

Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative:

Evaluation Update

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the BYA Initiative

The Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies (APS), is a four-year initiative of the Youth Development Institute (YDI). The initiative seeks to improve outcomes for young adolescents (ages 9-14) by increasing their participation, engagement, and retention in high quality activities at the Beacon centers.

Beacons are community centers—located in public schools and operated by community-based organizations (CBOs)—that offer a range of activities and services to participants of all ages before and after school, in the evenings, and on the weekends. YDI promotes best practices among Beacons and other out-of-school-time (OST) programs through training, technical assistance, and development of materials. Through national partnerships, YDI assists numerous cities throughout the country in establishing and strengthening Beacons and other OST programs.

Through the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA), participating Beacons are expected to improve their practice and capacity to serve this important age group. As stated in official YDI documents, the BYA initiative has defined the following objectives regarding improvement of participation of young adolescents in out-of-school time programming:

- Increase the knowledge of Beacons as to why some youth participate and why some do not;
- Increase the participation levels of youth and engage youth who are not currently participating;
- Strengthen the capacity of YDI and SFBI (the San Francisco intermediary) to improve the quality of Beacon services to young adolescents;
- Apply and disseminate lessons learned from this work;
- Strengthen policies geared towards young adolescent in the initiative cities as well as nationally.

As of June 2007, a total of 10 Beacons sites are participating in the initiative – seven located in New York City and three located in San Francisco. Of the seven New York City Beacons,¹ four will be Documentation Beacons and three will be Practice Development Beacons.² San Francisco will include only Practice Development Beacons, but plans to use their experiences to educate all eight of

¹ As stated in their December 2007 report to APS, YDI has revised the nomenclature for BYA sites so that they more closely relate to their roles in the initiative: Leadership sites are now known as Documentation sites; Developing sites are known as Practice sites. This change has shifted network focus away from program hierarchy to one of exploring effective and sharing practice no matter where they arise.

² The roles and requirements for Documentation and Practice Development Beacons are clarified in the initial evaluation report, and in updated form in the December 2007 YDI report to APS. Regarding involvement in the initiative, both Documentation Beacons and Practice Development Beacons are invited to network meetings, training and conferences and are eligible to receive specific TA from YDI.

its Beacon programs. All of the Beacons in both sites will be committed to significantly improving the quality of their work with young adolescents and increasing and expanding participation.

The BYA Initiative is overseen by YDI (the BYA intermediary) which also serves as the intermediary for the New York City site. The San Francisco Beacon Initiative (SFBI) serves as the intermediary there. The goals of BYA include capacity development for intermediary organizations as well as Beacons. The Intermediaries administer funds, coordinate implementation and provide training and oversight. The BYA Intermediary (YDI) also oversees and coordinates site interventions and the evaluation, and disseminates information on lessons learned.

BYA is currently in its second program year.³ Prior to this there was a planning period (June 2006 through December 2006), and an extended planning period (January 2007 through May 2007).⁴ The 2nd BYA program year began in 2007. This evaluation report covers the first semester of the 2nd BYA program year (fall 2007).

1.2. Structure and Changes: BYA Initiative New York City

In New York City, the initiative is supporting three Practice Development Beacons (Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon, Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon at JHS 168, St. Nicholas Beacon at the Williamsburg-Grand Street HS Campus). The St. Nicks Beacon was initially a BYA Documentation Beacon, but in response to changing needs it elected at the beginning of program Year 2 to change its status. In addition to the Practice Development Beacons, there are four Documentation Beacons (Queens Community House Beacon at JHS 190, Center for Family Life Beacon at PS 1, Good Shepherd Services Red Hook Community Center Beacon at PS 15, and University Settlement Beacon at East Side Community High School). Additional details about the seven BYA Beacons and BYA context in New York City are available in the initial Evaluation Report, YDI reports June and December 2007 and project archives.

As described in the YDI December 2007 report, there were several contextual factors that shifted since June 2007. This included key staffing changes and a move.

- In August 2007, YDI learned that the Deputy Director and supervisor for BYA would not be returning after a prolonged absence that began mid-June 2007. To enhance support and oversight for BYA, YDI promoted its Director of Education to supervise BYA, and it engaged several leading experts to assist with dissemination planning.⁵
- To reduce overhead and establish a more neutral organizational home, YDI moved from the Fund for the City of New York to a new location co-located with TASC. As clarified in the YDI December 2007 BYA report, YDI is now under the legal aegis of the Tides Center and physically located in mid-town Manhattan.

³ YDI's first funding year of BYA was April 2006 – March 2007. The second year of funding began in April 2007. This report covers activity in alignment with the Beacon calendar, coinciding with the first semester of school-year 2007-08.

⁴ During the planning period final strategies for BYA were determined, a program director was identified, New York City Beacons were selected, an evaluation team from OMG Center for Collaborative Learning was identified and strategies to select a second BYA site were undertaken. During the extended planning period, New York City Beacons finalized their plans and began working together, selection of the second BYA site was finalized, and the BYA evaluation design was finalized and initiated

⁵ Newly engaged experts include: Richard Murphy who helped found the Beacons as Commissioner of the NYC Department of Youth Services; Jean Thomases, who was responsible for the early development of the Good Shepherd Services Red Hook Community Beacon, and Francine Joselowsky, an independent consultant and writer.

University Settlement Beacon at East Side Community High School

University Settlement's Beacon Center at East Side Community High School (ESCHS) was launched in January 2000. The Beacon Program currently serves 1,200 youth in kindergarten through 12th grade, and their families. The Beacon operates comprehensive after-school and day camp programs for elementary-aged children from several neighborhood public and parochial schools, as well as structured middle and high school programming. Literacy is at the core of every component of the Beacon Program. Activities offered through University Settlement's Beacon program are varied, and generally break down into main categories such as Academic support and academic enrichment; creative arts; sports and recreation; enrichment, among others. University Settlement has formed collaborations and referral arrangements with social service organizations and community partners that enhance their ability to run a diverse and engaging Beacon. Beacon academic services also benefit from a partnership with New York University, through which students from The Dean's Service Honor Corps provide tutoring and homework help at the Beacon site.

1.3 Structure and Changes: BYA initiative San Francisco

San Francisco was selected as the second BYA site in the spring of 2007.⁶ The San Francisco Beacons Initiative (SFBI)⁷ is a broad-based public-private partnership that includes the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF – where the initiative offices are located), the San Francisco Unified School District, the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department, community organizations, and local foundations, led by the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

YDI and SFBI operate BYA in the two locations using a mirrored approach. As YDI and the participating New York City Beacons build skills and strategies through the initiative, they share with SFBI. SFBI is expected to utilize what is learned in New York and to share strategies with YDI as well. As of December 2007, the two sites were considering multiple strategies to enhance networking and other communication opportunities between BYA Beacons.

Since June 2007, there have also been some change in the context in which the SFBI operates. New staff were added to the initiative (Aldo Rodriguez, Sylvia Hom), funding was secured for programs and operations, SFBI completed a strategic planning process, and the Beacons Steering Committee was re-established and called to action. The initiative continues to determine how best to integrate Beacons programming with the SFUSD School Health Programs department ExCEL⁸ after school programs which focus on academic development in the out-of-school hours. Many of the SFBI Beacons are ExCEL program partners, but the missions and strategies are not always in alignment.

⁶ Details regarding the selection process are available in the YDI Report to APS, June 2007. YDI has awarded SFBI a grant of \$100,000 for their first year: \$25,000 to SFBI and the remaining \$75,000 to be allocated by SFBI to the three San Francisco Beacon practice development sites.

⁷ There are eight (8) Beacon Centers housed in public schools across the city, three of which are BYA participants. The Beacons provide youth development opportunities before and after-school, on weekends and in summer. Programs are focused on five different areas including education, career development, arts and recreation, leadership and health. The 8 centers now serve nearly 7,000 youth and adults, every year.

⁸ According to their website, the ExCEL programs were created as "safe havens" at public schools where students and community members can access expanded learning opportunities and integrated education, health, social service, and cultural programs in the out-of-school hours. ExCEL After School Programs are currently in 46 elementary, 4 kindergarten through 8th grade, 16 middle, and 5 high schools.

2. Data Collection: Fall 2007

The OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (OMG) has been engaged to conduct a multi-year evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent initiative (2006-07 start-up, 2007-08 and 2008-09 program years).⁹ The evaluation is designed to document and assess changes in practice at Practice Development Beacons and their CBOs, as well as changes in the participation of young adolescents at the Beacons. The evaluation is also designed to document and assess how: 1) BYA strategies are delivered by YDI and SFBI, 2) how Documentation Beacons inform the initiative and are influenced by the initiative, and 3) how partnering organizations in the BYA initiative work together. (For additional details regarding the evaluation, including a list of evaluation questions, please see OMG's BYA Evaluation Design Summary and Evaluation Framework.)

This interim evaluation report covers the first half of the 2nd Beacon program year (summer 2007 – November 2007). The report addresses the following: 1) changes in BYA context in New York City and San Francisco; 2) assessments of and changes in practice at the 3 New York City Practice Development Beacons, and description of current practices with young adolescents at the 3 San Francisco Practice Development Beacons; 3) roles and actions of the two intermediary organizations; 4) participation at the Practice Development Beacons and ongoing efforts to document it; (5) the progress made to-date by the Practice Development and Documentation Beacons, and the intermediary organizations in the work of the initiative. The report concludes with a brief summary assessment of the BYA as it enters its first full year of programming, and a section discussing Issues for Further Consideration including next steps for the evaluation. OMG's data collection and analysis activities during this initial period included:

- Review of proposals submitted by the three Practice Development Beacons in San Francisco and by the new Documentation Site (University Settlement) in New York City.
- Review of YDI's program information including monthly summaries of meetings and other activities, training, relevant literature and other documents. Interviews and regular communication with the BYA Initiative Director.
- Visits to Practice Development Beacons in both sites where directors and key staff (and in some cases other stakeholders) were interviewed, site operations were observed, and attendance/enrollment data were discussed. Attendance at a Beacons Steering Committee meeting in San Francisco.
- Observation of and participation in the first BYA Conference on Participation and Engagement of Young Adolescents.
- Collection and analysis of available young adolescent enrollment and attendance data from all BYA Beacons.¹⁰
- Secondary analysis of Beacon program quality assessments (rubric surveys) from New York City BYA Beacons.¹¹

⁹ During the summer of 2007, OMG submitted a request and was granted New York City Department of Education Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. OMG staff members were fingerprinted, protocols were reviewed externally and all necessary descriptive information was delivered to school principals and Beacon officials.

¹⁰ The system in San Francisco is managed by the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families and has much potential to produce the needed reports. In New York City, the Beacons-on-line system was initiated fall 2007. Beacon staff and directors are currently populating the database with enrollment information, activity summaries and attendance data.

3. Interim Findings¹² (Fall 2007)

3.1. Context of Developing Beacons' BYA work

In New York City, DYCD shifted its contracting requirements for PY 2007-08. For 2007-08, Beacons are contractually obligated to focus their DYCD-supported efforts on middle-school aged participants. Current DYCD requirements demand that Beacons service 150 youth in grades 5 to 8 for 216 hours per year. This change in emphasis largely benefits BYA, but all three of the Practice Development Beacons also reported that it created other challenges. The Beacon design has historically called for services to children, youth, families and other community members, all of the BYA Beacons were challenged to continue providing quality services to non-targeted individuals (especially younger children and other adults). The BYA Beacons clarified that it is sometimes harder to stay focused on quality issues when so much attention is paid to the exact number of hours of service and involvement. Targeting youth is also somewhat counter to the inclusive frameworks by which NYC Beacons have historically operated.

All three of the NYC Practice Development sites continue to enjoy substantial support from their lead agencies. The supervisors of the three BYA Beacons are both informed about and involved with the work of BYA at the Beacons. The Directors described them as supportive and each meets with BYA teams regularly regarding next steps.

While relationships at the schools of two of the NYC Practice Development sites became more productive, BYA's newest Practice Development Beacon has a challenging host environment.

- The school setting of the Parsons Beacon changed substantially. The former Parsons Middle School (JHS 168) closed, and now the Robert F. Kennedy Middle School uses the campus. The Queens School of Inquiry, which opened in 2006-07, added a new grade. Principals from both of the schools were described as very supportive of the Beacon and enrollment by youth increased. Administrators and staff of all three schools at the building were described as working well together.
- A new principal was installed at IS 302, the middle school where the Cypress Hills East New York Beacon is housed. The new principal has expressed support for the Beacon and Beacon staff were allowed to visit classes and orient students regarding Beacon activities and services, for the first time in years.
- The St. Nicholas Beacon is located on a campus that houses three high schools. The Beacon has no indigenous population of middle school students and the school facility has space constraints (high-school programming must be accommodated first), and a questionable reputation in the community. The school-Beacon relationship was described as diplomatic but mostly neutral.

In San Francisco, the three Practice Development Beacons are located in neighborhoods with distinct and somewhat challenging characteristics. The community surrounding the Mission Beacon has a long history of gang rivalry and specific measures must be employed by the school (and the Beacon) to minimize any spill-over violence. The OMI/E Beacon and the Visitacion Valley

¹¹ OMG helped to streamline and finalize the BYA rubric, assisted with data entry and initial analysis and conducted additional analyses per the BYA director's request. OMG plans to continue assisting BYA with use of this important data.

¹² See also the appendix for individual Beacon site visit reports.

Beacon are also located in neighborhoods where violence incidents are common. The Visitation Valley Beacon attributes recent declines in enrollment to specific incidents of violence in the community.

All three San Francisco Beacons indicate they are strongly supported by their sponsoring CBO's and by the work of the SFBI. Key staff in each agency oversee the work of the Beacons and are aware of and plan to be involved with BYA.

All three San Francisco Practice Development Beacons operate in middle schools that serve both their students and other community target youth. Most of the Beacon participants are students from the schools where the Beacons are located, but neighborhood youth who attend other schools come to the Beacons for specific programs and activities.

Relationships with the Host Schools are challenging at two of the three San Francisco BYA Beacons. While the Visitation Valley Beacon enjoys the strong support of its prize-winning principal and many staff members, support from the other two host schools was described as more limited and sometimes strained. Staff at the OMI/E Beacon indicated that while some teachers and counselors were supportive of the Beacon, the initiative does not have the full buy-in of the principal. The program has been dislocated as the school undergoes renovations and at the time of the fall site visit was preparing for another move to a temporary space. Similarly, at the Mission Beacon, space allocations in the school have changed over time. School issues such as high administrative staff turnover and high expectations of the Beacon to meet school academic needs have become stressors.

The most productive strategies for integrating San Francisco Beacon programming and other afterschool efforts have not yet been determined. All three of the Beacon Directors and their staffs, especially those from Mission and OMI/E Beacons, indicated that there is a lot of programming competition in the target neighborhoods. School sports, the ExCEL programs and other enrichment opportunities are also operating in most neighborhoods (see section 1.3 for more details about ExCEL).

