2013

Examining Programming for At-Risk Youth in Museums: Literature Review and Three Case Studies

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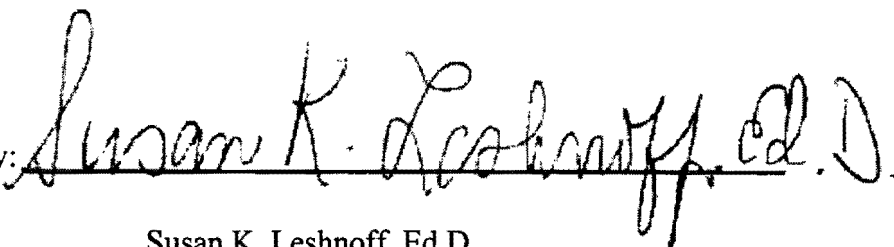# Examining Programming for At-Risk Youth in Museums:

Literature Review and Three Case Studies

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Museum Professions

Seton Hall University

May 2013

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Museum Programming for At-Risk Youth:

Introduction

Museums and teenagers are seen by many to be unlikely companions. In their book *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime*, Wilkening and Chung found that less than a third of adolescents regularly visited museums.[1] Still less likely to visit museums are teenagers from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds, sometimes described as "at-risk youth."[2] By combining these groups, however, both museums and at-risk youth can reap substantial benefits.

"At-risk youth" benefit not only through content-based learning at museums, but through the social and personal assets that such institutions can provide. Museums can, by welcoming at-risk youth through their doors, address the needs of struggling adolescents in broader scopes than simple content-based education, to the benefit of both participating museums and the teens they serve. This thesis explores museum programming for at-risk youth at the following museums; The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum in East Orange, New Jersey; The New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, New Jersey; and The Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey. Post-observation, the effects of these programs on participating at-risk youth were determined through the use of The Search Institute's Developmental Assets list, which establishes criteria through which the needs of at-risk youth can be assessed. Major outcomes of these case studies includes growth in communication ability as well as learned skills applicable to museums and other job

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[1] James Chung and Susie Wilkening, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2009): 71.
[2] Chung and Wilkening, 72.

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markets. In each case study, there is also data supporting the function of the program as a bridge to jobs and further education.

By establishing the need for social activism in the museum, identifying the needs and characteristics of at-risk youth, outlining the Search Institute's Developmental Assets as an assessment instrument, assembling the benefits of at-risk youth programming found in museum literature, and finally exploring case studies of museum programming for at-risk youth, this thesis argues that the museum setting is particularly well-situated for providing growth in communications and job skills to at-risk youth.

Social Activism in Museums:

The Evolution of Purpose and Contemporary Arguments

Before analyzing the role of programming for at-risk youth in museums, it is necessary to establish whether or not such programs are appropriate endeavors for museums to undertake. If a museum is, as the Merriam-Webster definition of the word describes, "an institution devoted to the procurement, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value; *also* : a place where objects are exhibited," what place, if any, do community, social, or civic endeavors have in museums?[3]

As museums have changed and evolved, so have their roles in society. This chapter will briefly explore the movement leading to social activism in the museum from the late nineteenth century to the present, and will then take into account contemporary literature on the subject.

History: The Civic Engagement Movement

The change museums have experienced since the mid-twentieth century is best described by Kenneth Hudson, quoted by Stephen Weil in his museological classic "From Being About Something to Being for Somebody;"

> "The most fundamental change that has affected museums during [the] past half-century...is the now almost universal conviction that they exist in order to serve the public. The old-style museum felt itself under no such obligation. It existed, it had a building, it had collections and a staff to look after them. It was reasonably adequately financed, and its visitors, usually not numerous, came to look, to wonder and to admire what was set before them. They were in no sense partners in the enterprise. The museum's prime responsibility was to its collections, not its visitors."[4]

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[3] "Museum." *Merriam-Webster*, 2013, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/museum.
[4] Kenneth Hudson, "The Museum Refuses to Stand Still," *Museum International* 197 (1998): 43.

Hudson's 'new-style' museum, with its emphasis on welcoming museum visitors from all walks of life and implementing social change, has its roots in progressive museum thinkers starting in the mid and late nineteenth century. Sir Henry Cole, founder of the South Kensington Museum, wrote in 1884 of his wish to "Open all museums of Science and Art after the hours of Divine service; let the working man get his refreshment there in company with his wife and children...The Museum will certainly lead him to wisdom and gentleness."[5] Cole's contemporary Matthew Arnold expressed similar opinions. His writings are described in Andrew McClellan's book "The Art Museum from Boullee' to Bilbao," which explains that "Arnold stressed the value of embracing 'all our fellow men' – not least 'the raw and unkindled masses'- in the 'sweetness and light' of high culture...The purpose of culture and its broad dissemination was to bring about the 'general expansion of the human family' and to 'leave the world better and happier than we found it.'"[6] These nineteenth century authors established museums as institutions for the use of not only affluent, but for the education and "refreshment" of working class visitors. For these writers, social change meant opening museum doors to the general public, which would find themselves refreshed and educated through exposure to high art.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought with it the foundation of the American Association of Museums (not the American Alliance of Museums), and museum visionary John Cotton Dana. Dana continued and expanded Cole and Arnold's tradition of responsibility to museum visitors. In his 1916 publication for the AAM, "Increasing the Usefulness of Museums," Dana writes "The goodness of the museum is not in direct ratio to the cost of its building and its upkeep thereof, or to the rarity, auction-value, or money cost of its collections. A museum is

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[5] Henry Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), quoted in Lois Silverman, *The Social Work of Museums* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2010): 9.
[6] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, Reprint 1994), quoted in Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullee to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): 24-5.

good only in so far as it is of use…Common sense demands that a publicly supported institution do something for its supporters."[7] Dana's socially responsible museum, therefore, was an institution that not only opened its doors to all visitors, but that actively improved the lives of its visitors.

Gradual change toward visitor engagement and museums' roles as agents of social change continued through the twentieth century. Hallmark moments included the creation of the Museum Educator's professional association within AAM in the 1970s, and most significantly, the publication of '*Excellence and Equity*' by the American Association of Museums in 1992.[8] This landmark document clearly described the AAM's commitment to public service. Bonnie Pitman's introduction to the document describes the three "key ideas" presented within the report;

> "1. The commitment to education as central to museum's public service must be clearly expressed in every museum's mission and pivotal to every museum's activities.
> 2. Museums must become more inclusive places that welcome diverse audiences, but first they should reflect our society's pluralism in every aspect of their operations and programs.
> 3. Dynamic, forceful leadership from individuals, institutions, and organizations within and outside the museum community is the key to fulfilling museums' potential of public service in the coming century."[9]

The body of *Excellence in Equity* goes on to reveal the goal behind these three key ideas; "By making a commitment to equity in public service, museums can be an integral part of the human experience, thus helping to create the sense of inclusive community so often missing in

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[7] John Cotton Dana, "Increasing the Usefulness of Museums," in *The New Museum: Selected Writings by John Cotton Dana*, ed. William A. Peniston (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1999): 102.
[8] Ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy, "Excellence in Equity" (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1991): 6.
[9] Bonnie Pitman, introduction to "Excellence in Equity," ed. Ellen Cochran Hirzy (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1991): 3-4.

our society."[10] By officially publishing a document in support of community-oriented practices, the American Association of Museums made social engagement, now described as active education, diversity of audiences and opinion, and responsibility to the needs of the community, an expectation, and even requirement, of American museum best practices.

Further evidence of the American museum field's transition to public service goals can be found in the late Stephen Weil's 2002 essay, "From Being About Something to Being For Somebody." The industry heavy-hitter proposed a view of contemporary museums as social institutions;

> "[T]he vision of an emerging new museum model [is] – a transformed and redirected institution that can, through its public-service orientation, use its very special competencies in dealing with objects to contribute positively to the quality of individual human lives and to enhance the well-being of human communities."[11]

Weil's vision was crystallized on a global level in the 2007 definition of museums at the International Council of Museums (ICOM). Unlike the Merriam-Webster object-based definition given at the beginning of the chapter, ICOM's definition instead places the social role of museums as first and foremost;

> "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment."[12]

The changes over time in the implications of the museum's social responsibility has continued and escalated in the twenty-first century. Contemporary opinions regarding the roles

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[10] Hirzy, 4.
[11] Stephen Weil, "From Being About Something to Being For Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum," *Making Museums Matter* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2002): 31.
[12] "Museum Definition." *International Council of Museums*, 2012, http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/.

of museums in the communities they serve are varied, which places complex responsibilities upon museum professionals.

Contemporary Arguments

With the thinkers and publications discussed above firmly ensconced as a theoretical basis for socially active museums, museum professionals have continued to explore the goals and implications of audience and community centered institutions. Contemporary museum writers explore not only general concepts of 'social change,' 'civic engagement,' and 'community relations,' but also dive further into what Lois Silverman calls "the social work of museums."[13] Museum professionals continue to struggle with how far to take social activism, and many fear that an increase in funds and energy toward community needs means the abandonment and neglect of collections and scholarship.

Among museum professionals who disagree with museums taking on socially active roles, a common fear is that museum scholarship will be sacrificed in favor of public opinion. Silverman's *The Social Work of Museums* cites James Cuno's opinion regarding socially-geared museology; "Museum director James Cuno cited 'the emerging 'consensus' among politicians, community activists, funding sources, and engaged academics that the art museum is first and foremost a social institution…with a mandate to encourage therapeutic social perspectives' as 'the biggest problem facing art museums today – and the gravest threat to the quality of their scholarship.'"[14]

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[13] Lois Silverman, *The Social Work of Museums* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2010): 9.
[14] James Cuno, "Whose Money? Whose Power? Whose Art History?" *The Art Bulletin* 79, no.1 (1991): 6-9, quoted in Lois Silverman, *The Social Work of Museums* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2010): 3.

