experiences under the mentorship of community professionals;
- To support high-school students in gaining deeper experiential understandings of core connections and specific skills in art, science, math, language, career development, team building and communication.
- To increase a sense of community involvement on the part of families and students.
- To facilitate shifts in attitudes and increase the ability of teachers to integrate visual arts into core curriculum subjects.
- To provide an opportunity for high school students to work as mentors to middle school students.

#### *Audience Served*

This program served 200 students weekly for almost two years, in multiple components of the program. In addition, it served the larger community with the completed courtyard project and local educators by helping them understand how to integrate public art projects into their curriculum.

### **Program Successes**

#### *Courtyard Project*

In addition to the most obvious program success, a beautiful courtyard, the collaborative process offered students a very positive opportunity to work with professionals in the community. The project was transformational for a number of students, as many developed new skills and attitudes about public art, the value of research, contributing to a community and “possible selves.” Museum visitors and docents were impacted as they witnessed the unfolding of the new courtyard, and came to understand the power of service learning. The renovated outdoor space served the children, staff, and parents of participants in the museum’s summer program, and the physical space is now frequently used as a meeting space for both museum groups, and staff members of the City offices, which overlook the yard. In the long term, the project developed a strong link with the Tucson Unified School District and engaged a number of families from non-traditional audiences in a deeply personal way.

#### *Elementary School Component*

These K-8 students developed a deep comfort with the concept of public art, the museum, and, for many, downtown Tucson. There has been a general upward trend in museum participation, and in these students’ participation in museum summer programming. Teachers involved with the project indicated that they had learned important skills that they would continue to utilize, and had new understandings of how to integrate art into core curricular activities. As a result of this project, a new relationship formed between the museum’s Education Center and the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), and the museum has proposed a new project that the district is considering.

#### *After-school Component*

The goal of providing high-school students with the opportunity to mentor middle-school participants was not successful for a wide variety of unanticipated reasons, such as the fact that many of the students were siblings and the high-school students were not sufficiently prepared to

step into a mentoring role. The after-school program, however, was successful as an arts enrichment program for the middle-school students, many from non-traditional museum audiences.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences in the Courtyard Project**

#### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

This program offered students a rich opportunity to work as apprentices with a variety of community experts. In addition to learning the associated skills and vocabulary of each role, students had the opportunity to observe adults with multiple agendas work out their differences and alternate leadership and support roles. The community professionals offered unexpected opportunities to individual students; for example, one student whose career goal had been limited to joining her family business, realized she had the ability and desire to go to design school, and was surprised to find herself in college the following year. Another student, with the goal of entering medical school, found a related internship position as a result of a conversation with a museum board member.

#### *Opportunity to Contribute to Community*

The purpose of service learning itself is to provide ways for individual students to address the needs of their communities through service and to use their experiences to facilitate the learning process in academic courses. The intent is to create a method of collaborative learning that stresses conceptual knowledge in the classroom combined with its application through experiential learning in the community. Ideally, by participating in this process students will have acquired a deeper understanding of themselves, their world, and knowledge about specific information being addressed in their courses. The emphasis is on encouraging a deeper investment in a process that involves a broader, more integrative approach to learning. This project was a very successful example of a service learning project, as it allowed students to learn and apply academic skills and concepts, explore public art and public spaces, and make a tangible difference in their community. Students emerged as spokespersons for the media, and were able to eloquently articulate the purpose of the project, as well as the project's strengths and weaknesses, for the media. Each involved student left their "signature" somewhere in the courtyard, and families returned years later to reconnect with the transformed space.

### **Strategies for program stability**

This project was designed to be time limited and completed within the two-year time span. But it also served as a pilot project for the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block to develop new ways of working with the Tucson Unified School District, and to develop new methods for serving underserved youth in the Tucson area. The lessons learned and relationships developed will continue to inform future projects and collaborations. Key points learned in this process that could inform successful, sustainable projects in the future include:

- Clearly assigned and defined roles and planning requirements for all personnel;
- Clear information about the project for the involved students from the outset;
- Written information about expectations and goals for each session;
- Time to present community participants' backgrounds, credentials, and expertise to build credibility with the students; and
- Training high-school students about how to mentor younger students, what they have to offer, and the importance of such an effort.

