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## COMMENTARY AUTHORS

Nicole Yohalem • Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom

The Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary series is written and published by  
**The Forum for Youth Investment**  
with support from the

### Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

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For information about reprinting this publication and information about other publications, please contact the Forum at:

The Cady-Lee House, 7064 Eastern Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20012-2031  
T: 202.207.3333; F: 202.207.3329  
Email: youth@forumforyouthinvestment.org  
Web: www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

#### SUGGESTED CITATION:

The Forum for Youth Investment. (2005). *Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #9: When School is Out, Museums, Parks and Libraries Are In*. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. Available online at

[www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/comment/ostpc9.pdf](http://www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/comment/ostpc9.pdf)

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- *Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #3: Reflections on System Building: Lessons from the After-School Movement*

In 1992, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development published *A Matter of Time*, a galvanizing report that summarized, among other things, what focus groups of young people said they most wanted during their non-school hours. Not surprisingly, they did not answer in terms of programs — they talked about places. And interestingly, the places they talked about are not necessarily front and center in current conversations about out-of-school time. They pointed to “Safe parks and recreation centers; exciting science museums; libraries with all the latest books, videos and records...”

Parks, libraries, museums and other cultural organizations represent a diverse array of assets and share a broad mission to serve the community. Implied, if not explicit, within most of their institutional missions is a mandate to serve the social, cultural, recreational and educational needs of children and youth. Many of these institutions run specific programs designed to engage children and youth. But regardless of programming, museums, parks and libraries are positive, accessible places, present in communities across the country, with some dedicated funding (public, in the case of libraries, parks and some museums) that ensures basic facilities and staffing.

Beyond the basics, these institutions possess a wealth of resources that, if used well, can extend learning opportunities beyond the school walls. Increasingly, museums, parks and libraries are coming to the table to participate in innovative learning partnerships with schools and community-based programs and upgrading their facilities and programs to better meet the needs of children and youth. And nationally, a range of innovative foundation-driven initiatives has helped build the capacity of museums, parks and libraries to better meet the needs of young people (*see Figure 1: National Capacity-Building Initiatives and Demonstration Projects, below*).

## FIGURE 1: NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

**Museum Youth Initiative.** Between 2000 and 2003, The James Irvine Foundation provided nearly \$4 million to ten museums in California seeking to develop after-school programming for youth.

**Urban Parks Initiative.** Since 1990, this Wallace Foundation initiative has helped improve the quantity and quality of urban parks for public use, and to broaden urban leaders' understanding of the importance of parks to the health and vitality of cities.

**Equal Access Libraries.** This initiative helps libraries realize their potential as community centers for learning. Funded by the Gates Foundation, it supports networks of libraries working to meet the information and learning needs of specific constituencies including youth.

**Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development.** In 1998, The Wallace Foundation launched Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development, which helped libraries become more responsive to young people's needs and create innovative services that further the mission of the library and the development of youth.

**Youth ALIVE!** From 1991–1999, the Wallace Foundation funded YouthALIVE! to help establish and support adolescent programs in science and children's museums that provide positive, hands-on work and learning opportunities for youth.

These commonalities serve as our starting point for exploring the roles that museums, parks and libraries can and do play in supporting young people during out-of-school time. To gain insight into the realities and the possibilities, we talked with Marsha Semmel, director of strategic partnerships at the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS); Elaine Meyers, head of children and teen services at the Phoenix Public Library; and Peter Witt, distinguished professor in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism at Texas A&M University. Their observations and our own review of existing literature and programs inform reflections on the following questions:

- *How big of a role do museums, parks and libraries play in kids' lives?*
- *How do museums, parks and libraries contribute to out-of-school time?*
- *What does it look like when these institutions work together on behalf of kids?*
- *Is out-of-school time an important part of museums, parks and libraries' futures?*
- *What are some policy opportunities to consider?*

Our interviewees agreed on an important core assumption that drives our interest in this topic: Few communities have fully capitalized on the significant value of museums, parks and libraries when it comes to supporting young people during out-of-school time.