Some museum professionals are concerned about the effect of participatory museums on the visiting public; Erik Ledbetter tells the story in his article "Let Us Now Praise Museum Authority" of his father, who received his arts education not by going to college but by visiting traditional art museums and learning from typically authoritative curatorial voices. "Will our future participatory museums, our museums without authority, be equally welcoming to autodidacts?... Will museums be positioned to step up for those Americans whose access to college is being foreclosed? Will we still offer the path to formal, canonical knowledge – the basis of informed questioning and criticism – that my father found?"[15]

Even among avid proponents of museums and community engagement, museum professionals continue to question where to draw the line. Elizabeth Wood's 2009 article, "Rules for the (R)evolution of Museums," admits that, though the social role of museums has a long tradition, actively adopting social responsibility can be daunting for a museum; "Taking on social change is most likely an evolutionary or revolutionary idea for museums; various efforts meant to change perspectives on sensitive topics have failed in some venues while others are creating new opportunities for community engagement."[16] Claudia Ocello, in her article "Being Responsive to Be Responsible," also wonders if museums can take social responsibility too far; "When museums respond to their communities, they attract a larger and more diverse audience that sees their value in a broader context. But can a museum step over the line to become overly responsive, and turn into something it is not – a social service provider?"[17]

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[15] Erik Ledbetter, "Let Us Now Praise Museum Authority," *Museum* (November-December 2011): 24.
[16] Elizabeth Wood, "Rules for the (R)evolution of Museums," in *Inspiring Action: Museums and Social Change*, ed. Carol Brown and Gabriela Salgado (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1999): 25.
[17] Claudia Ocello, "Being Responsive to Be Responsible," in *Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics : Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum*, ed. Janet Marstine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2011): 188.

However, with all of these concerns taken into account, there is still a large movement

toward using museums and their collections to address the needs of their surrounding

communities, and undertake socially active roles. Andrew McClellan, in his book *The Art

Museum from Boullee to Bilbao* takes a slightly more cynical view of recent changes; "What has

tipped the balance toward audiences in recent decades has been the rise of social activism –

political demands for museums to be more inclusive – and the need to meet escalating operating

costs through higher attendance."[18] Others feel more genuinely passionate about social roles of

museums. Silverman reveals in her book's preface that "It is my passionate belief that the most

important and essential work museums do is to use their unique resources to benefit human

relationships and, ultimately, repair the world."[19] Wood and Ocello, who questioned how far

museums should go into social work above, both go on to fully support immersive endeavors.

Wood explains,

> "The values of a civically engaged museums – one that is highly democratic, inclusive of
> community knowledge and expertise, and one that provides a platform to discuss and
> explore issues of power and prejudice – can be best achieved when museums use a
> critical pedagogy approach with the goal of the transformation of visitors. This is perhaps
> the purpose and the promise of the 'new museum,' a concept that positions collective
> memory and heritage as a shared endeavor at the heart of the operation. Hausenchild
> (1988) believes the work of the new museum will stem from the local community and its
> needs. Identifying ways to build critical approaches in museum education then, serves to
> enhance overall civic engagement practices and informal learning opportunities that
> engage visitors sat at a deeper level."[20]

Claudia Ocello most clearly addresses not only social activism in museum, but social work

geared toward specific community needs. She states that;

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[18] McClellan, 156.
[19] Silverman, xii.
[20] Wood, 28-9.

"These museums [are] *doing* social service work using the museum's resources, [and] that the long-term gains of such social service efforts for both the museums and its audiences outweigh a perceived division of resources...Museums – if they are willing to accept this challenge and are poised for change – should embrace this expanded vision to become more responsive and relevant to society, consequently encouraging sustainability – both as a way to keep the doors open as well as fulfill their mission."[21]

When the museum assumes responsibility toward not only itself as an influential institution, but to the communities affected by its actions and presence, it becomes appropriate for museums to consider creating museum programming for "at-risk youth." By addressing the needs of this underserved (and typically absent from museums) population, participating museums utilize their resources to the benefit of their community and become institutions for social change.

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[21] Ocello, 188.

<div align="center">Who Are At-Risk Youth?:

Needs and Identifiers</div>

Identifying 'At-Risk' Youth

Deanna Banks Beane writes in her article "Museums and Healthy Adolescent Development; "It is often said that all adolescents are at risk, but some are more at risk than others."[22] How, then, to identify these "more at risk" youths? The term "At-risk Youth," while much bandied about, is difficult to clearly define, and seems to have as many definitions as it does people who use it. Literature regarding identifying markers of at-risk youth presents a number of different definitions and descriptors. These range from specific behavioral and environmental factors, to general influences and states being.

Some of the literature identifies observable and quantifiable factors to compare adolescents to when establishing "at-risk" status. For example, the article "Addressing the Needs of At-Risk and Adjudicated Youth," by Scott, et al., outlines specific and observable environmental and behavioral risk factors for youths likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system. The authors identify the following factors;

> "Ethnic minority status;
> Aggressive, antisocial behavior;
> Difficulties in school and school failure (including educational disabilities);
> Family stresses, including: poverty; single parent home; inadequate parental supervision, and lax or inconsistent parental discipline; coercive family interactions; physical abuse;

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[22] Deanna Banks Beane, "Museums and Healthy Adolescent Development: What We Are Learning from Research and Practice," *Journal of Museum Education* 25, no. 3 (2000): 5.

substance abuse (self or family); living in a high crime community; and criminal or delinquent relatives or peers."[23]

Other identifiable risk characteristics were included by June Kronholz, who describes an alternative high school program; "…poor attendance, excessive tardiness, academic failure, apathy, social issues, low motivation, and such challenges to success as pregnancy and poverty."[24] Yet another set of qualifiers comes from James Catterall, Susan Dumais, and Gilliam Hampden-Thompson, in the study "Arts and Achievement," who identified "at-risk" youth through four governmental databases, which used family income, parental education level, and parental job status to establish socioeconomic status.[25] This report then designated teens at the low socioeconomic status as "at-risk." These sets of identifiers for "at-risk youth," while a bit different in detail and application, use quantifiable external factors to identify adolescents who, for whatever reason, have impaired access to resources necessary for successful development.

While the studies above chose to identify "at-risk youth" by measurable and observable behavioral and environmental factors, other authors on the subject identify struggling adolescents by the social and developmental pressures they may be feeling. For example, Beane chooses to focus on adolescents whose sense of identity and place within their communities and broader society is challenged as those most 'at-risk.' She states; "While biology has programmed all children for the developmental process ignited by the onset of puberty, adolescents of color are confronted with the additional challenge of developing self-defined identity in the face of racial

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[23] Terrance Scott, C. Michael Nelson, Carl Liaupsin, Kristine Jolivette, Christine Christie, Mackenzie Riney, "Assessing the Needs of At-Risk and Adjudicated Youth through Positive Behavior Support: Effective Prevention Practices," *Education and Treatment of Children* 25 no.5 (August 2002): 3.

[24] June Kronholz, "Getting At Risk Teens to Graduation: Blended Learning Offers a Second Chance," *Education Next* (Fall 2011): 27.

[25] James Catterall, Susan Dumais, Gillian Hampden-Thompson, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies* (Washington, D.C.,: National Endowment for the Arts, 2012), 9.

or ethnic stereotypes."[26] She further cites the five year study by Heath & McClaughlin's on identity development in urban youth, which describes the challenges "urban adolescents" face;

> "A youth's sense of personhood, self, and future results from the interplay of the multiple contexts in which he or she moves: community, neighborhood, family, peer group, social institutions, and labels of ethnic membership defined by larger society. These give multiple dimensions – son, Latino, student, Baptist, younger sister, gangbanger, athlete, immigrant, mother – and situate meaning and circumstance."[27]

Beane further explains that such adolescents "are at moderate to serious risk of not achieving productive adulthood largely because in the midst of their quest for identity they become the victims of unhealthy or negative behaviors like substance abuse, pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and school failure or dropping out."[28] For Beane, then, adolescents become "at-risk" due to identity struggles in the absence of guidance.

Though the two approaches toward identifying characteristics of "at-risk youth" differ, both methods of establishing risk factors for unhealthy behavior describe problems adolescents could face in response to the presence of negative pressures (e.g. drug influences or identity struggles) as well as the absence of positive influences (parental supervision or community support).

Needs of At-Risk Youth

Having explored some of the defining and identifying characteristics of "at-risk youth," how, then, does one determine what these adolescents need? Before, during, and/or after teens participate in risky behavior, what do "at-risk youth" need in order to become successful adults?

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[26] Beane, 4.
[27] Shirley Brice Heath and Milbrey McLaughlin, "Identity and Inner-City Youth: Beyond Ethnicity and Gender," (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), 213.
[28] Bean, 4-5.

A need clearly and quickly defined by many studies and articles is positive adult role modeling. Jane Tuttle in "Positive Adolescent Life Skills Training for High-Risk Teens" in the *Journal of Pediatric Health Care* explains;

> "Healthy adolescent development and the avoidance of risk-taking behavior are enhanced by attachment with caring adults. Most teens look to their families to provide them with resiliency factors such as support, positive role modeling, and a sense of themselves as worthy of care... A teen's positive connectedness with the family, social, and community environment is protective against substance abuse."[29]

Similarly, an article on applying culturally appropriate teen curriculum to decrease risk behaviors in the *American Journal of Health Studies* by Clemons, et. al., advises,

> "A supportive environment and presentations by role models allow teens to witness live examples of goal-setting and positive choices. Consequently, this empowers teens to make good decisions regarding sexuality and high risk behaviors resulting in more productive lives for the future."[30]

These sources state that the most significant need that at-risk youth require is access to responsive and responsible adult role modeling.

The Search Institute: Developmental Assets

The most exhaustive and comprehensive list of needs that must be met for teens, however, is compiled by the Search Institute.[31] The Search Institute has established Forty Developmental Assets for Adolescents. These are "building blocks of healthy development – known as Developmental Assets – that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and

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[29] Jane Tuttle, Nancy Campbell-Heider, Tamala David, "Positive Adolescent Life Skills Training for High-Risk Teens: Results of a Group Intervention Study," *Journal of Pediatric Health* Care 20, no. 3 (2006): 184.

[30] Diana Clemons, Ruth Wetta-Hall, Lisette Jacobson, Amy Chesser, Ashley Moss, "Does One Size Fit All: Culturally Appropriate Teen Curriculum for Risk Behaviors," *American Journal of Health Studies* 26, no. 1 (2011): 54.

[31] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

responsible."[32] By identifying which assets at-risk youth are missing, the needs of struggling

adolescents can be met in tangible ways. The Institute has the following to say about its research

and Assets;

> "Over time, studies of more than 2.2 million young people consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive. Research has proven that youth with the most assets are least likely to engage in four different patterns of high-risk behavior, including problem alcohol use, violence, illicit drug use, and sexual activity."[33]

Museum professionals have already found that the Search Institute's assets list is applicable to

their work with at-risk youth. Beane's "Museums and Healthy Adolescent Development" article

explains that, when viewing problems that at-risk youth face, "The more [Search Institute

Developmental] assets adolescents have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behavior."