3.2. Initial Developing Beacon Practice – San Francisco

All three of the BYA Beacons offer a range of stimulating, age-appropriate activities to youth 9-14 years old. Activities designed to meet the developmental needs of each age group are offered after school, on weekends, and during the summer. Activities offered range from arts and recreation to cooking and a variety of locally appealing enrichment activities like bike clubs, skateboarding, video game production, and media classes. All three of the sites offer academic assistance in very structured ways, and for each it is a requirement of participation in other Beacon activities. The OMI/E Beacon includes a Wellness Program with counseling options, and the Mission Beacon administers the ExCEL program for the school. Each Beacon is conscious of developing and delivering activities that appeal to the target population **and two of the three systematically request input from youth about programs of interest.** Social opportunities, like dances and Movie nights are also part of the offerings, but there is little gender specific programming.

Two of the three Beacons (Visitation Valley and OMI/E) are closely monitoring changes in their populations. They are already trying out incentives to attract specific youths (like those who are particularly at-risk), and to involve current participants in recruitment of others.

3.3. Changing Practices – New York Practice Development Beacons

At both the Practice Development Beacons that have been with the BYA from the start (Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon at JHS 168 and the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon) there has been strategic restructuring and expanded programming for middle school youth. These changes were both numerous and noticeable, and as reported by the directors inspired and informed by BYA.¹³ **The St. Nicholas Beacon began its work as a Practice Development Beacon by changing strategies for the target group.**

- At the Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon, there are now a number of new activities that were inspired by input from youth. This includes activities such as explorers club, salsa dancing, string ensemble, book making, mural painting, science lab, media project, martial arts, team challenges, ultimate gym and hoop camp among others. Special attention has been paid to girls (Girls Only!, girls track and field), and there is an active youth council. For those who need it there is a coordinated literacy program that includes one-on-one and computer assisted training. The number and type of activities has increased substantially adding a richness of opportunity that was not present prior to BYA and the new DYCD-inspired focus on middle schoolers.
- At the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon, the Afterschool program has been re-structured to accommodate a separate middle-school unit. Prior to fall 2007, the Beacon used to combine elementary and middle school students. Since February 2007, through funds for the Advantage School Program, the Beacon is offering two sessions of afterschool exclusively to middle-school aged youth. The program includes multiple activities during the weekdays, from recreational activities, to enrichment and leadership activities. There is structured homework help that includes individual work and peer study, and there are structured activities where middle-school aged youth can serve as role models and leaders with the younger participants. Activities change every 10 weeks. In addition, as a specific action of BYA, the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon has initiated a Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program, and it has changed programming at the Teen Center, include girls-only hours and girl-specific activities such as Hip Hop and step dancing to attract more girls. Like at the Parsons Beacon, this represents a substantial shift of programming inspired at least in part by BYA.
- Prior to 2007, the St. Nicks Beacon had operated a small program for middle school students who were either siblings of younger participants, or who had transitioned up from earlier Beacons involvement. As the DYCD regulations changed and the Beacon became more involved in BYA, it recognized the need to broaden its efforts to attract target-aged youth who had not participated before and to provide them with meaningful activities and opportunities for choice and change.

Both the Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon and the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon hired new staff and re-structured staff responsibilities to better serve middle-school aged participants. The St. Nicks Beacon, though newer as a Practice Development site, recognized the

¹³ Note that the DYCD shift also called for a change in focus at the Beacons. The three directors reported, however, that while the DYCD regulations were a mandate for change, the BYA provides insight about what to do to satisfy the new requirements, and more importantly to ensure that the target population get access to productive and meaningful services and activities.

need to engage older staff while still balancing their commitment to use of local youth and learning-ladders. Specific changes and strategies are described below.

- The Parsons Beacon re-assigned its Deputy Director to oversee all programs for Middle School-aged youth. He formerly oversaw the grade 1 – 5 afterschool center, but had also worked previously with middle-school aged youth during the school year and during summers. He has extensive youth development training and is by his own report and that of his director, interested in and dedicated to the target population. In addition, the Beacon hired a new staff person to develop and provide programming for youth with a specific focus on girls. There are also new consulting arrangements and additional efforts to co-locate services (e.g., wrestling provided by high school coaches, structured basketball clinic hoop camp).
- The Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon hired a new staff member and revised job descriptions somewhat so that staff could focus on their efforts with target youth. Many middle school youth are involved in a specific group (CIT, Intergenerational Leadership), and they have dedicated staff who oversee their Beacon involvement. All staff with BYA-related responsibilities meet weekly to discuss what they are working on, to keep each other apprized of challenges and opportunities, and to seek input from staff not directly involved with their own groups.
- The program staff members at the St. Nicks Beacon are mostly college-bound high school graduates and freshmen/sophomore college students who have had significant exposure to St. Nicks' practice by virtue of having volunteered and participated in the Beacon at a younger age. Beacon leadership believes that having leaders who have been Beacon participants encourages youth to aspire to a "career" with the Beacon. Beacon senior staff also believe that young staff, rather than adults, connect more easily with middle school youth, a belief shared by the parents interviewed. As part of BYA, however, the Beacon is recruiting youth who are at least 18 to serve as group leaders.

All three of the Practice Development Beacons have modified their recruiting efforts. Staff from the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon visited the classrooms of students this fall for the first time in many years. The new principal allowed the recruiting and staff took advantage of the opportunity to describe change and opportunities and to strongly encouraged middle school-aged youth to enroll at the Beacon and participate in its programs. The Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon also visited classrooms during Fall 2007 and for the first time conducted detailed, mandatory orientation sessions for parents/guardians. The Parsons Beacon also continues to work collaboratively with the QSI school to involve their students in Beacon programs. While the St. Nicks Beacon had not initiated a full-press recruitment effort, staff were strategizing about how to attract target youth who had never been to the Beacon before, and were offering incentives to their current participants to bring in friends.

3.4 Intermediary Promotion of Change

Both the YDI and SFBI have developed and initiated multiple strategies to promote change at the participating BYA Beacons. For example, the YDI conducted programming observations at the Practice Development Beacons, provided feedback and worked together with the Beacons to strengthen programs and approaches for the target populations. The YDI also conducted Youth

Development training for staff from both the New York City and San Francisco Beacons.¹⁴ The SFBI has met regularly, by phone with the YDI and requested training assistance from them. Additionally, they are currently strategizing internally with the Beacons Steering Committee to determine next steps.

SFBI helped Practice Development sites organize focus groups with youth and parents/guardians. Through the focus groups, the Beacons had the opportunity to systematically collect information directly from members of the target population and other key spokespersons. SFBI continues to help the Beacons to analyze and plan for use of the information. **YDI has also begun reviewing how Focus Groups can best be used at Practice Development and Documentation Beacons in New York.** They plan to work on this more during winter/spring 2008.

YDI conducted the first BYA Conference on Participation and Engagement of Young Adolescents. YDI hosted this event in October 2007 and it was attended by 55 people representing four different Beacon cities (New York, San Francisco, West Palm Beach and Minneapolis). As stated in their December 2007 report, the conference highlighted practices, activities and organizational structures that support the participation and engagement of young adolescents. Participants had the opportunity to hear from experts in the field about both current and historical issues of significance regarding Beacons, to learn about promising outreach and retention practices from noted expert Priscilla Little from the Harvard Family Research Project, to participate in panels involving New York City Documentation Beacon representatives, and to attend site visits to local Beacon programs. (For more details about the conference see the YDI December 2007 report.) Initial response to the conference was very positive. Spring evaluation interviews will include questions about actions resulting from conference learning

4. BYA Progress

NYC Practice Development Beacons

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Both the Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon and the Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon have formed BYA teams to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative. These teams include diverse staff and the person responsible BYA oversight. The teams are scheduled to meet regularly, attend YDI BYA meetings and to interact with others at the lead agency and with the BYA network as needed/desirable. The St. Nicks Beacon has not yet constituted its team, but it is aware of the need to do so.

Staff who serve the target population have attended YDI Youth Development training and are able to provide training internally. All three practice development Beacons had staff who attended YDI Advanced Youth Development training. They described the training as positive and constructive but also indicated that more staff need to participate. Though internal staff can now provide some of the training, Beacon directors indicated that more training at YDI (and at times other than during program hours) is most desirable.

¹⁴ New York City Beacon staff are encouraged to attend training that is ongoing in the city. A special two-day training session was conducted by YDI staff for San Francisco Beacon directors and staff in San Francisco, in collaboration with the SFBI Director.

Feedback from the YDI has been provided, but there is still some uncertainty regarding TA plans and purpose. The Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon and Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon directors both reported they had been visited by and received feedback from BYA staff from the YDI. But they were still unclear about the specific structure and purpose of Technical Assistance and site visits in particular.

Cross-Beacon exchanges have been limited so far. At the time of the evaluation sites visits, the Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon indicated that cross-Beacon exchanges had been limited and somewhat incidental. The Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacon director indicated that there had been none. Both directors indicated that they desired more interaction with other beacons involved in BYA including more facilitated site visits to other beacons. They were also interested in opportunities to take advantage of the BYA network and to visit both Documentation sites and the San Francisco Beacons. The BYA Conference provided the opportunity to initiate Cross-Beacon site visits and YDI plans to continue these throughout winter/spring 2008.

The role of the Documentation Beacons is still evolving. All BYA Beacons are being asked to be more proactive regarding roles. Although representatives from both Documentation and Practice Development Beacons have indicated that their interactions at BYA network meetings have been beneficial, at the time of the evaluation site visits, the role of the Documentation Beacons remained unclear. All three Practice Development Beacon directors indicated their interest in learning from the Documentation sites, but expressed uncertainty regarding strategies to do so. At the November BYA meeting additional discussions were conducted about meeting formats/structure, supports and resources from YDI. Documentation and Practice Development Beacons were asked to take on more ownerships of the work, and were provided with opportunities to talk about topics they want to address through the network.

Capacity to track enrollment and attendance data has improved with the implementation of the Beacons-on-line system. Additionally, all three Practice Development Beacons clarified their needs to analyze available data to inform recruitment and programming. System challenges remain, however. See also section 4.4.

San Francisco Practice Development Beacons

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Only one of the three Practice Development Beacons in San Francisco had formed a specific BYA team and identified a leader for BYA efforts. All of the San Francisco Practice Development sites, and the SFBI director saw the first BYA conference as the true kick-off to their efforts. With the exception of Visitacion Valley Beacon, their plans were to return from the conference and begin team formation. Future evaluation efforts will update this status. Junior staff at all three sites had little familiarity with BYA.

San Francisco Practice Development Beacon staff attended and responded favorably to the training provided by YDI. Junior staff, however, were not yet aware of the training. Directors and senior staff who attended the two-day training conducted by the YDI in San Francisco were very positive about it. They indicated that the level was appropriate and that they learned valuable and practical information, especially about strategic planning.

The three Beacons and SFBI leaders all viewed the first BYA conference as the true kick-off to BYA. By late fall it is expected that teams will be established and a framework for action will be developed. Future evaluation site visits will track responses to the conference.

All Beacon staff value the effective communication and overall support of the SFBI.

As part of BYA and Beacon networking, San Francisco Practice Development Beacons participate in valuable cross-Beacon exchanges. All San Francisco Beacons participating in the BYA initiative meet monthly together with the SFBI to strategize and plan how to network and exchange promising practices.

Self Assessment of Important Beacon Practices

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Since BYA began, the YDI has been developing a rubric to clarify the continuum of change expected at BYA Beacons (see YDI December 2007 report for a copy of the rubric scale items). This rubric, though still in draft form, provides a framework for YDI technical assistance to BYA Beacons. As stated in the December 2007 YDI Report to APS, the rubric is an important part of the YDI on-site technical assistance strategy that identifies practices and assesses program quality at both Documentation and Practice Development Beacons. Using the rubric as a guide, BYA Beacons will develop action plans that support an increase in participation and engagement of young adolescents.

In the fall of 2007, YDI distributed a comprehensive program assessment tool to each of the BYA Beacons in New York. This survey-like tool, based on the BYA rubric¹⁵ asked Beacon staff to clarify whether they employed certain actions in each of five areas: enrollment, attendance, engagement, retention and organization and agency supports. Directors at the BYA Beacons were asked to distribute the rubric-based assessment tool to members of their BYA teams (and significant others where needed). The combined responses of Directors and staff to all individual items were then recorded in an electronic database and summarized for each Beacon. The YDI will use this database along with the rubric to guide future TA efforts. Specifically, Beacons will review positive practices they are not currently undertaking (e.g., *Beacon staff promotes enrollment of participating and non-participating young adolescents and has structures and practices in place to ensure their continuous recruitment*) and seek assistance to incorporate those efforts. Additionally, the YDI now knowing which areas are most challenging for groups of Beacons, will tailor its group efforts to address common challenges. Assessment results will also serve as a yard stick to measure BYA progress at individual Beacons and for the initiative overall. A copy of the aggregate responses to the first administration of the rubric-based survey tool is included in the appendix.

As part of its Fall 2007 evaluation activities, the OMG Evaluation team helped the YDI collect and analyze data from the rubric-based program quality assessment tool. As stated above, program-quality responses were summarized for all Beacons and sent to YDI for their use, and aggregated as summary measures for the evaluation. Response to the rubric-based quality assessment tools showed that many important, promising practices are already used by BYA Beacons, especially at the Documentation sites. Areas where the most work is needed include the following:

¹⁵ YDI completed a draft of the BYA rubric during summer 2007 and is consulting with its National Advisory Working Group and other Beacon practitioners about the use and accuracy of the tool. The assessment based on the rubric will be administered to San Francisco Beacons during winter/spring 2008.

Table 1: Examples of Practices Currently Used and Not Yet Regularly Used, According to self-report via the Rubric-based Program Quality Assessment

<u>EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY MOST BYA BEACONS</u>	<u>EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES NOT YET REGULARLY USED</u>
<u>Beacon staff has enrollment plan specifically focused on current, new and hard to reach adolescent participants</u>	<u>Beacon staff have conducted needs assessment of the community and identified characteristics of the target population including youth likely to participate and those hard-to-reach. Needs assessment reviewed and updated regularly by Beacon staff.</u>
<u>Beacon staff promote enrollment of non-participating young adolescents and has structures and practices in place to ensure their continuous recruitment</u>	<u>Staff develop strategies to focus on non-participating and hard-to-reach young adolescents and build contact networks with social workers, juvenile justice, caseworkers and others who can assist in recruitment.</u>
<u>Young people are given other program options and resources within the program or through referrals to outside organizations</u>	<u>Intake includes interview with young adolescent to learn his/her interests, issues and needs for services and supports</u>
<u>Beacon advertises through posters, flyers and mailings</u>	<u>Participating youth buddy with newcomers</u>
<u>Intake is organized and welcoming and includes basic information about the program youth health and permission forms</u>	<u>Beacon staff reflect and discuss attendance outcomes on a regular basis, noting patterns, long-term absences and staff follow-up</u>
<u>Intake contact is made with the key parent/caregiver</u>	<u>Beacon director/staff consult with school or other institutions to follow-up on youth who no longer attend.</u>
<u>Program orientation includes introduction to activities and expectations of youth and program</u>	<u>Activity selection is informed by research about what works for specific developmental ages</u>
<u>Beacon director and staff set attendance goals</u>	<u>A youth council helps Beacon director assess program quality and plan improvements</u>
<u>Beacon director assigns staff person to oversee attendance data entry</u>	<u>A system of Primary Person is in place – each young adolescent has one staff person who is responsible for him/her</u>
<u>Beacon staff documents daily attendance using a least a paper sign-in system</u>	<u>Beacon youth play a role in retaining young adolescents through buddy and mentor systems</u>
<u>Beacon activities incorporate themes that reflect youth interests and help expand the cognition, emotional and skill development of young adolescents</u>	<u>Staff visit other programs to observe and gain new ideas and perspectives</u>
<u>Activities are provided in both organized classes and as drop-in experiences. Activities provide a mix of physical, mental and creative experiences</u>	<u>Beacon has hired education coordinator to oversee academic programs</u>
<u>An atmospheres of response enables staff and young people to monitor implementation of youth development principles</u>	<u>Evaluation plan addresses relationship of program activities and goals to key developmental outcomes for youth</u>
<u>Beacon activities offer young adolescents opportunities to engage in meaningful relationships with staff and peers</u>	

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The rubric-based program assessment tool will be administered again to BYA teams in the spring or summer of 2008 to determine if there have been changes in practices as the Beacons participate together in BYA. The evaluation will also track more specifically, which strategies have been addressed through BYA technical assistance and what changes are reflected in future self assessments.