## HOW BIG OF A ROLE DO MUSEUMS, PARKS AND LIBRARIES PLAY IN KIDS' LIVES?

A rough estimate suggests that there is a city-owned park or playground within one mile of most urban neighborhoods in the United States.<sup>ii</sup> This country is home to roughly 16,000 museums and close to 118,000 libraries. These institutions are plentiful. But how well utilized are they by young people, and what role do they play in supporting development?

### PARKS

*"Parks and recreation departments are really the largest provider of youth services in the United States. They have more facilities, in more communities, than any other service provider."*

— PETER WITT

Parks and recreation centers arguably represent the largest single provider of youth services in the United States, and perhaps the most evenly distributed community resource, not including schools, that targets children and youth.

Parks are traditionally thought of as venues for play — open space, playgrounds, fields — and for sports activities or leagues, both of which make important contributions to young people's lives. Yet the work of parks and recreation departments extends well beyond traditional notions of recreation. At their full potential, they offer a wide variety of responsive and creative programming that can help build skills and develop assets in young people.

According to Peter Witt, changes in perception and focus in the 1980s and 1990s have steadily influenced how parks and recreation professionals conceptualize and implement programming for children and youth. Solid inroads have been made in moving from "gym and swim" to more comprehensive developmental opportunities.<sup>iii</sup>

### LIBRARIES

*"Libraries have had many wonderful golden ages of outreach to youth — providing responsive collections, skill-building opportunities, caring adults and safe spaces. Our past, present and future have always been highly associated with children and youth, and their success as readers and community members."*

— ELAINE MEYERS

In a recent national poll, 65 percent of households reported using a library at least once during the past year, most often for educational and entertainment purposes. Sixty percent of all library patrons are young people (37 percent are children under age 12 and 23 percent are between 12 and 18 years old) who often utilize libraries' computer and on-line services, seek homework help or research assistance for school projects, browse music and periodical selections and, increasingly, come simply to spend time in many libraries' dedicated spaces for youth.<sup>iv</sup>

At the most fundamental level, most libraries meet or exceed the basic safety/supervision standard the public demands for children during the nonschool hours. Further, many libraries offer specific after-school services, including reading programs (100 percent), cultural programming (80 percent), computer courses (approximately 30 percent) and homework help (just under 25 percent). The frequency of these services varies, with reading and homework assistance most likely offered on a weekly or greater basis, and other programming offered much less frequently. Elementary-aged children are the focus of the majority of reading, culturally-focused and other programming offered through public libraries.<sup>v</sup>

## MUSEUMS

*“Museums collectively spend more than \$1 billion annually on K–12 educational programming and contribute more than 18 million instructional hours for education programs including teacher professional development, guided field trips and traveling exhibits.”*

— AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

While only two attempts have been made to count all of the museums in the United States, both yielded a rough but impressive estimate of somewhere between 15,500 and 16,000.<sup>vi</sup> While museums have a reputation as traditional institutions, situated around permanent and special collections that deliver on-site cultural and educational programming, they are very diverse in terms of size, focus and approach, including public and private museums of art and history, aquariums and zoos, botanical gardens, arboreta and nature centers, children’s museums, science and technology centers, and historic sites.

A 1999 poll by Lake, Snell & Perry reported that museums average approximately 865 million visits per year; this means that roughly 2.3 million people visit a museum every day in the United States. Of the different types of museums, zoos boast the highest annual attendance rates, followed by science/technology museums, arboretums/botanical gardens and children’s museums.<sup>vii</sup>

Increasingly, museums and other cultural institutions are reaching out to intentionally and creatively engage youth and their families through special programs, teen employment opportunities, and by partnering with public housing and community-based organizations to bring cultural resources from museums directly into neighborhood settings.

