

Peer Networking Meeting
Summer Programming: Addressing Summer Learning Loss
June 18, 2009
9am-11am

Introductions

- About half of the people have attended a meeting before, the other half are attending for the first time.

Announcements

- Mazzoni's **Ally Safe School Program** offers free staff development on working with LGBTQ youth. They also provide Technical Assistance for schools. Contact Allison Buehler (abuehler@mazzoni.org) for more information.
- The **OSTRC Newsletter** is distributed on the first business day of the month. If you have an OST Job, Event, or Publication to advertise email it to Katie Derickson, kder@sp2.upenn.edu, at least 5 days before the last of the month.
- **BuildaBridge** will be running its **Artology** summer program, a curriculum which combines art and biology. Contact Charlene Melhorn, achievement@buildabridge.org for more information.
- **Busted Anti-Tobacco Program** can come to your site to give a presentation about tobacco use. Contact Annalea Grove, annalea.grove@elconcilio.net, for more information.
- The **OSTRC Directories** have been updated for the summer. Download them from the OSTRC website: www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc.
- Save the Date! The **OSTRC** will be holding a city-wide **Resource Fair** at the Free Library of Philadelphia on November 19th
- The PA Senate Bill 850 has proposed that prevention money will go to prisons instead
 - Next Wednesday, June 24th – 2-3 PM rally at Love Park to stop the bill from passing as is. Call Brandon Brown for info - 215-851-1755

Panel Discussion

Brenda McLaughlin (bmclaughlin@jhu.edu) spoke about the work of the **National Center for Summer Learning**. The mission of this organization is to ensure that all young people in high poverty communities have access to high quality summer learning opportunities. She noted that there is an isolation which occurs for summer practitioners as people do not network as much in the summer. In 2001 the center shifted from direct service to national intermediary. The center focuses on 3 areas of work: professional development, research, and policy/advocacy efforts. Brenda introduced the audience to two research briefs produced by the center:

1. "Summer can set kids on the right or wrong course"— followed kids from Baltimore City Schools for 20 years now to see what has happened to them throughout their educational lives.
 - Kids from better off families continue to make progress in reading over the summer, kids from less well off families actually regressed. By 5th grade, students are 2.5 years behind their peers in reading skills
 - All kids, regardless of income, are losing math skills over the summer.
 - The goal is to create intentional learning opportunities to prevent some of this learning loss over the summer
2. "Children's Health in the Summer"—a study of weight gain in the summer between kindergarten and first grade
 - Kids gain weight twice as fast during the summer than during the school year, even more than natural growth.
 - Kids who were underweight, got more underweight, kids who were overweight, got more overweight.

Brenda also discussed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Title 1 money for summer school based providers. She highly encouraged programs to partner with school districts in summer of 2010 for summer programming as school districts will need community agencies to help with this process.

Cathryn Carkhuff (ccarkhuff@nsnp.com) spoke about her work with **Norris Square Neighborhood Project**. She talked about bringing education into arts and cultural organizations in creative in out-of-the-box ways. Cathryn suggested the following:

1. Start an entrepreneurship program. It is a great way to incorporate math into youth programs
 - Teenagers in this economy need money, entrepreneurship makes it relevant to them
 - Kids don't realize they are using math, algebra skills
2. Collaborate
 - NSNP collaborates with Free Library for reading activities
 - There are several orgs in Philly that can help you boost your math and literacy activities
3. Integrate literacy into your activities.
 - NSNP has an onsite library, provided through donations
 - Storytelling and story time are incorporated into the program
 - Every summer the reading is included in thematic programming
 - Partner with senior centers – intergenerational story time, kids reading to adults, adults reading to kids
 - Conduct a spelling bee biannually, kids can win prizes
 - Keep things relevant to kids so they know why they are doing it

Cathryn also provided general suggestions for summer programs. She noted that the transition from after-school to summer camp can be overwhelming, since you are changing from 3 hour program to an almost 12 hour program. She advised:

- Make things that are program wide and make them active – it keeps kids more focused as opposed to when they are inside working on reading and math
- Provide the children with electives. Allow them to choose by week or by day. Kids are more connected to what they are doing because they had a say in it
- Make your program exciting and diversify projects and programs

Christine Caputo (caputoC@freelibrary.org) spoke about the **Free Library of Philadelphia** summer reading programs. According to a Harvard study, reading four or five books over the summer has as much of an impact on kids reading levels as summer school, *no matter what the books are about*. The best predictor of reading achievement is actually reading! The average kid reads 10 minutes a day outside of school.

Christine suggested making summer reading a game. The Free Library provides game boards, one for kids and one for teens. It is happening at every Free Library in Philadelphia – come and visit but please call ahead! She explained how programs can work with the Free Library to incorporate literacy:

- Kids sign up, and get a prize just for showing up
- Kids have to read for 15 minutes to move through the game board and there are 8 more opportunities to win prizes Really trying to focus on students who have reading difficulties
- There are raffle tickets for big prizes, additional games involved, small art activities
- Let kids and teens know there are books about every subject
 - Help them find a book that interests them
- Kids get a certificate at the end of the program
- The Library has a program for adults as well
- Programs can have **group library cards** so that they can check out books to keep at your programs for the summer
- The **Free Library offers outreach staff** in the summer. They can come visit your program to conduct literacy activities. Email Mark Wolfe for more information wolfem@freelibrary.org.