This case studies in this thesis were analyzed within the context of the Search Institute's

Developmental Assets as indicators of the zones and needs of participating at-risk youth. The

Search Institute's history, goals, and full description of Developmental Assets will be explored in

the next chapter.

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[32] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

[33] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets.

Study Instrument:

The Search Institute's Forty Developmental Assets

This thesis looked to The Search Institute and its Forty Developmental Assets for healthy adolescent growth as an instrument to analyze the effects of museum programming for at-risk youth. This instrument was applied to participating case studies post-observation; The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum in East Orange, New Jersey; The New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, New Jersey; and the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey, do not use the Search Institute for internal evaluation.

The Search Institute describes its function as "a leading global innovator in discovering what children and adolescents need to succeed in their families, schools, and communities."[34] The research-based institution has compiled data on over three million youths since 1990, and state that it has developed "tools, resources, and services to support positive change in communities and society."[35] Its mission is "To provide catalytic leadership, breakthrough knowledge, and innovative resources to advance the health of children, youth, families, and communities," and the organization believes that "All children and adolescents need and deserve the range of "developmental nutrients" identified in the framework of Developmental Assets."[36] In more plain terms, the Search Institute's website lists under its 'How Do We Work' section;

> "Search Institute helps people understand what kids need to succeed and to take action based on that knowledge. We do this by

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[34] "What We Do." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/about/what-we-do.
[35] "What We Do." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/about/what-we-do.
[36] "Mission, Vision, and Values." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/about/mission-vision-values.

- conducting high-quality research and evaluation that deepens knowledge of young people, what they need, and how to care for and work with them more effectively;
- providing tools, resources, and services to equip parents, educators, youth workers, policy makers, and other leaders to create a world where all young people are valued and thrive;
- collaborating with partners to broaden and deepen commitments, capacity, and effectiveness in fostering healthy development and thriving among children and adolescents."[37]

A significant element of the Search Institute's work is its Developmental Assets, which the institute deems "building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets— that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible."[38] First proposed in 1990, the forty assets for youth ages twelve to eighteen is based on research in positive youth development, prevention, and resiliency.[39] The Search Institute breaks its Developmental Assets down into External and Internal assets, which youth gain through interactions with their schools, community, parents, and leaders. Subcategories further explore the areas in which youth need support. The full list of the Developmental Assets is as follows;

<u>Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents[40]</u>

<u>External Assets</u>

SUPPORT
1. Family Support | Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive Family Communication | Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other Adult Relationships | Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring Neighborhood | Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring School Climate | School provides a caring, encouraging environment.

[37] "What We Do." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/about/what-we-do.
[38] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .
[39] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .
[40] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

6. Parent Involvement in Schooling | Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7. Community Values Youth | Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as Resources | Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to Others | Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety | Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11. Family Boundaries | Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries | School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood Boundaries | Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult Role Models | Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive Peer Influence | Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High Expectations | Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. Creative Activities | Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth Programs | Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
19. Religious Community | Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at Home | Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING
21. Achievement Motivation | Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement | Young person is actively engaged in learning.

23. Homework | Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to School | Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure | Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

26. Caring | Young Person places high value on helping other people.
27. Equality and Social Justice | Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity | Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty | Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. Responsibility | Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. Restraint | Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32. Planning and Decision Making | Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence | Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence | Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance Skills | Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution | Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

37. Personal Power | Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. Self-Esteem | Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of Purpose | Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. Positive View of Personal Future | Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future."[41]

By using the Search Institute's Developmental Assets tool, groups and individuals

working with at-risk youth, including museums, can easily identify which assets adolescents are

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[41] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

missing, and can fulfill those needs using their unique set of tools. Museums are highly qualified to fulfill many of the External Developmental Assets the Search Institute identifies, which will be further explored in subsequent chapters and case studies.

<center>Benefits of Museum Programming for At-Risk Youth:</center>

<center>Findings in the Field</center>

Museums can provide programming for at-risk youth that can satisfy their unique needs, and help prevent risk-taking behavior. By exploring how museums can meet the needs of at-risk youth, and the unique opportunities museum can provide, it becomes apparent that museums can serve adolescents in dramatic ways. Museums themselves can also greatly benefit through associations with teenage audiences.

Benefits for At-Risk Youth

"Several students saw the class as an opportunity to gain information about possible careers in marine science. However, one third of the students indicated that [the program was] a better alternative than "being bored" during their vacation time. One student even admitted that it would 'keep him off the streets.' These comments suggest that the prospect of learning science may not, in itself, have been as important as the opportunity for a new or interesting experience. "[42]

-James Kisiel, "Urban Teens Exploring Museums: Science Experiences Beyond the Classroom

The program described in the quotation above was held over two week periods of time during school vacations for urban teens in California. The adolescents visited the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County to learn about marine science. (Such programs aren't uncommon; concerns about low levels of female and minority populations in scientific fields are well-published, and there are many science or STEM based teen programs in museums.[43]) The results of the program were encouraging; students enjoyed the experience, and six months later

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[42] James Kisiel, "Urban Teens Exploring Museums: Science Experiences Beyond the Classroom," *The American Biology Teacher* 68, no. 7 (2006): 396.

[43] Sreyashi Jhumki Basu and Angela Calabrese Barton, "Developing a Sustained Interest in Science among Urban Minority Youth," *Journal of Research in Science Teaching,* 44, no. 3 (2007): 466.

could quickly and clearly recall information they had learned.[44] An unexpected result, however, dealt not with the program's marine biology content, but with the experience students had with the program itself. As Kisiel indicated in the quotation above, students had positive reactions to participating in a museum-based program, and enjoyed opportunities for free-choice learning. Further still, Kisiel states, "All of the participants interviewed expressed interest in coming back to the museum to help with museum events. Students saw these volunteer opportunities as learning opportunities as well, giving them the opportunity to participate within a learning community."[45] For the at-risk students participating in Kisiel's program, their experience learning in a museum transcended marine biology content, and resonated strongly with more of the adolescents' needs.

The experiences of Kisiel's student were not unique. Deanna Banks Beane assessed the YouthALIVE program, which established museum programming for at-risk youth in the 1990s, through the lens of the Search Institute's Developmental Assets;

> "YouthALIVE programs have demonstrated that science centers and museums can be excellent resources for bringing a number of developmental assets into the lives of young people whose lives and communities are limited in what they can provide. Through these kinds of long-term programs, adolescents are finding adult support, empowerment (feeling valued and safe), boundaries (adult role models), high expectations (from staff, peers, visitors), constructive use of time, creative activities, commitment to learning (achievement motivation), positive values (helping others, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, and responsibility), and social competencies (planning and decision making, interpersonal skills, intercultural skills, conflict resolution.)"[46]

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[44] Kisiel, 399

[45] Kisiel, 399.

[46] Deanna Banks Beane, "Museums and Healthy Adolescent Development: What We Are Learning from Research and Practice," *Journal of Museum Education* 25, no. 3 (2000): 5.

By addressing these specific social and personal Developmental Assets, museum programming for at-risk youth transcends content-based education and gives high-risk adolescents opportunities for healthy growth.

The acquisition of Developmental Assets occurs in addition to declared benefits in museum programming for at-risk youth. For example, The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum in East Orange, New Jersey, which will be further examined in a case study, provides a program through which youths can earn their GEDs, while at the same time working at the museum. Participating adolescents not only receive tangible benefits in the form of their GEDs, but have access to Developmental Assets through their association the museum (as assessed via this thesis; though the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum does not apply the Search Institute's Assets in-house).

<u>Benefits for Museums</u>

The advantages of programming for at-risk youth are not all on the side of the teens. Museums, particularly those which espouse social roles within their communities, can find themselves improved by the implementation of programs for adolescents.

Most importantly, as more and more museums include relationships to their communities in their mission statements, programs that serve at-risk youths apply directly to the practical implementation of that mission. For museums that do not readily espouse social relevance, however, such programs can benefit museums by bringing in untapped audiences. Claudia

Ocello states "Museums…should embrace this expanded vision…consequently encouraging sustainability – both as a way to keep the doors open as well as to fulfill their mission."[47]

This sentiment goes double for the elusive teenage audience. Wilkening and Chung's book, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* had the following to say about teenage audiences;

> "Nearly half of students said they only went to museums "hardly ever" or never… It also became clear that Caucasian students appeared to be generally more positive about museums than other children…This mirrors the typical demographic pattern that we find in more of our surveys of museum visitors and members, who tend to be disproportionately Caucasian and affluent."[48]

Kisiel found that programming for at-risk youth overcame the socioeconomic barriers for teenage visitation described by Wilkeing and Chung.

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[47] Claudia Ocello, "Being Responsive to Be Responsible," in *Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics:*
[48] James Chung and Susie Wilkening, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2009): 72.

Case Studies: An Introduction

The programs for at-risk youth at three different museums have been studied for this thesis. The *New Jersey Youth Corps* at the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum in East Orange, New Jersey, *Partners in Learning* at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark, New Jersey, and the *Explorers Program* at the Newark Museum, also in Newark, New Jersey, were all willing to be participants in the study. Case studies are presented via the history and mission of the hosting museums, current museum operations, a program description, results of program observation and/or program outcomes, and finally program analysis.

All three programs and host museums serve the greater Newark city area in Northeastern New Jersey. The three programs are all recurring, multi-month programs requiring commitment from participating at-risk youth. As will be evidenced through the case studies, similarities among the programs include opportunities for peer interaction, mentorship, and community service.

The Search Institute's Developmental Assets instrument is used to assess the benefits gained by at-risk youth as a result of their participation in museum programming post-observation as a third part instrument. The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, New Jersey Historical Society, and Newark Museum do not use the Search Institute's Developmental Assets for internal program evaluation.

Case Study #1:

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum

"For some observers, resources replaced respectability as the measure of a museum- a good museum in their view, was one with a fine collection, and excellent staff, an impressive building, and a solid endowment. For others a museum was measured not by what resources it had but by what it did with those resources- by its programming."[49]

-Stephen Weil, *From Being About Something to Being For Somebody*

History and Mission

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, located in East Orange, New Jersey at 192 Dodd Street was founded in 1992. Unlike many other museums that are founded by arts or historical groups and individual endowments, the museum is the product of a collaboration between The Urban Education Project and the New Jersey Youth Corps at New Jersey City University, and is, according to the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, "New Jersey's first museum built by kids for kids."[50] The museum is housed at a branch of the East Orange Public Library, and shares its premises with the lending institution, while dedicating over 9,500 square feet to exhibition space.