## HOW DO MUSEUMS, PARKS AND LIBRARIES CONTRIBUTE TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME?

*“There’s a lot being done on the side of creating programs and developing innovative partnerships. The bigger challenge is the issue of access and what it means to reflect and serve the needs of community more broadly.”*

— MARSHA SEMMEL, IMLS

Museums, parks and libraries should be part of the out-of-school time conversation for several reasons. First, they offer an important physical infrastructure in many communities. Although budgets are tight all-around, many have dedicated public and private funding sources combined with a commitment to support children and youth. Museums and libraries in particular are committed to supporting learning, and are uniquely qualified to help young

people develop 21st century skills such as problem solving, accessing information, and cultural awareness.

The contributions that parks, libraries and museums make to out-of-school time happen at three distinct but overlapping levels (*see Figure 2: Contributing to Out-of-School Time, page 4*). First, many operate their own after-school programs. Second, they are increasingly developing partnerships with community-based youth organizations or with local affiliates of national organizations like Boys & Girls Clubs to respond to growing demand. And finally, many parks, museums and libraries are thinking beyond specific programming to basic questions of access and reach, striving to become more attractive, accessible and inviting places where young people choose to spend time when not in school.

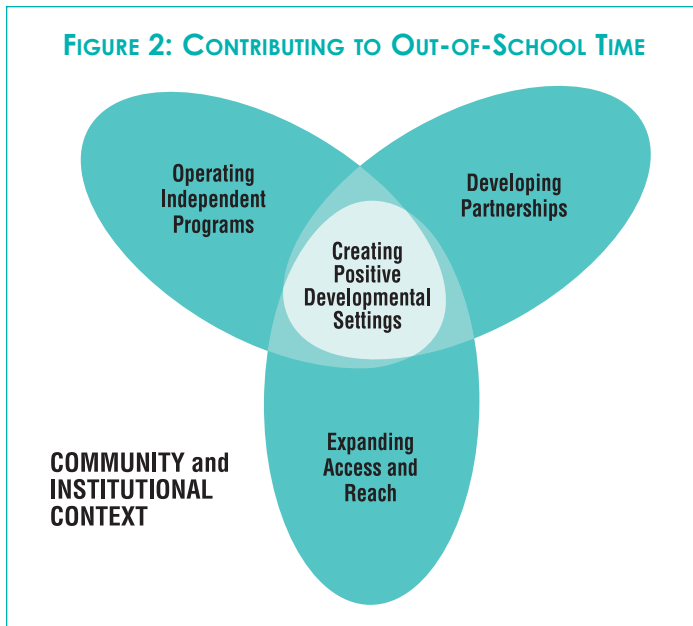
At the core of all three of these distinct, interrelated roles is a commitment to creating supportive developmental settings and positive youth-adult relationships. New program development and partnerships can drive institutions in the direction of systemic change in terms of access and reach, and engaging with new populations can drive program and partnership development.

**Operating independent programs.** One of the simplest ways to think about how museums, parks and libraries contribute to out-of-school time is to look for structured program offerings with the stated purpose of engaging children and youth in the afternoons, evenings, weekends and summers. For example:

- The Free Library of Philadelphia offers the LEAP after-school program which serves low-income 6- to 18-year-olds at all 55 branches. Programs include homework assistance, technology, recreation, cultural and educational enrichment and career development.
- The San Diego Natural History Museum offers several after-school options, including thematically integrated natural history workshops that bring together hands-on arts, science and reading.
- The Austin Parks and Recreation Department’s Totally Cool, Totally Art after-school program offers visual art classes for teens twice weekly. Instruction is led by local artists who emphasize skill development, career awareness, team work and self-expression.

While such programs abound (*see Table 1: Museums, Parks and Libraries during Out-of-School Time: A Spectrum of Promising Examples, page 5, for additional examples*), they are typically considered add-on efforts from a budgetary and staffing perspective, often rely on a patchwork of funding sources, and as a result, are very

FIGURE 2: CONTRIBUTING TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME



susceptible to changes in funding or priorities. Forging partnerships with organizations with complimentary resources is an important strategy for addressing some of these challenges.