## **East Iowa Community College— Davenport, IA**

Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center

National Leadership Grants for Libraries, 2001

Amount: \$229,972

Program: *Connected by a River: Plants, Animals, and People*

### **Overview of Program Activities**

*Connected by a River: Plants, Animals, and People* was a National Leadership project funded by IMLS in 2001 and continuing through 2003. The project brought together a community college, museums, libraries, and schools to create materials dealing with the common geographic feature that flows through communities in Eastern Iowa, the Mississippi River. The Mississippi was both the focus of the content, as well as a metaphor for the collaboration of the diverse educational partners, including Putnam Museum and Nahant Marsh (which the museum operates as an educational center); Davenport Public Libraries; Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency; the Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center (ATEEC) of Eastern Community College; and other museums, parks, historical sites, and community organizations in the area.

Through the collaboration of these partners, five modules were created for middle-school students. While the primary focus of the modules is science, teachers involved in initial front-end analysis wanted modules that were clearly interdisciplinary. As a result, these modules offer opportunities for language arts, history, math, social studies, and civic extensions which enrich science learning and help to contextualize the material into the broader context of students' lives. The five modules are:

- 1) Life forms and habitats on the river
- 2) The impact of human-made structures on the river
- 3) The history and value of wetlands
- 4) Pollution sources and their effects on the river
- 5) A case study of the creation, destruction, and eventual restoration of the Nahant Marsh

The learning modules incorporate videoconferencing, simulations, and video streaming and were designed to be visually rich and fast-paced. Videoconferencing enables communication between participating classrooms, the museum, and Nahant Marsh, allowing students to schedule times to “visit” and “ask the experts” questions related to the learning module; streaming video allows students to enter worlds outside their classroom for “field-based” learning experiences. In addition to the learning modules, there were a series of workshops to introduce teachers to the CD and its use, as well as an exhibit created for the library.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for Connected by a River: Plants, Animals, and People*

- Develop five innovative learning modules based on local standards and benchmarks.
- Evaluate project outcomes and research results.
- Disseminate and build on project activities and outcomes to promote and sustain the project.

Terry Bilyeu, the instructional developer who researched all of the modules and developed four of them, added that she felt that there was a tremendous need for this project since the Mississippi is such a large part of students' lives yet there is little about it in textbooks. Many teachers, if they teach about it at all, only do so for a few weeks at most. Terry Bilyeu said that one teacher put it well, “The kids live next to the river, but they don't always go to look at it.”

### *Audience Served*

*Connected by a River: Plants, Animals and People* was designed for middle-school students and used by between 1,000 and 5,000 students. The materials were sent out to 140 schools as part of the Grand Excursion, a river-related event scheduled in the summer all along the upper Mississippi. Material was assembled into packs or trunks and distributed to regional schools as part of the event. Ten eastern Iowa schools agreed to help conceptualize the CD project and those schools received a Web camera (Webcam) for classroom use. The Webcam enabled classrooms to videotape and send real-time correspondence to other schools or to communicate with the naturalist at the Nahant Marsh. In fact, the project director was able to leverage the resources of their IMLS grant with another smaller grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency so that they could make additional copies of the CD and buy additional Webcams for the schools to facilitate the videoconferencing and video streaming aspects of the modules.

The overarching idea was that the modules would reach beyond school audiences, particularly the Life Forms and Habitats module of the CD, if marketed to the public under the name, “River Tales.” The *River Tales* CD sells for less than \$10 in local museum and gift shops and its primary audience is parents of school-age or younger children. There was also a plan to approach book stores and shops in the region.

### **Program Successes**

*Connected by a River: Plants, Animals and People* was well received by the educational community, in part because a group of teachers who were already teaching about the river in science or social studies helped project staff define the learning objectives for the modules and reviewed the finished product. It was also a well-researched product. During the planning and research phases of the project, Terry Bilyeu visited ten schools, to talk to students and to see what kind of technology capabilities each school had. She also spent many hours working with museum and Nahant Marsh staff. Because of this rich input, she felt that this was one of the best and “most fun projects” she had ever worked on.

