



## The Rise of Creative Youth Development

By Denise Montgomery

### Introduction

The education and youth development sectors are both concerned with supporting young people in leading productive, stable, and enriching lives. Yet these two worlds largely exist apart, failing to address the reality that youth learn and grow—or fail to reach their potential—through influences and experiences in *all* spheres of their lives, including home, school, and the settings where they spend time outside of school (Heath 2001).<sup>1,2</sup>

No longer the province of merely keeping youth safely occupied, out-of-school time (OST) programs, including those in creative youth development, are garnering attention due to their high levels of youth engagement that contribute to substantial learning, enhanced critical thinking (Lampert 2011; Holloway and LeCompte 2001) and to other benefits for young people such as heightened confidence and sense of agency (Dworkin, Larson Hansen 2003, 17). Decades of research findings link adolescent engagement, efficacy, and responsibility with opportunities for immersion and mastery, connection in a community of practice, embracing youth voice, and cultivating youth leadership with adolescent engagement, and non-school settings have emerged as crucial developmental and learning environments for youth (Heath, Soep and Roach 1998; Halpern, Heckman and Larson 2013).<sup>3</sup>

Creative youth development (CYD) is a dynamic area of community arts education that successfully bridges youth development; the ongoing process through which youth acquire social, emotional, academic, and vocational skills while also meeting their needs for physical and psychological safety, caring relationships, and community connection (Quinn 1999); and arts education. *Creative youth development* is a new term to describe

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<sup>1</sup> Sherilyn Brown (director of education programs, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts), in an interview with the author, October 29, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Gil Noam (founder and director of The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education & Resilience, Harvard University), in an interview with the author, November 26, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> "Youth Driven Spaces Initiative," *The Daniel P. Weikhart Center for Youth Program Quality*, <http://www.cypq.org>

this segment of out-of-school time youth arts programs.<sup>4</sup> Young people in CYD programs exhibit high levels of artistic skill and accomplishment along with increased self-esteem, and sense of belonging (Heath and Roach 1999). CYD participants are immersed in a broad array of rigorous artistic endeavors, including creating documentary films, researching and reporting on community issues through radio broadcasts, writing and staging new theatrical works, and engaging in thoughtful critique of one another's visual art work. The impact for youth of program participation extends beyond pride in artistic accomplishment. Throughout the United States, teen participants in CYD programs assert that the programs saved their lives, putting them on positive trajectories and away from gangs, drug use, crime, and ennui.

This article provides a definition for the term *creative youth development*, describes core characteristics of CYD, and briefly describes four programs. It provides background on the origins and history of creative youth development, including current advances in the field and signs that the field is coalescing. The article describes creative youth development in the larger contexts of arts education and of education reform. Lastly, the piece discusses policy, funding, and research needs and opportunities and provides questions for consideration.

A movement with historic roots, CYD is experiencing a catalytic moment with advances in visibility, organizing, and knowledge. The field is uniting and building on research, publications, and model programs about the characteristics, approaches, impact, and outcomes of quality CYD programs.

### **Definition and Characteristics of Creative Youth Development**

Creative youth development (CYD) is an intentional, holistic practice that combines hands-on art making and skill building in the arts, humanities, and sciences with development of life skills to support young people in successfully participating in adolescence and navigating into adulthood. CYD organizations and programs encompass those working in arts-, humanities-, and science-based youth development with an emphasis on creative inquiry and expression. CYD programs position young people as active agents of their own change, with inherent strengths and skills to be nurtured and developed (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998).

The youth development model for arts education is a holistic approach that combines arts instruction and art making with life skills development; such as leadership, teamwork, communication, respect for diversity, and positive self-image (Hirzy 2011); and attention to the whole person and their well being and relationship to community and society. CYD programs recognize that youth participating in their programs have a range of needs, from housing to food to mental health and well being, and some programs provide what they refer to as “wrap around” support and social services through employing social workers on staff or by integrating efforts with other community providers to create a coordinated response to youth needs.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The term *creative youth development* encompasses programs in the humanities and sciences in addition to the arts. The programs share a common purpose of positive youth development and common approach of youth gaining skills, experience, and knowledge through processes emphasizing creative inquiry and expression (Stevenson 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Elisabeth Soep (Research Director, Youth Radio), in an interview with the author, February 10, 2012.

Core characteristics of effective creative youth development programs include that they are assets-based, viewing youth as resources in the community and partners in learning rather than vessels to be filled or problems to be solved; are youth driven; set high expectations for growth and learning in the arts, humanities, and sciences; provide physically and emotionally safe spaces for youth; foster the development of positive relationships with peers and adults; and address the broader community and unique social contexts in which they take place.<sup>8</sup> Sarah Bainter Cunningham, executive director for research, School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University stated, “At the heart of this work is grassroots non-profit development throughout the country, where highly original CYD organizations develop to serve local needs or work with the local talent.”<sup>9</sup>

CYD programs move far beyond arts exposure. Rather than a one-shot visit to a museum or performance, a characteristic of CYD programs is sustained participation that deepens over time, involving mastery of skills and belonging in a community of practice.

CYD programs contrast with, for example, a more narrowly focused music conservatory program strictly concerned with musicianship and performance. CYD programs also differ from a drop-in arts program that performs the function of keeping youth off the streets but is limited in goals or expectations for youth program participants’ learning and personal growth. Individual CYD programs vary in the precise ways that they describe their work and approaches. One example is the Mosaic Model for youth development, developed by Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, which states that it “creates growth in skills, self-image and societal commitment” (Gutiérrez and Spencer 2008).

The creative process at the center of CYD programs contributes to profound personal growth for youth participants (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998; Hughes and Wilson 2004). The National Summit on Creative Youth Development’s *Collective Action for Youth: An Agenda for Progress Through Creative Youth Development* states, “As young people create their own work in the arts, humanities, and sciences, they build the personal, social, and intellectual capacities they need to succeed in school, career, and life. And as they experience the creative process over an extended period, they learn that they can use it to express their own identities, understand and change the world around them, and connect to the greater human experience.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Matt D’Arrigo, (Presentation, BOOST Best Out-of-School Time conference, Palm Springs, CA April 29, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Cultural Council, “Creative Youth Development: Key Characteristics,” *Seen & Heard: Transforming Young Lives Through Creativity* (blog), <http://seenandheard.massculturalcouncil.org/key-characteristics-of-youth-development-programs/>. Accessed April 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Massachusetts Cultural Council, “Creative Youth Development: Key Characteristics,” *Seen & Heard: Transforming Young Lives Through Creativity* (blog), <http://seenandheard.massculturalcouncil.org/key-characteristics-of-youth-development-programs/>. Accessed November 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Bainter Cunningham (executive director for research, School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University), e-mail message to Heather Ikemire (director of communications and marketing, National Guild for Community Arts Education), September 26, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> *Collective Action for Youth: An Agenda for Progress Through Creative Youth Development* (National Summit on Creative Youth Development, 2014) PDF File. Accessed November 2014. <http://bit.ly/1q8JLiF>

## **Creative Youth Development Programs throughout the United States**

Hundreds of creative youth development (CYD) programs exist throughout the United States. Recipients of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities' prestigious National Arts and Humanities Youth Program (NAHYP) Awards offer a glimpse of the range of CYD programs. The organizations below are all recipients of the NAHYP Award or the same honor under its former name, the Coming Up Taller Awards, the nation's highest recognition for out-of-school time (OST) youth arts and humanities programs.

Dancer, choreographer, and arts educator Kwayera Archer-Cunningham founded **Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy** in Brooklyn, New York, in 1989. The organization combines rigorous artistic training with African culture to support young people in achieving high caliber skills, which they display through professional level performances. Ifetayo invests in ongoing professional development for its teaching artists who forge strong personal relationships with youth participants. In addition to artistic skill building, young people's experience at Ifetayo includes training in life skills such as financial literacy and health and wellness. The experience of being part of a community of practice and the heightened self-confidence and leadership development they gain contribute to many participants remaining with the program for five to seven years.

