

Q4 2021

play it forward



A quarterly newsletter for the Afterschool Development movement across America.

Dear Afterschool Development Community,

During this season of hope and giving, Play It Forward would like to express our appreciation of YOU – the members and builders, both young and old, of our Afterschool Development movement.

As we find new and more powerful ways to navigate these troubling times, it is an honor to stand with the hundreds of nonprofit and afterschool practitioners and leaders; educators and researchers; civic, elected and business leaders; philanthropists, activists, advocates, artists, youth and other caring adults who work to use the most innovative approaches available to transform lives in every corner of our country.

We celebrate the time, energy, passion and resources you give every day as we work together to advance the influence and impact of afterschool as a growth-filled and game-changing strategy for moving our communities forward.

Thank you and best wishes for the new year!

Bonny L. Gildin, Ph.D.

Vice President, Afterschool Development Research & Policy,
All Stars Project, Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Play it Forward is a quarterly newsletter that introduces you to the builders and influencers in the field of Afterschool Development, 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 [CLICK HERE.](#)

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Building the future of afterschool development



Dr. Tiffany Brown



Orlando Ceaser

Five dynamic afterschool and youth development leaders from around the country were recently honored at the All Stars Project National Virtual Benefit for their efforts in building the Afterschool Development movement in their cities and beyond. Tiffany Brown, Ph.D., professor at California State University at Long Beach; Orlando Ceaser, founder of Watchwell Communications; Sergio Garcia, senior manager of learning systems of Big Thought in Dallas; Jessica Nuñez, youth program manager at the Newark Museum of Art; and Carrie Lobman, Ed.D., professor at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education were in the spotlight and represented the hundreds of grassroots and nonprofit leaders who have been coming together in working groups and conferences to share, recognize and uplift the important work being done in the afterschool arena. Orlando Ceaser spoke on behalf of the group saying, “My involvement in the Working Group has given me an environment to strengthen my work and impact with young people – and adults. It has helped me see that when



Sergio Garcia



Dr. Carrie Lobman

young people are ‘stuck’ or having challenges, what they need is development and I can help to ignite that... This activity helps ALL of us do more and better for our kids.”

Here is a link to the [celebration](#), and follow these links to explore the work and words of our honorees:

[Professor Tiffany Brown](#), [Orlando Ceaser](#), [Sergio Garcia](#), [Professor Carrie Lobman](#) and [Jessica Nuñez](#).



Jessica Nuñez



[See the celebration here!](#)

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On the cutting edge



When “even short bridges can feel risky in this moment of polarization, political purity, and physical and emotional estrangement,” the “need to bridge in order to expand our political might and achieve real solutions” was front and center at the “[Othering and Belonging Virtual Conference](#)” hosted by the University of California, Berkeley’s Othering & Belonging Institute (OBI) in October. One of the conference highlights was an opening conversation on “[Risk and the Courage to Bridge](#)” in which OBI Executive Director John Powell and philosopher/gender theorist Judith Butler discussed the opportunities and pitfalls of bridging in moments of crisis.

Of special relevance to everyone working to help young people and communities grow and develop was the case Powell and Butler made for building risky bridges, arguing that perhaps the risks of **not** bridging are greater than the risks of failing to reach across differences. They were followed by a [thoughtful and intimate conversation](#) among leading thinkers and culture makers that continued to explore why taking risks and building bridges are “important and necessary for the success of our social movements.” Another exciting and timely conference moment was provided by activists and organizers who came together to explore, in a conversation entitled “[What If We Called In, Rather Than Called Out?](#)”, how diverse individuals and groups might engage in “good conflict” – disputes that “allow us to see the human in those with whom we disagree” – and how an ethic of taking risks and “calling in” can help grow “belonging for all by reaching out directly to those who we do not understand.”

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A new conversation about Evaluation



A Summary of the All Stars Project's Outcome Evaluation - Conducted by Southern Methodist University's Center on Research and Evaluation

As the afterschool movement grows across America, so does interest in the development of evaluation measures that allow outside-of-school practitioners and programs to more accurately and powerfully tell the story of their work and its impact on young people. At a joint meeting last month of Afterschool Development Working Groups (ADWG) in Dallas and New Jersey, members heard about a groundbreaking effort to do just that - an outcome evaluation designed and implemented over five years by the [All Stars Project](#) (ASP) and [SMU's Center of Research and Evaluation](#) (CORE). ASP Vice President/Afterschool Development Research & Policy [Bonny Gildin, Ph.D.](#) and CORE Executive Director [Annie Wright, Ph.D.](#) shared the process they went through to characterize and quantitatively measure development. As Dr. Gildin explained, "Like many afterschool programs we focus on youth development. We wanted to achieve an authentic fit between what our programs were focused on and the outcomes and evaluation yardstick that would be used to assess them. The work to make what we mean by "we develop youth" more tangible and transparent has been incredibly valuable. It has enhanced our ability to talk about and advance the work of our programs internally and it has advanced our ability to tell the story of the programs externally." Dr. Wright added, "Too frequently development programs get cast as educational programs only. . . I think academic outcomes are incredibly important, but we lose so much richness when we try to paint all kinds of development and informal learning with that same brush. We spent a long time unpacking what development really means. That's how we came up with these dimensions of development, that's how we developed tools. Our hope is that these development dimensions might apply for you as well. . . and it will give you another tool, another type of yardstick that you might be able to apply to your programs." You can watch the full presentation [here](#), and also read a [summary report](#) of the evaluation project and results.

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This project helped us push our thinking about how we are going to measure these things that are harder to measure and yet no less meaningful. . . Of really pushing for more prominence of this paradigm shift where we can see and value the learning and development that takes place out of school hours.

Annie Wright PhD,
SMU CORE Executive Director

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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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