



## **Issue Brief: Business and Afterschool: The Perfect Partnership**

Afterschool programs directly benefit the youth that participate in them. There is a strong relationship between afterschool programs and the business community, particularly in New York, which is home to more Fortune 500 companies than any other state and has a large school-age population. Afterschool programs support parents and guardians by providing a safe, enriching environment for youth during the “critical” hours in the afternoon.<sup>i</sup> Secondly, afterschool programs develop tomorrow’s workforce by teaching skills and affording opportunities for personal growth that are not typically received during the school day. Unfortunately, it is estimated that 600,000 youth do not have access to an afterschool program in New York; they spend their afternoons unsupervised and in unstructured environments.<sup>ii</sup> There is much the business community can do to ensure that all youth have access to afterschool programs.

### **Afterschool Programs Support Today’s Workforce**

By contributing to the afterschool field, businesses are ensuring that working parents have access to the programs their children need. Afterschool programs support working parents and guardians by affording them a safe place for their children to stay while they are at work. Corporate Voices for Working Families found that the difference between a child’s school week and an adult’s work week can be as large as 25 hours. Furthermore, it is estimated that 80% of employees with children miss work due to child care issues.<sup>iii</sup>

Catalyst, a research and advisory organization focused on women in the workplace, published a report in 2006 entitled, “After-School Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business”. The report focused on Parental Concern about After-School Time (PCAST), and found that PCAST affects one-third of the labor force and contributes to worker stress that costs the business community a total of \$50 billion to \$300 billion each year in lost productivity. PCAST can affect all employees at all levels in businesses. Catalyst suggested that one strategy to foster a more effective, agile workplace is to expand “supports that are specifically related to after-school care and investing in community services that support after-school care programs.”<sup>iv</sup>

### **Afterschool Programs Develop Tomorrow’s Workforce**

Research has shown that youth from the United States will need a myriad of skills to compete in the quickly developing global economy, but that the majority of young adults are not prepared for the workforce. The excerpts below, from “Are They Really Ready to Work?” by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, describe the lack of skills present in young adults and how this problem can be solved.

“Employers report that new entrants to the workforce need not only the basic skills—reading, writing and math—but that in the 21st century business world, possessing a range of applied skills directly related to the workplace is critical to success... Less than a quarter of employers report that new entrants with four-year college degrees have “excellent” basic knowledge and applied skills...”

“Business leaders, educators, community leaders and policymakers must work together to ensure that young people have the opportunities they need to develop important workplace skills. Many corporations already partner with schools, after school programs, and university and community based youth development programs to offer internships, summer jobs, work-study programs, and other hands-on programs to provide practical learning experiences for students to cultivate the important applied skills needed in the workplace. But more high quality programs are needed to meet the needs of all young people.”<sup>v</sup>

By contributing to the afterschool movement, business leaders can take responsibility for the professional development of tomorrow’s workforce. By investing in afterschool in your community, you can ensure that local human resources are being developed and prepared for work.

## How Businesses Can Contribute to the Afterschool Movement

### *Become a partner.*

Joining a board of directors or advisory group for afterschool programs is a great way to engage in the afterschool movement as a leader and advocate. Thomas Buckley, Manager of External Affairs for AT&T in Connecticut serves as a valuable resource for the Connecticut After School Network while contributing to the development of the state's future workforce. Mr. Buckley stated, "First and foremost, today's students must stay in school to receive a solid education that will prepare them for tomorrow's workforce. Quality afterschool programs are valuable tools that provide safe environments for students - addressing both academic and physical needs." Business partners can assist afterschool programs and advocacy efforts with securing resources that would otherwise not be made available.

Many businesses also benefit from building relationships with programs that can provide afterschool services to local employees. These relationships are often beneficial to both business and afterschool providers. Annette Byrd, Manager of Health and Well-being for GlaxoSmithKline in North Carolina, expressed the benefits of the company's work with the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Care.

"GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) is committed to supporting schools in the communities in which we are located. For our employees, we provide several programs to support the parents of school-age children, including afterschool and summer enrichment programs. GSK considers this an investment in tomorrow's workforce. Because of this commitment, we hosted and invited other area businesses to join us for a discussion, sponsored by Corporate Voices for Working Families and the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Care. It was an honor for GSK to partner with the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Care on this important topic."

### *Provide support.*

*Technical Assistance* can be extremely valuable to improving the quality of the management and administration of afterschool programs. If your business specializes in a service, such as research, evaluation, human resources training, or information technology management, afterschool programs could greatly benefit from your help.

*Supplying merchandise and equipment* to afterschool programs can have a large impact on the quality of programs available to youth. Donations may include:

- Books
- Office and Art Supplies
- Toys, Games, and Sports Equipment
- Furniture
- Computers and Electronics
- Meeting Space

*Financial support* can be hugely important to the sustainability of afterschool programs. Businesses can underwrite fundraising events or purchases which can greatly improve a program's outcomes for youth. Businesses can also sponsor programs in exchange for marketing opportunities, such as having the company logo printed on the program's tee shirts.

## Getting Involved

Afterschool programs need your support in order to provide youth with opportunities for academic enrichment, social learning and skill development. The quality of the workforce of both today and tomorrow can be improved by investing in the quality of today's afterschool programs. To learn more about participating in NYSAN or other organizations focused on afterschool, please contact us at [info@nysan.org](mailto:info@nysan.org).

## Resources

For more information on afterschool and the business community, please see the following resources:

### **Afterschool Alliance**

“Afterschool Programs Help Working Families”

[http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_work\\_family\\_16.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_work_family_16.pdf)

### **Corporate Voices for Working Families**

<http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org>

### **JCPenney Afterschool Fund**

<http://www.jcpenneyafterschool.org/index.html>

### **NYC Department of Youth and Community Development**

Information on opportunities for NYC Businesses to offer internships to young adults.

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/jobs/jobs\\_internships.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/jobs/jobs_internships.shtml)

### **NYS Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development**

International Center for Leadership in Education

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/owd/private.asp>

### **Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

[http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=57](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=57)

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New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) is a statewide public-private partnership dedicated to promoting young people's safety, learning and healthy development by increasing the quality and availability of programs during non-school hours. For a copy of this and other NYSAN publications, visit [www.nysan.org](http://www.nysan.org). NYSAN thanks the following individuals for their assistance and contributions to this issue brief: Mary Linda Andrews, Annette Byrd, Thomas Buckley, Janelle Cousino, John Dornan, Michelle Doucette Cunningham, Jamie Knowles, Nydia Portilla, and Jennifer Siaca.

<sup>i</sup> “Critical” hours refer to the hours from 3:00 to 6:00pm on school days. During these hours, teens are most likely to commit or become victims of crime, to be in or cause a car crash, and to smoke, drink, or use drugs (Fight Crime Invest in Kids 2007).

<sup>ii</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York. “New York’s After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement”. 2002.

<sup>iii</sup> Corporate Voices for Working Families. *10 Tips to Engage Business in Afterschool*.

<sup>iv</sup> Catalyst. *Study Finds Working Parents Concerned about After-School Care, Companies Losing Billions in Job Productivity*, Press Release. December 6, 2006. <[http://www.catalyst.org/pressroom/press\\_releases/12\\_6\\_06-PCAST%20Press%20Release.pdf](http://www.catalyst.org/pressroom/press_releases/12_6_06-PCAST%20Press%20Release.pdf)>

<sup>v</sup> Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. *Are They Really Ready to Work?*

<[http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/key\\_findings\\_joint.pdf](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/key_findings_joint.pdf)>

*Working to ensure that all of New York State's children and youth have access to high quality programs during the non-school hours.*  
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