High expectations, a hallmark of CYD programs, are a core part of **Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit's** approach, which holds teens accountable for their own success in the program. The organization's immersive Mosaic Youth Ensemble program requires 10 hours of participation per week. Each Mosaic program includes a teaching artist and a youth support director who work as a team with youth. Benefits to participants in the Detroit, Michigan-based program founded by Rick Sperling in 1992 extend beyond artistic skill building and achievement to encompass personal development and academic success. *Excellence in Stage and in Life: The Mosaic Model for Youth Development Through the Arts* documents the findings of a three-year research study on Mosaic and its holistic approach, which emphasizes skills, self, and society (Gutiérrez and Spencer 2008).

At **SAY Sí** in San Antonio, Texas, middle school and high school students participate in visual arts, theatre, and media arts afterschool, on Saturdays, and during the summer. Participants spend eight hours per week in the program, which was launched in 1994 by program founder and local architect Mike Schroeder with artist Jon Hinojosa. Through the students' commitment of time and rigor, they become part of a community of practice of youth artists and their artist mentors, the paid, professional artists who comprise the full-time faculty. SAY Sí boasts a 100% rate of graduation and pursuit of higher education in a community with a 45% dropout rate, making it a celebrated success story often cited by elected officials. Hinojosa, the organization's artistic and executive director, extends his leadership into the community by co-chairing the local collective impact afterschool initiative, Excel beyond the Bell-San Antonio.

Bob Grove and Madeleine Steczynski co-founded East Boston, Massachusetts' **ZUMIX** in 1991 in the wake of a period of youth-on-youth violence in the local community. The organization's teamwork-oriented programs for young people in music and media arts are designed to foster a sense of belonging and cultural understanding. ZUMIX serves an

equal number of youth through its afterschool programs and in school partnerships, 500 each. Young people engaged in the afterschool program choose where they want to participate, from beatmaking to songwriting and performance to instrumental music, radio, and audio technology. Community connection is at the core of ZUMIX's work, and the organization attracts over 10,000 people each year to its festivals and performances.

These CYD programs vary in art form, geographic location, and ages of youth served, but they share a common set of principles, codified in *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs From Urban Youth and Other Experts* (Montgomery, Rogovin, and Persaud 2013).<sup>11</sup>

The principles presented in the *Something to Say* report were based on case studies of best practice youth development arts programs and interviews with experts in arts education, afterschool, adolescence, and youth development include:

1. Instructors are professional, practicing artists, and are valued with compensation for their expertise and investment in their professional development.
2. Executive directors have a public commitment to high-quality arts programs that is supported by sustained action.
3. Arts programs take place in dedicated, inspiring, welcoming spaces and affirm the value of art and artists.
4. There is a culture of high expectations, respect for creative expression, and affirmation of youth participants as artists.
5. Programs culminate in high-quality public events with real audiences.
6. Positive relationships with adult mentors and peers foster a sense of belonging and acceptance.
7. Youth participants actively shape programs and assume meaningful leadership roles.
8. Programs focus on hands-on skill building using current equipment and technology.
9. Programs strategically engage key stakeholders to create a network of support for both youth participants and the programs.

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<sup>11</sup> Best practice youth development arts organizations were the focus of the case study organizations researched and profiled in *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs From Urban Youth and Other Experts*. At the time that *Something to Say* was published, the term *creative* youth development was just coming into definition and use with preparation for the National Summit on Creative Youth Development and in that Summit's report, *Setting the Agenda*, which was published after publication of *Something to Say*.

10. Programs provide a physically and emotionally safe place for youth (Montgomery, Rogovin, and Persaud 2013).

Research for *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs From Urban Youth and Other Experts* also included focus groups and ethnographies with urban, low-income tweens and teens and their parents and caregivers in five metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Researchers discovered that what tweens and teens want in afterschool arts programs—such as practicing, professional artists and rituals to foster a sense of belonging—overlapped significantly with what experts say youth need through such programs and with what the programs of excellence demonstrate in their approaches. CYD programs support young people’s need to belong and interest in immersive, hands-on learning. This is supported by the high levels of engagement reported by these programs and the long duration of participation, often spanning three or more years.

The *Something to Say* report’s findings on the common practices across out-of-school time youth development arts programs of excellence reflect research findings on characteristics of out-of-school time programs that support youth engagement, such as a commitment to excellence (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998), fun and challenging activities (Greene, Lee, Constance, and Hynes 2013), and youth having a voice and choices within programs (Quinn 1999). The *Something to Say* principles are also consistent with research on features of positive developmental settings for youth including connections and relationships with supportive adults (Eccles and Gootman 2002; Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen 2003), opportunities to cultivate peer relationships (Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen 2003), encouragement of youth decision-making and responsibility (Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen 2003), the importance of critique (Soep 1996 and Holloway and LeCompte 2001), facilitating youth contributions to the community and society (Quinn 1999) and physical and psychological safety (Eccles and Gootman 2002). Further, the program principles described in *Something to Say* were vetted and confirmed through a national survey commissioned by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Guild for Community Arts Education, and President’s Committee for the Arts and Humanities prior to the National Summit on Creative Youth Development (Stevenson 2014).

### **Origins and Beginnings**

Creative youth development programs in the United States can trace some of their roots, including providing tuition-free, community-based arts programs for low-income youth and encouraging youth initiative in shaping those programs, to 1889 and the establishment of Hull-House, the first settlement house in the movement of community centers to help economically disadvantaged immigrants (Starr 2003). In 1892 Hull-House co-founders Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established the first community school of the arts in the United States to provide access to arts programs for children of immigrants. Arts programs included instruction in visual art, music, drama, and dance as well as exhibitions and performances and valued the arts as a vehicle for self-expression and means to connect with and express cultural identity (Addams 1912). Hull-House was influential, and the practice of providing arts programs spread. In 1914 there were 400 settlement houses, and almost all had arts programs serving both youth and adults (Rabkin et al. 2011).

In 1937, the National Guild of Community Music Schools was founded as an outgrowth of this surge of community-based arts programming. That organization has evolved in mission and scope to become the National Guild for Community Arts Education, whose mission is to advance and support lifelong learning opportunities in the arts. The National Guild is now one of the key organizations helping to lead national advancement of the CYD movement in partnership with the President's Committee for the Arts and the Humanities, Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and Americans for the Arts through dialogue, publications, conferences, presentations, professional development, research, policy development, communications efforts, and advocacy.

Local arts agencies also share a long history of advancing OST youth arts programs. Through the 1950s and 1960s the local arts agency movement took hold in the United States, leading to the formation of the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies. Members of this association often conducted afterschool programs designed to support what would be later identified as CYD outcomes. This work of local arts agencies has continued under the leadership and support of Americans for the Arts (formerly the American Council of the Arts) and The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

### **Advances in Contemporary CYD**

Beyond the settlement house movement, another key period in the early days of what would become creative youth development was a wave of new programs started primarily by artists in the late 1980s and 1990s. From the beginning, these programs had a central belief in the ability of young people to achieve and grow artistically and personally through creative expression and skill building in the arts.

People who establish and work in CYD programs often cite a commitment to social justice as a source of motivation. Correspondingly, the philosophies of progressive educator and activist Paulo Freire have inspired many in CYD, particularly as presented in the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1970).

Founders largely developed their programs independently, refining their approaches through reflective practice. These programs remain dedicated to artistic excellence, while now often self-describing as being engaged in youth development through the arts. CYD practitioners embrace positive youth development principles as central to their approaches, such as espousing an assets-based view of youth.