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum was originally built, and continues to be staffed and maintained by youth involved in the New Jersey Youth Corps. The participants in the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps partnership are former high school dropouts working to attain their GEDs as well as work experience and career skills. The exhibit at the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum were all built by youth participants, and the museum's programs continue to be run by these students. So integral are the contributions of the NJ Youth

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[49] Stephen Weil, "From Being About Something to Being For Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museums," *Making Museums Matter* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2002): 35.
[50] "Detailed Brochure." *Jersey Explorer Children's Museum*, March 2008, http://www.jerseyexplorer.org/uploads/2/9/0/0/2900566/updated_mission_birthday_etc._info_package_3.08.pdf

Corps participants to the museum that they are explicitly included in The Jersey Explorer

Children's Museum mission;

> "The mission of the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum is to provide educational enrichment to the thousands of children who visit the museum and to provide academic and vocational opportunities to the at-risk young adults, of NJ Youth Corps, who built and staff the Jersey Explorer."[51]

Current Museum Operations

> "We believe that our schools need museums and other programs outside their walls to help them to expand the learning and motivational opportunities that we can offer to our children. Learning should never be limited by the size of a school, the table of contents of a textbook or the material covered on tests. Our job, at the Explorer, has always been to find new ways to teach and new ways to motivate. We want our visitors to see themselves as explorers and to see the gaining of knowledge as part of a great adventure."[52]
>
> *-2011 Annual Report, The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps*
>
> *Partnership*

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum serves preschools as well as elementary, middle,

and high schools in the greater New York Metropolitan and New Jersey areas. Since the museum

opened its doors, it has reached over 270,000 children through its in-house and outreach

programs.[53] For much of the museum's existence many school groups attended for free, courtesy

of a Prudential Foundation grant; however, recently the museum has had to start charging a small

fee for groups visiting from outside East Orange.[54] The 2011 Annual Report at the museum

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[51] "Mission and Partners." *Jersey Explorer Children's Museum*, last accessed March 28, 2013, http://www.jerseyexplorer.org/mission--partners.html.

[52] "2011 Annual Report," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2011), 1.

[53] "Detailed Brochure." *Jersey Explorer Children's Museum*, March 2008, http://www.jerseyexplorer.org/uploads/2/9/0/0/2900566/updated_mission_birthday_etc._info_package_3.08.pdf

[54] Gary Patnosh, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 25, 2013.

boasts over 12,000 children and adult explorers in attendance that year.[55] According to co-director Gary Patnosh, many of these attendees are from local urban schools, including East Orange, Orange, West Orange, and the greater Newark area.[56] The museum's 2012 report submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills identifies its attendee target population as "The children of New Jersey, particularly the children of our cities, who visit the museum, our traveling museum and our outreach programs...Our primary target has always been the children of the greater Newark metropolitan area, particularly the children from the surrounding urban districts."[57]

While the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum serves children of all ages, its exhibitions and programs cater more specifically to grades 2-5. This is in part because of the museum's theatrically themed exhibits and programming. According to co-director Patnosh, "Unlike most children's museums, the JECM is less hands-on based and more of a presentations style, immersion-based experience."[58] Only one exhibition, the museum's "International Main Street" (themed, in 2013, around a Louisiana village) is reminiscent of the traditional hands-on free play areas of children's museums. The other exhibitions are all experienced through guided, interactive presentations. These exhibitions include; "The Tomb of the Ancient Kings," an Egyptian maze and treasure hunt; "The Stargazer- Journey to Sakar," a science lab which mimics the interior of a spaceship; "The Time Traveler," an immersive set of exhibits based on historical events, which includes presentations of the Underground Railroad, World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement; "Roscoe's House," an interactive puppet theater; and "Jukebox Timeline,"

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[55] "2011 Annual Report," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2012), 1.
[56] Patnosh, interview, January 25, 2013.
[57] "The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey Youth Corps Partnership: Submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2012), 2.
[58] Patnosh, interview, January 25, 2013.

which explores musical trends in the twentieth century. A school group's visit to the museum, which typically lasts two hours, may include guided tours of up to three exhibitions, as well as presentations such as "Scienceworks: Hands-On-Science," and "Art Cart."[59]

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum includes outreach as part of its programming. "Vietnam Memories: Stories Left at the Wall" is a traveling exhibition created and distributed by the museum, and is sent to high schools where it is installed in a classroom for the use of the students. "This exhibit," according to the 2012 Oranges & Short Hills report, "which has been seen by over 140,000 people, is the largest and most successful museum high school outreach program in the United States."[60] Other outreach programs include the Jersey Explorer/Bridge of Books Distribution Program, which "distribute[s] thousands of children's books to schools, camps, after-school programs and children who visit the museum."[61]

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum struggles financially on a regular basis. However, The NJ Youth Corps partnership with the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum contributes heavily to the financial stability of the museum, and not only through grant contributions. According to the museums' 2011 Annual Report; "The in-kind support of labor that we receive from our partnership with NJ Youth Corps remains the center of our financial support system."[62] Other than the three adult employees who work full time at the museum, the institution is completely staffed by NJ Youth Corps participants. Their involvement includes program presentation, gallery supervision, exhibition construction, newsletter publication, etc. In

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[59] "2011 Annual Report," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2012), 3.
[60] "The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey Youth Corps Partnership: Submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2012), 3.
[61] "2010 Annual Report," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2011), 5.
[62] "2011 Annual Report," 7.

fact, almost every exhibition was designed, built, painted, and crafted by NJ Youth Corps
students.

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership

> "The mission of the *Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership* is
> to provide educational enrichment to the thousands of children who visit the museum and
> to provide academic and vocational opportunities to the at-risk young adults, of NJ Youth
> Corps, who built and staff the Jersey Explorer."[63]
>
> > -Mission statement, *2011 Annual Report, The Jersey Explorer Children's*
> >
> > *Museum/ NJ Youth Corps Partnership*

While the first 'core issue' that the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey

Youth Corps Partnership report submitted in 2012 relates to the children who visit the museum,

the second is "the need to address the academic, job training and personal development needs of

the thousands of, often forgotten, teenagers and young adults who drop out of high school each

year."[64] The report also addresses at-risk youth as a second target audience; "The young high

school dropouts of NJ Youth Corps who make up the museum's staff."[65] It goes on to explain

that "Each year, we will serve between 60 and 70 young people who are part of our Corps

programs. These young people come from special needs districts and the majority will also be

enrolled in the GED component of the Youth Corps partnership."[66]

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, which declared itself to be "the only museum in

the United States that is a complete product of the youth service corps movement" in its 2008

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[63] "2011 Annual Report," 2.
[64] "The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey Youth Corps Partnership: Submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills," 2.
[65] "The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey Youth Corps Partnership: Submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills," 2.
[66] "The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/New Jersey Youth Corps Partnership: Submitted to the Junior League of the Oranges & Short Hills," 2.

Annual Report, has been tied to the New Jersey Youth Corps since the museums' founding in

1992.[67] The NJ Youth Corps, founded in 1985, declares as its mission;

> "To restore and preserve the dignity of young adults who have been underserved, and
> enhance their value to society by providing a comprehensive program of academic
> instruction and community service that form a solid foundation upon which to build a
> brighter future."[68]

According to NJ Youth Corps web information, as one of the twelve locations that hosts

NJ Youth Corps operations, the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum offers the following to

young adults age 16-25 in exchange for community service projects;

> "1. Education development in basic skills and preparation to obtain a GED or locally
> issued Adult High School Diploma; 2. Life skills and employability skills instruction; 3.
> Personal career and counseling to build self-esteem, clarify values, and develop
> leadership skills while they are developing their career portfolio; 4. Transition services
> and continuing support services as they transition to college, training, employment or
> other national and domestic service opportunities; 5. Community service opportunities
> which develop positive employability skills while addressing unmet community needs.
> Corpsmembers receive a stipend while enrolled in Youth Corps."[69]

The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum's 2008 Annual Report states that there are between

12,000 and 14,000 high school dropouts in New Jersey every year. New Jersey Youth Corps

serves 800 of these youths annually, who are selected through an application based on math and

reading scores. The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps partnership combines

classroom instruction, with the end goal of students earning their GEDs, with job experience

working at the museum. The four month program has participants spend three days a week in

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[67] "2008 Annual Report," (The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps Partnership, 2009), 13.
[68] "New Jersey Youth Corps." *State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development*, last accessed April 17, 2013. http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/wfprep/edtrain/ged/Youth.html.
[69] "New Jersey Youth Corps." *State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development*, last accessed April 17, 2013. http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/wfprep/edtrain/ged/Youth.html.

instruction, and the remaining two to three days a week working at the museum.[70] The

partnership runs two sessions per school year, each serving 30 students. According to the 2011

Annual Reports, there have been over one thousand youth participants since the beginning of the

museum's existence.[71]

Measurable Goals

The program's most easily measurable goals, which include GED achievement and

successful placement in jobs or colleges, indicate great success. According to the museum's

2008 Annual Report, forty five students passed the GED, which constituted the highest GED

graduation in New Jersey's Youth Corps programs. After the program, twenty four youth

participants were enrolled in colleges, and forty one were placed in jobs.[72] The success continued

in 2011; fifty one youth passed the GED, thirty one enrolled in college, and twenty eight were

placed in jobs.[73] The program has also increased in popularity over the years; in 2008 the

museum reported three applications for ever available spot, and in 2011 applications had

increased to fifteen per spot. The inability of the program to meet demand continues to trouble

the program's supporters. The 2011 report describes the following situation;

> "Every single day we receive between five and ten calls from young people, parents,
> counselors, probation officers and others who are all trying to get themselves or someone
> else into NJ Youth Corps. We are one of the few safety net programs available to this
> population and unfortunately our net is nowhere near as large as it needs to be. It is never
> easy to turn away a teenager who is seeking help and never easy to tell a desperate parent
> that there is just no room in the program for their child."[74]

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[70] "2008 Annual Report," 9.
[71] "2011 Annual Report," 4.
[72] "2008 Annual Report," 5.
[73] "2011 Annual Report," 7.
[74] "2011 Annual Report," 6.