**Developing partnerships.** Collaborations with existing after-school programs, schools or community-based organizations can allow each organization to do what they are best suited for. An extremely valuable resource that parks bring to the table, for example, is facilities. Museums bring educational resources to bear and the technology available at libraries may add value. Other organizations may, in turn, have access to program participants, thus relieving a museum, perhaps, from the responsibility of recruitment. For example:

- At the King County Library, partnerships with Junior Achievement and Microsoft formed the backbone of the Techno Teens program, which provided high-quality career and technology training to local youth.
- The Boston Children’s Museum partners with Artists for Humanity, Boston Nature Center, The Food Project, Malden YMCA and MetroLacrosse to operate the Teen Ambassadors out-of-school time program.
- The National Parks and Recreation Association has developed an affiliation with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America organization in order to facilitate more cooperation between organizations at the local level.

**Expanding access and outreach.** Creating individual programs or partnering with others to do so are certainly important contributions. However, systemic changes in the way these organizations think about engaging and supporting children and youth may be as, if not more,

critical. Libraries, museums and parks are all accessible, neutral spaces that are open to the public and are for the most part, free of charge. The tension between breadth and depth of experiences is a real one, however. Organizations often face the choice of keeping a large group of young people safe and monitored versus engaging a small group in a focused learning experience. However, particularly for older youth, creating an appropriate structure that promotes autonomy and self-directed learning is an important way that museums, libraries and parks can play a role.

Important internal conversations are underway within museums, parks and libraries about how they meet young people’s developmental needs and how staffing, professional development and facility design can best support their goals.

- Among parks, an important question is the location of staff. “Roving leaders” or “detached youth workers” work in the community to identify and engage hard-to-reach young people, with the goal of eventually integrating them into facility-based activities.
- While dedicated staff is critical to operating specific youth programs, libraries around the country are recognizing that hiring teens to work in the library and helping all staff — from librarians to security guards — effectively interact with young people are two important steps in creating more inviting environments.
- The Walker Art Center (the Walker) in Minneapolis has taken a comprehensive approach to broadening their audience. Familiar strategies include collaborating with community-based organizations to offer free events and providing transportation and discounts. In addition, the Walker established the Teen Arts Council to advise and drive all teen programming at the museum.<sup>viii</sup>

## LOCAL SYNERGY — WORKING TOGETHER ON BEHALF OF KIDS

Museums, parks and libraries increasingly consider themselves, and are considered by others to be, key players in out-of-school time. Examples of partnerships among these institutions and with other organizations and systems abound, and their contribution to the menu of available opportunities is clear. But to what extent do they have a seat at the planning table when it comes to out-of-school time and youth issues more broadly?

Chicago stands out as a city that has successfully harnessed the significant energies and resources of three large public agencies and increasingly, a range of commu-

TABLE 1: MUSEUMS, PARKS AND LIBRARIES DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