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Participation

The Practice Development and Documentation Beacons are committed to tracking and analyzing information about participation in Beacon programs and services. In New York City this will be facilitated by use of the new Beacons-on-Line data collection and reporting system. In San Francisco there is already the Contract Management System (CMS) available for recording and analyzing Beacon data.

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New York City

By Fall 2007, Practice Development sites and Documentation sites alike had begun to enter data into the new Beacons-on-line system. This included background information about each youth who enrolled at the Beacon, unit record attendance data for each activity, and specific activity descriptions. Enrollment and attendance reports are expected to be available in real time through the new system.

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As of November 30, 2007, the new system was operational, but Beacon staff had not completed data entry and they had not begun to systematically use the built-in reporting functions. Responses to evaluation team requests for data from NYC BYA Beacons were mostly limited as Directors clarified that system kinks and backlogs made data availability less than desirable. Data collection documents were reviewed however, and conversations were conducted with Beacon-on-Line technical assistance agents to ascertain information about what ultimately will be available to the evaluation. Assurances were made that summary tables like the following, could easily be generated soon (spring 2008).

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Beacon directors and staff reported that the process of using the new system and the changes in DYCD requirements have made them even more aware of enrollment and attendance and the need to track and review it regularly for individuals and groups. Directors at all three Practice Development Beacons indicated they had already noted trends showing that while enrollment was sufficient (waiting lists existed at the Child Center of New York Parsons and Cypress Hills LDC East New York Beacons), many participants were not attending regularly and some young people were admittedly getting less exposure to Beacon programming than desirable. The Beacon Directors expressed their commitment to continue following the trends and exploring explanations and possible solutions. Once data entry is completed, the system is expected to help them pinpoint discrepancies.

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San Francisco

The San Francisco Beacon Initiative regularly uses the CMS to track and analyze data. Each of the three Practice Development sites has an individual with specific responsibility to enter data, and program directors regularly review results. All three San Francisco Practice Development Beacons indicated they would use the system to see how the BYA-inspired addition/modification of activities affected attendance and enrollment, once they began implementation of strategies for the target group.

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What is available and who has enrolled at the BYA Beacons?

The following tables include currently available information for both New York and San Francisco BYA Beacons. Specifically, Table 2 shows the number and types of participants enrolled at BYA Beacons by location, the average number attending during each of the three fall months, and the average number attending each day during the fall. Table 3 shows the number and types of activities

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offered. Please note that New York enrollment and attendance data entry was still in progress at the time of the evaluation data requests and the reports included in table are likely undercounts. Some Beacons were not able to generate enrollment and/or attendance data. Unavailable data are indicated in the tables as NO REPORT and all totals represent only available data. Given those caveats, there are still important Beacon features suggested by available data.

- As shown in Table 2, with the exception of the San Francisco Visitacion Valley Beacon, roughly equal numbers of males and females are enrolled at the BYA Beacons.
- The BYA Beacons serve a diverse group of young people in the targeted age group. It will be important to learn how attendance varies for these different groups.
- In San Francisco, although monthly attendance is fairly consistent, it is proportionately somewhat low suggesting that while Beacon centers are not under-utilized, amount of programming experienced by individuals is quite varied. New York attendance data do not yet include all participants, but will be reviewed accordingly in the future.
- Table 3 shows that there are many different types of activities at each Beacon, and that each Beacon has a varied selection of available offerings. (Please note that the activities indicated in Table 3 include only those for which an approved activity description has been submitted.)
- Table 3 also shows that at both New York and San Francisco Beacons, attention is paid to the academic needs of participants. All Beacons have at least one academically focused offering and some have more than one.
- Each Beacon has a combination of enrichment-like activities (e.g., visual and performing arts), computers, cooking), and most have both recreation teams and instruction as well as open recreation periods.
- Almost all Beacons in both cities also have leadership activities and gender-specific groups.

In addition to average daily attendance, attendance for each activity can be reported and all Beacon Directors and key staff are being encouraged to regularly review it to help determine what is appealing to the target youth.

Data requests for evaluation purposes will be made again in the spring of 2008 for the entire 2007-08 school year and it is expected that system challenges for New York City Beacons will have been overcome. Further, New York City Beacons directors will meet during the winter to clarify again what can and should be included as part of regular evaluation reports, and to discuss how they can best use their own data to answer questions of importance. Unit record enrollment and attendance data for individuals will be requested by the evaluation team from both sites so that amount and types of Beacon participation can be determined for all participants, for important subgroups (such as females), and for activities developed specifically as part of the BYA strategy.

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Beacon Enrollment and Attendance September - November, 2007															
Site Name	Number of Participants 9-14 Yrs Old	Race/Ethnicity							Language			Average Number Attending Each Day (For All Activities Offered to 9-14 Year Olds)			Total Mean Attendance (Sept - Nov)
		Males	Females	Asian/Pacific-Islander	African-American	Hispanic/Latine	White	Other	English	Spanish	Other	Sept	Oct	Nov	
NEW YORK	TOTAL														
Center for Family Life	109	57	52	2	2	103	0	2	51	56	2	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
Queens Community House	115	n/a	n/a	13	19	42	17	24	94	11	10	50	62	49	54
University Settlement	138	76	65	6	42	68	8	14	135	2	0	143	126	107	125
Good Shepherd Red Hook	124	66	58	0	69	42	1	12	122	1	1	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
St. Nicks Williamsburg	-	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
Cypress Hills LDC East NY	-	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
CCNY Parsons Beacon	180	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
Total	666	199	175	21	132	255	26	52	402	70	13	193	188	156	179
SAN FRANCISCO															
MISSION	276	132	144	27	49	162	6	32	137	125	14	108	109	108	108
OMIE	321	164	157	136	72	79	5	29	219	34	68	73	85	76	78
Vis Valley	140	91	49	58	49	19	1	13	108	7	25	63	72	86	74
Total	737	387	350	221	170	260	12	74	464	166	107	244	266	270	260
BYA TOTAL	1,403	586	525	242	300	515	38	126	866	236	120	437	454	426	439

Note! New York enrollment and attendance data were incomplete at the time of Evaluation Data Requests. Undercounts are probable. Some Beacons were not able to generate enrollment and/or attendance data. Unavailable data are indicated above as NO REPORT. Totals represent only available data.

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Number of Activities Within Category	Number of Activities Offered by Category*										Total
	New York							San Francisco			
	Center for Family Life	Queens Community House	University Settlement	Good Shepherd Red Hook	St. Nicks Williams burg	Cypress Hills LDC East NY	CCNY/ Parsons Beacon	MISSION	OM/E	Vis Valley	
Homework/Academics	1	1	3	3	No report	No report	7	1	7	1	24
Visual Arts	3	1	3	5	No report	No report	1	1	3	3	20
Dance	1	1	2	5	No report	No report	4	1	2	4	20
Music	0	1	0	3	No report	No report	3	1	0	1	9
Computer	1	0	0	2	No report	No report	2	1	1	1	8
Leadership	1	2	0	2	No report	No report	1	1	1	0	8
Career Prep	3	1	1	2	No report	No report	1	0	0	0	8
Girls group	1	0	2	1	No report	No report	1	2	2	2	11
Boys group	1	0	2	1	No report	No report	0	1	1	1	7
Science	0	1	1	0	No report	No report	1	1	1	0	5
Civic Projects	4	1	1	0	No report	No report	2	0	0	0	8
Recreation--Teams	3	0	2	2	No report	No report	4	1	2	2	16
Recreation--Instruction	1	0	3	3	No report	No report	7	1	1	1	17
Recreation--Open	1	1	4	6	No report	No report	3	1	2	1	19
CIT	5	0	0	1	No report	1	0	0	0	0	7
Cooking	2	1	0	1	No report	No report	0	2	3	1	10
Other	7	0	0	0	No report	No report	10	3	9	3	32

*Denotes the number of *different* activities offered at Beacons within each category listed. *Most activities are offered multiple times during a week.*

INCLUDES ONLY ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY INCLUDED IN BEACONS-ON-LINE OR CMS ACTIVITY SUMMARIES.

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5. Summary Assessment

With some expected challenges, the complex, multi-faceted implementation of BYA continues to proceed effectively.

- BYA now includes 10 Beacon partners actively implementing the initiative. With the re-assignment of the St. Nicholas Beacon, three Practice Development (formerly Developing) Beacons are now operating in New York City. All have the capacity to undertake BYA work and are moving forward with implementation. Four Documentation (formerly Leadership) Beacons are operational in New York City, including the University Settlement Beacon which was added as the St. Nicholas Beacon changed status to Practice Development. Together with the YDI and Practice Development Beacons, the Documentation Beacons continue to develop opportunities, including Cross-Beacon visits, to inform and enhance the BYA initiative. Three Practice Development Beacons in San Francisco began implementation of BYA. Each has the support of their lead agency and the capacity to undertake BYA work.
- In both New York and San Francisco, all of the Practice Development and Documentation Beacons offer a range of stimulating, age-appropriate activities to youth 9-14 years old.
- Important practice shifts occurred at the two New York City Practice Development Beacons with the longest involvement in BYA. This included strategic re-structuring of their programs to focus services for middle school-aged youth, initiating new activities especially geared for this population and important sub-populations such as girls or hard-to-reach youth, and hiring new staff. Program activity options for middle-school aged youth expanded at both Beacons. (The third New York City Practice Development Beacon began implementation during summer 2007, but was actively planning changes in its services to middle-school aged youth.) Any resultant changes in participation will be assessed as service delivery documentation proceeds through the program year.
- Capacity to track enrollment and attendance data has improved with the implementation of the Beacons-on-Line system. All three Practice Development Beacons in New York City clarified their needs to analyze available data to inform recruitment and programming. System challenges remain, however. System availability and use in San Francisco is at the desired state. All three Practice Development Beacons there have access to the CMS which actively tracks and provides analysis of enrollment and participation.
- Program self-assessments using the rubric-based program quality assessment tool showed that both the Practice Development and Documentation Beacons in New York City are currently employing many of the desired actions to serve the middle-school population and can identify practices and actions to strengthen as they proceed with BYA involvement.
- Two of the three Practice Development Beacons in San Francisco (Visitation Valley and OMI/E) are closely monitoring changes in their populations. They are already trying out incentives to attract specific youths (like those who are particularly at-risk), and to involve current participants in recruitment of others.
- Staff from Practice Development Beacons in both New York City and San Francisco reported they had attended training delivered by YDI which was both targeted and useful. Plans were

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made at all Practice Development Beacons to integrate information they learned through training.

- YDI continued to convene New York City Practice Development and Documentation sites throughout the summer and fall of 2007. The groups used the meetings to address topics of interest and allow for Cross-Beacon exchanges.
- YDI developed/modified advanced Youth Development training for BYA staff and provided intensive training to both New York City and San Francisco Beacons.
- YDI developed and delivered the first BYA Conference on Participation and Engagement of Young Adolescents. This brought together Beacon Directors, supporters and staff from four Beacon cities to learn about and discuss important strategies for serving the target population. Conference participants assessed the event very positively and are planning to implement actions based on their experiences.
- YDI and SFBI continued to develop roles as intermediaries and to finalize internal clarification of staffing strategies as well as interaction structures for working with dual sites. Both intermediaries were acknowledged as supportive and helpful regarding BYA implementation.
- Comprehensive evaluation of the initiative at both New York City and San Francisco sites continues. All data collection strategies (described in the methodology section) were implemented, analysis of data was conducted and this [interim status update](#) report was produced for YDI and SFBI and their stakeholders.
- YDI continues to explore other opportunities for initiative expansion, while attending to implementation in New York City and San Francisco. SFBI also continues to work with all eight of the members of the San Francisco Beacons Initiative so that BYA learning is shared.
- Through BYA discussions, conference presentations and commissioned topical briefs, as well as evaluation activities, the Practice Development Beacons in both sites are increasing their understanding of youth participation.
- All 10 BYA Beacons have formed teams to take on BYA challenges. The teams are expected to move BYA from a project to a concerted, integrated effort to change practices so young adolescents are recruited, retained and better served.

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6. Issues for Further Consideration

The BYA initiative has expanded and continues to unfold. As the effort moves from initiation to full-scale implementation, ongoing careful oversight and direction continue to be needed and provided. The following five issues continue to be tracked as BYA proceeds through its second year.

- **Continuing to Clarify Roles and Strategies.** As stated in the Year 1 Evaluation report, due to its complexity, BYA will probably have to contend with this issue throughout the projected timeline. In New York City this will mean ongoing attention to the ways **Documentation and Practice Development** Beacons differ and are similar, and how they enhance each others work. The San Francisco Beacons will **only include Practice Development sites, but all eight Beacons** are expected to benefit from the work of the three **BYA Beacons as well as the work of New York City BYA Beacons.**
- **Maintaining Flexible Support for Strong Partnerships.** BYA allows for and depends upon multiple interactions between Beacons. **This now includes** interactions between San Francisco **BYA** Beacons and New York City **BYA** Beacons. Continued attention to this feature of the work, especially continuing to resist rigidly defining Beacon interaction is critical. **Beacon officials from both Documentation Beacons and Practice Development Beacons in both sites continue to** consistently indicate that being able to learn from and advise each other is critical to their own capacity development process.
- **Continuing to Promote Full Implementation of BYA and Practice Changes.** For both the **YDI and the SFBI this includes continued** delivery of specialized Youth Development Training **within and across BYA Beacons,** continued development and delivery of **city-specific and cross-site** network meetings, support for Beacon-level team building, and individual Beacon technical assistance including cross-Beacon visitation. SFBI and especially YDI will need to **maintain their vigilance** regarding capacity issues **at both the Beacon and intermediary level** as new efforts are undertaken.
- **Supporting Productive Interaction between New York and San Francisco BYA efforts.** **Both the YDI and the SFBI need to stay focused on best strategies for fully implementing BYA in San Francisco and integrating** San Francisco **and** New York City work. **As stated at the end of Year 1, implementation of BYA in two cities** presents powerful opportunities for networking, learning and substantial practice improvement. **The first BYA conference demonstrated that specifically.** **But implementation in two distant cities, even with productive use of technology** also adds another level of complexity for BYA. **Both YDI and SFBI are** poised for the challenge **and continue to hold expectations for broad outcomes for both BYA Beacons, other Beacon cities and potentially the larger youth-serving community.**
- **Providing Technical Assistance For and Making Productive Use of Available Data about Beacon Practices and Participation.** Efforts to use information gathered through the rubric-based program quality assessments to guide technical assistance should be continued in New York and initiated as soon as possible in San Francisco. Further, both YDI and SFBI need to convene sessions to encourage Beacon staff and Directors to identify their own data reporting and analysis needs, to facilitate data access for the BYA evaluation, and to meaningfully involve Beacon staff and Directors in the analysis of practice and participation data to inform ongoing efforts.