Programs also increasingly engage in evaluation, and the CYD groups begun in the 1980s and 90s now have years of research and evaluation on the efficacy of their programs. In addition to CYD programs, their funders, and related service organization conducting research, the field has attracted outside researchers who continue to add to the body of research on CYD. As such, creative youth development has evolved from its grassroots beginnings to an empirically supported field.

Recognition and national level involvement have propelled CYD forward. The President's Committee for the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) engaged with Americans for the Arts to engage nation-wide research to publish *Coming Up Taller: Arts and Humanities for Children and Youth At Risk* in 1996 (Weitz 1996). This seminal report

raised national awareness of CYD, making the case for the arts and humanities in youth development, profiling 200 model programs with descriptions of their program practices. Two years later, PCAH launched the previously mentioned Coming Up Taller Awards, now called the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, which have celebrated and supported excellence in programs that foster learning, self-discovery, and achievement. Awardees have effectively leveraged the award to build awareness and support for their programs.

Research and publications have fundamentally strengthened CYD by substantiating positive impact and articulating nuanced best practices. Americans for the Arts, in partnership U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, broke new ground with its YouthArts Development Project, an initiative that demonstrated the impact of arts-based youth programs in reducing risk factors and building protective factors in a study conducted in three American cities: Atlanta, Georgia; Portland, Oregon; and San Antonio, Texas. The companion *YouthArts Handbook: Arts Programs for Youth at Risk* was designed as a comprehensive resource for arts, education, juvenile justice, and social service organizations for creating and strengthening arts programs for low-income and “at-risk” youth (Farnum and Schaffer 1998).<sup>12</sup>

A watershed moment for creative youth development occurred in the late 1990s with the publication of Shirley Brice Heath’s research. Heath’s work, based on a decade of field research on OST programs that youth identified as being desirable places to learn, was significant in revealing that cognitive and linguistic development were greater for young people participating in arts-based programs as compared to other types of programs such as athletics. Key publications include “Living the Arts Through Language-Learning: A Report on Community-Based Youth Organizations” (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998) and “Imaginative Actuality: Learning in the Arts in the Nonschool Hours” in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Heath and Roach 1999).

Heath reported guiding principles in creative youth development—such as the orientation toward recognizing young people as resources, not problems (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998; Heath and Roach 1999). She also catalogued characteristics of effective CYD programs, such as supporting risk within a safe space (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998; Heath and Roach 1999) and youth assuming key roles (Heath, Soep, and Roach 1998; Heath and Roach 1999; Heath 2001), thus identifying some of the DNA of effective programs. Because Heath approached her research as an impartial social scientist who was neutral regarding the arts in comparison to other types of out-of-school programs, her findings about gains through sustained arts participation galvanized practitioners and funders.

The body of research in creative youth development grew with publication of *Powerful Voices: Developing High-Impact Arts Programs for Teens* (Levine 2002), notable in documenting importance of professional artists to artistic rigor in order to optimize youth development outcomes.

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<sup>12</sup> The term “at risk” is used here to reflect the language used in *YouthArts Handbook: Arts Programs for Youth at Risk*, which was the language in use at the time. Today, the term *at risk* is not typically used in the field of creative youth development.

*Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel et al., 2009) was a landmark publication in analyzing and describing how arts educators achieve and sustain high quality arts learning experiences for young people at in- and out-of-school settings.

More recently, *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts* (Montgomery, Rogovin, and Persaud 2013) provides insights on tween participation and engagement in out-of-school time arts programs through research on tween free time motivations and barriers along with its blueprint of 10 principles for quality OST arts programs.

While the body of research documenting CYD and its outcomes has grown, the independent nature of the movement, as well as the lack of formal structures, and regularly held, dedicated forums, have been historical limitations.

### **The Field Coalesces**

While efforts to build the field have largely been decentralized, a national community of practice is emerging. A catalytic moment for the CYD field occurred in March of 2014, when over 200 youth arts practitioners, participants, funders, advocates, and policymakers convened in Boston for the first National Summit on Creative Youth Development. The Summit was organized by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, National Guild for Community Arts Education, and President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The term *creative youth development* was adopted during the research and planning process for the Summit in order to more clearly articulate these programs’ benefits to a wider audience. Summit organizers chose wording that bridged the arts, humanities, and sciences with youth development as an effort to serve youth by proliferating productive partnerships between social service providers and arts providers. The moniker continues to gain traction.

The Summit generated heightened focus and energy in creative youth development. “The Summit validated CYD as a field of work,” said Anita Walker, executive director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She added, “CYD as a field is positioned for acceleration.”<sup>13</sup> The timing of creative youth development unifying as a field is fortuitous given some of the shifts in priorities and perceptions about education. The October 2014 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll on public attitudes toward public education reported that parents and the general public alike value aptitudes supported by CYD, such as persistence and teamwork, over student performance on standardized tests with regard to what they think will help high school students obtain a good job in the future.<sup>14</sup>

A national research study commissioned by the Summit organizers informed the Summit delegates’ deliberations (Stevenson 2014). The study included in-depth interviews with a

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<sup>13</sup> Anita Walker (executive director, Massachusetts Cultural Council), in an interview with the author, November 10, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> “Americans rate “soft skills” ahead of grades and test results.” *The PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*. (Phi Delta Kappa International. October 2014). <http://pdkpoll.pdkintl.org/october/- 14>

range of practitioners and policymakers, focus groups with youth, and a national survey of practitioners and young people from more than 150 CYD programs. The resulting report, *Setting the Agenda*, documented the importance of creativity in the lives of young people and their communities and identified the five strategic priorities that provided the organizing framework for the Summit: Building Impact to Improve Youth Outcomes, Contributing to Community Development, Facilitating Social Change and Social Justice, Documenting and Communicating Program Impact, and Funding and Sustainability.

Together Summit delegates drafted a national policy and advocacy agenda, *Collective Action for Youth: An Agenda for Progress Through Creative Youth Development*. This two-page document calls for amplifying youth voice, telling a bold story about youth success, optimizing cross-sector collaborations, incorporating savvy business models designed to support sustainability, and for expanded public and philanthropic support. The Agenda's policy action items are included below. The National Guild for Community Arts Education article "Creative Youth Development Movement Takes Hold" (Montgomery 2014) provides further discussion of the policy action agenda.

# COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR YOUTH

## AN AGENDA FOR PROGRESS THROUGH CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

*Adopted at the National Summit on Creative Youth Development, 2014.*

### Policy and Advocacy Agenda

**Position creative youth development as the catalyst for dynamic cross-sector collaborations to ensure young people's academic, professional, and personal success.**

- Build organizational readiness for collaboration toward shared youth development outcomes.
- Invest in structures and strategies that facilitate collective action to support youth and their successful transitions into careers, college, and adult life.

**Establish young people and their creative youth development programs as key leaders in discovering and developing opportunities to improve the livability and economic viability of their communities.**

- Connect creative youth development programs with local community development initiatives to improve community outcomes.
- Amplify youth voices and strengthen their roles as key decision makers in community development initiatives.

**Develop and deepen opportunities for young people to create a more just and equitable society.**

- Collaborate with youth to integrate their voices and leadership into the core structures and practices of creative youth development programs and the broader sector.
- Champion creative youth development programs as spaces in which young people develop positive self-identities, recognize liberating and oppressive forces, and activate these programs' potential for impact.

**Document and boldly communicate the vital impact and experience of creative youth development.**

- Invest in capturing and analyzing impact through shared language, systems, and tools.
- Demonstrate impact in order to cultivate shared ownership of creative youth development across sectors.

**Support and advocate for a strong creative youth development sector with effective business models, new revenue sources, and partnerships that generate adequate funding and sustain the sector.**

- Organize and mobilize as a sector to increase capacity, sustainability, and impact.
- Advocate for and develop funding strategies to increase the strength and long-term impact of creative youth development programs.