## A SPECTRUM OF PROMISING EXAMPLES

	Specific Programs	Community Partnerships	Expanded Access and Outreach
<b>MUSEUMS</b>	<p><b>The Youth Mentorship Program at Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village</b> in Dearborn, Michigan offers high school students at risk of not graduating the opportunity to develop meaningful life and work skills while fostering positive relationships with adult role models. Through a partnership with a local school district, participating students receive a combination of job training, community service and mentoring. Students spend the second half of each school day and after-school hours working with a full-time museum employee who serves as a mentor to the teen. Students earn school credit while learning marketable skills. The award-winning program's impacts include student gains in school attendance and significantly increased grade point averages.</p> <p><a href="http://www.hfmgv.org/explore/ymp/default.asp/">http://www.hfmgv.org/explore/ymp/default.asp/</a></p>	<p><b>Big Thought</b> is an ambitious collaboration between the Dallas Independent School District, the office of Cultural Affairs, Young Audiences of North Texas, and more than 60 local cultural institutions. Big Thought focuses on both access — making sure every child can benefit from arts and culture and impact — ensuring that programs support classroom learning. In addition to connecting schools with programs, Big Thought provides professional development and tools to help teachers integrate the arts into their teaching. Big Thought was developed in response to a local study that revealed deep disparities in access to performances, residencies and field trips by Dallas youth. The initiative was recently recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities as a recipient of a 2004 Coming Up Taller Award.</p> <p><a href="http://www.yanorthtexas.org/">http://www.yanorthtexas.org/</a></p>	<p>A partnership between <b>Adventure Science Center</b> in Nashville and a local youth organization called <b>Community IMPACT!</b> developed out of concerns about reaching residents of one of the city's lowest income communities. Ironically, the targeted community was also the neighborhood where the science center is located. Young people worked as community researchers to identify barriers to participation in the museum's programs and strategies for engaging residents in authentic ways. Youth researchers' findings confirmed community wisdom that physical proximity and traditional outreach were not enough; programs had to be embedded inside community events and institutions. While the museum had invested some resources in outreach, the youth uncovered several strategies not previously considered; some were incorporated into the museum's strategic plans.</p> <p><a href="http://www.adventuresci.com/">http://www.adventuresci.com/</a></p>
<b>PARKS</b>	<p><b>Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance's</b> most innovative community-oriented program is its Empowering Youth initiative. Each year, 15 fourth through seventh-graders create a permanent display for the children's garden. The students work in teams as designers and budgeters, collectively deciding on the year's winning design. The program not only provides youth with content knowledge but also helps youth plan and work together, master challenges, and make lasting contributions to their community. The program exploits one of the Chicago park's best assets — the public gardens of its Conservatory — to teach community children and youth a range of skills.</p> <p><a href="http://www.garfield-conservatory.org/">http://www.garfield-conservatory.org/</a></p>	<p><b>Phoenix Activity City (PAC)</b>, managed by the Phoenix Parks &amp; Recreation Department, has more than 100 sites throughout Phoenix located in schools, community centers and churches. Participants spend time in a supervised program in a location close to home. Activities offered at PAC sites include: Life skills activities; educational support; physical education and recreational activities; arts workshops and activities; and cultural awareness programs. Each PAC site takes these elements and designs its own special program that incorporates the interests of the surrounding community. Partners and funders include: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grants, School Community Volunteers, Arizona State University, Barrett Honors College, AmeriCorps/VISTA and community colleges.</p> <p><a href="http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/PAC/">http://www.ci.phoenix.az.us/PAC/</a></p>	<p>In New York, Central Park's <b>North Meadow Recreation Center</b> focuses on enhancing health and wellness. Wishing to expand engaging opportunities for and access to regular exercise and wellness education, the center redesigned its physical space and retooled its outreach approach. Sports are used as a "hook" to attract youth. Once there, youth discover broader opportunities that teach physical and mental wellness, and build self-esteem and skills. Opportunities range from learning basketball refereeing skills, to learning about basic anatomy and wellness principles through interactive computer programs, to gaining confidence and skill on one of the center's two climbing walls.</p> <p><a href="http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/northend/northmeadowreccenter">http://www.centralparknyc.org/virtualpark/northend/northmeadowreccenter</a></p>
<b>LIBRARIES</b>	<p><b>The Community Youth Corps Program</b> at the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore offers youth an opportunity to earn community service-learning hours by working at the library. Students who are selected as interns are placed at a local branch where they assist with the daily functions of the library; job shadow; help plan and implement youth programs; assist with technology; help children with homework and are trained in computer literacy, social skills, media arts and career skills. Interns use their newly acquired skills to develop a public program or service, often in partnership with a college work-study student.</p> <p><a href="http://www.smartlink.org/">http://www.smartlink.org/</a></p>	<p><b>The Phoenix Public Library's Teen Central</b> is a 5,000 square foot space created "for teens by teens" that serves approximately 200-300 teens a day and features computers; video, CD, book, magazine and comic book collections; large screen video; surround sound music; living room, dance floor and a cafe. Interdepartmental city partnerships include shared casework with Human Services, film editing training with educational channel KNOW 99, and film screenings with the Family Advocacy Center. Community partnerships include programs by Homebase Youth Services, a shelter for homeless teens; Teen Lifeline, a teen hotline; shared art work and teen critique of Phoenix Art Museum exhibits and a financial literacy partnership with Wells Fargo.</p> <p><a href="http://www.phoenixteencentral.org.">http://www.phoenixteencentral.org.</a></p>	<p><b>The Tucson-Pima Public Library</b>, which serves the city of Tucson and Pima County, has focused on better marketing the library to young people by creating specialized spaces that are designed specifically with their needs and interests in mind. Teen Centers were designed, with input and direction from youth, to be welcoming and to provide positive educational and career development opportunities. Centers offer technology training, employment opportunities, job skill development and positive adult role models. Opportunities for young people to advise library staff, advocate for the library and participate in community education were built into the plan from the outset.</p> <p><a href="http://www.lib.ci.tucson.az.us">http://www.lib.ci.tucson.az.us</a></p>