The grant proposal detailed a summative evaluation plan to assess the project’s success in three areas: (1) Did it enhance student access to, and use of, museum resources? The Putnam Museum’s survey results of museum users indicated a substantial increase in access to and use of museum resources by students and teachers who participated in the project and had access to the *Connected by a River* CDs. Local news coverage on the project was also listed as a source for increased attendance. Attendance at the Nahant Marsh Education Center also saw a marked increase in student/teacher visits. (2) Did its use enhance student learning? Results of pre- and post-tests from the pilot sites indicated that the instructional materials engaged students and increased their knowledge of the Mississippi River’s life forms, habitats, human-made structures, wetlands, pollution and the Nahant Marsh. Results indicated it also increased students’ awareness of the river and the need for good stewardship. (3) Did it help teachers to expand and further develop an understanding of the role of museums and libraries in the core educational process? According to teacher surveys from the pilot sites, the teachers gained an appreciation for the educational connectedness and use of these entities in the educational process – the tying of informal and formal education.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Access to key resources and materials*

The major premise of the project was to create a set of innovative learning modules that would immerse middle-school students in rich experiences exploring the natural and cultural history of

the Mississippi River. As Stacey Peterson, a teacher at Louisia-Muscatine Middle School said, “In this time of budget cuts at schools, this provides a great alternative to field trips. It makes this all real tangible to students. Even though they live so close to the river, students rarely think about it. Most of them probably don’t even know about the Nahant Marsh.” Four other teachers commented about the program’s value and depth:

*Great visuals and information. Next best thing to being there.  
I’m loving what you’ve done overall and it is so extensive – very impressive!  
It fits so well with everything I cover. It’s easy to navigate. Good detail in the information without getting overloaded.*

*I feel everything is covered to some extent and goes perfectly with what I am already doing. It will be a great addition to my Mississippi River unit. I can’t believe how many links and other sources have been included.*

#### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

The videoconferencing and video streaming aspects of the learning modules and the fact that at least ten schools received Webcams meant that students could potentially communicate with students at other schools using the materials and also could interact with museum and Nahant Marsh staff, a potentially important mentoring opportunity. The final report states that, “Some of the teachers expressed a desire to visit the Nahant Marsh with their new cameras,” but it is not clear from the report if the teachers followed through, or whether the interactions were intense and powerful enough to engage students in a long-term fashion.

#### **Strategies for Program Stability**

##### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

A strength of this effort was the partnership established between the Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center (ATEEC) of Eastern Community College; Putnam Museum and Nahant Marsh (which the museum operates as an educational center); Davenport Public Libraries; Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency; and other museums, parks, and historical sites in the region. These institutions worked together smoothly and, with the exception of the final push to complete the CD, quite compatibly (Terry Bilyeu did say that one lesson she learned from this project was not to leave all the editing to the end; “edit as you go!” she said). In particular, the museum and Nahant Marsh staff members were helpful and spent many hours working with her.

In addition to these partners, Terry Bilyeu indicated that she received incredible support in accomplishing the most difficult task of creating the learning modules—identifying appropriate photos and images and getting permission to use them on the CD. She got a lot of support and cooperation from various places including the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who helped tremendously by providing images for the manmade structures module.

##### *Incorporate New Funding Sources after Inception*

As suggested earlier, the project director was able to leverage the resources of this grant with resources from another smaller grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency so that they could make 250 additional copies of the CD and buy additional Webcams for the schools to facilitate the videoconferencing and video streaming aspects of the modules.

*Create Community Awareness of Program Impacts*

The project got a great deal of attention in the community. It was the topic of a feature story in the local newspaper and on the evening news, which covered the unveiling of the CD.

The project did not continue beyond the grant period, but this was expected given that it was designed to create a specific set of materials. Terry Bilyeu did feel that there was learning among the partners and the participating teachers: “You can do this— blend the resources of these three entities (community college, museum, and library) to create a high-quality product.