When NJ Youth Corps participants begin their work at the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, they start with extensive training by museum staff that includes identifying each student's strengths and best fit within the institution. Co-Director Patnosh describes the difficult process of training a new staff every four months; "It's always hard to break in new groups. Assessing strengths, academic level, and potential behavioral issues has to be done quickly. For every ten students we'll get two great presenters, three okay presenters, and five that are really shy. The ones that aren't comfortable presenting will get a variety of jobs, including building, painting, cleanup for exhibits, book delivers and donations, and park cleanups."[75]

Program Observation

During a morning museum visit on January 26, 2013, a group of thirty four preschool students from Orange, NJ participated in tours and programming at the museum. Youth Corps students led tours, acted as experiment assistants, and performed in puppet shows. The eight students (four male and four female) had completed their GEDs, and were the last of their group to continue working in the program, prior to starting college or being placed in jobs. The visiting preschoolers were split into groups of three, and rotated through "The Tomb of the Ancient Kings," "The Stargazer," and "International Main Street" exhibitions. The groups then reconvened for a final stop at "Roscoe's House" for a puppet show, which rounded out their two hour visit.

"The Tomb of the Ancient Kings" tour, though supervised by a full-time adult museum employee, was conducted completely by two NJ Youth Corps students. The young female presenter led the preschool students on a treasure hunt through an Egyptian Pyramid, and guided

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[75] Patnosh, interview, January 25, 2013.

her charges to find and interpret clues with enthusiasm, asking questions such as "Are you guys ready to find some treasure? What kind of treasure do you think we're going to find? What would you want to find?" The teenage presenter related content to her audience at an age appropriate level, guided her students to learn and repeat key vocabulary, and engaged students kinesthetically through hand motions that connected the exhibit's story to the children's lives. Her actions revealed training in museum education techniques, and successfully engaged the visiting preschoolers. Her partner, a teenage male, served as the group's "caboose" and acted in a safety and supervision role as the three-to-five year olds climbed down ladders and through trap doors during the treasure hunt. The young man effectively comforted students who became scared of dark spaces, and interacted well with the preschoolers on a one-on-one level.

In "The Stargazer" and "International Main Street" exhibits, NJ Youth Corps participants acted in support roles as full time museum employees led experiments and tours. In "Stargazer" two male NJ Youth Corps members assisted the visiting preschoolers in performing polymer-based science experiments. In "International Main Street" a female NJ Youth Corps member led preschoolers into the exhibit in a parade, after an introduction by an adult employee.

The final component of the visit was a puppet show at "Roscoe's House," which was narrated by a full time museum employee, and performed entirely by NJ Youth Corps students. The puppet shows provide shyer youth the opportunity to speak up, according to Patnosh; "They really come out of their shells behind that curtain."

After the preschoolers left, the NJ Youth Corps participants shared their experience about the program with this author. The eight students had all initially heard about the NJ Youth Corps/Jersey Explorer Children's Museum program through friends and family members. When

asked about their expectations prior to starting the program, they answered that they were looking for both GED completion and general job experience. Specific skills that the youth felt they gained through their association with the museum included communication, hosting, acting, patience and tolerance, customer/audience service, job enthusiasm, and how to work with children of different ages. One young man identified his favorite part of working at the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum as working with younger kids, particularly special needs children.[76]

The majority of the students interviewed were moving on to college after the program, with two progressing straight to careers. None of the students seemed to be more likely to choose a career in museums as a result of this experience. The young woman who began the program intending to become a mechanic still wanted to become a mechanic, and other students intending to continue onto medical fields (including ultrasound technicians and nurses aids) had not changed their minds on their intended futures. However, the students did identify themselves as being more likely to visit museums in the future. "If they're, like, a science or wax museum, yeah, I'd go," said one young man.[77] Another young woman indicated she'd visit if she had a family in the future; "Yes, I'd go to children's museums when I have kids. I don't know if I'd have thought of that before [the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum]."[78]

Search Institute Analysis

The results of the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum/NJ Youth Corps partnership can be viewed not only from the perspective of successful GED completion, but by identifying which Search Institute Developmental Assets the program meets for participating youth. Basic Asset categories include;

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[76] New Jersey Youth Corps Participant A, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 25, 2013.
[77] New Jersey Youth Corps Participant B, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 25, 2013.
[78] New Jersey Youth Corps Participant C, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 25, 2013.

"External Assets:
       Support
       Empowerment
       Boundaries and Expectations
       Constructive Use of Time
Internal Assets:
       Commitment to Learning
       Positive Values
       Social Competencies
       Positive Identity"[79]

(See pages 19-21 for the full Developmental Assets listing).

While New Jersey Youth Corps may have gained Internal Assets as a result of the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum program, identification of these unobservable benefits was beyond the scope of this thesis. External Assets, however, are easily identifiable aspects of programming, and are explored below.

Within the "Empowerment" category, the program provides "Community Values Youth," "Youth as Resources," and "Service to Others" assets. By putting youth in leadership roles and giving them the opportunity to build and operate the museum, the museum indicates that they value the teens' participation and talents. Book drive and park clean-up group activities fulfill community service needs.

Among "Boundaries and Expectations" assets, access to "Adult Role Models," "High Expectations," and "Creative Activities" were provided. The firm leadership from Jersey Explorer Children's Museum employees, goals for academic and work skills excellence, and creative activities including exhibit construction and play acting all contribute to giving participating students access to these assets.

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[79] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

Case Study #2:

New Jersey Historical Society Partners in Learning

The 'difference' that the Historical Society makes is not assessed solely through how much history one learns but also how quality of life is improved, in this case through the development of parenting skills including the ability to use cultural institutions as a resource vis-à-vis their children. The community's well-being – that of teen parents and their children as well as the greater community in which they reside – is prioritized and enhanced by participation in this program.[80]

-Claudia Ocello, "Being Responsive to Be Responsible"

History and Mission

The New Jersey Historical Society, the oldest cultural institution in New Jersey, is

located in downtown Newark. Since its founding in 1845 the New Jersey Historical Society has

been an institution dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of New Jersey state history.[81]

It is currently located at 52 Park Place in Newark, in the historic building that formerly housed

the Essex Club. The New Jersey Historical Society's mission is as follows:

> "The New Jersey Historical Society is a state-wide, private, non-profit historical museum, library, and archives dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the rich and intricate political, social, cultural and economic history of New Jersey to the broadest possible audiences."[82]

The New Jersey Historical Society continues to describe its purposes on its website:

> "Through the history of New Jersey - a quintessentially American place - the Historical Society promotes exploration of our cultures, past and present. As we challenge and

[80] Claudia Ocello, "Being responsive to be responsible," in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*, ed. Janet Marstine (New York: Routledge, 2011), 188.

[81] "Who We Are," The New Jersey Historical Society, accessed March 18, 2013, http://www.jerseyhistory.org/whoweare.html.

[82] "Who We Are," The New Jersey Historical Society, accessed March 18, 2013, http://www.jerseyhistory.org/whoweare.html.

inspire people to grow as learners and thinkers, we strive to make a difference in their lives."[83]

Current Museum Operations

The New Jersey Historic Society operates out of a revitalized area of downtown Newark, located near the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The Historical Society's building lends four floors to exhibitions, collections, and classroom spaces, with the fifth floor hosting the New Jersey Historical Society Library. Exhibitions on display in 2013 include "Feast Your Eyes: The Unexpected Beauty of Vegetable Gardens," "What's Going On? Newark and the Legacy of the Sixties," "Ebb and Flow: New Jersey and Its Rivers," in addition to a temporary exhibition on the Newark Riots.

The New Jersey Historical Society's collections are, according to statements on the organization's web site, "the physical records of New Jersey's past and present."[84] The museum's collections include "costumes, furniture, paintings, prints, ceramics, glass, [and], tools." When combined with the Library's archival holdings, the collections comprise what the Society's web statement calls "the largest and finest collection of New Jersey-related material in existence."[85]

The New Jersey Historical Society includes in its audiences the greater Newark population, and provides programming and services for families, school groups, individual visitors, visitors with disabilities, and adults. The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am to 5:00pm throughout the year, and charges a low entrance fee for non-Historical Society members.

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[83] "Who We Are," The New Jersey Historical Society, accessed March 18, 2013, http://www.jerseyhistory.org/whoweare.html.
[84] "Explore our Collections," The New Jersey Historical Society, accessed March 20, 2013. http://www.jerseyhistory.org/explorecoll.php.
[85] "Explore our Collections," The New Jersey Historical Society, accessed March 20, 2013. http://www.jerseyhistory.org/explorecoll.php.

Program Description

In the late 1990s, The New Jersey Historical Society founded "Partners in Learning," a

program established for the cultural enrichment of young parents in conjunction with Barringer

High School in Newark, New Jersey and grant funding from the Institute of Museum and Library

Services (IMLS). The program ran from 1999 until 2009, when funding for the program ran out.

The New Jersey Historical Society has recently received new funding for Partners in Learning,

and will reinstate the program in the fall semester of 2013.[86]

Sally Yerkovich, former Director of the New Jersey Historical Society, explained that the

New Jersey Historical Society's initial reason for starting Partners in Learning came from a

desire for more teenaged museum visitors; the Historical Society was often busy in the mornings

with visiting school children, but the afternoons found the museum empty. By attracting

teenagers, Yerkovich hoped to increase visitation in the after-school hours.[87] From there, the

Historical Society decided to focus on teen parents. Yerkovich wrote in her introduction to "First

Steps: A Scrapbook and Guide for Young Parents, Museums, and Community Partners;"

> "When we asked a young mother recently why she seldom visited museums before
> participating in The New Jersey Historical Society's *Partners in Learning* program, she
> said, 'People look at you funny. They think you are a kid and you have a kid yourself. I
> never felt like I knew what to do.' In 1998, believing that teens and their children are an
> ideal audience for the kinds of interactive programs and exhibitions that we offer, we
> decided to address this problem."[88]

Claudia Ocello, Curator of Education at the time the program began, describes the beginnings of

the Partners in Learning;

> "We approached a high school in the urban center of Newark, New Jersey, in the late
> 1990s to see about working with teenagers. The Director of the Infant-Toddler Center at

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[86] Maribel Jusino-Iturralde, interview by Sarah Adlis, March 2, 2013.