The unprecedented Summit was a milestone in the evolution of creative youth development in the United States, drawing attention to the necessary work of organizing and unifying the field. This Summit's policy and advocacy agenda marks a meaningful step toward widespread advancement for CYD.

Creative youth development has been the focus of a number of recent professional development and community building forums and national conference presentations. In 2014 the Arts Education Partnership, Grantmakers in the Arts, National Assembly for State Arts Agencies, and National Guild for Community Arts Education all included creative youth development-focused presentations or workshops in their national conferences. The President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities launched a Creative Youth Development resource section on its National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards website. In 2015 the national BOOST Best Out-of-School Time Conference featured a creative youth development-themed workshop.

At the local level, in 2014 a group of Colorado-based creative youth development organizations formed the Alliance for Creative Youth Development and launched a website at <http://www.cocreativeyouthalliance.org>. In 2015 arts, youth development, afterschool, education, library, and workforce development professionals gathered for the first San Diego Creative Youth Development Summit. The City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture organized a CYD forum that took place in 2015.

In addition to conceiving of creative youth development as a field with unique characteristics and formal and informal discussions on CYD, another sign of progress is increased clarity and sophistication in programmatic approaches. Programs employ refined youth leadership structures with clear pathways for youth to assume roles with visibility and influence. Young people are shaping their experiences and are speaking for themselves at board meetings, community forums, and before bodies of elected officials. Through many CYD programs youth participate in dynamic entrepreneurial enterprises, assuming responsibility for providing products and services to paying clients.

Traci Slater-Rigaud, director of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, reports a visible increase in the quality of the programs submitting applications to the NAHYP Awards. She stated, "We have seen growth in both the size and sophistication of the CYD field. Programs have become more adept in articulating the nuances of their work and how youth development shares equal footing with delivering high quality arts and humanities education. The applications also show that more organizations are making strong program evaluation a priority."<sup>15</sup>

Ayanna Hudson, director of Arts Education at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) concurs, stating, "There is increasing evidence of high quality teaching and learning in the strength of the community-based arts education grant applications [to the NEA], in the work samples and videos." Hudson pointed to other indications that the CYD field is advancing and coalescing. "The National Summit on Creative Youth Development was huge for the field in bringing people together to have meaningful conversations. Coining the term *creative youth development* is significant, and the

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<sup>15</sup> Traci Slater-Rigaud (director of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards), in an interview with the author. November 13, 2014.

collective agenda [created at the Summit] is a good framework and platform.” She continued, “There are conversations around CYD taking place at key national conferences such as the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the National Guild for Community Arts Education, and Grantmakers in the Arts.”<sup>16</sup> Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the National Afterschool Association have also featured forums on arts-based youth development at their national conferences.

Jonathan Herman, executive director of the National Guild for Community Arts Education, indicated another sign of progress in CYD. Herman noted, “There is growing interest nationally in creating more opportunities for creative youth development programs within youth development settings. Among parks and recreation, YMCAs, and Boys and Girls Clubs there is a receptivity to CYD that I believe reflects growing awareness of the value and needs for approaches to youth development that involve the arts, humanities, and sciences.”<sup>17</sup>

### **CYD and the Arts Education Ecology**

From Seattle to Los Angeles to Dallas to Massachusetts and elsewhere, communities striving to achieve a vision of access to quality arts education for all young people are taking multi-pronged approaches that encompass school-based arts education, arts integration across subject matter, and out-of-school time arts. Creative youth development organizations are an important part of this mix, not just in increasing the volume of opportunities for arts learning, but also through their approach in combining youth development principles with immersive, hands-on learning in the arts.

CYD approaches such as privileging youth voice, being rooted in a community of practice, and positioning teachers as mentors (Hirzy 2011) are particularly compelling for adolescent youth who report having to work hard to remain engaged in what they are doing in school (Certo, Cauley, and Chafin 2003). Teens develop intrinsic motivation as they immerse themselves and develop competence in a topic, connect with others who share this interest, and work with educators positioned as senior collaborators—all aspects of creative youth development programs (Halpern, Heckman, and Larson 2013). Further, CYD programs connect with the community around them and with real world issues, bringing relevancy and immediacy to young people’s experiences, further supporting engagement and learning (Heath and Roach 1999; Hughes and Wilson 2004; Stevenson, Limón, and Reclosado 2013). Hilary Pennington, vice president of the Ford Foundation’s Education, Creativity and Free Expression program stated, “Creative youth development is advancing the best of what we know about effective adolescent learning.”<sup>18</sup>

Cunningham discussed the unique contributions of creative inquiry and the artistic process to CYD:

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<sup>16</sup> Ayanna Hudson (director of arts education, National Endowment for the Arts), in an interview with the author. November 21, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Herman (executive director, National Guild for Community Arts Education), interview with the author, December 12, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Hilary Pennington (vice president of education, creativity and free expression, Ford Foundation), e-mail message to the author, November 13, 2014.

The search for artistic solutions to intractable challenges – whether in one’s personal life or as a citizen improving one’s city – engages both the serious and playful self by applying aesthetic knowledge to the situation. A new representation of an existing dilemma, in an image or musical sound, can reveal un-thought possibilities, revealing concealed solutions. While scientists use music to solve mathematical problems in places like UC Santa Barbara’s Allosphere, our communities have not yet fully embraced artistic representation or aesthetic knowledge as a means of expanding the self and mitigating the trauma and violence at work in many of our children’s lives.<sup>19</sup>

Sherilyn Brown, director of education programs at Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) stated, “We must get over the division between in-school and out-of-school arts and go to a model where the child is at the center and the learning is at the center. No single sector can achieve the goal of equal access to arts education alone. [Educators and administrators] need to be open to things like ELO’s [Rhode Island’s Expanded Learning Opportunities] and to seeing community organizations as equal and powerful partners. We need to see the field of arts education as a connected pie – not in and out-of-school time.”<sup>20</sup>

Erik Holmgren, program manager of YouthReach at Massachusetts Cultural Council, asserted, “The conversation [between arts education and creative youth development] needs to be aspirational – that we’re working together towards understanding and providing arts education as a social, emotional, academic, and economic intervention.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Toward A Holistic View of Arts Education**

School-community partnerships are a central tenet of the holistic education reform trend, including partnerships with creative youth development organizations. Researchers are documenting how school reform efforts are effectively engaging community partners in their efforts to improve student outcomes. *Opportunity by Design: New High School Models for Student Success* (Hamilton and Mackinnon 2013) cites the integration of positive youth development principles to optimize student engagement and effort as a characteristic of effective secondary school design. The report specifically names partnerships with community-based youth development organizations as a way for schools to integrate positive youth development and describes effective schools as “porous and connected,” enriching student learning through effective partnerships with community organizations.

The degree of connectivity between school and partner organizations is a contributing factor to partnerships’ success. The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University reports that one of the lessons of Annenberg Challenge, to date the largest public/private endeavor in U.S. history dedicated to improving public schools, has been that partner organizations are able to provide valuable technical expertise when they work

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<sup>19</sup> Sarah Bainter Cunningham (executive director for research, School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University), e-mail message to author, December 10, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Sherilyn Brown (director of education programs, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts), in an interview with the author, October 29, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Erik Holmgren (program manager, YouthReach, Massachusetts Cultural Council), e-mail message to the author, November 28, 2014.

in close alignment with the education systems they support rather than through looser partnerships.<sup>22</sup>

Warren Simmons, executive director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, discussed implications of education reform and recent research for arts education, advocating that arts educators, schools, and community arts organizations participate in broad, multi-sector coalitions that:

- Put teaching and learning at the center of the vision and design principles for school and system transformation efforts;
- Work with community partners from multiple sectors to vet the vision and design principles; and
- Strategically broaden community engagement and communications strategy to coincide with current and upcoming debates about education reform.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Arts Education Partnerships, From Citywide to Single School***

School-community arts partnerships hold potential both at the individual school level and for whole communities for financial advantage, enhanced effectiveness, wider reach, deeper impact, visibility, and sustainability (Antoni and Wolf 2012).