## **Pacific Science Center—Seattle, WA**

National Leadership Grants for Museums, 2001

Amount: \$242,563

Program: *Technical Assistance and Training for Informal Science Education*

### **Overview of Program Activities**

The Pacific Science Center (PSC) and a state consortium for out-of-school time (OST) providers, called Washington Regional Action Project (WRAP), initiated a partnership to provide a professional development program that focused on science for out-of-school time providers. The project, called the Technical Assistance and Training for Informal Science Education (TATISE) was specifically designed to support OST providers who already work and have strong community ties with underserved youth. Funded in part by an IMLS National Leadership grant, the TATISE project conducted workshops, developed science activity kits, provided technical assistance to OST providers, facilitated electronic networking, and hosted after-school events at the Pacific Science Center. WRAP specialists, trained by the Pacific Science Center science educators, served as regional specialists to bring science kits to providers outside of the central Seattle area. The overall project created a model for developing an informal science education program for OST and staff which serve youth underrepresented in science across the state.

### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for TATISE*

- 1) To increase the skills, confidence, and enthusiasm of out-of-school time providers and other youth leaders from community-based organizations for science education through professional development workshops on science pedagogy and science topics such as electricity, sound, and optics.
- 2) To develop multiple sets of seven simple science kits and a community loan program built on inquiry-based learning and supported by the professional development workshops.
- 3) To provide technical assistance for out-of-school time providers.
- 4) To positively impact the number of low-income and minority youth learning science in Washington State through professional development for community youth leaders, access to science kits, and by holding quarterly after-school events at the Pacific Science Center.
- 5) To link out-of-school time providers with Pacific Science Center staff and colleagues to discuss teaching strategies, activities, and kits, by establishing an online, networking, and information group for TATISE participants moderated by the project supervisor.

### *Audience Served*

- Twelve WRAP specialists served approximately 5,000 youth and trained 164 adults, many of whom are bilingual.
- 331 adults received professional development training, learning activity information, and/or hands-on interactive opportunities to learn more about science through 16-month workshops held at multiple venues.

### **Program Successes**

Continuous evaluation was an integral part of this program, and hence, much information about the project's impact and outcomes has been well documented. Overall, the TATISE project was focused on creating sustained relationships with OST providers that facilitate science learning experiences outside of school for underserved youth. Len Adams, the project's initial leader, was highly visible in the providers' community and meetings, as well as an active participant in OST listservs and discussions. As he came to be perceived as an active member of the community, his ability to reach this audience expanded. Participation in the project was broad and enthusiastic, and a sense of community grew. Evaluation indicates that the PSC workshops built successfully

on the existing confidence, skills, and enthusiasm of a group of community providers with moderate comfort levels with science, to create a synergy of knowledge and enthusiasm around inquiry-based science learning.

Evaluation also indicates that many practitioners have increased the number of science experiences in their daily activities at their individual site, and that many youth leaders discovered new resources available to them in the Seattle area. WRAP professionals are now in a position to replicate inquiry-based science professional development workshops for youth leaders around the state in even the most rural areas. Participating caregivers felt the experience enabled them to deliver improved science experiences to the youth they served. In these ways, the project built upon an existing network of care-providers, leveraging their ability to support science education in community-based organizations. With a change in leadership, the program appeared to lose some degree of momentum, but current leadership is committed to reestablishing the program's strong community involvement and, in fact, perceives the relationship as a reciprocal one that benefits the PSC as much as the community.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Access to Key Resources and Materials*

Although the major goal of the program was to support youth leaders, the ultimate beneficiaries were the youth these leaders served. Prior to this program, strong expertise in science education resided in the PSC staff, beyond the reach of youth in rural areas and communities that did not have a relationship with the museum. By partnering with an organization that already had strong communication networks and personal relationships with youth leaders across the state, the PSC was able to share both their wealth of knowledge and tangibles such as the science kits to benefit the broader community. In addition, a number of the youth leaders, in a new relationship with the museum, brought their youth groups to events at the PSC, which were designed specifically for this audience. Erika Newman, the youth leader in the Phinney community, and a TATISE participant explained: "For me the best thing about this program was that it brought science resources to the kids in my program – resources they don't usually have access to."