[87] Dr. Sally Yerkovich, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 22, 2013.

[88] Maribel Jusino-Iturralde, Claudia Ocello, and Janet Rassweiler, *First Steps: A Scrapbook and Guide for Young Parents, Museums, and Community Partners* (Newark: The New Jersey Historical Society, 2002), 8.

Barringer High School, where many teen mothers would leave their children in day care while they completed classes during the school day, noted that her required program teaching child development and healthy baby care to these young parents lacked a 'cultural component.'"[89]

The goals of Partners in Learning, according to information filed by Claudia Ocello for a 2002 American Association of Museums Award for Excellence in Museum Programming, were as follows;

"Outcome 1- Teen parents will enhance their parenting skills and interaction with their children.
Outcome 2- Teen Parents and their children will feel welcome and comfortable in a museum environment.
Outcome 3- Teen Parents will be empowered with the confidence and tools to use cultural institutions in their communities.
Outcome 4- Increase awareness of cultural institutions in their communities as learning resources."[90]

The program sought to achieve these objectives by bringing the young parents to the New Jersey Historical Society for a series of eight visits over the course of a semester. The outlines and purposes of each visit are described in "First Steps: A Scrapbook and Guide for Young Parents, Museums, and Community Partners," a handbook designed to be used both by young parents participating in the program, and by other museums wishing to implement the Partners in Learning model at their own institutions.[91]

Visit one takes place at the young parents' high school, where the program is introduced, questionnaires are administered, and young parents complete their first journal entry.[92] Visit two brings the young parents to museum without their children. While there, young parents become familiar with the museum, learn how to interact with their children at museums and complete a

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Ocello, 193.
[90] Claudia Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002" (grant application notes, New Jersey Historical Society, 2002), 4-11.
[91] Jusino-Iturralde et al, iii, 13-77.
[92] Jusino-Iturralde et al, iii, 13.
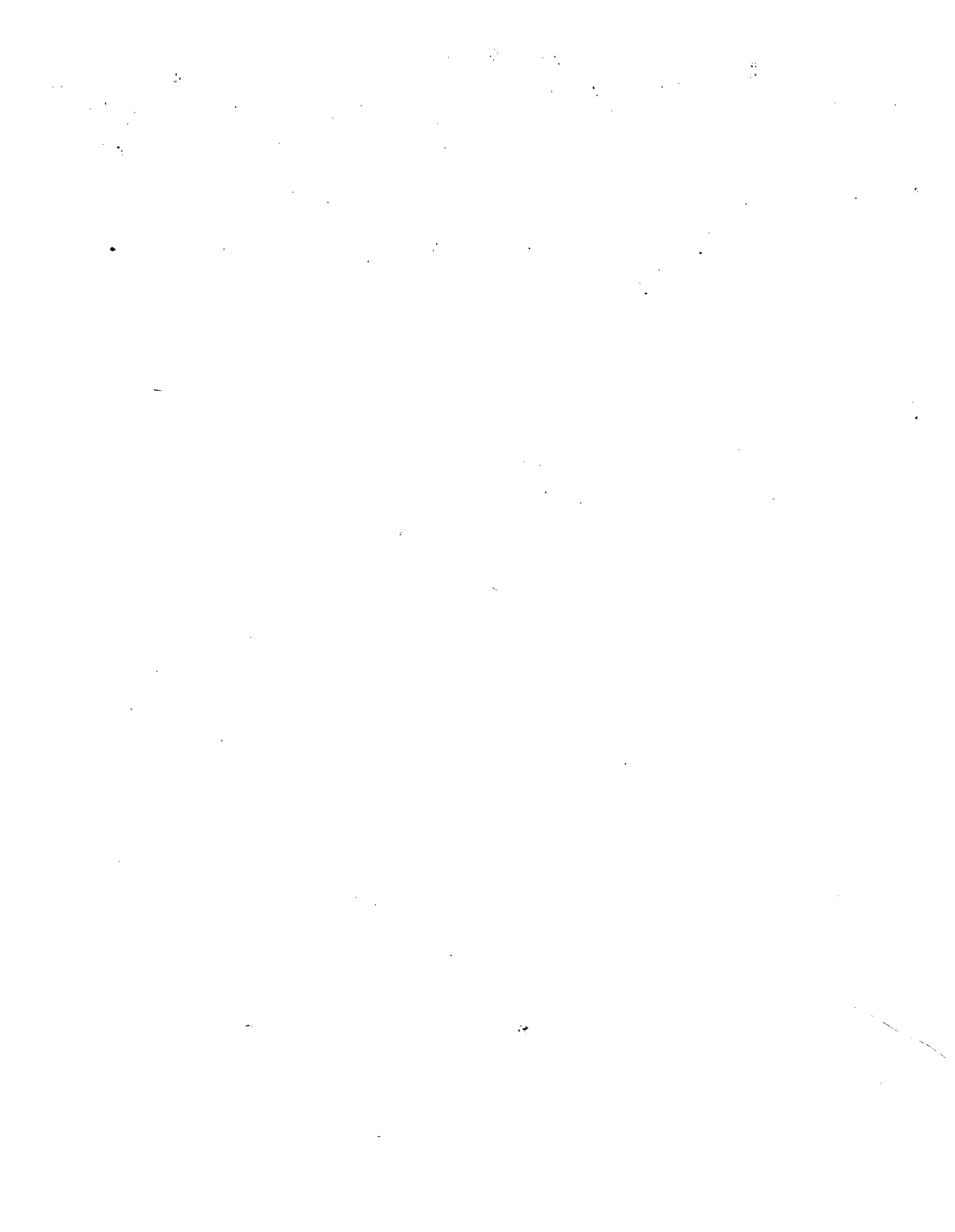
second journal entry. They also discuss the importance of visiting museums, including what to do while there and what parents can expect from a museum.[93] Visit three again brings the young parents to the museum without their children. Young parents explore how their children think and learn through role playing activities. Young parents complete a third journal entry and discuss the importance of interacting positively with their children as well as what their children might expect from a museum.[94]

It isn't until the fourth visit that participating young parents visit the museum with their children. During this visit to the museum, parents introduce their children to the museum galleries and practice what they have learned during other visits. Young parents also practice creating homemade playdough with their children, and discuss the importance of fine motor skills. Parents complete a fourth journal entry, take pictures of their children learning at the museum, and "review the importance of interaction and expectations of children in museums."[95]

Visit number five brings parents to the museum alone once more. Young parents practice calling other museums and cultural institutions to get information about visiting with their children, and research local museums they might want to take their children to. Parents complete their fifth journal entry, and discuss the importance of planning a museum with their children ahead of time.[96]

During their sixth visit, young parents practice the strategies they have learned from previous experiences by visiting a second cultural institution as a group with their children. Parents introduce their children to a few galleries and practices the techniques they have learned. Parents complete a sixth journal interview, and discuss the importance of interacting with their

[93] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 19.

[94] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 27.

[95] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 37.

[96] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 49.

children at museums, as well as the importance of keeping museum visits within their children's interests and attention spans.[97]

Visit seven takes young parents and their children to a local library, where parents visit the children's section, read to their children, and sign up for library cards. Parents complete a seventh journal entry, and review the importance of interacting with their children in library settings, and reading to their children at home.[98]

The eighth and final visit of the program is held at the hosting institution. A graduation ceremony is held for the young parents who have completed the program, parents complete their final journal entry, fill out program evaluations, and discuss the importance of continuing to visit cultural institutions with their children.[99]

While Partners in Learning ran at the New Jersey Historical Society, the museum paid for buses to bring the young parents, their teachers, teacher's aides, and children to and from Barringer High School.[100] One cycle of the Partners in Learning program ran each school year, with fifteen to eighteen young parents participating (depending upon the number of young parents who chose to enroll in the Barringer's Infant-Toddler Center. All young parents who wished to participate were included). Because the program was a required part of the young parents' curriculum each year, many parents participated in Partners in Learning repeatedly; these veteran parents served as mentors to new participants.[101]

Initially, Partners in Learning attempted to partner with multiple young parent groups, including other high schools and programs for young incarcerated men with children. However,

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[97] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 57.
[98] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 65.
[99] Jusino-Iturralde et al., iii, 77.
[100] Jusino-Iturralde, interview, March 2, 2013.
[101] Jusino-Iturralde, interview, March 2, 2013.

these partnerships were not sustainable, and efforts were focused solely on the young parents at

Barringer High School, made up of mostly young mothers.[102]

Maribel Jusino-Iturralde, current Curator of Education and chief program presenter for

Partners in Learning described the goals of the program in her own words during an interview;

"We were showing teen parents how to visit museums with their families, because they feel like

they don't belong there. When the young parents are here they're not treated as teenagers,

they're parents. A lot of [young parents] don't know about going to the museum…now they'll

constantly go to museums and teach their children [to do] the same thing."[103]

Program Results

Because Partners in Learning was created through funding from an Institute of Museum

and Library Services (IMLS) grant, it was designed with outcome-based evaluations built into

the program.[104] Evaluative data was collected from young parents' questionnaires, journal

entries, program evaluations, and from program observation by museum staff.

The four program outcomes listed on page 40 were each evaluated via the presence or

absence of specific indicators. Those indicators, which included observation, surveys, and

journal responses, were described in Claudia Ocello's 2002 award application, and are included

below.

Outcome #1: "Teen Parents will enhance their parenting skills and interactions with their

children."[105] The first indicator was "Parents' comments on children's interests and behavior in

journal responses." Examples that supported the presence of this indicator were comments such

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[102] Dr. Sally Yerkovich, interview by Sarah Adlis, January 22, 2013.

[103] Jusino-Iturralde, interview, March 2, 2013.

[104] Ocello, interview, March 20, 2013.