Partnerships can start through an individual teacher or principal reaching out to community organizations or vice versa, informally or in relation to formal initiatives, strategies, or funding streams. They may involve district-wide, long-term collaborations or, particularly in early phases, be more modest in scope.

Dallas's Thriving Minds initiative is a citywide effort serving more than 115,000 students and their families annually in Dallas, both in- and out-of-school. The program is administered by Big Thought Dallas and is a partnership between the City of Dallas, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) and over 100 arts, cultural, and community organizations. Big Thought Dallas, a national leader in building equity and access to quality arts education, takes a multi-pronged approach including arts education within the school day; arts integration across the school curriculum; and free, neighborhood-based afterschool and summer arts programs. The organization's successes are widely documented (Wolf, Bransom, and Denson 2007; Bodilly, Augustine, and Zakaras 2008; Chapman and Henken 2014).

Partnerships between schools, government agencies, and community organizations are part of Big Thought's core delivery model, including in the Thriving Minds initiative. Big Thought executive director Gigi Antoni co-authored with Thomas Wolf *More Than the Sum of Its Parts: Collaboration and Sustainability in Arts Education* (Antoni and Wolf 2012), a candid exploration of the many possibilities, considerations, and success

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<sup>22</sup> Warren Simmons, "Smart Education Systems: Your Role in a Community-Wide Approach to Public Education" (presentation, National Guild's Conference for Community Arts Education, Chicago, IL, October 30 – November 1, 2013). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrNslVvCIzU&list=UUUVunE-j\\_LXMn9bVGiM3cRaw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrNslVvCIzU&list=UUUVunE-j_LXMn9bVGiM3cRaw)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

factors for initiating and sustaining cross-sector arts education partnerships.

Operating on a smaller scale than Big Thought Dallas, Performing Arts Workshop based in San Francisco, California, provided long-term performing arts programs both in school as well as at community centers. The organization's Artists-in-Schools program brings long-term performing arts experiences to youth in schools and child development centers. Teaching artists visit schools once a week for between 15-30 weeks, working in partnership with classroom teachers and arts educators to provide standards-aligned programming.

Performing Arts Workshop and Thriving Minds are just two examples of the constellation of programs involving partnerships between creative youth development organizations and schools. Given the trend of holistic school reform and research on the value of closely aligned partnerships involving youth development organizations, educators and schools may elect to further initiate and expand such partnerships.

### ***Expanded Learning and Arts-credit bearing opportunities in OST***

Gil Noam, national leader in out-of-school time and scholarship on resilience, and founder and director of the Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (PEAR) at Harvard University, discussed the potential for creative youth development-centered extended day learning, where CYD programs take place at or in partnership with schools and use creative youth development-based approaches and structures. Noam stated, "CYD [holds potential in] extended day learning, longer days where the arts find an important place...where young people are engaged in experimentation and programs allow kids to have different relationships with each other and with adults."<sup>24</sup>

The National Center on Time & Learning report *Advancing Arts Education through an Expanded School Day* profiles five schools engaged in extended day learning models focused on the arts. One of the featured schools, Clarence Edwards Middle School in Boston, Massachusetts, partners with over 75 community organizations and local artists to provide deep learning experiences in the art forms of interest to students, ranging from fashion design to ballet (Farbman, Wolf, and Sherlock 2013). A long-struggling school, within three years of implementing arts-focused, extended day learning, in 2009 Edwards Middle School was one of the top-performing middle schools in Boston (Farbman, Wolf, and Sherlock 2013). The schools profiled in the report link student choice in arts classes and activities and immersive arts programming as key contributors to high levels of student engagement and to related improvements in overall academic performance and individual student outcomes (Farbman, Wolf, and Sherlock 2013).

CYD-based expanded learning can extend into standards-based opportunities for youth to earn high school credits. In Rhode Island, coinciding with a shift in state graduation policy to focus more on proficiency and competency-based learning than on credits, educators saw an opportunity to recognize the skill-development and academic growth that was occurring for students in quality afterschool programs. The Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA) led a process with several school districts and

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<sup>24</sup> Gil Noam (founder and director of the Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (PEAR), Harvard University), in an interview with the author, November 26, 2014.

community organizations to design a system for students to receive credit for rigorous, standards-based activities taking place outside of the traditional school day. Currently in Rhode Island there are 10 school districts in the pilot or implementation phase of the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) project, and over 500 students have participated in an ELO for high school credit.

Without adequate orientation to the heterogeneous nature of young people's strengths, interests and needed pathways, high schools struggle with student engagement (Halpern, Heckman and Larson 2013). Approaches such as Rhode Island's ELOs can increase student engagement in learning by supporting students in deep pursuit of their individual interests. Adam Greenman, executive vice president, community investment for United Way of Rhode Island and former executive director of the Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance reflected:

For schools and out-of-school time programs, this initiative has been a terrific opportunity to collaborate and to work together to create student-centered learning activities. It has also provided more flexibility for schools, and has legitimized the work that happens in the out-of-school time space that we have known for years is a critical component to development. More importantly, for students it has meant more options. It has also given them a chance to explore what they are passionate about and see the types of academic skills that connect to their passion. For many, it has re-engaged them in school and they have been able to better understand why learning and school are important. That passion is key to the entire learning process and it is the major benefit from this work.<sup>25</sup>

Brown stated, "The ELO model is highly effective. It respects both worlds, in-school and out-of-school. It has appropriate rules and regulations." Brown also discussed how student engagement is central to the ELOs and creative youth development's strength in the area of student engagement, commenting, "Schools are looking to improve student engagement. Schools can't increase test scores if students aren't engaged... The field of creative youth development has a lot to teach schools about increasing student engagement. Arts teachers are often the last bastion of student engagement in schools, and there are synergies with CYD, which crosses more than just arts education but also social justice, social studies, the whole culture of the school."<sup>26</sup>

Greenman shared lessons learned through the process of piloting the ELOs. "First, policy is important at both the state and district level. The fact that people knew state policy not only allowed for this type of credit flexibility, but encouraged it, helped to convince school districts to get engaged. Additionally, local buy-in is critical to success. Collaboration and development of this initiative is time intensive and is hard work fraught with some conflict. Having people at the table to understand why they are there and who want to be there was absolutely necessary to success. Finally, the best way to see how this works is to actually conduct a pilot allowing for a couple of students to engage in the process. It shows you what in the process must be tweaked, where more

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<sup>25</sup> Adam Greenman (executive vice president, community investment for United Way of Rhode Island), e-mail message to the author, November 10, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Sherilyn Brown (director of education programs, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts), in an interview with the author, October 29, 2014.

support is necessary, and what worked well.”<sup>27</sup> As policy continues to evolve to support this work, Greenman cited the possibility for further connection to the student-centered and competency-based learning movements.

### ***Experiential Learning, Project-Based Learning, and Linked Learning***

Innovative school models are attracting national attention for their success in student engagement and achievement. High Tech High in San Diego, California is one example of such a school, where two daily blocks of instruction time support in-depth, project-based learning. Larry Rosenstock, the founder and CEO of High Tech High, has called the school “an art school in disguise,” referring to the school’s parallels with those of an arts academy, such as rigorous training with professional artists and emphasis on skill mastery.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to a faculty including a number of practicing artists, students frequently work with community experts as guest teachers to address real world challenges through direct inquiry and experiences. A team of three High Tech High students made a documentary on Light and Space artist Robert Irwin, with whom they worked directly through a partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego’s teen program. The project culminated in a screening of the documentary at the museum, where the teen filmmakers introduced their film to a packed house of peers, family, friends, and arts community members.

