

Q1 2021

play it forward



A quarterly newsletter for the Afterschool Development movement across America.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Play it Forward is a quarterly newsletter that introduces you to the builders and influencers of the Afterschool Development movement, offers updates on the latest and most innovative thinking and practices in the field and lets you know how you can become involved. *Play it Forward* also provides a forum for exploring some of the latest topics of interest in the Afterschool Development community.

To find out more about Afterschool Development

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In the Field

It's electric – and collective!

That described the February 16 celebratory gathering organized by the New Jersey Afterschool Development Working Group and co-hosted by Shadae McDaniel, ASP of New Jersey City Leader and Thomas Owens, [MENTOR Newark](#) Executive Director.

Having leaned on each other for support in taking on the challenges of the pandemic, the Working Group focused their annual Breakfast on celebrating organizations and leaders who were exemplary in “staying true to their mission, inspiring young people and creating new opportunities of hope for youth and their communities.”

Marsha Armstrong, Youth Program Director for the [NewarkWORKS](#); **Kaleena Berryman**, Director, [Abbott Leadership Institute](#); **Yolanda Gadson**, ED, [I Have a Dream Foundation](#) in NJ and **Zellie Imani**, Teacher, Paterson Public Schools & Co-founder, [Black Liberation Collective](#) received awards.

The virtual event included remarks by **Taneisha Nash Laird**, President & CEO, [Newark Symphony Hall](#), and a report on recent collaborations and partnerships fostered by ADWG. Attendees represented 33 organizations – including FELLAS Fatherhood Program, Newark Thrives, Rutgers University, SHE Wins Inc. and The Sis and Bro Initiative – and had the time to explore how they will continue to “roll up their sleeves, get in the weeds and work with others” to grow the Afterschool Development movement and its mission in 2021.”

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Kaleena Berryman, Abbott Leadership Institute



Marsha Armstrong, City of Newark



Yolanda Gadson, I Have a Dream Foundation



Zellie Thomas, Black Liberation Collective

building the future of afterschool development

In Afterschool Development Working Groups (ADWG) leaders and frontline practitioners come together to create a rich and vibrant environment for exploring new ways of thinking, learning innovative practices, and creating partnerships that both strengthen the field and help meet the day to day demands of their work.

What's ahead in 2021?

According to [Antoine Joyce](#), All Stars Project of Dallas City Leader and key organizer of Dallas' ADWG, "Now that there's light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, the Afterschool Development Working Groups are taking up the important question of "how", in our day-to-day practice and as a field, we are going to move forward into summer, fall and beyond. In many ways we have gotten closer to our young people and their challenges. We've learned more about the strengths and value of our work. We've been open to learning new things. Can we be even bolder now in our supporting young people, in our leadership and in asking for greater investment in developing our youth."

“
There's light
at the end of the
pandemic tunnel...
”

Working group meetings are now virtual and are open to afterschool practitioners and leaders across the country. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for a working group or contact Julie Lenner at jlenner@allstars.org or 312-994-3101. Below is the schedule of upcoming meetings.

Newark NJ

April 13

June 8

Chicago

June 23

December 8

Dallas

June 22

October 5

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On the cutting edge

According to *The Guardian*, a group of academics in the United Kingdom are mounting a campaign to persuade their government to support a “summer of play” to help pupils in England “recover from the stress of lockdown and a year of Covid upheaval.” In response to government ministers who are considering extending the school day and lengthening the summer term to help children “catch up,” the group, PlayFirstUK, argues that it is social interaction and play that are needed to address “...unprecedented increases in children’s mental health problems during the pandemic, as well as increased loneliness and reduced academic motivation.” In a letter to a newly appointed education recovery minister, they wrote, “... Social connection and play offer myriad learning opportunities and are positively associated with children’s academic attainment and literacy,” and cautioned that “catch-up” plans could end up worsening children’s mental health and wellbeing and have a negative effect on learning in the long term.

