

Q2 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

When **Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot** created the first ever **Mayor’s Medal of Honor Awards** this year, she did so with the belief that “...it is even more important to allow ourselves to relish what we’ve accomplished as we prepare ourselves for the next challenge.” Among the honorees were two organizations active in the Chicago Afterschool Development Working Group (ADWG): [Gads Hill Center](#) and [Pui Tak Center](#).

Gads Hill Centers provide early childhood education and youth programs centered around an inter-generational approach to civic engagement, social emotional learning, and academic success. During the pandemic, Gads Hill Centers remained open so that young people were able to keep learning and living.



Gads Hill Center



Pui Tak Center

Pui Tak Center, serving Chicago’s Chinatown, stood up for residents and was a community lifeline for thousands of individuals and families during the pandemic. Gads Hill Youth Programs Manager David Barboza said, “The work has been tough, but at the end of the day, when we see the positive impact we have on young people, it makes everything worth it. It means a lot to our staff to be recognized for our work.”

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# building the future of afterschool development

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**In an education landscape dominated by debates on standards and testing, it is important to remember that strong academic skills alone are not enough to lead a child to a productive, fulfilling adulthood. What other qualities matter and how can adults nurture them?**

”

[Ryan Heath](#) is a social work and youth development scholar investigating the role of out-of-school programs in adolescent development, social/emotional “non-cognitive” factors, and young adult outcomes. While completing his Ph.D. in Social Work/Interdisciplinary Education Sciences, he was a member of the Chicago Afterschool Development Working Group, and in 2020, received an American Educational Research Association’s Emerging Scholar Award. Now an Assistant Professor at Syracuse University, Heath is eager to use his research to go beyond whether afterschool programs work and look at how they work and how they are good for young people. He explains, “I want to move from ‘Are or aren’t they participating?’ to examining the level of engagement young people have, the intensity of their participation, what level and breadth of experiences are available to them and what meaning-making opportunities exist. And, how do we connect all this to the social and emotional factors we want to be looking at?” Heath has been involved in several research projects, most recently as a collaborator on the [“Becoming Effective Learners—Out-of-School Time Study”](#) with The Consortium for School Research at the University of Chicago.



Ryan Heath

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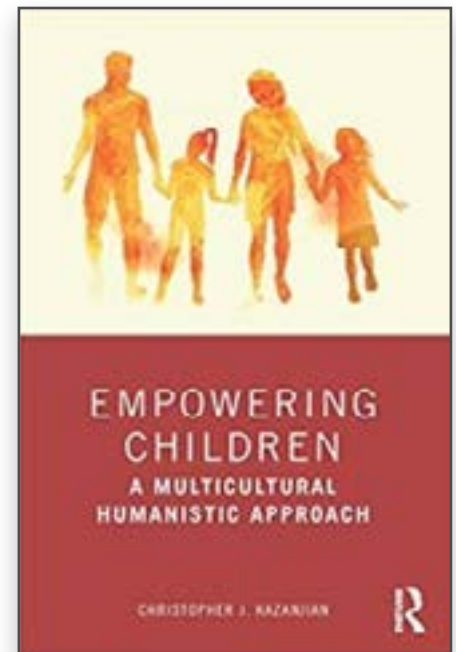
# On the cutting edge

[Empowering Children: A Multicultural Humanistic Approach](#), published by Routledge in early 2021, explores the interplay between conceptual foundations and program practice. The book's author, Christopher Kazanjian, is an associate professor of educational psychology at El Paso Community College. He also serves as program director of an after-school program called Kidz n' Coaches-El Paso, which he modeled on a Utica, NY-based program created and run for more than 30 years by now-retired Mohawk Valley Community College Professor **Jim Smirtic**.



Christopher Kazanjian

Kazanjian tells the story of Smirtic's personal and professional commitment to young people in the Utica community, his affinity to American humanistic psychology and multiculturalism and how this came together in the creation and ongoing development of [Kidz n' Coaches](#) as "a space where children and caring undergraduates could form growth-promoting relationships...explore with others, be part of a community, and find safety to just be themselves."



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# Philanthropic Partnerships

“ ... It is important that we [in Afterschool] are able to maintain our roots and articulate the strengths of what we bring to the table and strengths of what we offer to young people. ”

As chair of the American Educational Research Associations' Out-of-School Time (OST) Special Interest Group, [Dr. Jaynemie Angbah](#) is encouraging more OST professionals to [join](#) and participate in research and practitioner discussion of pressing issues. In our Play It Forward interview, she reflected on OST's place in the ecosystem of education. "...we are like most educational systems, beholden to funding, both through fundraising and philanthropy... but it is important that we are able to maintain our roots and articulate the strengths of what we offer to young people...Pete Harris calls what youth development professionals do as similar to jazz improvisation. They are able in the most difficult circumstances to be immediately responsive to young people, be immediately nurturing in their development. Youth workers form some of the tightest, non-judgmental bonds with young people, so they see beyond the most superficial circumstances and are able to push and guide them in a way that other adults in their lives are unable to do...Super important, particularly during this time.”



Dr. Jaynemie Angbah

Dr. Angbah currently serves as Strategic Projects Senior Manager, Education Grantmaking at the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies.

While the Philanthropies does not fund OST organizations, she generously shared advice to help the afterschool community think about foundation funding. “I always advise ‘keep your main thing your main thing.’ What draws the attention of funders are organizations that have the systems, programs and people to do what you are set up to do – and that are able to tell a compelling story of what they do, the intention behind it, short- and long-term impact and how you are using measurement to advance the mission.

Since not a lot of national funders focus on OST, it is also important to get to know the community funders in your area, getting to know their language, their priorities and other organizations funded before reaching out to them.”

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# A new conversation about Evaluation



## Reimagining the Future of Afterschool

Building Back Better with Youth and Communities

The need to “collect data that substantiates the impact and importance of afterschool programs” was one of the key takeaways from “Reimagining the Future of Afterschool,” a virtual national conference hosted by [Every Hour Counts](#) (EHC) in April (see conference highlights [here](#).) A coalition of citywide organizations, EHC network leaders represent 28 communities and 3,500 school and community partnerships that reach 500,000 young people. The conference featured forward-thinking leaders such as [Hal Smith](#), **Senior Vice President of Education, Youth Development & Health for the National Urban League**. During the opening plenary, he spoke of the critical need to “...create a narrative, a set of evidence, a set of indicators for the work that we do and intend to do....If the work can’t stand on its own then I think it’s particularly difficult to make an argument that we’re vital and central...What is it we intend to do, how do we intend to do it, what’s the evidence for that... is critically important.” You can listen to an interview with him on [The 180 Turnaround for Children Podcast](#).

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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. Register today for the fall workshop "**The Hidden Power of Ensemble Building**".

For detailed information or contact Kathy Fiess at [kfiess@allstars.org](mailto: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.

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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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