Erika Newman also felt that a unique aspect of the program, and a key to its success, was the way in which it linked the professional development in the workshops to the kits available for loan and use. She described that "the art museum also has kits – but I'm never quite sure I'm using them right. Linking the two (kits and workshops) was unique and the value is really to the children. The staff are more engaged and understand what they're doing, rather than just following directions. They've seen someone implement the kit so they can be more enthusiastic and confident. I think use of the kits is much higher – and more effective – this way."

In Washington State, as elsewhere, the time and money for the professional development of any educator is at a premium. TATISE recognized the difficulty that tightly funded community OST programs had in participating in professional development even when offered free of charge, and offered participating programs reimbursement for the additional staff that would be hired to offset costs; they also allowed staff participation in the 3-hour workshops.

#### *Established Levels of Accomplishment*

Originally, workshop participants simply received a Certificate of Accomplishment for their participation in individual workshop trainings. Washington State has a registry system that requires childcare staff to attend training to increase their skills in working with children, and to ensure quality care for all children in the state. The Washington State Training and Registry System (STARS) requires that childcare staff attend training to increase their skills in working

with children. In 2002, the TATISE program received state approval to offer their workshops for 2.5 hours of STARS continuing education credit. This opened the program to an even more diverse audience of educators, and in fact, made participation even more attractive for many care-providers.

#### *Based on an Established Framework*

The program was strongly based on the tenets of inquiry-based learning and was tightly aligned with school standards. The workshops specifically addressed alternate methods of teaching science than those presented in school; they were often free of specific science content, and instead focused on science process: how to formulate good questions, how to investigate questions, or how to test hypotheses. Participants acquired science process and science education skills that extended beyond the specific content areas of the workshops and discovery kits, as they are applicable to science education most generally.

### **Strategies for Program Sustainability**

#### *Incorporate Alternate Sources of Funding and Other Resources*

At various times the TATISE program has also received funding from Washington State University, National Science Foundation, the Honda Foundation, the Murdoch Foundation, and 4-H, and was thus able to continue for approximately ten years, seven years beyond the IMLS funding. An additional strength of the program was its partnership with WRAP, an existing, successful organization that had a strong infrastructure and existing relationships with the OST community. Rather than invest large amounts of time in developing multiple relationships with many different communities, partnering with WRAP allowed the PSC to access the network already in place, and leverage that network to bring science education to a broad community.

#### *Stable Leadership*

Through the inception and initial two-thirds of this program, the program leader, Len Adams, was a high profile and continuous presence in the OST community. Participants identified Len with the program and the PSC, and felt they had a representative at the PSC “table.” Len had strong personal relationships within the community and a high level of respect and credibility. When Len moved to another position in the PSC, a new individual was hired who had strong experience in community-based work, but less experience in science education. Community participants did not seem to connect easily with the new leadership, and participation seemed, to some, to become less enthusiastic. Current management is rebuilding those relationships, and ensuring the relationship is based on partnership and reciprocity, rather than the perception of OST simply as a “target audience.” Components of the program continue today and are likely to increase in the future. Interviewees agreed that leadership for this position required an understanding of and experience in working with community-based organizations, and a passion for reaching underserved audiences. Although experience in science education was seen as important, passion for community-based work was considered paramount.

## **Dallas Public Library—Dallas, TX**

Library Services and Technology Act State Grant, 2002

Amount: \$57,434

Program: *Teen Center*

### **Overview of Program**

The Teen Center program of the Dallas Public Libraries began in October 2002. The program was conceptualized and developed by branch managers who wanted to provide a program dedicated to teens. The original center was established at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch Library, located in one of the city's most disadvantaged areas. The goal was to provide mentorship, information, and positive experiences for local youth. By creating a stable program, the library was able to attract more teens and their families to the library, provide a safe and supportive environment for teens, and offer teens the resources they needed and wanted.

The first year of the program had four key components: (1) defining a teen-specific area of the library; (2) creating access to technology; (3) providing programming that was attractive and useful for teens; and (4) growing and maintaining the young adult collection. The Teen Center had its own dedicated area in the library that was furnished with teen-friendly seating, colorful carpet selected by the teens, and the banner of the Teen Center. These dedicated spaces showed the teens that they were valued and gave visibility to the program within the library. Teens were also invited to use the multipurpose spaces in the libraries, such as auditoriums and meeting rooms, for their own activities.