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7. Next Steps for the Evaluation

7.1 Winter/Spring 2008

This report represents the final deliverable for this phase of evaluation work. For the remainder of BYA Year 2, the evaluation design will continue to guide evaluation actions. Evaluation activities scheduled for the next reporting period (January 2008 through June 2008) will include:

- Conduct site visits to Documentation Beacons to observe promising practices, especially those encouraged at the recent BYA Conference (winter 2008).
- Conduct follow-up site visits to San Francisco and New York BYA Practice Development Beacons to determine changes in context, practices, staffing, and participation. Visits to focus on observation of programming where applicable and to follow-up on BYA conference influences.
- Conduct follow-up interviews with Intermediary leaders in San Francisco and New York City regarding efforts to promote change, internal organizational development and challenges encountered. Continue documenting work of YDI and SFBI.
- Revise Beacon-specific data requests for participation data, collect and analyze participation data for the 2007-08 school year.
- Analyze data collected through all strategies described above to document/assess practice and participation changes, assess effectiveness of training and other Intermediary support and document ongoing BYA implementation.

7.2 The BYA Cohort Study

In addition to the ongoing evaluation of practice change and participation at BYA sites, OMG will also be conducting a study of a cohort of participants from selected BYA Beacons in New York City. Through confidential surveys and focus groups, this study is designed to determine what influences participants' decisions to stay connected?¹⁶ Who leaves Beacons and why? Who establishes new connections to Beacons and what influences their decisions? Additional details about the cohort study are included in the appendix to this report.

¹⁶ Influences of interest to include: **Individual characteristics** such as gender, age, school connectedness/progress, participants' Beacon involvement intensity and history; **Beacon characteristics** such as structure, specific staff members, and especially strategies and BYA-inspired practice changes; and **other supporting, detracting, and competing factors** such as families and friends and other programming opportunities.

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¶ NEXT STEPS for the Evaluation¶

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Appendix: Practice Development Beacon Site Visit Summaries

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

St. Nicholas Beacon at the Williamsburg-Grand Street HS Campus: Initial Site Visit Summary

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 10th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with the St. Nicholas Beacon director, and a number of Beacon staff and (please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewees).

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Beacon's Context

The community surrounding the St. Nicks Williamsburg Beacon is racially/ethnically diverse and undergoing gentrification. Interviewed staff described the community as “changing” as a result of gentrification. Established, smaller family houses are giving way to newer, larger buildings. Rapid changes in the housing market have driven rent prices up and forced a number of residents out, including low-income immigrant families. The multicultural community surrounding the Beacon includes ethnic groups that have been well established in the area as well more recent immigrant arrivals. Representatives of the former include Italian and Jewish groups; the latter are represented by Polish, Russian, and various Hispanic groups such as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and South Americans from a number of nations. There is a small pocket of Asians – around PS 250 – that is perceived by interviewed senior staff as “difficult for the Beacon to serve.”

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The existence of various youth services in the community, including another Beacon, makes for a competitive service environment. Besides the Williamsburg Beacon, Greenpoint Beacon (run by the same agency, St. Nicks NPC) is located nearby. In addition, there are many after-school programs in local elementary and middle schools, and a YMCA that offers many services.

The St. Nicks Williamsburg Beacon is located in a building that houses three high schools. Space is limited and challenging. The high school 478 campus (formerly Eastern District High School) now includes Progress High School (total enrollment = 1089), Legal Studies High School (total enrollment = 835), and Enterprise, Business and Technology High School (total enrollment = 819). Almost all Beacon participants attend other elementary and Middle Schools. Despite the Beacon's location on a large campus (the building is four stories with several athletic fields), space is somewhat limited and the Beacon frequently has to compete with all three schools for space. The campus offers a number of enrichment activities, which leave the Beacon without access to sports until 7pm. The lack of effective communication among the three high schools – as perceived by the Beacon – also often limits the Beacon's ability to use school space. The location of the Beacon poses an additional challenge because middle school-aged youth have to get to the high school campus in order to attend the Beacon and middle school parents have real concerns about the Beacon being on a HS campus, forcing younger children to be together with high-school aged students. Eastern District High School's reputation (academic and disciplinary) was not positive. The new principals, however, as

indicated by the Beacon director, are all trying to change the negative image, with varying degrees of success.

The Beacon’s relationship with the host schools was described as diplomatic, but mostly neutral.

Interviewed Beacon senior staff indicated that only limited interactions occur between them and the three principals on a daily basis. Beacon representatives are required to attend school meetings however. The Beacon seems to have the buy-in of most school administrative staff (e.g., custodians), parent coordinators, and a number of teachers.

The St. Nick’s Williamsburg Beacon enjoys the strong support of its CBO, the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation. The interview with the CBO director of the youth and family services division, who oversees the Williamsburg Beacon, revealed there is strong support. He is very engaged individual with an in-depth understanding of the Beacon and a genuine concern about youths developmental needs. The division director and the senior after-school manager – also a CBO representative with extensive Beacon knowledge and experience - have been actively involved in the planning of BYA work, and have participated in YDI meetings and trainings. The Beacon director acknowledged the support received from the CBO, including support in program areas and around staff training.

Beacon Practice

Williamsburg Beacon offers a range of stimulating, age-appropriate activities to their youth overall, with limited programming for the middle school population. Among the activities offered to middle school youth are literacy, art, dance, chess, as well as a Friday lounge. Traditionally, the Williamsburg Beacon has focused its programming on k-5 children with a strong literacy focus. The middle school programming has always been small and - as senior staff described - “manageable.” For the most part, middle school programming had traditionally been offered for the younger children in the Beacon to transition to, and as a place where older siblings of Afterschool participants could come. Through those efforts, the Beacon has served on average about 40 middle school-aged students. Current DYCD requirements require a much more substantial service provision for the target group (New York City Beacons are now expected to service 150 youth in grades 5th to 8th for 216 hours per year). As a result, the Williamsburg Beacon is in the process of assessing and re-thinking its programming structure, which includes downsizing the earlier grades to offer more slots to middle school youth.¹⁷ At the time of the site visit, Beacon senior staff were still planning ways to address new recruiting requirements.

The Beacon Director has the necessary educational credentials and a long history of involvement with the Beacon and the lead agency. Cesar Salcedo participated in Beacon activities as a teen (at the Phipps West Farm Beacon. Mr. Salcedo has held numerous positions with St. Nicks, including sports coordinator and assistant Beacon Director. He has been the Williamsburg Beacon director for 5 years.

The majority of the activities offered to middle school youth are led by young adults who were former Beacon participants and volunteers. Program staff members are mostly college-bound high school graduates and freshmen/sophomore college students who have had significant exposure to St.

¹⁷ Although DYCD requirements overlap in part with the aims of the BYA initiative, Beacon senior staff were not initially planning to expand the middle school programming significantly and in such a short period of time. St. Nicks’ plans for BYA are discussed in more detail in the section of this document entitled “Status of BYA Initiative”.

Nicks' practice by virtue of having volunteered and participated in the Beacon at a younger age. Beacon leadership believes that having leaders who have been Beacon participants encourages youth to aspire to a "career" with the Beacon. Beacon senior staff also believe, that young staff, rather than adults, connect more easily with middle school youth, a belief equally shared by the parents we interviewed. The Beacon leadership is committed to investing a significant amount of time and human resources to provide training for the middle school youth workers.

Currently, St. Nick's Williamsburg Beacon leadership asks for input from youth on programming in a rather informal manner. At the present, there is no youth advisory council or similar formal input structure at the Beacon. Beacon senior staff expressed an interest in having a system for the youth to provide input more systematically, yet at the time of OMG's site visit there seemed to be no strategic plan as to how or when this will happen.

The Beacon has a small core of engaged and motivated parents who are strong Beacon advocates. Although these parents have no formal advocacy role at the Beacon (most are parent coordinators for the school), they make sure other parents know about the Beacon. Both parents interviewed recognized the positive impact the Beacon has had on their children and grandchildren, both emotionally and academically, and spoke highly of the Beacon's programming and staff.

Status of BYA Initiative

As of the site visit, Beacon senior staff members were in the planning stages of the initiative. A BYA planning team had been formed. It is composed of Beacon senior staff and CBO staff. At the time of the OMG visit, the Beacon was about to hire a program director, and the expectation was to have this person on the planning team as well. A former Beacon senior staff member, who is now a consultant to the Beacon, is also on the planning team. The Beacon leadership had identified some potential focuses for the initiative, which included staff recruitment and training, as well as outreach and program design. In terms of future programming for BYA, the beacon director mentioned a desire to offer more sports clinics and to learn from the experience of other Beacons. The director intends to bring the idea of open gym back to the Beacon in an effort to attract middle school youth.

St. Nick's Williamsburg Beacon staff recognize the potential challenges of recruiting middle school youth. The staff recognized that recruiting middle school-aged youth will be challenging not only because of the Beacon location in a high school environment (as discussed earlier), but also because most middle schools in the Beacon vicinity are extending their extra curricular activities until 5:30pm at least twice a week, competing directly with the Beacon. As mentioned earlier, Beacon senior staff do not have a strategic recruitment plan as of yet.

Senior staff members were very aware of youth development issues in general and those regarding young adolescents in particular. Among the youth workers, however, there was less clarity regarding what youth development principles are, although it seemed apparent that some of the principles were being incorporated in their practice unintentionally.

At the time of OMG's site visit, the BYA initiative was still extremely new to young Beacon staff. The junior staff revealed that the initiative was extremely new to them and described not having much knowledge about it. They have not participated in any YDI training (a/o OMG's visit).

The role of the YDI in the initiative was not understood by all staff. The junior staff did not seem to have a clear understanding of YDI's role, but enior staff had already received technical assistance

and were extremely positive regarding the interactions that had occurred with the intermediary organization (YDI). The feedback received from YDI was seen as valuable and helpful, especially around program design and internal staff training for middle school workers.

Data Collection Capacity

The newly instituted DYCD Beacon Online system will improve the tracking and management of Beacon enrollment and participation data. The new system allows all NYC Beacons to store registration information for all participants and attendance data for each activity, and to generate multiple reports – from specific activity-related, to more general, aggregate reports on the data entered in the system. The system will clearly not only serve DYCD’s requirements, but also improve the Beacon’s ability to accurately monitor attendance and participation for the BYA initiative. At the time of the OMG site visit, the system had just been launched and Beacon staff was starting to learn how to navigate the system (which they characterized as frustrating). Staff definitely recognized the long term benefits of the system for data tracking and management and they had begun to inquire about enrollment and attendance trends. As of the site visit, the Williamsburg Beacon had enrolled about 40 middle school youth, most of whom were only able to come to the Beacon on some days of the week due to other Afterschool commitments.

Summary Assessment

At the time of the site visit, the Williamsburg Beacon was making positive strides toward improving the infrastructure necessary to carry out BYA. They have several key challenges to address. A new program director was being hired, and the Beacon leadership was committed to providing training to staff, especially youth workers. Space arrangements for their current middle school programming had the same limitations as other Afterschool programming. Space may become increasingly challenging as the Beacon starts to recruit more students and to offer more activities for the middle school population.

- The Beacon was still in the process of planning and setting concrete goals for the BYA initiative at the time of the site visit. Current thinking is focused on staff training, recruiting strategies, and middle school outreach and programming.
- Williamsburg Beacon senior staff expressed their desire to invest more on sports programs for middle school youth, but it will be difficult to offer sports in the evening.
- The Beacon leadership completely recognizes the challenges moving forward with BYA with regards to youth recruitment and space negotiation with the schools.
- Beacon young staff have a limited understanding of the BYA initiative as well as of the role of the YDI as the intermediary; extensive training for youth workers is in the Beacon plans for the BYA initiative;

Appendix A: Interviewees

- Cesar Salcedo, Beacon Director
- Charisse Johnson, Senior After-School Manager, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation
- Eric Bent, Division Director, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation
- Youth workers -- Latia Tyler, Tiffany Santiago and Elizabeth Sosa
- Parent Representatives – Althea Bittle, Jennifer Martinez

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

Child Center of New York Parsons Beacon: Summary of Fall/2007 Site Visit

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 10th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with the Parsons Beacon director, and a number of Beacon staff and (please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewees).

Beacon's Context

The school setting of the Parsons Beacon has changed. There are still three schools in the Parsons Educational Complex, the building that houses the Parsons Beacon, but Parsons Middle School (JHS 168) was closed (as of June 2007) and Robert F. Kennedy Community Middle School opened at the site (September 2007). The building also continues to house the Queens School of Inquiry (QSI), which has added another grade level, and P.S. 255, a District 75 school which serves students with autism spectrum disorders. Both QSI and RFK schools serve middle-school aged students who are Beacon participants.¹⁸

Both the Middle Schools are supportive of the Beacon. As reported by the Beacon Director, the new RFK Principal (Mark Rosenberg) has totally embraced the Beacon. As in the past, QSI (principal Elizabeth Ophals) is also a strong supporter, systematically involving its students in Beacon-like activities at the end of the school day, enrolling all students as Beacon participants, and using Beacon gym services. The Beacon Director also reported that RFK and QSI leaders were working well with each other, and the integration of RFK into the Parsons Educational Complex has been positive for the school and the Beacon. Staff from RFK are still coming along, but there are plans to more fully involve them in the Beacon in the future, and to continue interaction with them. There is also a new Head Custodian who has taken on several projects to help the Beacon.

The Child Center of New York is, as described by the Director of Youth Development Programs, expanding at a rapid pace. It continues to oversee multiple Beacon centers. The Direction of YD Programs continues in his oversight role for BYA and also is increasingly involved in OST work, expanding and integrating youth programming and strengthening youth development practices.

¹⁸ RFK serves up to 450 students in grades 6 – 8. Many local students, formerly JHS 168 students and others, now attend RFK Community MS. The school population is 22% African American, 18% Asian, 24% Hispanic/Latino, 38% Caucasian, very multicultural and much more diverse than JHS 168. QSI is designed to serve grades 6 – 12, although now only includes grades 6 and 7. There are 161 students and the population is 39% Asian, 12% African American, 27% Hispanic/Latino, and 23% white.