The fundamental characteristics of experiential learning and project-based learning mirror many of the aspects of creative youth development programs: immersive, hands-on experiences; skill building; working with professionals practicing in a discipline; and projects or culminating events that involve a plan, produce, refine, reflect cycle. 826 National’s network of writing and tutoring centers engages youth in projects such as writing, editing, and publishing anthologies. At the end of the process, student participants are published authors. Creative youth development programs such as the 826 affiliates support schools in implementing project-based and experiential learning both during and after the school day.

Linked Learning helps to create career pathways for young people through integrating academics with apprenticeships or internships, including in the arts.<sup>29</sup> Students’ interests determine their selection of learning pathways. Linked Learning is a new approach in education reform that seeks to prepare students for success in higher education and in the workforce by providing them with confidence and a sense of ownership over a personal trajectory identified within but also expanded by the experience with the CYD program. The four components of Linked Learning are rigorous academics, work-based learning, acquisition of real-world technical skills, and personalized support<sup>30</sup>—and overlap with

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<sup>27</sup> Adam Greenman (executive vice president, community investment for United Way of Rhode Island), e-mail message to the author, November 10, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Larry Rosenstock, (Presentation, Urban Land Institute conference, San Diego, California, September 2, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> “Linked Learning,” 2014. <http://linkedlearning.org/>

<sup>30</sup> “ConnectEd and Linked Learning Fact Sheet,” The California Center for College and Career. Accessed December 12, 2014. [http://connectedcalifornia.org/direct/files/resources/LL\\_and\\_CEd\\_Factheet.pdf](http://connectedcalifornia.org/direct/files/resources/LL_and_CEd_Factheet.pdf)

the CYD characteristics of rigor, high expectations, hands-on skill building, and positive relationships with peers and caring adults.

Creative youth development also supports young people in their professional and academic endeavors through being accountable to oneself and one's peers, through high expectations, and via confidence earned through skill building and positive risk taking. Many CYD programs pay stipends to youth participants, who in turn are expected to maintain professional standards such as punctuality, engagement, and fulfilling contracts for services such as graphic design in a timely and complete manner. Paid apprenticeships at CYD programs, such as the Apprenticeship Training Program at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, enable young people to earn money in settings that supports their personal development rather than resorting to low wage jobs such as fast food establishments where adults may or may not serve as positive mentors and where youth may be exposed to negative risk factors. Holmgren asserted, "CYD needs to be broadly understood as a vehicle for college and career readiness."<sup>31</sup> Because CYD embodies a number of the core characteristics of linked learning, CYD partnerships and professionals—teaching artists, in particular—are resources for educators and schools to draw upon as they explore and seek to implement linked learning.

### **Collective Impact and Children and Youth Master Plan Trends**

In efforts to affect large-scale social change to benefit youth, communities are increasingly employing as a core strategy collective impact initiatives involving broad cross-sector coordination (Montgomery 2014). "Collective Impact," John Kania and Mark Kramer's seminal article published in 2011 in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, highlights Strive, Cincinnati's collaborative student outcome initiative, as a model collective impact approach resulting in student success improvements. Kania and Kramer wrote about Strive's success, attributing it to the fact that:

...a core group of community leaders decided to abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement. More than 300 leaders of local organizations agreed to participate, including the heads of influential private and corporate foundations, city government officials, school district representatives, the presidents of eight universities and community colleges, and the executive directors of hundreds of education-related non-profit and advocacy groups.

These leaders realized that fixing one point on the educational continuum—such as better after-school programs—wouldn't make much difference unless all parts of the continuum improved at the same time. No single organization, however innovative or powerful, could accomplish this alone. Instead, their ambitious mission became to coordinate improvements at *every* stage of a young person's life, from "cradle to career (Kania and Kramer 2011)."

Arts educators working in and out-of-school have much to offer these types of cross-sector efforts, and they stand to gain support, connection, and resources. Arts education needs to be present at these influential community planning forums as a unified field that is part of the solution for improving education and developmental outcomes for youth.

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<sup>31</sup> Erik Holmgren (program manager, YouthReach, Massachusetts Cultural Council), e-mail message to the author, November 28, 2014.

Lara Davis, arts education specialist at the City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, in an interview for the article *Creative Youth Development Movement Takes Hold* observed:

When we talk about collective impact we might initially be thinking about the ways in which different organizations come together within arts education. Then we expand our notion of collective impact to be about how organizations come together across the field of youth development. We further expand the concept to include cross-sector collaboration in other areas relevant to young people's lives such as health, housing, jobs, community, etc., and you begin to see the ways in which creative youth development, as a holistic approach to engaging young people, builds connectivity across systems.<sup>32</sup>

Broader connectivity for arts education also occurs through community children and youth master planning processes, which The National League of Cities has cited as an established trend among U.S. cities (Bosland and Karpman 2009). Such plans influence public and private resource allocation, often for years at a time. Pennington stated, "...looking at public systems that have implemented Children's Cabinets or "Children's Plans" like those in New York offers the opportunity for creative youth development advocates and policy experts to insert, influence, and embed this thinking into the public provision of services and supports related to the holistic well-being of children."<sup>33</sup>

The Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission (Metro Arts) actively participated in and provided leadership for portions of the process to develop Nashville's Child and Youth Master Plan. As an outgrowth of the planning process, Metro Arts now has a deep partnership with Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA), Mayor's Office of Children and Youth and Metro Public Schools focused on arts and cultural access for Nashville youth.<sup>34</sup>

### **Policy and Funding Opportunities**

Advocates of creative youth development, including arts education leaders, are working to deepen collaborations with public agencies, foundations, and nonprofit organizations to improve youth outcomes. As in other realms such as education reform, creative youth development and arts education share synergistic policy opportunities. Narric Rome, Vice President of Government Affairs & Arts Education at Americans for the Arts stated, "I see significant overlap already between the policy pursuit of arts education and creative youth development. Both emphasize an education in, and through, the arts and through that commonality can connect to the broader policy support in the education sector."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lara Davis (arts education specialist, City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture), in an e-mail to the author, June 5, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Hilary Pennington (vice president of education, creativity and free expression, Ford Foundation), e-mail message to the author, November 13, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Cole (executive director, Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission), e-mail message to the author, September 9, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Narric Rome (vice president of government affairs and arts education, Americans for the Arts), e-mail message to the author, November 13, 2014.

Additionally, because of its holistic nature, CYD can expand the range of traditional arts education funding sources to include support from federal, state, local, and private funds for such issues as substance abuse and violence prevention, workforce development and juvenile justice. Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA) counts prevention funds among its mix of grants and government support. National Dance Institute of New Mexico has successfully leveraged the health and wellness dimension of their work into a diversified mix of funding sources including funding to promote wellness and combat obesity. Berkshire Children and Families, a social services agency, addresses young people's social and emotional needs with a youth orchestra. The organization is able to draw on social service sector funding for the orchestra program. And the National Science Foundation has funded Youth Radio because of the technological aspect to Youth Radio's programs. Other organizations access community development block grants, economic development investments, and workforce development dollars. "The policy needs and opportunities [for CYD] exist outside of the discussion of the arts and inside policies in workforce development, academic achievement, economic and opportunity gaps, and public/private partnerships investigating social impact bonds," stated Erik Holmgren of the Massachusetts Cultural Council.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 highlights out-of-school time programs' efficacy in connecting with youth as one vehicle for improving the U.S. workforce development system.<sup>37</sup>