Technology was used as a way to attract teens to the center. Many of the teens did not have access to personal technology such as cell phones or computers at home. The Teen Center was supplied with five laptops connected to the library's wireless network. The laptops were available to be checked out for use in the library by people ages 13-18, so that it was a privilege available only to teens. With these laptops, teens could do homework, go online, and use specialized software such as Dreamweaver and Adobe Photoshop. There were also flash drives available for checkout so teens could take their work with them to school.

A programming series created for the teens was a mixture of what the teens wanted and what the coordinators felt they needed. Libraries hosted three to six teen-oriented programs per month. Topics ranged from sexuality and drugs to etiquette and applying to college. Cultural programs involving music, art, photography, and dance were also part of the program offerings. An overview of the programming can be found online at <http://dallaslibrary.org/teen.htm>. Teens were encouraged to suggest programming ideas and guest speakers.

The library's young adult collection was both broadened and updated through the Teen Center program. Always available were the classics covered in English class, career information, and college catalogues. Newer acquisitions included magazines, non-fiction, and fiction requested by the teens.

In the second year of the program, three other sites were added at the Hampton-Illinois, North Oak Cliff, and Skyline branches, and a part-time coordinator was hired to manage the Teen Centers at all the sites. This freed up the branch manager at the Martin Luther King, Jr. branch, who had previously been maintaining the program himself. In the third year of the program, each site hired a part-time coordinator who was responsible for that site only. This change in staffing grew out of the program's inability to find a candidate who was willing to work part-time and shuttle between the various sites. Making the switch to one coordinator per site was the best

staffing decision that was made during the course of the program. Having a dedicated Teen Center coordinator on site allowed each of them to devote more time to that site; they were in their branch and community more often, and hence better able to meet the specific needs of that community.

#### *Overarching Goals/Intended Outcomes for Teen Center*

- To provide programs, resources, and opportunities for teens to shape and develop their educational and career goals.
- Provide positive role models and relationships with adults in the community.
- To develop and boost self-esteem, organizational, and communication skills, group skills, creative skills, and positive attitudes, and behaviors in teens that would allow them to shape their lives in a positive way.
- To introduce teens to library services and materials to learn that the library can be used for a variety of experiences, not just for doing homework.

#### *Audience Served*

The Teen Centers served 1,000 teens from urban Dallas. Teens served were largely African-American youth from some of the poorest areas of Dallas.

#### **Program Successes**

Despite staffing changes, the program consistently employed staff with a strong teen-oriented vision. The original coordinator for the program, the branch manager at the Martin Luther King, Jr. library, had a background as a young adult librarian. Later, the Teen Center coordinators were hired because of their experience working with teens and doing community outreach. For example, one coordinator had been in the Peace Corps and another had experience working with youth in a high-school program. Coordinators were expected to “hit the pavement” by making contacts and drumming up support for the program at local schools and businesses. Successful coordinators were also able to identify with the teens and gain their trust. As one former coordinator explained:

*I understood their struggles financially...[but also] what it means to go to school and achieve. [I could tell them] that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Youth are always able to tell if you are genuine with them. You have to be accepted first before you can give advice. [It's] all about showing that you do care.*

Less important was finding someone with strong library skills; the branch managers felt they could easily provide library training for the coordinator, but that a strong background in youth programs was essential. Program coordinators acted as role models for the teens in the library.

Teens who visited the center often were changed by the experience. Branch managers noticed that the teens' behaviors changed from “cutting up” to being responsible in the library. “Before they always came and got into trouble,” reflected one branch manager. “When we put this together and asked them to share the responsibility, they became leaders.” Some teens volunteered at the library, shelving books and helping other teens find materials. The teens were also called on to help promote the library at community events, like festivals and parades. They would help sign up festival-goers for library cards and hand out incentives. One manager stated, “We would sign up more people [for library cards] when they were with us than when it was just staff” because of the teens' connections with members of the community.