DYCD shifted its contracting requirements for PY 2007-08. For 2007-08, Beacons are contractually obligated to focus their DYCD-supported efforts on middle-school aged participants. Current DYCD requirements demand that Beacons service 150 youth in grades 5th to 8th for 216 hours per year.

Beacon Practice

Parsons Beacon has strategically re-structured and expanded its programming for middle school youth. The changes in Beacon practices, including initiation of new activities and revised approaches and incorporation of new staff, are noticeable. Early afternoon activities now include: explorers club, a special Literacy group, fitness, Tae Kwon Do, Salsa dancing, string ensemble, Girls Only!, Boys Book Club, Book Making, Mural Painting, Science Lab, Yoga and aerobics, globe investigators, history film club, fashion design, and a talent workshop for QSI students and others. Later afternoon activities include martial arts, the media project, team challenge, youth council, ultimate gym, recording studio, step, hoop camp and girls track and field. In addition participants can access the game room or open gym at certain scheduled times and everyone has access to structured homework help. For those who need it, there is a coordinated literacy program focused on youth who scored at levels 1 or 2 on spring standardized tests. **The change in programming has also presented some challenges to Parsons Beacon.** As described by the director, programming changes happened in part because of BYA, but also as a result of the new DYCD requirements for NYC Beacons. The Beacon director and staff expressed their concerns that the focus on numeric requirements make it challenging to also focus on the quality and depth of the activities.

Staff roles have been restructured and new staff have been hired to serve the BYA population.

Rob Closs, who formerly oversaw the grade 1 – 5 afterschool center at the Beacon is now responsible for overseeing all programs for Middle-School aged participants. He also formerly provided supervision/direction for Middle School-aged youth at the Beacon pre-BYA, has overseen summer programming for several years, and has extensive youth development training. In addition to changing job roles for Rob Closs, the Beacon has also hired Thalene King to develop and provide programming for youth with a specific focus on girls. There are also new consulting arrangements (Media Force, Martial Arts, dance and computer instructors), and additional efforts to co-locate services (e.g., wrestling provided by H.S. coaches, structured basketball clinic, hoop camp).

Parsons Beacon hired an internal evaluator to assist with the design and implementation of evaluation tools, to specifically monitor middle school efforts. The hiring of the evaluator illustrates Parsons' focus on measuring program outcomes for the middle school population.

Parsons Beacon continues to work together with QSI. Special programs for QSI "Afterschool" activities include activities for QSI students, plus gym use with Beacon staff supervision. Non-QSI Beacon participants can join these activities and QSI students are also encouraged to participate in other Beacon services and activities. Increasingly they do.

Parsons Beacon has strategized to increase involvement of parents/guardians. A new strategy involving parents/guardians was incorporated into fall '07 registration. Participation at orientation sessions was required for registration, and parents/guardians learned about the Beacon and helped their children choose activities. In addition, one Beacon staff member has been made responsible for making calls to parents to report non-attendance.

Status of the BYA Initiative

Parsons Beacon has formed a BYA team to ensure the successful implementation of the initiative. The team is diverse - composed of the Beacon director, one Beacon assistant director, a CBO representative and the new Beacon staff member responsible for middle school girls programming. The team composition may change in the future according to the needs of the Beacon as it moves forward with the implementation of BYA, including the addition of other staff and youth workers. Although the team had been formed, at the time of the site visit, specific BYA-related roles for each team member were still being determined.

Parsons Beacon staff have received valuable training from the Youth Development Institute (YDI), and are able to provide training internally. Beacon senior staff described training provided by YDI as positive and constructive, but also stated that the overall goals of training as it relates to BYA are still unclear. More Parsons staff members need youth development and AYD training. Plans to secure this for them are still under development.

YDI conducted site visits and observed programming. Feedback was seen as practical and helpful, and opportunities to strengthen intermediate efforts were identified. Beacon senior staff was very appreciative of the valuable feedback provided by YDI after site visits were conducted. They also indicated that feedback could be even more helpful if it were provided in a timelier manner and if there were more clarity regarding structure and purpose of YDI site visits and other training. Staff was not clear as to the specific goals of site visits. Beacon senior staff also expressed their interest in reading both YDI and OMG reports about the initiative and about their individual Beacon.

At the time of the OMG site visit, cross-Beacon exchanges had been very limited. Senior Beacon staff expressed the need and desire for more interaction with other Beacons involved in BYA, including more facilitated site visits to other Beacons. They were also very interested in opportunities to take advantage of the BYA network and to visit both Documentation sites and the San Francisco Beacons. *(Note that visit opportunities were started through the October 24 – 26 BYA conference in NYC, and are expected to continue during 2007-08).*

The role of documentation (formerly leadership) Beacons remained unclear. Parsons Beacon senior staff continued to be uncertain about the role that documentation Beacons were to have in BYA and how Parsons could exchange experiences with those Beacons.

Data Collection Capacity

The newly instituted DYCD Beacon Online system will improve the tracking and management of Beacon enrollment and participation data. The new system allows all NYC Beacons to store registration information for all participants and attendance data for each activity, and to generate multiple reports – from specific activity-related, to more general, aggregate reports on the data entered in the system. The system will clearly not only serve DYCD's requirements, but also improve the Beacon's ability to accurately monitor attendance and participation for the BYA initiative. At the time of the OMG site visit, the system had just been launched and Beacon staff was starting to learn how to navigate the system (which they characterized as frustrating). Staff definitely recognized the long term benefits of the system for data tracking and management and they had begun to inquire about enrollment and attendance trends. As of the site visit, Parsons Beacon had enrolled about 105 middle school youth, 2/3 of which (70) were participants that came in every day.

As stated previously, Parsons Beacon hired an internal evaluator to assist with the design and implementation of evaluation tools. The hiring of the evaluator shows Parsons increasing focus on measurement of outcomes, especially for the middle school population.

Summary Assessment and Issues for Further Consideration

Parsons Beacon has the necessary infrastructure in place for continued implementation of the BYA initiative.

- There are now several key staff members, with appropriate credentials dedicated to BYA efforts (as a result of both BYA and new contracting requirements of DYCD).
- The Beacon is effectively sharing facilities with the three schools and Beacon staff manages to make the best out of currently available space (there are waiting lists for all middle school activities).
- The Beacon continues to enjoy a positive and mutually supportive relationship with the schools in the Parsons Educational Complex.
- The funding provided by DYCD for the middle school programming emphasis directly – and positively - impacts the Beacon’s capacity to carry out BYA.
- Parsons Beacon’s middle school programming has been re-structured (with new activities and staff) and will continue to change to fit the needs of the target population for BYA.
- The BYA team has been formed (although specific BYA roles for each team member still need to be delineated).
- The hiring of the internal evaluator is a positive stride in the direction of developing a system for measuring outcomes. This has been a goal of Parsons leadership from the beginning of BYA and more so now with DYCD requirements;

The Parsons Beacon experience with YDI has been mostly positive. There is still a need, however, for YDI to clarify its TA and training goals and to provide more timely feedback so that the Beacon can implement or try out suggested changes. Relationship expectations for documentation sites are still unclear, but there is keen interest in strengthening them. There is also a continued and increasing interest in the network overall, including interactions with other development sites, self assessment via the rubric, and involvement with San Francisco Beacons. The Parsons Beacon director also observed that recently hired staff needs to undergo additional training regarding structured activities and overseeing homework help.¹⁹ Further, Parsons Beacon senior staff expressed interest in additional program and youth development training for the all their middle school staff, since the developmental needs of different middle school groups (4th-5th grades; 6th grade; and 7th-8th grades) are distinct. Moving forward, the Parsons Beacon wants to bring more teachers onboard.

¹⁹ Most staff trainings are currently provided during programming hours which presents a logistical challenge to Parsons Beacon staff. Suggested alternative times include week nights and weekends..

Appendix A: Interviewees

- Jackie Cohen, Parsons Beacon Director
- Rob Closs, Assistant Beacon Director
- Rich Stein, Parsons Beacon Youth Worker
- Ben Constant, Parsons Beacon Youth Worker
- Deep Ghosh, Director of Youth Development Programs

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

Cypress Hills Beacon: Summary of Fall/2007 Site Visit

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 10th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with the Cypress Hills ENY Beacon director, and a number of Beacon staff (please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewees).

Beacon's Context

The school setting of the Cypress Hills ENY Beacon has changed slightly. There are still two schools in the building that houses the Cypress Hills ENY Beacon, but the principal at IS 302 is new (Lisa Linder – formerly Martin Weinstein). PS 89, which serves both younger and middle-school aged students, is still scheduled to move for the 2008-09 school year. Both IS 302 and PS 89 serve middle-school aged students who are Beacon participants.²⁰

The new principal has expressed support for the Beacon. For the first time in some years, Beacon staff members were allowed in fall 2007 to visit classes and orient students regarding services available through the Beacon. The new Principal (Lisa Linder) has pledged ongoing support and the Beacon Director indicated that the two resident schools were working well with each other. This definitely reduces burdens for the Beacon director.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corp. continues to provide substantial support for the Beacon. The Director of the Department of Youth and Family Services, continues to oversee the initiative, meet regularly with and assist Beacon staff.

DYCD shifted its contracting requirements for PY 2007-08. For 2007-08, Beacons are contractually obligated to focus their DYCD-supported efforts on middle-school aged participants. Current DYCD requirements demand that Beacons service 150 youth in grades 5th to 8th for 216 hours per year. Funding for the Cypress Hills ENY Beacon did increase for the 2007-08 program year (due to increased program dollars and increased DOE contributions for use of the facilities).

²⁰ IS 302 serves 1151 students in grades 6 – 8. The school population is 36% African American, 4% Asian, 59% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Caucasian. PS 89, which was founded in part by Cypress Hills Local Development Corp., and includes a dual language program, serve students in grades K – 8. There are 245 students and the population is 3% Asian, 16% African American, 82% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% white. Over-crowding is a challenge.

Beacon Practice

The after-school program has been re-structured to accommodate a separate middle-school unit.

The after school program at Cypress Hills used to combine elementary and middle school students. Since February 2007, through funds for the Advantage School Program, Cypress Hills is offering two sessions of afterschool exclusively to middle school-aged youth. Currently, there are 25 students enrolled in each session and a waiting list of about 10 students for each group. The program offers middle school students multiple activities during the weekdays, from recreational activities to leadership activities, to homework help – this last one structured to include both individual homework time as well as study groups so that youth can enjoy more peer support. Activities change every ten weeks. On Fridays, elementary and middle school participants are brought together, with the purpose of teaching middle school youth to be leaders and role models for the elementary students.

At the time of the OMG site visit, Cypress Hills Beacon had made positive, concrete strides toward implementation of activities planned through BYA. One of the main goals of BYA for the Cypress Hills Beacon was to institute its Counselors-in-Training program (CIT). During spring 2007, as BYA began, Cypress Hills Beacon launched its CIT program with 10 students. A number of those students returned for CIT this year, and the Beacon recruited a few more, increasing CIT enrollment to 13 youth (20 is the capacity). A couple of CIT participants from last year are currently working with the afterschool program. Another focus of BYA was to augment the Teen Center to attract more girls. Presently, Mondays and Fridays are weekdays when girls are offered specific activities such as Step and Hip Hop. Staff reported a slight improvement in girls attendance since February/March. Another goal for BYA was to create a “youth development continuum” by connecting different programs offered to young adolescents at the Beacon,²¹ a task that has been taken on by the recently established BYA planning committee (described below).

Cypress Hills Beacon is focusing strategically on recruitment of middle school youth. Beacon staff members are making a concerted effort to recruit more middle school youth. The enhanced recruiting effort is in keeping with BYA goals and in response to new DYCD requirements for NYC Beacons. Beacon staff have actively visited classrooms to market the Beacon to middle school-age students in both schools and staff have developed flyers to hand out to prospective participants. Additionally, the Beacon has been promoting its programming at area churches.

The Youth Leadership Council gives the youth an active voice in the Beacon. The Youth Advisory Council that meets monthly provides the Beacon with systematic input from youth on programming. Since being part of BYA, the Beacon has been drawing youth from different programs to have a broad representation at the YLC table. Currently, the Council is composed of a couple of youth in the CIT program, a couple in the after-school, and a couple in the Intergenerational services (IGS).

²¹ As detailed in an earlier OMG report, such a continuum was expected to encourage youth to explore different programs at the Beacon, leading to youth deepening their involvement at the Beacon.

Status of BYA Initiative

Cypress Hills ENY Beacon has established a BYA planning committee to ensure the continued successful implementation of the initiative. The planning committee meets weekly and is composed of all full-time staff members who are involved in BYA (please refer to Appendix A for a complete list). According to interviewed Beacon staff, the committee has improved internal communication about individual programs, which in turn has improved staff's ability to refer youth to different activities – an important step toward the “continuum”. Additionally, the weekly meetings help staff effectively discuss programming goals and desired outcomes. Interviewed staff expressed their sincere appreciation for this opportunity to give their input on programming, and observed how much the committee has made them feel officially part of the process.

Cypress Hills ENY Beacon staff have received valuable training from the Youth Development Institute (YDI), and are able to provide training internally. Beacon senior staff described training provided by YDI as positive and constructive. The overall goals of training as it relates to BYA, however, are still unclear. More Cypress Hills ENY staff members need youth development and AYD training. Plans to secure this for them are still under development, but were described as top priority.

There is still uncertainty regarding the goals of BYA. Though they have attended BYA meetings and been visited by YDI staff, the Cypress Hills Beacon director indicated the goals and desired actions for BYA were still vague.

At the time of OMG's site visit, cross-Beacon exchanges had not happened for Cypress Hills Beacon staff. The director expressed the need for more interaction with the other Beacons involved in BYA, including more exchanges with the Documentation (formerly leadership) Beacons.

The role of documentation (formerly leadership) Beacons remained unclear. Cypress Hills ENY Beacon staff continued to be uncertain about the role that documentation Beacons were to have in BYA and how Cypress Hills could exchange experiences with those Beacons.

Data Collection Capacity

The newly instituted DYCD's Beacon On-line system will improve the tracking and management of Beacon enrollment and participation data. The new system allows all NYC Beacons to store registration information for all participants and attendance data for each activity, and to generate multiple reports – from specific activity-related, to more general, aggregate reports on the data entered in the system. The system will clearly not only serve DYCD's requirements, but also improve the Beacon's ability to accurately monitor attendance and participation for the BYA initiative. At the time of the OMG site visit, the system had just been launched and Beacon staff was starting to learn how to navigate the system (which they characterized as frustrating). Staff definitely recognized the long term benefits of the system for data tracking and management and they had begun to inquire about enrollment and attendance trends. As of the site visit, Cypress Hills Beacon estimated that approximately 75 middle school youth were participating in the Beacon this year.

Summary Assessment and Issues for Further Consideration

Cypress Hills ENY Beacon has the necessary infrastructure in place, necessary for continued implementation of the BYA initiative.