Youth violence prevention is a key priority for the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), and the group regularly passes resolutions that include supporting afterschool programs, including those in the arts, as a solution. The USCM's "A National Action Plan on School Violence and Kids from 2:00 to 8:00pm" highlights the value of arts programs in providing youth with positive outlets for self-expression and calls for more partnerships among schools and local arts agencies, city agencies, and cultural institutions.<sup>38</sup> Individual mayors such as former Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter include investment in CYD programs among their strategies to address youth violence.<sup>39</sup> The rate of juvenile crime in Philadelphia triples between the hours of 3:00pm and 6:00pm, and the City has prioritized meaningful engagement for youth via out-of-school time programs, including in the arts, as a violence prevention strategy.<sup>40</sup> "Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence" also calls for support for the Mural Arts Guild Program's restorative justice program for youth.<sup>41</sup>

In policy development related to economic and social equity, CYD-oriented policies have the potential to mitigate the costs of an impoverished childhood. Youth participation in out-of-school programs is closely linked to access, and socioeconomic-related barriers to participation for low-income youth include transportation and program fees (Quinn 1999)

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<sup>36</sup> Erik Holmgren (program manager, YouthReach, Massachusetts Cultural Council), e-mail message to the author, November 28, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Investing in America's Competitiveness," 2014. [http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/WIOA\\_One\\_Page\\_Summary\\_May\\_2014.pdf](http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/WIOA_One_Page_Summary_May_2014.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> "A National Action Plan on School Violence and Kids from 2:00 to 8:00pm," United States Conference of Mayors. Accessed December 12, 2014. <http://usmayors.org/publications/violence/report.htm>

<sup>39</sup> "Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence," City of Philadelphia, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 38.

as well as family responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings while parents work or teen employment to contribute earnings to their household income (Lauver, Little, and Weiss 2004). Youth in high socioeconomic status (SES) families have more opportunities for arts involvement than low SES youth (Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga 1999). For example, while private arts instruction or art camps are a means for mid- and high-income youth gain access to high quality out-of-school time arts activities, the required fees are a likely barrier for low-income youth. In addition to missing out on the enjoyment of participation, these diminished opportunities contribute to low-income youth's summer learning loss, causing them to fall behind their peers academically (Browne, Syed and Mendels 2013).

CYD programs and organizations frequently work with diverse populations of youth, including low-income youth, often as part of their core missions, and can therefore be an important way to address equity in access to quality out-of-school time arts education. Gil Noam stated, "This is a turning point where people are pushing back against the kind of ideology of high stakes testing and narrower focus of academic subject matter and we are seeing a reinvention of the whole child approach. This raises equity considerations. Middle class, upper middle class families make sure their children get whole child opportunities....This is a policy argument, a societal argument about what we consider good child development and what we want children in our country to have."<sup>42</sup>

"There is a real opportunity to draw more meaningful integration between creative youth development and education," stated Pennington. She continued, "Embedding social supports and creative youth development within school *practice* should be a key priority. The traction that community schools are receiving nationwide as a platform to transform learning is one example, but there are many more. In addition, further embedding creative youth development indicators in policy systems is an important *policy* opportunity." Pennington pointed to the example of California Office to Reform Education (CORE) school districts' inclusion of social-emotional learning indicators as part of their school accountability frameworks.<sup>43</sup>

There are opportunities to develop CYD standards assessment methodologies and protocols that can be used in alignment with arts education content standards. Members of the spoken word for young people network Brave New Voices, led by Youth Speaks in San Francisco, California, are doing so as they investigate development of educational content standards for spoken word. Further research that demonstrates rich artistic and academic inputs with benefits to civil society will better position CYD to influence local, state, and federal policymaking.

At the federal level, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) funds CYD programs such as Spy Hop, a youth media organization in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Satellite Schools Program of Young People's Chorus of New York City, which provides afterschool choral music education at New York City public schools. Similarly, both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library

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<sup>42</sup> Gil Noam (founder and director of The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education & Resilience, Harvard University), in an interview with the author, November 26, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Hilary Pennington (vice president of education, creativity and free expression program, Ford Foundation), e-mail message to author, November 13, 2014.

Services invest in organizations including libraries, museums, and universities that sponsor CYD programs. Collectively, all of the federal cultural agencies in partnership with the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities support CYD through their collective sponsorship of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards. The NEA, NEH, and Institute for Museum and Library Services are also part of a Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development.

At the state level, a number of state arts agencies provide funding—an imprimatur of quality in addition to being a source of revenue—as well as professional development and community building, such as is exemplified by The Massachusetts Cultural Council’s YouthReach program, begun in 1994. In some states, such as in Rhode Island, community-based youth serving organizations are also eligible to apply for state arts agency arts education funds.

Policymakers at the local and regional level have opportunities to advance community development and CYD by creating incentives for artists to live and work in distressed neighborhoods and to mentor youth via CYD programs. They can also support and fund CYD programs to revitalize buildings and spaces in neighborhoods.

The community of National City, California and the multidisciplinary creative youth development organization A Reason to Survive (ARTS) have formed a multi-faceted, synergistic partnership. In 2012 ARTS moved into two buildings in National City, the community with lowest income per capita in San Diego County. National City had renovated the primary building, a former library, with the hope of attracting an arts organization occupant. ARTS has further transformed these spaces through the sweat equity of artists, designers, and students.

ARTS pays National City a flat fee of \$50,000 a year to lease its spaces, the equivalent of \$1/year in rent and the cost of utilities for the 20,000 square foot facility. The City provides all landscaping, major building maintenance, and major facility improvements. The partnership extends beyond facilities. As part of the lease agreement, ARTS is required to fund and produce four community art projects each year. The City directs a percentage of capital projects budgets in the form of grants to ARTS for artistic elements and creative placemaking, totaling over \$100,000 in 2014.<sup>44</sup>

National City leaders and administrators have embraced ARTS as a positive force in the community, and the Mayor will join students to work on community projects. The city planner taught a semester-long class on community place-making at ARTS, and the City and ARTs have jointly written and submitted grants.<sup>45</sup> ARTS Founder and CEO Matt D’Arrigo shared:

In two years, we've had a tremendous impact on the community... In addition to the ARTS Center, we've also begun to partner with the City to begin transforming and beautifying the community through public art and creative place-making... We came to National City with the intention to create a safe, creative, and

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<sup>44</sup> Matt D’Arrigo (founder and CEO, A Reason to Survive), e-mail message to author, December 12, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

inspiration place for kids to come to everyday. Then we asked... "Why can't the entire community of National City be a safe, creative, inspirational place?" So our work is now just beginning to make the bigger vision a reality. ARTS is now a part of the City Master Plan to act as a partner to bring our joint vision of transforming the blighted community through arts and design into reality.<sup>46</sup>

Many local arts agencies have long supported CYD organizations and programs through their grants programs, and some are newly revising funding policies to allow for more investment in CYD. Metro Arts, a long-time supporter of in-school arts education in Nashville, recently changed funding guidelines to include out-of-school time youth arts programs. Afterschool systems are evolving at the local level, with increased coordination among individual entities and via alliances of afterschool stakeholders as well as through city agencies. CYD will potentially benefit from such systems and coordination via greater visibility and support.

The U.S. government does not have an arts education policy, insofar as education is left to the states and cannot, according to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), have content dictated by the U.S. Department of Education. As a result, federal policy messages are sent primarily through elective funding opportunities, revisions of federal program guidelines, and targeted special projects.

Policy, however, is not solely dictated by funding. Presence in policy development would demand municipalities to attempt CYD intervention in certain worst-case conditions in low performing schools. CYD intervention policies might outline general standards and practices to be implemented, requiring public agencies to take specific actions, when conducting CYD interventions. Such policies would have to be reconciled with the current state-control frameworks in place that dictate educational and learning agendas.