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Our children have missed out on enough over the past year. They deserve a summer filled with play.

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Philanthropic Partnerships



Afterschool development received important recognition in December 2020 when the New York Jets, one of the nation's most iconic sports organizations, contributed \$1 million to four organizations, "sharing the goal of reducing barriers and creating opportunities for individuals in need." Among those receiving grants were [Year Up](#), which provides pathways for young adults to successfully launch careers, and the [All Stars Project](#), which uses the developmental power of performance and partnership with caring adults to help young people create success in their lives, as well as the [Innocence Project](#) and [New York Urban League](#).

All organizations are engaging Jets players, coaches, and staff in volunteering their time and expertise. The Jets' Social Justice, Diversity and Inclusion Team (SJDIT) along with club ownership and player leadership, identified focus areas in which to make an impact: poverty; race equality and diversity and inclusion; criminal justice reform, police-community relations; and access to education and healthcare. The team has future plans to identify additional organizations to partner with, engage in meaningful conversations with community members, and identify legislation to help enact. [CHECK OUT THE PRESS RELEASE AND VIDEO HERE.](#)

“

We wanted to contribute to these organizations and help push our community forward. It is our hope through these partnerships that we can positively affect the access, equity and rights of those in need.

”

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A new conversation about Evaluation

In 2018, as part of their Equity Series, [Chicago Beyond](#) issued [Why Am I Always Being Researched?](#) as a guide to help community organizations in Chicago and nationally to grow the impact of their work. The premise of Why Am I... was “if evidence matters, we must care how it is made,” and it shined the spotlight on the “power dynamic between community organizations, researchers, and funders [that] blocks information that could drive better decision-making and fuel more investment in communities most in need... and allows unintended bias to seep into how knowledge is generated.” The guide gives practical direction to community organizations, researchers and funders, respectively, for building trust and creating equitable processes in research and evaluation projects, including determining what to measure and how to make meaning of results.



Liz Dozier, Founder & CEO, Chicago Beyond

Almost two years since its publication, responses have continued to be very positive, which comes as a “pleasant surprise” to Chicago Beyond Founder & CEO Liz Dozier. “When we decided to write the guide, it was as much a letter to ourselves about what we’d learned from being in the research space as it was to push funders and researchers about how to create an approach in which ‘community involvement’ is more than just something to check off a list. So it’s crazy to see the impact it’s had, and the momentum that continues to build.” In addition to the Gates Foundation, which cited the guide in its efforts to develop research guidelines for K-12 education nationally, it is being used by a growing number of research hubs and non-profit organizations across the country and internationally.

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Afterschool Development Courses and Workshops

2021

Let's continue to grow ourselves and creatively move our field forward. ▶▶▶▶▶

You are invited to participate in online workshops and courses from the All Stars Project's Afterschool Development Initiative. 2021 offerings include "Creating Developmental and Empowering Conversations with Young People" and "The Hidden Power of Ensemble Building".

[CLICK HERE](#)
for detailed information or
contact Kathy Fiess at
kfiess@allstars.org
or (212) 356-8487.



let's talk

Please share your responses to anything in Play it Forward and thoughts you have on Afterschool Development and what it means for our communities and country.

[TELL US
WHAT YOU THINK](#)



spread the word

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coming up

In the Next Quarter Issue of *Play it Forward*:

In the Field – Profiles of people on the frontlines in our communities who are changing lives and making a difference.

Building the Future of Afterschool Development – Updates on the issues that practitioners, academics, and business, civic and community leaders are coming together to discuss in Afterschool Development working groups and conferences.

On the Cutting Edge – The latest developments in thought leadership, research and policy helping to shape the conversation about Afterschool Development, education and poverty in America.

Philanthropic Partnerships – Featuring partners and funders who are stepping up and investing in Afterschool Development and its growth nationally.

A New Conversation about Evaluation – Highlights of the growing national conversation about evaluation and the need for new tools.



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