- There are several key staff members with appropriate credentials dedicated to BYA efforts and service to the Middle-School aged population, and the Beacon has hired part-time instructors for weekend activities such as dance and percussion among others.
- Cypress Hills Beacon has had limited space available for programming, however, the staff anticipates an improvement in space and overall relations this year due to changes in school administration.
- Funding has increased for 2007-08. The funding provided by DYCD for the middle school programming emphasis directly – and positively – impacts the Beacon’s capacity to carry out BYA.
- At the time of OMG’s site visit, Cypress Hills Beacon had moved forward with its BYA plans that included instituting the CIT program, enhancing the Teen Center to attract more girls, and forming a BYA planning committee. Beacon full-time staff members have stepped up their recruiting efforts for middle school youth.
- The after-school program instituted a middle school unit, so that programming is more attractive to middle schoolers, who engage in activities that are designed to address the developmental needs of their age group.

Appendix A: Interviewees

- Gladys DeSantiago, Cypress Hills Beacon Director
- Larry Acosta, Youth Development Specialist, Cypress Hills Beacon
- Eric James, Recreation Director, Cypress Hills Beacon
- Erica Oquendo, After-School Director, Cypress Hills Beacon
- Milagros Cortes, After-school unit leader (middle school), Cypress Hills Beacon
- Carlos Basora, Office Manager, Cypress Hills Beacon

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

OMI/Excelsior Beacon: Initial Site Visit Summary

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 11th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with the OMI/Excelsior Beacon director, and a number of Beacon staff (please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewees).

Beacon's Context

OMI/Excelsior Beacon is situated in a community that has considerable racial/ethnic diversity. This includes many Hispanic, Chinese, Filipino, and African-American residents, long-time community members and those that are newer to the community or are recent immigrants to the U.S. The community surrounding the Beacon is predominantly low-income and violence incidents are common.

OMI/E Beacon is based at James Denman Middle School. The school serves grades 6 to 8. About half (52%) of the student body receives free lunch and another 15% receives reduced price lunch. The school performance was described by interviewed staff as lower than desirable, but definitely demonstrating improvement. As of 2006, about 1/3 of students were performing at or above proficiency in math and English, compared to roughly 1/4 in 2002.²² According to Beacon staff, the current principal, who has been with the school for approximately 5 years, is regarded as a strict disciplinarian. His support for the Beacon is limited as his focus is on academic development and behavioral conduct of students at the school, during school hours.

The OMI/E Beacon is overseen and fully supported by the Urban Services YMCA. Urban Services YMCA provides many programs and services to the community, including academic enrichment, mentoring, counseling, violence prevention, oversight of another Beacon program and many other resources for families.

Support from the host school is limited. Both senior and junior Beacon staff indicated that the Beacon-school relationship is somewhat strained, and that they do not have the principal's full buy-in regarding the Beacon mission. The Beacon does enjoy some support from other administrative staff such as school counselors. At the time of the site visit, the Beacon was preparing to move within the school – to a smaller space - due to scheduled renovations for the building. It is not expected that the construction will be completed before March 2008. Interviewed staff stated that communication between the Beacon and the school does not always occur effectively.

²² S.F.U.S.D. School Profiles 2006-07 (Fall 2006). Retrieved from <http://orb.sfusd.edu/profile/prfl-632.htm>.

School and Beacon enrollment have declined in recent years. Beacon staff reported an enrollment of 130 youth. Approximately 80 participants attend regularly.

Beacon Practice

OMI/Excelsior Beacon offers a range of stimulating, age-appropriate activities to their middle school population, in an increasingly competitive service environment.²³ Besides focusing on quality, the Beacon's approach to programming is about choice. The Beacon offers a number of new activities every cycle of 6 to 12 weeks depending on the activity. The classes to which staff refer as "core" last 12 weeks and are project-based. Youth must complete a project by the end of the cycle. The "elective" classes are shorter in duration. They happen once a week for 6 weeks. At the time of the visit, some of the activities being offered to youth included cooking classes (e.g., grilling, cooking without a stove) various sports, media classes (movie making), making and playing video games, and several academic focused activities that ranged from homework help to leadership classes. Another important aspect of programming at OMI/E, since last year, is the 30-minute mandatory academic assistance period. Participation in academic support is a pre-requisite to participation in any enrichment activity offered.

Youth from the middle school and surrounding communities attend the Beacon. They are required to participate in Beacon activities for at least three days a week.

Participating youth must come to the Beacon for three days a week at a minimum, although some come several days a week. Ideally, the Beacon would have youth come Monday through Friday; however, there are other after-school programs offered currently by the majority of city schools. Sixty percent (60%) of the youth who stay for the Beacon come from zipcode 94112 and most attend Denman MS. Another 16% of Beacon participants are from Hunters Point - Bayview and either attend Denman or go to the Beacon as a result of staff outreach efforts.

OMI/E Beacon includes a Wellness Program. Through this, the Beacon offers general wellness, physical and mental health services including case management, substance use prevention, wellness counseling, trauma therapy, peer-led health education, empowerment groups for girls, life skills groups for boys, and gang intervention. Multiple issues are addressed (e.g., anger, stress management) and youth can self refer or be referred by teachers who think they need assistance. Parents/guardians and other family members can access these services, and it is standard practice for every youth who participates to have a family wellness plan developed.

The Beacon's attractiveness to at-risk youth has declined somewhat in the last two years. The Beacon suspects that the loss of some of its "at-risk" youth is the result of the more structured programming that is currently operated. Prior to the introduction of the mandatory academic assistance, the Beacon focused primarily on providing enrichment in an environment that was somewhat less structured but equally as committed to youth development. Beacon staff recently interviewed some of the youth who've stopped coming. They stated that the Beacon had become a place for "goody two shoes."

OMI/Excelsior Beacon asks for input from youth on programming in a systematic manner. In addition to relying on the youth leadership council for input on programming, the Beacon conducts

²³ The existence of various youth services in the community, including ExCEL afterschool programs run by the Department of School Health, makes for a competitive service environment. Many schools in the area offer after-school programming for their students.

surveys and focus groups with the youth. The Beacon's approach to youth input is to balance the wishes of the youth with the staff strengths and talents.

The Beacon senior staff interviewed would like to see greater parental involvement. Beacon staff mentioned the difficulty in engaging parents of young adolescents. Getting parents' buy-in is challenging because adults do not want their children traveling the streets at night due to safety concerns. Recently, the Beacon polled a few parents regarding their requests for students and there was a clear preference for a stronger academic focus. Beacon staff observed parents do not see enrichment and youth development as valuable and neither does the school.

Status of BYA Initiative

As of the site visit, OMI/E Beacon staff were in the planning stages of the initiative. Beacon senior staff have worked closely with SFBI for the past few months on strategizing and planning for BYA. No individual staff member has been selected to oversee BYA, but the team has identified. The October YDI/BYA Conference in New York was regarded as the formal BYA start for San Francisco. As of early October, the Beacon director was considering who to include as part of the BYA team at OMI/E, with the possibility of hiring a staff person whose main responsibility would be BYA. At the moment, the program director, the Beacon director, and the director of the Beacon wellness center have all been involved with the initiative at some level. The team was very enthusiastic about being part of the BYA initiative. The Beacon director and staff are committed to identifying new ways to reach out to the youth not currently served by the Beacon. At the time of OMG's site visit, no concrete marketing and outreach strategies had been laid out.

Junior staff were not aware of the BYA initiative at the time of the site visit. With the exception of one staff member, whose understanding was vague, the junior staff interviewed had no knowledge of BYA. The junior staff had participated in trainings pertaining to youth development issues but did not attend the recently provided by YDI.

The Beacon senior staff and the Director possess an understanding of the particular needs of young adolescents, have substantial experience with youth, and knowledge of youth development principles. Staff reported making a concerted effort to incorporate youth development principles in their daily practice, and to constantly provide training to younger staff.

All Beacon staff value the effective communication and overall support provided by the San Francisco Beacon Initiative.

Beacon staff valued the training received from the Youth Development Institute (YDI). The training was perceived as being extremely helpful and provided them with new ideas regarding recruiting and staff training. Beacon senior staff are planning to conduct additional training for their junior staff based on the work they did with YDI.

As part of BYA and Beacon networking, OMI/W Beacon has participated in valuable cross-Beacon exchanges. All San Francisco Beacons participating in the BYA initiative meet once a month together with the intermediary – SFBI - to strategize and plan how to network and exchange promising practices. OMI/E beacon staff commented on the value of networking with other local Beacons in the initiative in helping identify opportunities for improvement.

Data Collection Capacity

Through CMS, the Beacon has a detailed data system that allows it to monitor trends in enrollment and participation for their own management purposes and for BYA reports. The CMS data system has been used by the San Francisco Beacons since before the BYA initiative, and so most Beacons, including OMI/Excelsior, have staff members with CMS knowledge and data experience.

Summary Assessment

The OMI/E Beacon has the infrastructure necessary to carry out the BYA work. The Beacon has an enthusiastic and experienced staff that report being very committed to the cause of youth development. They offer multiple activities for participating youth. The space available (even the temporary area) is adequate and can accommodate some expansion. While the school undergoes construction though, space will be fairly limited. The lack of full school support will be an ongoing challenge.

Appendix A: Interviewees

- David MacGillis, Director, OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Sherrice Dorsey, Program Director OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Rachel Scherz, Director of Wellness Services, OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Education Coordinator, OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Enrichment Coordinator, OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center
- Site Manager, OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

Visitacion Valley Beacon: Initial Site Visit Summary Fall 2007

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 10th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with the Visitacion Valley Beacon director, and a number of Beacon staff (please refer to Appendix A for a list of interviewees).

Beacon's Context

The community surrounding Visitacion Valley Beacon is racially/ethnically diverse. Many residents are lower income and it is characterized by increased violence. Interviewed staff described the community as plagued by gang-related violence, which has negatively impacted Beacon enrollment. The community is racially/ethnically diverse: it has a large Asian-Pacific Islander (API) population and smaller African-American and Hispanic populations. Single family households and poverty are predominant in the community, but there are pockets of economic stability and there are some homeowners further down the valley. The Beacon plays a key organizing role in the community as the lead agency of the Violence Prevention Collaborative that is composed of City agencies, CBOs, local businesses and residents to address the escalating violence in the area.

The Beacon enjoys the strong support of its lead CBO, Visitacion Valley Community Center. The agency's executive director was perceived by interviewed Beacon staff as supportive of and on board with the Beacon's practices and leadership decisions. Furthermore, the agency is always open to collaborating with the Beacon on new ideas, and gives the Beacon their constant input and guidance. The relationship between the Beacon and its agency was described as very collegial.

Visitacion Valley Community Center was also described by Beacon staff as an asset to the community given the range of supports it provides. Programs and services include youth employment programs, family support services (e.g., child care and after-school, counseling), and programs for senior citizens.

Visitacion Valley Beacon is housed at Visitacion Valley Middle School. The school serves grades 6th to 8th, and its population, like the surr mirrors the community. Eighty percent (80%) of the student body receives reduced price lunch, and a sizeable share of the students lives in the nearby public housing. The school performance was described as lower than average but demonstrating improvement. Despite the increased incidences of violence in the community, Visitacion Valley Middle School is perceived by members of the community as safe ground and a neutral place to hold community meetings. Beacon staff interviewed indicated that the community holds a favorable view of the school.

The Beacon's relationship with its host school was described as long-term and extremely positive. The Beacon director described the school principal as being tremendously supportive of the Beacon, and highly committed to supporting the community in general. The Beacon has great space available to programming as a result of a mutually supporting Beacon-school relationship. The school – and indirectly the Beacon – has recently gained notoriety due to the National Middle School Principal of the Year award received by the principal – who has been with the school for 8 years.

Beacon Practice

Visitacion Valley Beacon offers a range of stimulating, age-appropriate activities to their middle school population. There are numerous opportunities for youth at Visitacion Valley Beacon to express their creativity, learn and exercise leadership skills, and sharpen their academic abilities. The Beacon offers activities such as homework assistance/after-school tutoring, sports, open recreation, cooking classes, Friday night movies, and numerous others. The Beacon leadership in conjunction with school officials has instituted mandatory attendance for homework assistance (for at least 1 hour) as a pre-requisite to participation in any enrichment activity offered. Furthermore, the school principal has instructed all students with low academic performance – about 40% of the student body - to attend the tutoring portion of Beacon programming. The students have the choice to stay for enrichment activities or to leave the Beacon after the tutoring. This year (2006-07), through additional funding received, the Beacon is able to compensate school teachers to work with youth during the after-school academic assistance period. (Beacon staff acknowledged, however, that having the teachers on-board is a huge fiscal commitment for the Beacon since they are paid the same hourly rate they earn during the school day). To complement this enhanced academic focus, Beacon BYA team members and other staff have also developed many new activities in response to requests and research about what is appealing and meaningful to the target population.

The Beacon has an incentive structure for youth who participate in tutoring, and additional incentives for participation in enrichment. In an effort to boost youth's engagement levels, Visitacion Valley Beacon remunerates students with "Beacon bucks" for their participation. Participation in voluntary enrichment activities earns students more bucks. Tutoring, since it is mandatory, earns students fewer "bucks." Once in possession of Beacon bucks, students can purchase a variety of goods at the Beacon store at the school (most of the goods are purchased at dollar stores by the staff). Beacon bucks are also good for admission to Beacon events such as the talent show or dances. Students also receive extra bucks for bringing in friends. Funds for the Beacon store are written into the budget, but it is also supported through donations.

Participant youth at Visitacion Valley Beacon give input on programming. At three points throughout the year youth are surveyed by Beacon staff. Beacon participants are asked to give their opinion on current programming and make suggestions for future programming.

Status of BYA Initiative

As of the site visit, Visitation Valley Beacon staff were in the planning stages of the initiative.

Beacon leadership has been working closely with SFBI for the past few months on strategizing and planning for BYA. Beacon staff were regarding the October YDI/BYA Conference in New York as the formal BYA start for San Francisco. The Beacon director and staff stated that they would like to focus not only on reaching out to African-American male adolescents – as initially planned – but also extend their outreach efforts to the community at large as well as to the Asian-Pacific Islander (API) population that is considerable in the area. At present, escalating incidences of violence in the neighborhood are hampering Beacon enrollment and participation levels. Enrollment at the Beacon has dropped to 75-80 youth (from over 100). Nonetheless, Beacon staff are confident that through intense outreach they will be able to attract more youth to the Beacon. The team's excitement levels with the initiative were high.

A Beacon BYA team has been formed. Visitation Valley Beacon has a large staff with extensive experience and knowledge of youth development. The BYA team is composed of the youth program director, the Beacon director, and a newly added team member working on outreach strategies (more on this below).

Visitation Valley Beacon staff have begun to outline a recruitment and outreach plan. Eager to increase youth enrollment and engagement levels at the Beacon, the staff has been making a concerted effort to develop and implement a recruitment plan. As of the site visit, the Beacon had just hired a former consultant who brings extensive Beacon experience to the table as well as enthusiasm and passion for the community. This person's main responsibilities will include outreach and recruitment for BYA. The Beacon outreach efforts will target youth as well as their parents/caregivers. The outreach coordinator has posted flyers around the school and has outlined the next steps for recruitment and outreach both in the school and in the community.