[105] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 4.

as the following; "I did not think that my daughter would like the museum. Me not knowing and seeing her react the way she did (excited, happy, and curious) made me say 'I would love to bring her again.'"[106] The second indicator for the first outcome was "Increased activities and interaction with [participant's] children outside of the program parameters."[107] Collected data for this indicator showed that there were 20% increases in parents playing with their children, making things with their children, going on outings, visiting museums, and visiting libraries with their children outside of the program between the first and sixth visits.[108]

Outcome #2, "Teen Parents and their children will feel welcome and comfortable in a museum environment," was evaluated via videotaped and written observations from museum staff. In observed behavior checklists, parents moved confidently through the museum 83% of the time at the New Jersey Historical Society, and up to 91% of the time when visiting the Newark Museum.[109] Observation forms filled out by adults recorded statements such as the following; "I could see the changes in mothers. They are more excited to go out to different places. I think more than children are."[110] Finally, young parents recorded in their journals that "I learned how to enter a museum properly without commotion" and "It helped me communicate with my child without get[ting] or showing him the belt. And now I will not be scared of taking my child out to public places."[111]

Outcome # 3 was "Teen Parents will be empowered with the confidence and tools to use cultural institutions in their communities." The indicator for this outcome was a follow-up survey every three months after the end of each Partners in Learning cycle. A year after the program

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[106] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 4.
[107] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 6.
[108] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 7.
[109] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 9.
[110] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 9.
[111] Ocello, "Notes for Final Report on IMLS Grant for Adolescent Parents Program 2002," 9.

ended, 33% of parents had taken their children to cultural institutions other than the New Jersey Historical Society.

The fourth and final outcome was "Increase awareness of cultural institutions in their communities as learning resources." One indicator measured the number of parents who called cultural institutions on their own. 82% of young parents successfully completed this indicator. Young parents also brainstormed potential local cultural institutions to visit, though the results of the brainstorming session were not recorded.

When asked how Partners in Learning helped them with their child, young parents' responses included the following;

"It helped me have a better communication with my child;" "It helped me out and I learned how to take my some to the library and how he will act out;" "It is a way good program because it teaches a lot of things and how to understand our kids better."[112]

Search Institute Assets Analysis

The results of the Partners in Learning program goes beyond successful completion of the outcomes identified by the New Jersey Historical Society, and includes Search Institute Developmental Assets. Again, basic Asset categories include;

"External Assets:
    Support
    Empowerment
    Boundaries and Expectations
    Constructive Use of Time
Internal Assets:
    Commitment to Learning
    Positive Values
    Social Competencies

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[112] Jusino-Iturralde et al., 81.

Positive Identity"[113]

The External Assets young parents gained through their association with the museum are explored below.

Developmental Assets for Adolescents from the Search Institute were accessible by Partners in Learning participants within "Support," "Empowerment," "Boundaries and Expectations," and "Constructive Use of Time" categories.

Within "Support" assets, the most clearly defined connection is "Other Adult Relationships." The close relationship program director Marisol formed with young parents gave them opportunities from non-parental support.

Similarly, within the "Boundaries and Expectations" category, "Adult Role Models and Positive Peer Influence" assets were reached through close adult and peer mentoring processes within the program. An "Empowerment" asset met by the program includes "Youth as Resources," by showing young parents through museum explorations that they could be positive resources for their children.

Finally, in the "Constructive Use of Time" asset component, the young parents engaged in "Creative Activities" such as drawing, painting, and sculpting with their children.

(See pages 19-21 for the full Developmental Assets listing.)

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[113] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute*, 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

Case Study #3:
Newark Museum + Explorers Program

"A good museum attracts, entertains, arouses curiosity, leads to questioning – and thus promotes learning."[114]

-Newark Museum founding Director John Cotton Dana.

History and Mission

The Newark Museum, the largest museum in New Jersey, is located in the heart of downtown Newark at 49 Washington Street. The institution was founded in 1909 by museum leader and visionary John Cotton Dana, and has expanded from its original two galleries above the Newark Public Library to its current 80 galleries within the museum complex, which includes (among others) the National Historic Landmark Ballentine House, The Victoria Hall of Science, The Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium, the Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, a 1784 Schoolhouse, and the Newark Fire Museum.[115] Dana's influence is still felt in the museum's commitment to education and experiential learning.

The following is the Newark Museum's Mission Statement;

> "The Newark Museum operates, as it has since its founding, in the public trust as a museum of service, and a leader in connecting objects and ideas to the needs and wishes of its constituencies. We believe that our art and science collections have the power to educate, inspire and transform individuals of all ages, and the local, regional, national and international communities that we serve."[116]

Current Museum Operations

Collections in the Newark Museum include; African, American, Asian, Classical, Contemporary, Decorative arts, a Sculpture Garden, and Natural Science exhibits, in addition to

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[114] John Cotton Dana, "Increasing the Usefulness of Museums," in *The New Museum: Selected Writings by John Cotton Dana*, ed. William A. Peniston (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1999): 121.

[115] "About the Museum," *The Newark Museum*, 2013, http://www.newarkmuseum.org/About.html.

[116] "About the Museum," *The Newark Museum*, 2013, http://www.newarkmuseum.org/About.html.

numerous temporary and traveling exhibitions. In 1979 the museum added its prestigious Tibetan Art collection, the installation of which was overseen by the Dali Lama.[117] The African art collection continues to expand, and the museum will soon open new exhibition space dedicated to a larger permanent African art exhibition.

The museum welcomes dozens of school groups every month, and dedicates its morning weekday operating hours solely to visiting students on field trips. The museum offers a full array of public programming as well, including docent-led tours, family festivals, cinema showings, lectures, theater performances, and more.

The greater Newark Community is a large population which is economically, culturally, and demographically diverse. The City of Newark began an urban revitalization starting in the late twentieth century. According to the 2010 Newark Museum Fact Sheet, "The Museum, long the cornerstone of the City of Newark's cultural life, is one of the key leaders of the city's renaissance."[118] The 2010 Census Fact Sheet states that 26.1% of Newarkers lived below the poverty level, and 31% had education levels below that of a high school degree.[119] The Newark Museum admission is free for Newark residents, and invites all to visit the museum and attend its largely free public programming events. The Newark Museum Explorer website totals the Newark Museum's on-site, outreach, and web audience at 1.7 million visitors.[120]

On the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary in 2009, the Newark Museum commemorated its past and identified its goals for its future;

[117] "General Facts Sheet," *The Newark Museum,* 2013, http://www.newarkmuseum.org/uploadedFiles/PDFs/Press_Office/2010/fact_sheet_032910.pdf.

[118] "General Facts Sheet," *The Newark Museum,* 2013, http://www.newarkmuseum.org/uploadedFiles/PDFs/Press_Office/2010/fact_sheet_032910.pdf.

[119] "State and County QuickFacts: Newark, New Jersey," *United States Census Bureau,* January 10, 2013, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/34/3451000.html.

[120] "About Us," *The Newark Museum + Explorer Program,* April 2012, http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/about_us.

"Contemporary innovations in collecting and presentation;
the relationship of objects in our collection to the needs of our community;
interdisciplinary projects in the humanities and sciences;
expanding the definition of art;
and global interconnections."[121]

Explorers Program

The Newark Museum Explorers Program was founded, according to the program's web

publications, in 1995 as part of the YouthALIVE movement, funded by the Dewitt Wallace

Readers Digest fund and the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). The goal of

programs funded by these start-up grants was "the development of programs in museums that

could provide positive work and learning opportunities for young people."[122] The program is

currently funded via the science department, event budgets, and special exhibition budgets.

Explorers are often called "Science Explorers," and the core content related to the program stems

from science-related lessons and activities.

According to the The Newark Museum + Explorer Museum website, today the Newark

Museum Explorer Program is "a successful college and job preparedness program that provides

invaluable education, employment, and mentioning opportunities to urban youth."[123] Susan

Petroulas, Senior Manager of Science Education at the Newark Museum, identifies the goal of

the program; "To prepare students for their lives in the future. It's job preparedness. It's

responsibility."[124]

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[121] "General Facts Sheet," *The Newark Museum*, 2013,
http://www.newarkmuseum.org/uploadedFiles/PDFs/Press_Office/2010/fact_sheet_032910.pdf.
[122] "About Us," *The Newark Museum + Explorer Program*, April 2012,
http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/about_us.
[123] "About Us," *The Newark Museum + Explorer Program*, April 2012,
http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/about_us.
[124] Petroulas, interview, March 12, 2013.

The program admits a group of twelve to fifteen high school sophomores each year, who remain with the program through their senior year. There are two main components of the program; workshops, training, and education within the Explorer curriculum, which each grade level group receives; and a paid internship. The general Explorer curriculum is designed to, as Petroulas describes it, "to open their minds to learning and possibilities."[125] Workshops, which Explorers attend with their grade level groups twice a month, range in topic from learning theory and classroom management (in preparation for the student's roles as Summer Camp teachers) to art and science concepts. Explorer Program Director Chidi Agostinelli explains, "We try to make our curriculum fun, and not school-like. We believe in constructivist learning, and we want to be experiential."[126]

Newark Museum Explorers are recruited from Newark Area high schools. Explorer Program Director Chidi Agostinelli distributes applications to Newark teachers and guidance counselors, and receives many applicants that learned about the program through word of mouth.[127] Between fifty and sixty freshmen apply during the spring of each school year for up to fifteen spots. Students are accepted to the Explorers program based not on grades or extracurricular involvement, but on potential and passion. Agostinelli explains; "We don't look at grades. It's a very time demanding program. We look at their willingness to learn, looking to dive into diverse things in the arts and science fields."[128] Once students are accepted, they begin by attending orientation and by completing 30 volunteer hours the summer before their sophomore year. These volunteer hours, in addition to helping the students determine whether the program is right for them or not, also gives Agostinelli the opportunity to learn whether the

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[125] Petroulas, interview, March 12, 2013.
[126] Chidi Agostinelli, interview by Sarah Adlis, March 7, 2013.
[127] Agostinelli, interview, March 7, 2013.
[128] Agostinelli, interview, March 7, 2013.

students' hearts are in the program, or if they are only in it for the paid internship. "It's a job and more," says Agostinelli. "The learning comes before the internship. The internship's a bonus."[129]

In addition to general grade level workshops, Explorers choose to join any number additional Explorer groups and departments, in which they conduct their paid internships. Explorers work four hours a week during the school year, and twenty hours a week during the summer for their individual departments, earning a rate of $7.50 per hour.[130] Explorers may choose internships from the following departments; Family Events, *Dynamic Earth* exhibition ambassadors; the Membership Department; Special Events; Junior Museum Summer Camp; the Museum Shop; Visitor Services; the Library; School Programs; Information Technology; *Dynamic Earth* Chemistry Lab ambassadors; *Nanotechnology* exhibition ambassadors ; *EmPOWERED* exhibition ambassadors; *Generation Fit* exhibition ambassadors; *African Cosmos* art ambassadors; the Administrative Department; and the Media department (which includes the Newark Explorer Film, Website, and Editorial teams).[131] The experiences the Explorers gain in their departments of choice (which change throughout their participation) give them practical exposure to different working areas of the museum. It is through these internships that Explorers gain the "accountability and career preparedness" that Chidi Agostinelli emphasizes in the Explorers Program.[132]

Program outcomes are measured by the following criteria; successful completion of the Explorer Program; increased job skills; the achievement of a High School diploma; and movement of Explorers on to a college or university. In the five years since Chidi Agostinelli has

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[129] Agostinelli, interview, March 7, 2013.

