

Q3 2022

# 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 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.](#)

# Building the future of afterschool development



Cast of Las Memorias

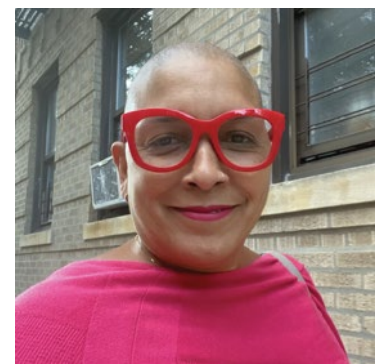
Setting up youth for college success is a priority for many afterschool programs – especially those working with youth underrepresented in the college space. While the focus is often on academics, [Dr. John Fraire](#) and [Dr. AnaMaria Correa](#) take a different tack with Performance as Education (PAE), a program they started in 2008 and that has involved 150 Latinx students from primarily agricultural and rural communities in Washington State and California.

PAE combines two immersive experiences – college life and creating and performing a professional theater piece for the public. This year PAE was sponsored by Cal State University Monterey Bay, where Dr. Fraire serves as VP Student Affairs and Enrollment. Participants came from local high schools through an application process, which included sharing stories of their lives – the seeds for their theater piece. They spent two weeks with Dr. Correa and a team of theater professionals developing these stories into [Las Memorias](#) and rehearsing their onstage performances. Participants also immersed themselves in college life: living in a residence hall, using the dining facilities and navigating the campus. *Las Memorias* was performed live for Monterey Bay community audiences in early August.

According to Drs. Fraire and Correa, PAE simultaneously cultivates young people’s voices, empowers them to tell their stories – and develops the skills critical to college success. Explains Dr. Fraire, “Standing up and asking professors a question or visiting them during office hours are performances, so we’re working with them on how to present themselves... At the end of the program, young people who never thought college was an option leave with a small taste of campus life – also with confidence. We’ve seen kids who could barely talk to us when they arrived blossom on stage and off.”



Dr. John Fraire



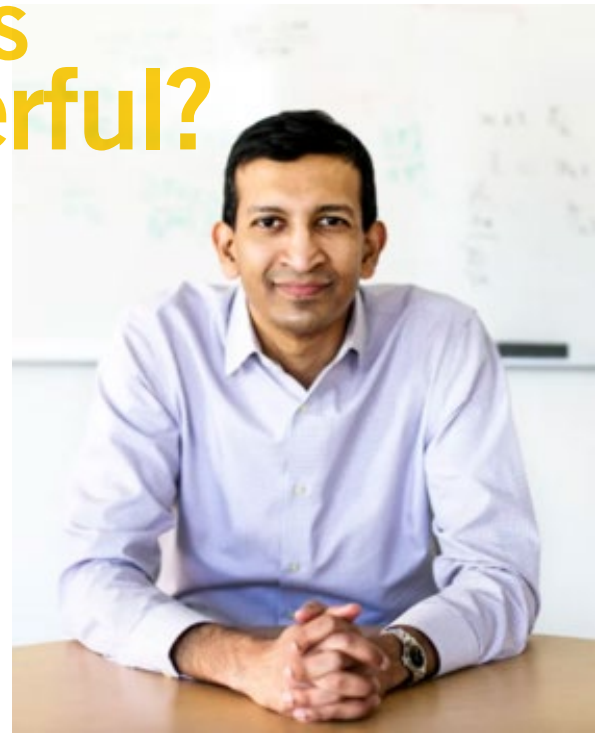
Dr. AnaMaria Correa

Click to [WATCH](#) highlights of this year’s program and [LISTEN](#) to a youth-led interview of the cast on the Radio Bilingue, National Public Radio Network.

# On the cutting edge

## What is it about friendships that is so powerful?

A [large-scale study](#) conducted by a research team led by noted Harvard economist [Raj Chetty](#) and recently published in the journal *Nature* presents groundbreaking evidence of how relationships between Americans of different economic status can lead to economic opportunity. Initially, Chetty and his colleagues began exploring why kids in places like Silver Spring, Maryland [one of the country's wealthiest communities], have a much better shot of rising out of poverty than kids in Little Rock, Arkansas [one of our poorest]. Said Chetty, "The big question became: why is the American Dream more alive in some places than others? And, along the way, lots of folks talked about the idea that social capital might be an important factor." [CLICK HERE](#) to read New York Times columnist David Brooks' feature on Chetty's research.



Dr. Raj Chetty

Social capital generally refers to the value of our relationships with family, friends, and broader community. Sociologists have long found that these relationships are important to well-being, but it has been less clear how to measure that most effectively. The Harvard team used Facebook data from over 72 million Americans to create three measures. They called the first "economic connectedness." They found that people with lower incomes were more likely to improve their financial situations over time if they were connected to people with higher incomes. Says Chetty, "Economic connectedness is among the strongest predictors of upward income mobility identified to date. If children with low-SES [social economic status] parents were to grow up in counties with economic connectedness comparable to that of the average child with high-SES parents, their incomes in adulthood would increase by 20% on average."