nity-based partners, to create a robust out-of-school time infrastructure. After School Matters (ASM) is an ambitious effort to dramatically increase the supply of out-of-school opportunities for Chicago teens. A partnership between the City of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Public Library, ASM began with Maggie Daley's determination to expand and replicate a single after-school arts apprenticeship program, Gallery 37. ASM now spans the city and reaches more than 20,000 teens, offering a variety of apprenticeships and activities focused on career exposure, enrichment and education in neighborhoods across the city.

Gallery 37 linked teens interested in the arts with successful professionals through master classes and apprenticeships in schools throughout the city. With strong support from the mayor, Daley expanded it and at the same time, created parallel programs in other interest areas including technology, sports and journalism. All of these programs are now operated by After School Matters, a separate nonprofit organization, three days a week in over a quarter of the city's high schools. Each school offers both the full range of paid apprenticeship programs and an informal teen drop-in center called Club 37. ASM's goal is to expand to roughly half of all high schools in just under three years.

Building a strategic collaboration between the city, school system, libraries and parks — separate bureaucracies with separate unions, missions and practices as well as some historical tensions — was by no means a simple task. “To forge an alliance among the schools, parks, and libraries, Ms. Walker [former chief of human infrastructure] devoted roughly one-third of her time for more than a year, working the phones and the city email networks, personally talking wary principals and park officials into cooperating with the program, navigating around liability issues and other logistical roadblocks, and occasionally arm-wrestling the more recalcitrant employees and middle managers, until the program came together...”<sup>ix</sup>

The role the library and park systems play in this after-school effort is substantial. Each program “campus” includes one school and an adjacent park and library. The bulk of activities take place in facilities controlled by these partners, with community-based organizations playing an increasing role. On the financial side, these three core public agencies provide roughly 43 percent of the near \$18 million total budget, with 28 percent coming from other public sources and 29 percent from private dollars. Nearly half of the public funds are in-kind contributions such as supplies, facilities, employees, transportation, security, etc.

After School Matters is indeed unique. Its success has depended largely on the powerful vision of strong popular public leaders, a committed private sector, and the significant capacity of and buy-in from the schools, library system and park district. But it is a very instructive example of how a city can leverage public institutions on behalf of children and youth and in the process, increase the value of those public institutions to the community.

## IS OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AN IMPORTANT PART OF MUSEUMS, PARKS AND LIBRARIES' FUTURES?

*“Every institution needs to see itself as one knot within a broad web of community support. Youth development is community development. As organizations with common goals, we have to get together around the issue of youth, not around the issue of parks or libraries or museums or any single institution.”*

— ELAINE MEYERS

Changes in the economic, social, demographic, cultural and technological contexts in which parks, museums and libraries operate mean that all of these institutions, along with schools, social service agencies and others, must think strategically about the way they structure and deliver services. Each of these institutions is well aware of the challenge.