By extension of what was happening in the Teen Center, other librarians began having positive experiences with youth as well. They now had a specific message to convey to teens: the library has something for you. Librarians had conversations with teens who visited the library often, encouraging them to join the Teen Center's council. They knew they could rely on teens who were involved with the Teen Center, and often asked for their help in troubleshooting computer problems or quieting down rowdier groups of teens.

### **Effective Practices for Youth Audiences**

#### *Engagement with Community Professionals and/or Mentors*

A significant objective of the Teen Center program was connecting teens to positive adult role models in the community. The most visible role models were the center coordinators. They interacted with youth on a regular basis: they took requests for programming and materials for the collection, visited local businesses with teens during fundraising drives, attended meetings in the community to raise the visibility of the Teen Center program, and supervised teens during teen council meetings and events. One former coordinator said he was there to “provide positive reinforcement” and to find out what they were struggling with and provide support. For example, if he found out a teen was skipping school, he would have a conversation with them about the cause and alternatives like night school or the Job Corps. The basis of these relationships was trust and caring. Teens also were able to meet other adults in their community through programming, as local leaders or professionals would often be guest speakers at events. The speakers provided positive examples of people making a difference in their community, something that the program was trying to emphasize to the teens.

#### *Access to Key Resources and Materials*

A major factor in drawing teens to the library were the resources offered at the Teen Center. Teens had dedicated facilities, laptops, printers, and collections that were provided and maintained by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding. One librarian talked of the teens feeling a sense of ownership about “their” laptops and said that it was important to keep the technology up-to-date so that the teens had access to the newest software and hardware. For teens from disadvantaged families, having free access to the latest technology is very important. Their only chance to use a computer regularly and build technology skills might be at the library.

### **Strategies for program stability**

#### *Develop Partnerships with Community Groups or Corporate Entities*

The coordinators at the Teen Centers and the branch managers were very savvy in creating community partnerships. They worked with local organizations that were already serving youth or who wanted to reach youth, such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation and Community Center, Our Brother's Keeper, and Central Dallas Ministries. Some of these groups were drawn to the Teen Center program because of the positive strides it was making with youth. Other groups were specifically contacted by the coordinators because of what they could provide to youth. These types of relationships served multiple purposes; they raised the community's awareness of the Teen Center, created contacts with potential speakers at programming events, and reached out to new youth audiences who were not using the library. By nurturing a network of organizations in the community, the coordinators gained access to resources and people who would support the center by giving time, funding, and visibility to the program.

Often coordinators would rely on the teens' contacts within the community. The teens knew who to talk to when they wanted to get the library announced on the PA system at an event. The teens

knew who to go to when the library was looking for an adult to monitor dance troupe practice in the auditorium. By valuing the teens' abilities and contacts, the coordinators were able to make even more connections within the community.

#### *Create Community Awareness of Program Impacts*

Creating community awareness for a program is a large part of maintaining community interest and support. In the case of the Teen Center, awareness was created by maintaining a high level of visibility. Within the library, the Teen Center was an attractive, welcoming space that library users saw being used in positive ways. Within the community, Teen Center teens were at the heart of the library's public persona. Teens attended community events to promote the library generally and the Teen Center specifically. Teens and coordinators went to PTA meetings and meetings of the Black Chamber of Commerce to share what was going on at the library, including upcoming events and ways these organizations could help. The teens would make announcements on local radio stations in support of summer reading week. Teens who were involved with the Teen Center were well-known enough to be able to leverage their connection to the library within the greater community.

#### *Incorporate New Funding Sources*

A grant of \$25,000 from the AT&T Foundation, formerly SBC, allowed the Dallas Public Library to open the newest Teen Center at the North Oak Cliff branch in April of 2006. The announcement in November of 2005 was in large part the work of Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Elba Garcia and Regional Vice-President of External Affairs of AT&T Inc., David Arbuckle, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the North Oak Cliff branch and the Dallas Public Library. The grant provided funds for five state-of-the-art laptop computers complete with wireless connection to the Internet, materials for teens that include print and media formats, programming, marketing and give-away items (T-shirts, flash drives, and other incentives). It is the Dallas Public Library's plan to add new centers as other companies take notice and want to contribute to the future of youth of Dallas.

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