As part of BYA and Beacon networking, Visitation Valley Beacon has participated in valuable cross-Beacon exchanges. All San Francisco Beacons participating in the BYA initiative meet once a month together with the intermediary – SFBI - to strategize and plan how to network and exchange promising practices. Visitation Valley beacon staff commented on the value of networking with other local Beacons in the initiative in helping identify opportunities for improvement.

The Beacon staff feel supported by the San Francisco Beacon Initiative senior staff. Beacon staff mentioned that SFBI maintains effective communication and provides great support to the Beacon.

Visitation Valley Beacon staff received valuable training from the Youth Development Institute (YDI). The training provided by YDI was referred to by Beacon staff as being of extremely high quality. Only one staff member observed that the content level was too basic and for that reason more suitable for the Beacon consultants. The feedback provided during the training was received positively among members of the staff, who felt their needs were heard and paid attention to by the YDI staff. The only shortcomings of the training, as perceived by Beacon staff, were the lack of more concrete action plans and the need to involve more staff members with different roles in the process. Visitation Valley staff indicated they would benefit from continued coaching regarding next steps in the implementation process.

Data Collection Capacity

Through CMS, the Beacon has a detailed data system that allows them to monitor trends in enrollment and participation for BYA. Additionally, said data system has been used by the San Francisco Beacons since before the BYA initiative, and so most Beacons, including Visitacion Valley, have staff members who are familiar with CMS.

Summary Assessment

- **Given its leadership, experience, and planned direction, Visitacion Valley Beacon possesses the capacity to carry out the BYA work.** The Beacon has a strong infrastructure, adequate space and considerable staff capacity to expand and enhance its programming moving forward. There are 15 full-time staff members and a number of consultants who provide youth-focused services. The director is well-respected and has deep knowledge and a long history of working with youth. There is longevity and cultural/neighborhood familiarity among the staff. The current space/capacity can definitely accommodate participation by to 160 youth, the desired target participation level. The principal and other school staff and lead agency are supportive and the community needs the positive programming. There are already a range of opportunities for youth which can be built upon, and staff have already begun working on an outreach and recruitment plan to attract more youth from the school and the community.

Appendix A: Interviewees

- Eli Horn, Director, Visitacion Valley Beacon
- Sandra Siharath, Beacon Youth Alternative Coordinator, Visitacion Valley Beacon
- Chris Rivera, Youth Program Director, Visitacion Valley Beacon
- Jose Ascencio, Case Manager, Visitacion Valley Beacon
- Nathaniel Cleveland, After-School Program Coordinator, Visitacion Valley Beacon

Evaluation of the Youth Development Institute's Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

Mission Beacon: Initial Site Visit Summary

Introduction

The evaluation of the Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative (BYA) was designed to document and assess changes in practice and in the participation of young adolescents at BYA Beacons. The evaluation documents how BYA strategies are informed by participating Beacons in New York City and San Francisco, how the initiative is directed by the YDI and SFBI, and how partnering organizations work together.

This report summarizes findings from the initial site visit interviews conducted on October 12th, 2007. OMG conducted interviews with Mission Beacon director and the program director (please refer to Appendix A for interviewees' names).

Beacon's Context

The community surrounding Mission Beacon is predominantly Latino. There is a long history of gang rivalry. The Mission community was described by interviewed staff as mostly Latino, with some African-American and Asian residents. The community has been historically plagued by gang rivalry. The influence of gang violence in the community can also be seen on school grounds, as some students tend to wear the gangs colors (e.g., wearing of gang colors even though they not active members).

Mission Beacon is located at Everett Middle School. Everett MS is a large building, situated in a corridor of schools: Sanchez Elementary (a feeder school) and Mission HS. Everett MS serves a total of 526 students in grades 6 to 8, 40% of whom are newcomers. The student body is predominately Latino (about 70%), with a small African-American representation, and an even smaller share of Asian students. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the student body receives free lunch and another 6% receives reduced price lunch.²⁴ The school's academic performance on state tests was described by the Beacon director as low.

Interviewees described the Beacon's host school as generally supportive, yet the relationship is occasionally strained. School issues such as high administrative staff turnover and high expectations of the Beacon around meeting the school's academic needs were raised as stressors in the school-Beacon relationship.

Mission Beacon enjoys support from its agency, Mission Neighborhood Centers (MNC). The Beacon director described the agency as supportive of the Beacon. There are multiple programs supported by the organization, however, including a few that are very new, and time and resources must be shared.²⁵

²⁴ S.F.U.S.D. School Profiles 2006-07 (Fall 2006). Retrieved from <http://orb.sfusd.edu/profile/prfl-529.htm>.

²⁵ Note, since the time of the site visit, key changes in personnel, including assignment of a new Beacon director, Valerie Tullier, and revision of other job descriptions at the Beacon have taken place.

Beacon Practice

The Mission Beacon offers a range of activities to its middle school population, with the strongest focus on academics. A considerable proportion of Mission Beacon's programming was modeled after its predecessor at the school – Community Bridges Beacon.²⁶ When initially hired, Mission Beacon director intentionally replicated some of CBB's most popular activities in an effort to secure the buy-in of both the school and the community. The Beacon director established an initial need as a Beacon to 1) meet the school needs first; 2) then reach out to families; 3) and finally to communities; what he termed the Beacon's three-level step. The school had a strong need for academic support services (given students' low academic performance on standardized testing), and so Mission Beacon strategically positioned itself to attend to the needs of the school by focusing on a structured and intensive homework help program. The Beacon mandates that students have their homework complete before engaging in any type of enrichment activity like chess, soccer, bike club, arts, and others. Only students who tested at or above proficient may waive the homework requirement if desired. The Beacon expectation is for youth to come to the Beacon at least three times per week and to engage in at least 2 hours of homework assistance per week.

During OMG's site visit, there was no evidence that Mission Beacon requests youth's input on programming. The Beacon director mentioned, albeit briefly, that eventually the Beacon's aim was to request youth's input on programming. Nonetheless, there seemed to be no strategic plan as to how or when this will happen.

Status of BYA Initiative

As of the site visit, the Mission Beacon was in the early planning stages of the initiative.

The Beacon Director and Program Director worked closely with SFBI for the past few months on strategizing and planning for BYA, however, as of Fall 2007, identification of an individual staff member to oversee BYA was seen as a future action. The October YDI/BYA Conference in New York was regarded as the formal BYA start for San Francisco. Specific strategies regarding BYA are on hold until after the conference.

Running the school ExCEL program uses Beacon resources – from space to staffing. The school relies on the Beacon to administer the ExCEL after-school program. The coordinator, a school staff member, oversees the work of the Beacon staff to ensure that the academic focus is maintained. On Thursdays, the day the school releases early at 12:15pm, it is up to Beacon staff to meet ExCEL regulations to conduct activities for students through 6:15pm. School staff are unavailable on those days and it can be challenging for Beacon staff to address all service needs for participants, for the extended period.

Professional development opportunities for young Beacon staff were described as limited. The program director indicated the need and desire to train younger staff was clear, but strategies to do so had not been developed.

The Beacon staff value the support provided by the San Francisco Beacon Initiative staff. The Beacon director indicated that SFBI has been keeping close communications and have provided the Beacon with much-needed guidance through the BYA planning process.

²⁶ Mission Beacon was introduced at Everett MS as a successor to another Beacon. Prior to Mission, there was Community Bridges Beacon (CBB) at Everett. In recent years, the lead agency for CBB was replaced and Mission's lead agency – Mission Neighborhood Centers (MNC) – incorporated the Beacon, re-naming it after its organization.

Mission Beacon staff were grateful for the training provided by the Youth Development Institute (YDI). The training led by YDI was received positively by Mission Beacon staff. They staff were especially grateful for the in-depth discussions around youth development as it relates to program design. There was no definite plan, however, for extending the training to other staff of the Mission Beacon.

Data Collection Capacity

Through CMS, the Beacon has a detailed data system that allows it to monitor trends in enrollment and participation for their own management purposes and for BYA reports. The CMS data system has been used by the San Francisco Beacons since before the BYA initiative, and so most Beacons, including Mission Beacon, have staff members with CMS knowledge and data experience.

Summary Assessment

As of the site visit, the Mission Beacon had a limited infrastructure to carry out the BYA work. Space for programming was not a problem, but other there are other issues, more critical to Mission's ability to carry out the initiative. For one, Beacon staff capacity is limited; secondly, available staff are over-extended and trying to meet school demands for academics; finally, the director and program director are not fully in alignment with each others. The Beacon would benefit from guidance and stronger leadership. The lack of opportunities for the professional development of junior staff is particularly worrisome.

- Mission Beacon was still in the planning stages of the BYA initiative, and the Beacon director seemed unsure as to the direction for the Beacon regarding BYA;
- Youth lack opportunities to give input into programming at Mission Beacon;
- There are limited opportunities for professional development of junior staff regarding youth development and BYA strategies.
- The partnership with ExCEL uses a great share of the Beacon's resources such as space and staffing. A more equitable, mutually developing relationship will need to be established to enhance the Beacon's success in moving forward with BYA;
- The fact that Mission Beacon has recently changed its leadership represents a positive stride toward BYA implementation.

Appendix A: Interviewees

Darren DeLeon, former Beacon Director
Valerie Tullier, Current Beacon Director (a/o late October 2007)
Elena Royale, Program Director
Ruben Urbina (attempted)

COHORT STUDY DETAILS

The Cohort Study will take place in conjunction with the full BYA evaluation and to be informed by data about practice and participation changes collected and analyzed through those efforts. It was designed to provide a deeper understanding of the affects of BYA on Beacon participants.

Cohort Study Key Questions

The goal of this study will be to determine how, to what extent and why youth are connected to Beacons and how this changes over time and in response to BYA efforts. The following key questions will drive the study.

- 1) Who stays connected to Beacons, how does their participation change and most importantly, what influences their decisions to stay connected? (Influences of interest to include: **individual characteristics** such as gender, age, school connectedness/progress, participants' Beacon involvement intensity and history; **Beacon characteristics** including structure, specific staff members, and especially strategies and BYA-inspired practice changes; and **other supporting, detracting and competing factors** such as families and friends and other programming opportunities.)
- 2) Who leaves Beacons and why? (to the degree possible this will include efforts to understand those whose participation substantially declines as well as those who completely exit the Beacons – the same influences to be considered).
- 3) Who establishes new connections to Beacons and what influences their decisions?

Combining survey data with careful review of enrollment and participant data will help to clarify the characteristics of the different groups of young adolescents, and provide some explanations for why and how their status changes.

Cohort Study Proposed Site Selection and other Strategy Considerations

Given the above questions and the need to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information, several site selection and data collection strategies are possible. The proposed design incorporates both survey and focus group strategies and includes data collection from youth involved at three different Beacon sites TBD*.

The proposed Cohort Study is designed to be a prospective follow-up study. The cohort is identified from participants at NYC BYA sites, fall 2007 and then followed through spring 2009 using a combination of participation data record reviews (collected through the full BYA evaluation), evaluator-administered surveys at each site, evaluator-administered phone surveys for participants who disengage**, and focus groups with youths for additional clarification/interpretation of findings and commentary about Beacon efforts. Note that a local site visitor will be identified*** to spend substantial time at the actual Beacon sites during the survey periods. Additionally, incentives will be provided to the Beacon sites to help defray the costs of staff time to assist with survey administration and participant status information, and to use to encourage participation by youth (for example by hosting pizza parties after surveys are

completed, etc.). Substantial effort will also be made to ensure regular record-keeping by the selected sites and by the evaluators to clean all collected data before analyses.

Cohort Study Timeline

As stated above, this study will begin in the fall of 2007 and will be conducted through the spring of 2009 with final reporting happening summer/fall 2009. Implementation and participation data collected for the full evaluation (especially unit record attendance data and staff and Directors' reports about BYA-inspired and other practice changes) will inform the Cohort Study throughout its duration. Report deliverables will include an initial survey summary (Jan 2008), Initial Cohort Study Report (Sept. 2008), Final Cohort Study Report (Sept. 2009). However, Cohort Study deliverables will not be on the same cycle as evaluation reporting deliverables, due to availability of data and the need for more extensive analysis and use of focus groups to consider survey findings.

*** Note that active consent to participate in research will be obtained from parents/guardians for all youth as they enroll in the Beacon. The request will be made on enrollment forms. Before administration of surveys, enrollment forms will be checked to verify permission to participate. The evaluator will only be able to conduct the study at Beacon sites that agree to include this on their enrollment forms.**

**** The evaluation team acknowledges all inherent challenges in finding disengaged youth and encouraging continued participation in this study. The size of this group is still unknown, but the study plan includes multiple efforts to inform youth upon initiating participation that they will need to respond to follow-up requests if their status changes. Follow-up contact information will be requested as first surveys are administered.**

***** Sylvia Sanchez, a bilingual graduate student from Bank Street College has agreed to fulfill the role of local site visitor. She lives in Queens and is familiar with both the Beacon programs and survey administration and has conducted similar tasks very effectively in previous collaborations with the proposed project director.**

ENROLLMENT – PROCESS BY WHICH YOUNG ADOLESCENTS ARE RECRUITED INTO THE PROGRAM

PRACTICE		IDENTIFIED
ENROLLMENT PLAN	Beacon staff has developed enrollment plan that includes all youth and age groups	100%
	Beacon staff has enrollment plan specifically focused on current, new and hard-to-reach adolescent participants	96%
	Beacon staff promotes enrollment of participating and non-participating young adolescents and has structures and practices in place to ensure their continuous recruitment	96%
INFORMATION ABOUT YOUTH AND COMMUNITY	Staff have identified key institutions, people and resources to gain understanding of where and how to recruit young people.	88%
	Staff understanding of the needs of the community is informal – a formal assessment needs to be completed.	83%
	Beacon director keeps staff informed about changes in the neighborhood and the target population	72%
	Beacon staff have conducted needs assessment of the community and identified characteristics of the target population including youth likely to participate and those hard-to-reach.	64%
	The needs assessment is reviewed and updated regularly by assigned Beacon staff	38%
ENROLLMENT GOALS AND MONITORING	Beacon staff have created enrollment process that is clearly communicated to young people and their families during intake	96%
	Young people are given other program options and resources within the program or through referrals to outside organizations and co-locators	96%
	Waiting lists are organized and families are kept informed of their status	92%
	Beacon meets or exceeds enrollment goals	92%
	There is a process for deciding whether enrollment will be rolling or cyclical	76%
	Young people on wait list	76%