A recently released report from Chapin Hall states that “Public libraries...have been grappling with questions about their mission and relevance in the age of the personal computer and Internet. In response, they have sought to define themselves as multifaceted institutions that not only provide printed and digital resources and expert guidance to these information sources, but also serve as cultural, educational and social hubs for communities.”<sup>x</sup>

On the museum front, the challenge is framed primarily in terms of reaching new audiences. “Engaging new and diverse audiences means that museums do something different from what they have done before. Inherent in these efforts is a certain degree of risk and uncertainty in exploring new and different strategies. These are risks that museums are increasingly willing to take to remain relevant.”<sup>xi</sup> And according to Chris Walker, a new view of parks is also emerging, one of “parks as valuable contributors to larger urban policy objectives, such as job opportunities, youth development, public health and community building.”<sup>xii</sup>

The critical roles that libraries, parks and museums can, and often do, play in supporting children and youth must be understood and made more visible. As these institutions face increasing pressure to demonstrate their value, the out-

of-school time movement offers a clear opportunity for them to articulate and strengthen their commitment.

## WHAT ARE SOME POLICY OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER?

The national policy conversation about young people has shifted in some important ways over the past few decades, from a focus on keeping teens out of trouble to a more balanced interest in helping youth avoid risks but also ensuring they develop into fully engaged, educated community members.<sup>xiii</sup>

As states and localities focus increasingly on learning, the value of having libraries and museums be part of the conversation about supporting young people becomes clear. Other policy shifts bring a new urgency to the role that parks can play, as concerns about health have spurred renewed commitment to physical activity and open space.

There are a range of things that program leaders, policy makers and other decision makers involved in the out-of-school time movement can do to ensure that more communities can successfully capitalize on the significant value that museums, parks and libraries represent:

- Recognize the role museums, parks and libraries are already playing in supporting child and youth development. Often unsung partners in out-of-school time, they should be included in resource guides and invited to participate in local and state planning conversations and networks.
- Recognize that museums, parks and libraries are ideal teen employment environments. When well structured, these jobs can be both developmentally appropriate and valuable to the institutions. Teen employees can also help change the “face” of an institution and as a result, increase the number of other teens who visit.
- Create conditions that allow museums, parks and libraries to play a stepped-up role in out-of-school time. Invite them to the planning table and keep in mind their strengths and assets during the development of RFPs, local initiatives and partnerships. Support professional development and other capacity building efforts so they can maximize the resources (i.e., staff, facilities) they already have.
- Take a hard look at access and equity issues. While there is an impressively large number of parks, libraries and museums in this country, they are unevenly distributed across rural and urban areas, and often unevenly distributed within specific communities. Rapid demographic shifts make this even more complex and urgent. Follow the lead of communities like Detroit

that have conducted a systematic analysis of where facilities are located vis-à-vis target populations.<sup>xiv</sup>

- Think beyond programs when considering the out-of-school time challenge. Children grow up in communities, not in programs. While programs are important developmental contexts, it is critical that the full range of places where youth spend time and the full range of adults they come into contact with are part of the picture as localities work to build and strengthen a web of community supports.

## ENDNOTES

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OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME  
POLICY COMMENTARY

#

9

# WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT, MUSEUMS, PARKS AND LIBRARIES ARE IN

Issue 9 • January 2005

Parks, libraries and museums share a broad mission to serve the community and, more often than not, a special mandate to serve the recreational, educational and cultural needs of children and youth. Based on the assumption that many communities have not yet fully capitalized on what museums, parks and libraries have to offer in terms of out-of-school time, this policy commentary explores the unique contributions these institutions can make. We look at roles they currently play, the synergies created when they work together at the local level, and related policy opportunities.

*How do parks, libraries and museums contribute to out-of-school time?*

*What does it look like when these institutions work together on behalf of kids?*

*Is out-of-school time an important part of the future identity of museums, parks and libraries?*

*What policy opportunities should be considered?*

