



## **Leadership Asheville 30 Leadership Learning Team (LLT) Project Description Seeds of Tomorrow Community Summit and Information Fair**

The LA 30 class held a community summit and information fair at UNC Asheville to provide information and strategies for developing and supporting after school programs. The Seeds of Tomorrow Community Summit was designed to provide information for the public in specific areas regarding after school programs. Various breakout sessions were available to attend with a focus on fundraising, business engagement, community involvement, challenges within existing programs, mentoring, and overall impact of after school programs.

The LA 30 class also broke into teams to focus on eight main areas of after school programs: Arts, Workforce Development, Life Skills, Environmental Education, Technology, Wellness and Recreation, Mentoring, and Literacy. Each team gathered real life examples of programs in the Asheville community and emphasized why their specific area of interest is beneficial to an after school program.

### Out-of-School Learning Teams

#### **Arts**

- Schools are losing federal funding for art programs.
- Out of school art experiences provide vital exposure and creative exploration for students.
- Those who participate in arts programs are more likely to reach higher levels of academic achievement, be elected to class office, and get involved in math and science activities. Low-income level students who participate in art programs are also more likely to do well in college, become employed, and volunteer in their communities.

#### **Workforce Development**

- Research shows that young people entering the workforce over the next two decades are lacking skills to become effective employees and managers, such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication.
- It is important to build better school partnerships with industry and to better utilize tools already in place such as internship and apprenticeship agreements.
- The City of Asheville and Buncombe County have embraced the idea of providing workforce development opportunities through local businesses during the school year and during the summer.
- After school programs can emphasize and incorporate “real world” work experience to better prepare students to successfully move forward into the workforce.

#### **Life Skills**

- Life skills are skills used every day to make decisions and handle personal affairs. This report focuses on financial literacy, entrepreneurial/business skills and conflict resolution.
- Life skills training is often a part of after school program opportunities with organizations such as The Boys and Girls Club, Girls on the Run, and the YMCA.
- The world can be difficult for youth to journey through without a solid foundation of necessary life skills. After school programs are a place to help build this foundation.



### **Environmental Education**

- Environmental education is prominent in Western North Carolina and many groups work with area schools, mostly during summer sessions.
- Through various organizations and institutions such as RiverLink, Warren Wilson College, Montreat College, and WCU, students have the opportunity to learn about the ecology of the French Broad River, wildlife conservation, and general environmental education while also providing opportunities for parents to get involved as well.

### **Technology**

- Schools are often the only way for students who do not have access to technology at home to gain access.
- Technology is often not utilized in after school programs due to the lack of volunteers, transportation, funding, accessing current resources, and minority involvement.
- The Lego Robotics after school program, which focuses on science and engineering program, could be an effective model for after school programs with the help of teachers instead of just parents.

### **Wellness & Recreation**

- In an attempt to focus attentions toward academic instructional time, physical activity time has decreased in schools.
- Child obesity has also become a major issue in the past 30 years. The percentage of children in the U.S. who are overweight has more than doubled.
- Research shows that being overweight can also affect academic performance.
- After school programs are a great way to promote healthy lifestyles for youth by reducing sedentary lifestyles with access to quality physical activity, and providing nutrition education and access to healthy foods.

### **Mentoring**

- A mentor provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and constructive example.
- Because after school mentors are faced with much fewer curricular demands than teachers, they are able to provide more attention.
- Due to the discouraging graduation rates in North Carolina, Western North Carolina is in need of quality mentoring.

### **Literacy**

- Overall, by the time students arrive to middle school, there is a two year achievement gap in reading.
- A major indicator of achievement decline is whether or not students read during the summer months when they are not in school.
- The Bookmobile project would help provide reading access to children who do not live near libraries.

Although there are many difficulties in creating, funding, and maintaining effective after school programs, all of these areas are important in order to maximize involvement and results throughout Western North Carolina. The Summit and Information Fair was an excellent way to spread the word about after school programs.