ENROLLMENT – CONTINUED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
OUTREACH, MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT	Beacon advertises through posted flyers and mailings	96%
	Beacon parents and community members are encouraged and supported to reach out to youth and are informed of the importance of recruiting young adolescents	88%
	Beacon youth participants are integral to the recruitment for and marketing of the program	87%
	Beacon staff visit local and host school classrooms to publicize program to youth	83%
	Staff survey and collect information from young adolescents on ways to recruit and enroll their peers such as town hall meetings, and incentives for bringing friends to the program	65%
	Staff conduct outreach to specific populations - they identify places where parents congregate and use services such as churches, health clinics, nail and beauty shops, supermarkets, etc. They go where youth hang out such as malls and playgrounds	63%
	Staff develop strategies to focus on non-participating and hard-to-reach young adolescents and build contact networks with social workers, juvenile justice, caseworkers and others who can assist in recruitment.	50%
INTAKE AND ORIENTATION	Intake is organized and welcoming and includes basic information about the program, youth health and permission forms, family and youth preferences and needs	100%
	Intake contact is made with key parent/caretaker	100%
	Program orientation includes introduction to activities and expectations of youth and program	100%
	Staff conducts orientation for youth that creates excitement and introduces activities, staff and supports	96%
	Youth assist Beacon staff in organizing group orientation and help lead events and tours of program	59%
	Intake includes interview with young adolescent to learn his/her interests, issues and needs for services and supports	38%
	Participating youth buddy with newcomers.	23%

ENROLLMENT – CONTINUED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS	Responsibility for enrollment is assigned to at least one staff person	92%
	Beacon staff have been trained on recruitment and enrollment procedures and are able to communicate key facts about the program to youth and families	92%
	Assigned staff have been trained on making outreach to young people and target young adolescent population	92%
	Assigned staff interfaces with other program staff and other community school contacts to implement enrollment and orientation process	88%
	Training includes information about the community and needs, connecting with parents and youth and involving young people in recruitment process	75%
	Young people are assigned specific responsibilities for recruitment and enrollment – they are supervised by staff person in charge	35%

ATTENDANCE – AN INDICATION OF TIME SPENT IN THE PROGRAM

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
ATTENDANCE GOALS	Beacon director and staff set attendance goals	96%
	Beacon director and staff review attendance goals and analyze the data based on what is and is not working.	96%
	Changes are made based on analysis to improve attendance and participation.	91%
	Beacon staff are aware of specific attendance targets for each demographic and developmental group in the 9-to-14 year old range.	83%
	Attendance goals are reviewed and adjusted midway through the year	81%
	Goals are set based on community and youth needs assessment	67%
STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	Beacon director assigns staff person to oversee attendance data entry	100%
	Agency supplies necessary computers and software for tracking youth.	96%
	All staff are involved in encouraging young adolescents to attend and ask those who are not attending what happened and that they are missed.	93%
	Staff person is trained and meets weekly with director to discuss attendance issues.	75%
ATTENDANCE DATA COLLECTION	Beacon staff documents daily attendance using at least a paper sign-in system	100%
	Beacon staff have process for monitoring and tracking daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal attendance.	93%
	Beacon data systems are automated and attendance in each activity is quantified and recorded.	88%
	Beacon data system tracks unit record data on each young adolescent.	85%

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
COMMUNICATION ABOUT ATTENDANCE	Young people are consulted on a regular basis about how to increase attendance and participation and to inform staff about what is working, what is realistic, and what changes in schedule might make a difference.	92%
	Young adolescents and their caregivers are informed during enrollment/intake about expectations for regular attendance during general orientation meeting and informally during daily interactions	83%
	Beacon staff reflect and discuss attendance outcomes on a regular basis, noting patterns, long-term absences and staff follow-up	58%
OUTREACH TO NON-ATTENDING YOUTH	Staff communicate to young adolescents that they are missed and needed by the Beacon Community.	92%
	If youth can be located, staff follow-up to determine the reason for leaving and address reason if possible through reaching out to youth and family.	91%
	Beacon staff outreach to non-attending youth is informal and occurs periodically but not on a regular basis.	83%
	Young people are involved in reaching out to their non-attending peers.	80%
	Beacon staff have a formal process of outreach to non-attending young adolescents through phone calls, email, home visits or other face-to-face contact.	58%
	Beacon director/staff consult with school or other institutions to follow-up on youth who no longer attend.	55%

ENGAGEMENT – ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT AND CONCENTRATED ATTENTION; YOUNG ADOLESCENTS ARE INTELLECTUALLY IMMERSED, SOCIALLY CONNECTED AND EMOTIONALLY CENTERED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	Beacon activities incorporate themes that reflect youth interests and help expand the cognition, emotional and skill development of young adolescents	100%
	Youth generate ideas for programming and design community service events, serve as youth program evaluators and plan celebrations and parties	100%
	Staff are trained in how to develop age-appropriate lesson plans for all activities	96%
	Beacon director and staff have developed a framework for program offerings what is based on the reality of what young adolescents need and what they want/enjoy	96%
	Staff and young people adopt curricula, learning strategies and resources to build their skills, knowledge and positive attitudes	96%
	Youth have a choice of activities including sports, arts, community service, literacy, informal math and science and academic assistance	93%
	Beacon staff solicit ideas from young adolescents and discuss, accept and act upon them	93%
	Beacon staff informally survey youth about their activity preferences and interests as well as program format and content.	92%
	A portion of Beacon activities are initiated, developed and directed by young adolescents in collaboration with staff	78%
	Activity selection is informed by research about what works for specific developmental ages	57%

ENGAGEMENT – ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT AND CONCENTRATED ATTENTION; YOUNG ADOLESCENTS ARE INTELLECTUALLY IMMERSED, SOCIALLY CONNECTED AND EMOTIONALLY CENTERED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
ACTIVITY STRUCTURE AND LEVEL	Activities are provided in both organized classes and as drop-in experiences	100%
	Activities provide a mix of physical, mental and creative experiences	100%
	Beacon activities include a focus on career development that build connections and skills	84%
	Activities include career fairs, mentoring and internships	72%
	Beacon director sets up formal contact with business people, artists, professionals and colleges to connect with young adolescents as part of career and education pathways program	71%
	More advanced offerings are available for young adolescents who want greater depth	64%
ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY	Beacon director and staff make targeted effort to appeal to traditional and non-traditional participants from diverse groups e.g. special programs/activities for girls and disabled	89%
	The Beacon staff is intentional in developing that counters historical lack of opportunities	83%
	Beacon director and staff have created informal opportunities for involvement of young adolescents with disabilities in the program	76%
	Beacon director and staff have created informal opportunities for involvement of young adolescents with disabilities in the program	74%

ENGAGEMENT – ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT AND CONCENTRATED ATTENTION; YOUNG ADOLESCENTS ARE INTELLECTUALLY IMMERSED, SOCIALLY CONNECTED AND EMOTIONALLY CENTERED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
QUALIFIED STAFF	An atmosphere of respect enables staff and young people to monitor implementation of youth development principles to reinforce the kinds of actions and attitudes that help young adolescents grow – positive and corrective feedback is offered	100%
	Beacon director hires specialists or outside organizations to provide specific high quality activities that will engage young adolescents	96%
	Staff are trained in youth development	96%
	Staff are recruited based on their youth development credentials and talents and interests they bring to the job	96%
	Beacon director encourages staff through formal and informal opportunities to share talents with youth and peers	96%
	Beacon director ensures that youth development training is continuous, with strong focus on increasing adolescent participation and engagement	92%
	Youth development principles are posted and made explicit throughout the program and in job descriptions	85%
	Beacon director monitors staff implementation of youth development principles in all activities to ensure that factors that foster resiliency are evident in staff relationships, activities and processes	85%
	Staff are trained in youth development and are aware of levels of participation (none, tokenism, consultation, representation, participation and self-managing)	83%
	Key staff have been trained in trainer-of-training AYD curriculum	81%

ENGAGEMENT – ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT AND CONCENTRATED ATTENTION; YOUNG ADOLESCENTS ARE INTELLECTUALLY IMMERSED, SOCIALLY CONNECTED AND EMOTIONALLY CENTERED

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
YOUTH PARTICIPATION	Beacon activities offer young adolescents opportunities to engage in meaningful relationships with staff and peers	100%
	Beacon activities offer young adolescents opportunities to take on a myriad of roles in their program as mentors, tutors and leaders in training	93%
	Beacon activities have "ladders of participation" and leadership including active youth council and opportunities for civil engagement	92%
	Alumni are encouraged to stay in touch with the program, visit, refer friends and siblings and speak to current participants	81%
	A youth council helps Beacon director assess program quality and plan improvements	64%
	A youth council helps Beacon director assess program quality and plan improvements	26%

RETENTION – THE ON-GOING LONG-TERM SUSTAINED CONNECTION TO THE PROGRAM

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
ENVIRONMENT	People greet each other and speak respectfully to one another	100%
	Adults acknowledge arrivals with warmth; there are spaces to sit and talk and fun things to do as young people arrive.	100%
	Young people have a sense of ownership and pride.	100%
	Beacon space is welcoming and safe	96%
	Staff make an effort to learn about and talk to all participants.	96%
	Young people work with staff to set up, design and decorate the space.	92%
	Bulletin Boards reflect the work of youth – space is clean and organized	88%
	Facilities are well-equipped and up-to-date.	83%
ACTIVITIES	Activities are clearly described and taught by trained staff.	100%
	Activities allow young adolescents several choices and they can take time to explore possibilities before making a commitment to the program.	88%
	Activities are based on input from young adolescents as well as observation and reflection by staff	88%
	Activities are regularly reviewed by staff and youth and are refined based on this assessment	88%
	Activities are designed using the youth development framework.	85%
	Some activities are youth-initiated and youth-led, with adequate adult support	76%
	Activities are designed to build on mastery e.g. beginner dance builds to advanced dance.	62%

RETENTION – THE ON-GOING LONG-TERM SUSTAINED CONNECTION TO THE PROGRAM

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLES	Beacon staff work to develop caring and trusting relationships with youth	100%
	Beacon staff encourage young people to build relationships with peers and with staff	100%
	Staff know the names, strengths and challenges of the young adolescents they serve	100%
	New people are formally and informally Introduced to peers and staff	100%
	Staff check-in with young people and know how they are doing	100%
	Staff make it clear that young people have important roles to play as both participants and peer leaders	96%
	Beacon staff informally reach out to young adolescents who attend irregularly	96%
	Staff is trained in the importance of healthy relationships as an indicator of developmental progress	96%
	Beacon staff implement focus groups of participants to learn how young adolescents can be retained	56%
	Beacon staff are assigned to individual young adolescents to follow-up on enrollment, attendance and retention	36%
	Beacon staff conduct interviews, surveys of current, past and disengaged participants to create database of information related to retention of young adolescents	32%
	A system of Primary Person is in place – each young adolescent has one staff person who is responsible for him/her	28%
	Beacon youth play a role in retaining young adolescents through buddy and mentor systems	24%

RETENTION – THE ON-GOING LONG-TERM SUSTAINED CONNECTION TO THE PROGRAM

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
COMMUNICATION	Staff people tell young people what they can gain by staying in the program	96%
	Staff highlight what is special about the program to young adolescents, emphasizing activities that will engage them and lead toward future employment and success	93%
	Beacon staff orients parents/caregivers about the benefits of regular and on-going participation of young adolescents in the program	92%
	Staff and young people compile reactions and reasons for staying with the program, identify what's special and fun and create written flyers, posters and presentations for recruitment	70%
SCHEDULING	Beacon activities are continuous and flexible with multiple opportunities for participation and retention of young adolescents – activities are changed seasonally to counter boredom	96%
	Program is consistently staffed	96%
	Schedules and activities are designed with knowledge of young adolescents interests and schedules and the need for relaxation and engagement	93%
RETENTION GOALS, MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP	Beacon staff collect data that accurately reflects who attends the program and for how long	96%
	Beacon director has set goals for enrollment, attendance and retention of young adolescents	96%
	Beacon staff have an understanding of why all eligible young adolescents participate or not in the program and has examined ways to address these issues	92%
	Beacon director and staff collect and analyze data that reflects retention trends and develop action plans based on data	88%
	Beacon staff create attendance incentives that support retention of young adolescents	88%
	Beacon has set enrollment, attendance and retention goals for young adolescents that include participating and hard-to-reach youth	87%
	Beacon staff meet regularly to discuss and assess effective retention strategies and design new ones	83%

BEACON ORGANIZATION AND AGENCY SUPPORTS – THE BEACON ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN ENSURES SMOOTH OPERATION, HIGH QUALITY DELIVERY OF SERVICES, AND COMMITMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
SUPERVISION AND SUPPORTS	Beacon Director receives supervision and support from lead agency on mission and goals of the organization	100%
	Beacon Director is supported in developing appropriate methods/strategies for supervising full-time and part-time staff – especially youth workers	100%
	Other agency staff are informed about the work of the Beacon	95%
	Agency Executive Director understands and is involved in developing a strategic plan for the Beacon and other youth development departments within the agency	90%
	Department Supervisor, director and key agency staff (ED, Assist ED, Division head) discuss how Beacon work relates to organization as a whole	89%
	Beacon supervisor makes regular visits to the Beacon to observe activities and meet with director	85%

BEACON ORGANIZATION AND AGENCY SUPPORTS – THE BEACON ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN ENSURES SMOOTH OPERATION, HIGH QUALITY DELIVERY OF SERVICES, AND COMMITMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	Beacon director offers informal feedback to staff on planning and facilitation of activities	100%
	Beacon director and staff have opportunities to participate in outside conferences and workshops	100%
	Staff receive initial training on youth development principles and understand the factors that foster resiliency they are trained to deliver this information to staff	92%
	Staff meetings include adequate time for reflection on practice The culture of the beacon is supportive and encourages staff to learn and observe each other, share reactions to programs, issues and ideas	88%
	All staff are trained in developing appropriate activities for young adolescents – director assists in this process	84%
	Staff visit other programs to observe and gain new ideas and perspectives	50%
	Beacon has hired education coordinator to oversee academic programs	35%

BEACON ORGANIZATION AND AGENCY SUPPORTS – THE BEACON ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN ENSURES SMOOTH OPERATION, HIGH QUALITY DELIVERY OF SERVICES, AND COMMITMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT	Staff adjust the program activities or methods where appropriate	100%
	Beacon staff reflect on their practice and programs informally	96%
	Beacon director offers opportunities for staff contribution and discussion of strategies for improvement	96%
	Beacon staff reflect on their practice and how the program is going both formally and informally with Beacon director, supervisors and colleagues	89%
	Beacon director gives regular feedback to staff on planning and facilitation of activities	89%
	Beacon staff who are skilled trainers participate in citywide or national trainings and serve as resources to other Beacons and OST programs	65%
	Agency has hired quality assurance person who works with Beacon staff to improve program and meet outcomes aligned with agency goals and mission	57%

PRACTICE AREA	PRACTICES	REPORTED
EVALUATION	Beacon director and staff has identified goals, outcomes and activities that guide its program design	96%
	Responsibility for evaluation is assumed by the Beacon director and key staff	86%
	Beacon staff conduct informal internal evaluation – they collect feedback from young adolescents, track attendance and retention data	83%
	Evaluation plan addresses relationship of program activities and goals to key developmental outcomes for youth	55%
	External evaluator submits reports to agency and Beacon on progress of its program – reports are used to enhance fundraising activities	50%
	Beacon staff have created an evaluation plan that measures program and youth outcomes and key indicators of success	48%
	Agency hires external evaluator who builds the capacity of staff to conduct interviews, focus groups and program observations	35%

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selection and integration of a third Developing Beacon,		
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Now that site selection is finalized and interaction has officially begun, YDI will also need to remain vigilant regarding its		
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efforts to help San Francisco initiate

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to best

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