Policies that incentivize and support larger public investments in afterschool and extended learning have the potential to bolster CYD's ability to work with more young people and to sustain the work. However, as Adam Greenman stated, "In order for the system to move more broadly, however, it will take more than money, and that is where policies that require schools to incorporate CYD can be a real game-changer for education."<sup>47</sup> Such a level of commitment will likely be hard won, but individuals such as Greenman who have witnessed the power of CYD programs on youth and youth learning are persistent. Providing guidance to school districts and local and state education agencies on how to include creative youth development in extended learning would be a step forward. Allies in government—whether representatives, legislators, departments of education, city managers, or mayors—might allow CYD to be mapped as an asset in communities and therefore to be considered for resource allocation to meet the appropriate needs and achieve the longed-for success that integrates creative, youth leaders into civil society.

Elizabeth Gaines, vice president of policy solutions for Forum for Youth Investment

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<sup>46</sup> Matt D'Arrigo (founder and CEO, A Reason to Survive), e-mail message to author, December 11, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Adam Greenman (executive vice president, community investment for United Way of Rhode Island), e-mail message to the author, November 10, 2014.

offered, “There is a data sharing perspective for schools, out-of-school, youth services providers, juvenile justice, human services, workforce development. How do we share data in ways that are helpful and helps everyone do their jobs better?”<sup>48</sup>

At all levels of public funding and extending into private funding, CYD and its advocates must educate funders about the benefits and costs of working with young people on a deep level. It will serve CYD and arts learning for funders to modify funding guidelines to support immersion rather than defaulting to prioritization of number of youth served over other factors. Erik Peterson, vice president of policy for the Afterschool Alliance stated, “Another key piece is the funding community and the need to bring funders into the creative youth development policy conversation.”<sup>49</sup>

## **Implications**

### ***Wide Ranging Research Needs and Opportunities***

Numerous CYD-related research projects are underway, but efforts are decentralized and lack consistent evaluation measures. A meta-analysis of existing research is currently lacking in CYD. A policy review is another broad opportunity.

Research on outcomes dominates discussions of a CYD research agenda, but the needs and opportunities are broad and varied. Pennington commented:

I would say this is a three-pronged research agenda. The first prong is to develop a set of key indicators related to skills, competencies, and capacities that creative youth development advances that are realistic to measure and reasonable to collect in both informal (e.g. afterschool programs), formal (e.g. school), and hybrid (e.g. workplace-based learning) settings. The second prong relates to how to link the indicators associated with creative youth development to the indicators/measures used in education systems to measure system inputs and student outcomes. And the third prong is to translate research into a public narrative that makes a compelling argument for how creative youth development should be essential for all students rather than a luxury reserved for those who can afford it or those who live in communities where it is ‘built in to the learning context.’<sup>50</sup>

James Catterall, director of the Centers for Research on Creativity, is leading a current CYD research study. The project is a 10-year, multi-dimensional longitudinal study of youth development involving students age 9 through 17 at the Wooden Floor, a dance-focused creative youth development organization in Santa Ana, CA.

CYD practitioners discuss the integral role of the artistic process to young people’s experiences in CYD programs (Montgomery, Rogovin, and Persaud 2013). While

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<sup>48</sup> Elizabeth Gaines (vice president, policy solutions, Forum for Youth Investment), in an interview with the author, November 7 2014.

<sup>49</sup> Erik Peterson (vice president, policy, Afterschool Alliance), e-mail message to the author, November 11, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Hilary Pennington (vice president of education, creativity and free expression program, Ford Foundation), e-mail message to author, November 13, 2014.

outcomes-focused research fulfills practical needs for understanding and for building critical support for the work, it must be part of a balanced, broader research agenda. Gil Noam cautioned, “I am concerned about the pragmatic use of the arts to reach youth or academic outcomes...it is primarily the process of art and creativity that matters.” He continued, “One needs multiple [research] approaches. For policy, however, people will want to do [outcomes research] the most and there is a need to do so, hopefully without losing the soul of the enterprise. One research strategy is to get organizations to voluntarily use a set of common instruments—their incentive to do so is to get good reports compared to regional and national norms—and this [consistent set of measures and aggregated data] becomes field building. At all times we can track how students and programs are progressing, we can feed that data back to programs and use it at the policy level. We can also refine the instruments as we go along.” This system has been rolled out through the PEAR Institute at Harvard University.<sup>51</sup>

A pressing research need is for ideas and information about sustainability models for creative youth development organizations. Even award-winning CYD groups with two decades of history, high profiles in their communities, and recognition for their work are struggling financially. CYD work is staff intensive and costly. Complementary research on why programs and projects fail could also be instructive.

Further research might focus on how to effectively scale CYD programs to serve larger numbers of youth while retaining quality. Research on scaling for depth through engaging youth in a richer experience would also be instructive to practitioners, funders, and policymakers.

Other broad areas of research opportunity include more neuroscientific research about creativity to give more credence to the metrics around arts engagement and learning, creativity assessments in the context of youth development, and comparative research such as examining informal learning and in-school learning. A sociologist and expert in arts engagement and U.S. cultural policy, Steven Tepper, dean of Arizona State University’s Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts stated, “We need good comparative studies. How exactly do the arts work differently than sports and other after school programs? And we need more nuance in terms of which arts work for which kids in which contexts.”<sup>52</sup> Additionally, youth engagement in creative placemaking is an unrealized dimension of community development that could benefit from examination of the impact on initiatives and on youth. Finally, long-term studies to examine how program impact affects alumni would be additive.

### ***Questions for Consideration***

As the fields of arts education and creative youth development consider synergies and their futures together and apart, a number of questions arise. Among these queries is:

- How might arts education and CYD forge connections and partnerships with the

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<sup>51</sup> Gil Noam (founder and director of The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education & Resilience, Harvard University), in an interview with the author, November 26, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Steven Tepper (dean, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University), e-mail to the author, October 31, 2014.

- youth development sector, and what is the potential of such partnerships and ties?
- How might successful programs be scaled for volume to increase positive impact among greater numbers of young people, such as in the El Sistema-inspired youth orchestra movement in the United States, and/or scaled for depth to increase the magnitude of positive impact on young people?
  - What are the potential opportunities and pathways for greater connectivity with the workforce development sector, including CYD's role in providing on-ramps for so-called "opportunity youth", young adults 18-24 years of age who are not engaged in higher education or future-oriented employment?
  - What is the role of the national arts education professional organizations in including out-of-school time arts education—whether on-site at schools as part of extended day learning or off-site at community organizations?
  - How can parents and caregivers become more aware of CYD opportunities and the potential benefits for their children through involvement in CYD programs?
  - What are some strategies to inform local and state arts agencies to support the development of and investment in the CYD field and programs in their communities?

## **Conclusion**

To be student-centered means to be youth centered and to therefore recognize and support all of the settings in which young people learn: at home, at school, and out-of-school. Creative youth development constitutes an important component of arts learning, primarily taking place in non-school hours.

Researcher and consultant Nick Rabkin, Managing Partner of reMaking Culture stated, "A paradigm shift must happen—whether in-school or out-of-school—that puts development of kids on equal footing with the art form. Programs must remain dedicated to excellence in the art form as a pathway [to positive youth development outcomes.]"<sup>53</sup>

Creative youth development, with historic roots, hundreds of programs and organizations throughout the United States, and a coalescing field of practice, contributes significantly to young people's arts learning and personal development. The field has articulated a vision for advancement and is ripe for additional research and policy development.

## **Acknowledgements**

This article was commissioned and guided by Americans for the Arts, National Guild for Community Arts Education, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

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Denise Montgomery is lead author of *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs From Urban Youth and Other Experts*. She is founder and principal of CultureThrive, a consultancy focused on organizational development, program development and implementation, audience development, and communications for arts and cultural organizations.

## **CONTACT**

Denise Montgomery [dmontgomery@culturethrive.com](mailto:dmontgomery@culturethrive.com) CultureThrive, San Diego, CA

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<sup>53</sup> Nick Rabkin (managing partner of reMaking Culture), interview with the author, November 17, 2014.

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