[130] Agostinelli, interview March 7, 2013.

[131] "About Us," *The Newark Museum + Explorer Program,* April 2012, http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/about_us.

[132] Agostinelli, interview, March 7, 2013.

been Explorer Program director, 100% of Explorers who have completed the program have graduated from High School and gone on to attend college.[133]

Program Observation

An initial observation of the Explorer Program on March 8, 2013 took place at a bi-monthly workshop meeting of the senior class. Seven members of the group attended, including two male and five female students. The workshop was presided over by Explorer Program Director Chidi Agostinelli, with guest training for the Explorers provided by Senior Manager of Science Education Susan Petroulas. The Explorers came to the Newark Museum on a Thursday after school for a workshop on Classroom Management, which would prepare them to teach the upcoming summer's Science Camp. The Explorers will be teaching the three to eight year old groups at the Camp. Prior to the meeting, group camaraderie was observable within the Explorers group, and between the Explorers and director Agostinelli.

Susan Petroulas led a classroom management exercise in which Explorers wrote potential behavioral or management issues they might experience during their Summer Camp teaching experiences. Situations were then drawn out of a hat, and the ways in which the Explorers might handle them were discussed among the group. Petroulas related their discussions back to learning theories the group had been studying, and even used the Explorers' own group behavior to demonstrate classroom management strategies. When the meeting turned into individual conversations, Petroulas regained group control showed students how they could do the same in their own classrooms. Explorers used their prior experiences working with the public at the Newark Museum to inform their discussions on classroom management. During discussions they demonstrated knowledge of age-appropriate activities and child development.

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[133] Agostinelli, interview, March 7, 2013.

When concluding the activity, Explorers responded that they had found the exercise helpful. In a further display of group camaraderie, when a female Explorer declared from the exercise she had learned the following; "I found out that I'm a horrible teacher, I don't know what to do!", another Explorer replied with "That's because you haven't done it yet- you'll be great!"

A second observation occurred on March17th, 2013 during Nano Day, a Family Festival staffed almost exclusively by Explorers. The Saturday afternoon event had Explorers presiding independently Festival stations including; sixteen different demonstration tables; acting as a lab assistant; manning seven interactives in three exhibitions; operating planetarium shows; and manning the gift shop.

Two Explorers interviewed about their experience in the Explorer program provided feedback about how the Explorers program has affected them. One student, a young woman from Newark's Science Park High School, identified the most valuable parts of her experience as "The friendships, and the communication skills. You learn how to interact with other people."[134] As a Gift Shop intern, she revealed that "You learn how to deal with people in so many different circumstances. It's improv. I try to please the customers and be helpful." Once she graduates from high school, she will move on to college, where she will study to become a teacher. Working with children in the Summer Science Camps as part of her Explorer internship helped her determine her path; "The constant interaction with five to six year olds opened my eyes to wanting to teach as a career. If I hadn't worked [in the Explorers program] that first summer, I would probably still be confused about what I want to do."[135]

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[134] Explorer A, interview, March 12, 2013.
[135] Explorer A, interview, March 12, 2013.

Another student, who wants to study occupational therapy, credits the Explorers Program with her love for science and her wish to work with and help people; "It's helped me become a more outgoing person, to be more comfortable presenting to people and leading activities."[136]

Past Explorers' experiences are posted on the Explorer Program website as well. One young man's experience revealed that, for him, the program met its goals;

> "Living in Newark, New Jersey, where it is not cool or common to excel in science, I was told to give up all hope of a science related career because my race, economic status, and social background would prohibit me from thinking analytically as others. The Science Explorer Program has been much more than an internship; it has been my portal into the fascinating science world."[137]

The Explorer, who graduated from high school in 2009, went on to major in Biology at Penn State. Other Explorers found personal benefits in areas other than science. One Explorer, who went on to study English at Rutgers, wrote that "The Science Explorer Program taught me to communicate with others on a professional level, as well as form lasting bonds with my peers."[138] Another Explorer, a future Education major, expressed that "The Science Explorer Program was one of the integral factors that contributed to my progress and maturity as a person and learner. The staff and visitors here have aided me through my years in high school."[139]

Search Institute Assets Analysis

In addition to the science curriculum followed during the Explorers program, at-risk youth gain benefits observable via the Search Institute's Developmental Assets. Again, basic Asset categories include;

[136] Explorer B, interview with Sarah Adlis, March 12, 2013.
[137] "Alumni Testimonials," *Newark Museum + Explorer Program*, April 2013, http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/testimonials .
[138] "Alumni Testimonials," *Newark Museum + Explorer Program*, April 2013, http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/testimonials .
[139] "Alumni Testimonials," *Newark Museum + Explorer Program*, April 2013, http://newarkmuseumexplorers.org/testimonials .

"External Assets:
    Support
    Empowerment
    Boundaries and Expectations
    Constructive Use of Time
Internal Assets:
    Commitment to Learning
    Positive Values
    Social Competencies
    Positive Identity"[140]

First, under the "Support" category, the Explorer program meets the "Adult Relationships" asset. Through the Explorers' close relationship to director Chidi Agostinelli, they receive support from a non-parental adult figure.

Next, under "Empowerment," the program addresses both "Community Values Youth" *and* "Youth as Resources." When Explorers are given the opportunity to lead experiments, teach younger children, man exhibitions, and complete useful museum internships, the museum shows them that they are valued and useful. Also under the umbrella of "Empowerment" is "Service to Others." At the beginning of the program, Explorers volunteer their time to the museum and its visitors, satisfying this External asset.

Finally, the program meets a number of assets within the "Boundaries and Expectations" category. First, the "Adult Role Models" asset is met. By working closely with both the program director and other museum employees through Explorer internships, Explorers see adults model positive, responsible behavior. Next, the "Positive Peer Influence" asset is reached. Explorers have the opportunity to form strong bonds with their fellow participants over the course of the three year program. Finally, and rather obviously, the "Youth Programs" asset is accomplished.

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[140] "Developmental Assets." *The Search Institute,* 2012, http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 .

The long-term nature of the Explorers program creates a consistent Youth Program asset for participating Explorers.

(The full listing of Developmental Assets are on pages 19-21.)

Case Studies: Findings

After investigating the program for at-risk youth at The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, The Newark Museum, and the New Jersey Historical Society, noticeable similarities and differences among the three programs became apparent. By comparing and contrasting these observations, useful information regarding the application of programming for at-risk youth can be ascertained.

Mentoring

Adolescents from each program had mentors available to them. Jersey Explorer Children's Museum Youth Corps participants were mentored by the three full-time museum staff; New Jersey Historical Society young parents were mentored both by program director Marisol and by mothers who had gone through the program before; and Newark Museum Explorers were mentored both by Explorer Program Director Chidi Agostinelli as well as by older students. Adult mentorship in programs for at-risk youth is not unexpected, and it also satisfies the Adult Role Models Developmental Asset. However, mentoring extends further in these programs. All three programs also put their at-risk youth in positions of responsibility or mentorship over younger children. Jersey Explorer Children's Museum youths taught guided tours to elementary school children, Partners in Learning mothers focused intently on guiding their children, and Newark Explorers taught family festivals and summer camps. By putting adolescents in positions of responsibility and authority over younger children, any number of both External and Internal Developmental Assets could be satisfied.

Peer Interaction

Wilkening and Chung note the strong need of adolescents to interact with their peers socially in a museums setting.[141] Each program provided opportunities for teens to socialize and engage with one another during their time at the museum. More significantly, because the programs were all long term (as compared to one-time events), adolescents had opportunities to create peer bonds, and satisfy a "Positive Peer Influence" Developmental Asset.

Grants

All three museums observed received grant money for their programs, suggesting a small monetary benefit. However, the outcomes of the programs are more significant. All three programs for at-risk youth resulted in comments from participating adolescents indicating they were likely to continue visiting museums. These programs not only served the needs of their community, but took steps to create a future visitor-base in the form of these at-risk youth at museums.

Communication & Job Skills

Most importantly, the programs at The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, the New Jersey Historical Society, and the Newark Museum provided participating at-risk youth with communication and job and educational skills necessary for future success. New Jersey Youth Corps participants not only earned their high school degrees, but learned communication and job skills working at the Jersey Explorer Children's Museum. Young parents at the New Jersey Historical Society were given tools to utilize community institutions for continuing education.

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[141] James Chung and Susie Wilkening, *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor: Building Engagement Over a Lifetime* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 2009): 71.

The Newark Explorers gained communication, job, and presentation experience through

internships. This most significant outcome takes the effects of museum programming for at-risk

youth beyond immediate risk-prevention strategies, that continues to affect participants

positively as they progress toward successful adult futures.

Conclusion

As demonstrated, "At-risk youth" benefit not only through content-based learning at museums, but through the social and personal assets found in programming hosted in such institutions. The usefulness and benefits of programming for at-risk youth can be tangibly assessed through the application of the Search Institute's Developmental Assets as an instrument.

Museums can, by welcoming at-risk youth through their doors, address the needs of struggling adolescents in broader scopes than simple fact learning, to the benefit of both participating museums and the teens they serve. Participating youth benefit through access to a number of different External Developmental Assets, and gain social benefits through forces such as "mentorship," "positive peer influence," and "community service," as well as essential communication and job skills training. After establishing the social responsibilities of museums, examining the characteristics and needs of at-risk youth, and identifying the specific social and personal benefits to be gained by participants, case studies from The Jersey Explorer Children's Museum, The New Jersey Historical Society, and the Newark Museum demonstrate tangible and measureable successes for their at-risk youth, as well as personal benefits through the social processes found at the museums. Each museum benefited from their programming as well, and created visitors likely to continue returning to and supporting museums in their successful adult lives.

The Search Institute's Developmental Assets instrument has significant application potential for museums working with at-risk youth, for both internal achievement assessment and potential future grant implications.

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