Among those applauding the study is political scientist Robert Putnam, the author of *Bowling Alone*, who, in an interview with the *New York Times*, says it "provides a number of avenues or clues by which we might begin to move this country in a better direction."

# Philanthropic Partnerships

## What does the Community Investment Act (CRA) have to do with youth development?

[Lena Robinson](#) has served as Director of Community Development for First Republic Bank for the last six years and is based in San Francisco. She is responsible for ensuring that the bank is in compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), a federal regulation designed to encourage commercial banks and savings associations to invest in all segments of their community, with an emphasis on low-income communities.

For Robinson, community development includes funding organizations and activities that help “break the cycle of poverty and change the trajectory of educational involvement and success for children from pre-school through college. This can take the form of early childhood literacy programs, internships, scholarships, etc.” As she explained to Patricio Delgado, Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at the All Stars Project, who spoke with her for *PIF*, “If we don’t change that trajectory, the future of these kids – not to mention the future of our country and the health and well-being of our communities – will be very limited.”

Preparing youth for the workplace is one of her special interests, shaped in part by her own experience as a teenager. “I started working in an ice cream parlor when I was 14. I learned how to manage money and inventory, how to interact with customers and what it meant to be responsible. It changed my life, and it’s



Lena Robinson

“I’ve suggested to those starting a new organization that they do a landscape survey, see who else is out there and find a way to work with existing organizations to expand their reach. I like introducing organizations to each other in the hope they’ll find ways to work together on increasing overall impact. Too many low-income kids are not getting what they deserve, and we all need to be in the strongest position possible to change that.”

why I’m always finding opportunities for First Republic employees to volunteer in the community. I don’t care whether they are mentoring a young person, teaching a class or workshop, cleaning up a school; I tell them, ‘go out and get involved because that’s how we’ll make a difference.’”

So how do youth-serving non-profits get noticed by Robinson? “One of the toughest parts of this job is to evaluate whether something is a good investment. I look at whether an organization has the capacity and experience to fulfill its mission. I’m more inclined to choose organizations with a track record, in part because new organizations don’t realize how much time they’re going to spend fundraising.”

# A new conversation about Evaluation

## The Hard Virtues of ‘Soft’ Program Measurement



In a July 2022 article appearing in the [Stanford Social Innovation Review Measurement & Evaluation](#), authors Lymari Benitez, Yessica Cancel, Mary Marx and Katie Smith Milway write about a “nascent social sector movement” among non-profit organizations now realizing that “...the very act of participants giving feedback on nonprofit programs can predict participant outcomes.”

Generally viewed as the “softer leg” of nonprofit program management, participant feedback is often ignored or dismissed in favor of “third-party evaluations that relegate participants to subjects of a study” that are viewed as a “gold standard for developing evidence of program outcomes.” However, several new research initiatives are showing funders and nonprofits that “participant feedback has empirical links to hard outcomes.”

Over the last six years, The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) and the Pace Center for Girls (Pace), have both shifted their approaches from only gathering data about participants to also gathering data from them. At CEO, participant feedback led to several changes, including expanded training opportunities and the decision to include participants in “higher levels of decision making.” At Pace, surveys taken in 2016 revealed that girls of different races “experienced the program differently and had differing levels of satisfaction with services.” After making several programmatic changes, 2021 surveys found that “girls of all races gave Pace virtually the same feedback...” All of which leads us to conclude that “Seeking participants’ insights at every step of community research, evaluation design, and delivery is the best way to build that evidence equitably... and predict, aid, and interpret outcomes.”

“...the very act of participants giving feedback on nonprofit programs can predict participant outcomes.”

# Sign Up Today!

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, learn innovative practices, and create partnerships that both strengthen the field and help meet the day to day demands of their work.

Our next ADWG meetings are:

## CHICAGO

Wednesday, October 26  
at 9:30 am CT on Zoom

## DALLAS

Wednesday, November 2  
at 10:00 am CT on Zoom

## NEW JERSEY

Thursday, December 8  
at TBD ET in person

Working group meetings are open to afterschool practitioners and leaders across the country.

to sign up for a working group or contact Kathy Fiess at [kfiess@allstars.org](mailto:kfiess@allstars.org) or 917-969-2627.



## 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.

[CLICK HERE TO TELL US WHAT YOU THINK](#)

Or email Kathy Fiess at [kfiess@allstars.org](mailto:kfiess@allstars.org)



## spread the word

Share Play It Forward with others and invite them to

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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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