Jane Nelson (nelsonjf@sas.upenn.edu) spoke about opportunities for students at the **University of Pennsylvania Museum**. She explained that it is important for children to have a sensory experience. To that end, Penn provides the following programs:

- Loan Box programs: each box contains 10 to 12 items that kids are allowed to touch
 - Each item comes with a description card, teachers get information before hand
 - Kids are shown the object, it is explained, and kids can come up with new uses for objects
 - Kids get to touch objects, handle them, pass them around, as opposed to museums where they are constantly told not to touch
- The International Classroom is a program that can come to your program to talk to students about what its like in a specific area of the world
- “Summer Wonders” provides Wednesday mornings sessions at 10:30 on various cultures. The program is included with price of admission
 - Handout on symmetrical aspect of Egyptian art – kids draw a sarcophagus on a grid and figure out the math
 - Hieroglyphs – kids learn to write their names in hieroglyphs, and go on scavenger hunts in museum

Group Discussion

Q: For the Penn museum, are all of these activities free?

A (Jane): Unfortunately, no. The loan box program is 65 dollars, but you can keep the objects for a month. The International classroom price varies, but is one of the more costly programs. The price for Summer Wonders is \$5 for children and \$7 for adults. The price includes museum admission.

Q: How do you logistically organize all of those students?

A (Cathryn): The summer program is one part of the week, so it is not too difficult. On Wednesdays, kids sign up in the morning for activities.

Q: With the pools closing, where are you going to take kids?

A (Cathryn): Waterloo Pool on 2nd and Waterloo

Q: Are there any programs that teach kids about homeless issues and all the things that go along with that? (For Norris Square)

A (Cathryn): We work with homeless shelters, and there are some program out there that focus on that issue. Contact Cathryn for more info.

Q: I run an Arts and Culture Program. What suggestions do you have for bringing art and culture into educational settings? Sometimes the instructors stop coming. Should kids run the programs?

A (Cathryn): The Entrepreneurship program was the students' idea and their leadership. It can work to let kids run programs. Having youth have a say in things keeps them engaged and attached. Give them some guidelines, an end point or goal, and rules, and let them take control.

A (Jane): Give them a goal or a way to show off to others what they are doing

A (Audience member): Students should form groups, and work together to keep everyone involved. Group leaders are in charge of groups and push each other to participate

A (Brenda): Create focus groups with your teenagers. Ask them "what do you want from summer programs?" "Jobs" was the most popular answer. Most popular jobs for teenagers were working in summer programs with younger kids

Q: How do we get more involved in summer learning initiatives on a policy level?

A (Brenda): Go to www.summerlearning.org – there is information on getting involved, provides information on policy shifts and upcoming legislations.

- Every July the Center asks programs to have some sort of event to honor National Summer Learning Day. There is a Media Kit available on website
- Think about local committees, even if they don't have a great focus on summer. A lot of times they don't think about how important summer learning is.
- Use the Research briefs. The study that Christine referred to about summer reading also includes information on how adults working together with kids on their reading helps them incredibly

Comment (Audience Member): This is my second summer working in a summer camp in Philadelphia. You guys have some of the best ideas I have ever heard about summer programs

Comment (Audience Member): Everything you've mentioned is great for kids of all ages during the summer

Q: What about training for youth and teachers for the summer?

A (Cathryn): Group leaders are responsible for one time slot of curriculum, teachers and the staff plan out everything else. The kids coordinate a lot of activities, but staff members design the curriculum and plan.

A (Brenda): I suggest at least a week of training for younger staff before the start of the summer program and opportunities to continue to speak about what is going on in the programs. Focus on group management skills, especially for the youngest staff who are closer in age to the students than anyone else

A (Nancy): In ideal world, there would be time set aside for training before summer programs, especially for staff transitioning from afterschool to summer camp – summer programs are intense. Look at the OSTRC training directory for trainings offered by other local organizations.

A: People who have participated in program before can peer mentor new youth workers

Q: It is very difficult to motivate older youth, especially second chance students, students who are parents. How do you motivate these students?

A (Brenda): In the past we have partnered with mayor's office to provide teens with job experiences combined with credit recovery programs. See if you can pay these students as well.

A (Cathryn): Older youth have more responsibilities at home and need jobs. Realize that attendance is not going to be perfect and that incentives really work. Also realize what you are competing with: Any youth can go on the street and sell drugs, and you have to compete with that. Kids will more often than not choose good, as long as they have a little incentive or stipend.

Q: Can you speak to the use of computers in the summer programs?

A (Cathryn): We recently acquired a full computer lab. We noticed a lot of little things and made programs out of them. For example, the kids all type messages and emails to each other so we incorporated typing games that are age appropriate.

Our Next Meeting will be in September

Be sure to fill out our Peer Networking Meeting survey this summer!