

Local organizations provide safe havens during crucial after-school hours

It isn't difficult to make the case for after-school programs.

According to a federal report, violent juvenile crime triples between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and it's during those same hours that children face the most serious danger of becoming victims of crime. Unsupervised after-school time is also a period of significant risk for substance abuse.

Clearly, something must be done to engage our youth in constructive ways when classes let out. Greater Cleveland is fortunate to have a number of high-quality programs and organizations that do just that and more, allowing young people not only to fill their out-of-school-time hours but also to become well-rounded, responsible adults along the way.

In this issue of *Donor Connections*, we look at four local nonprofits that take on this important responsibility. Without these sanctuaries, countless numbers of children in our area would have no place to go and nothing productive to do after school. As you'll see, the work of these nonprofits is vital and deserving of the community's support.

Strengthen

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Hope

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Succeed

Trust

Believe

Build

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Students from Progress With Chess, a local organization that improves the lives of young people through chess, shake hands in a display of sportsmanship at the start of a tournament. To learn more about Progress With Chess, visit www.clevelandfoundation.org/chess. You can also read about another after-school program, After School Prevention Resources, at www.clevelandfoundation.org/afterschool.

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Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center

transforms young lives

The Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center on Cleveland's west side can be described in many ways, but to the 40 young people served by its Youth Development Initiative, only one adjective really matters: life-changing.



Two boys from the Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center get down and dirty, weeding a community garden for a volunteer project.

The initiative consists of two programs. One, called Adelante, is geared toward urban adolescent boys, while the other, known as MyCamp, is for neighborhood girls. In both programs, youth can take advantage of tutoring, physical activities, individual mentoring, and personal growth instruction after school and on weekends.

"It costs us around \$500 per student annually to do everything we should for them," said Rev. Max Rodas, executive director of Nueva Luz. "That's a significant investment, but it's nothing compared with what we are already paying as a society to take care of urban individuals who were never supported when they were young."

Rodas believes that investing in young urban lives "is one of the most important things we can do to bring renewal and sustainability back to Cleveland." Toward that end, participants in Adelante and MyCamp have access to caring tutors and mentors who help them succeed both academically and socially.

To find out more about the Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center and the Youth Development Initiative, go to www.nuevaluzurc.org or call 216-651-8236.

Children

thrive



Sixth- and seventh-grade students engage in a spelling activity as part of A Vision of Change's Academic Empowerment Program.

in the nurturing environment
of A Vision of Change

Quite often, people who establish nonprofit organizations or social service agencies have little or no personal experience with the problem they're trying to address.

Not Delores Marchmon-Collins.

When Marchmon-Collins established A Vision of Change in 1993, it was a labor of love stemming directly from her own life. Her children's father had been sentenced to prison, and as a result, Marchmon-Collins watched them struggle with confusion, anger, unacceptable social behavior, and academic failure.

The First Tee of Cleveland teaches to young people

values



Young golfers finish a session on the putting green.

Staff members at The First Tee of Cleveland will tell you “it’s not about the golf,” which may seem ironic when you consider that golf is the primary tool First Tee uses to instill a set of core values in children.

But ultimately, whether or not golfing remains a part of their lives, the young people First Tee touches will always have the self-respect, honor, and integrity the program teaches.

“I knew I had to do something to make a change,” she said. “I decided to do something to help not only my family, but other families who were in the same or similar situations.”

The result was a nonprofit that offers a caring, nurturing place where children can learn in after-school and summer programs. Partnerships are key, Marchmon-Collins said, and they include strong ties with schools, families, and community members who contribute to the growth of young people.

A Vision of Change’s Academic Empowerment Program features the “Homework Zone,” where individual and group tutoring sessions may include use of a reading room, skills assessments in reading and math, and other educational tools to encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and

The First Tee of Cleveland bills itself as “a character education program” that teaches life skills and encourages the development of nine values: confidence, courtesy, perseverance, judgment, integrity, respect, responsibility, sportsmanship, and honesty.

“Using a game to help children understand themselves internally and aspire to do good and be great citizens is inspiring,” said Executive Director Patricia LoPresti. “Participants work to earn better grades in school and to become respectful, self-reliant, positive people.”

LoPresti noted that on the golf course, children learn to solve problems, make good decisions, and handle adversity calmly with a positive approach – all skills that translate well to situations faced off the course.

“This is a national program, and our curriculum has sound and proven results,” LoPresti said. “Few other children’s programs can claim the same type of positive outcomes and impact. We are building the future leaders of Greater Cleveland.”

A charitable gift of \$250 supports one year of First Tee programming for one child.

To learn more, visit www.thefirstteecleveland.org or call 216-641-7799

vocabulary building. Much of that work is accomplished through the use of SPELLMASTER, an interactive game in which a facilitator asks questions on a variety of subjects and awards points for correct answers.

A Vision of Change relies largely on charitable gifts from the community:

- \$900 supports summer program services for three students.
- \$1,500 funds three professional development workshops.
- \$2,000 purchases educational materials and equipment for expansion of the after-school program.

To learn more, e-mail avisionofchange@yahoo.com.

Rainey Institute engages *youth* in the arts and academics



Students spend after-school hours on homework at the Rainey Institute.

Want to know the impact the Rainey Institute has on children in Cleveland? Just listen to the words of 12-year-old Tayla Gray.

"I think Rainey changes lives. I started Rainey when I was six years old, and I fell in love with it. It changed my life because I am not afraid to express my feelings and myself," said Tayla, one of hundreds of youth Rainey engages each year in positive, enriching arts activities.

The idea, according to Executive Director Lee Lazar, is that such activities will keep children away from gangs, drugs, crime, teen pregnancy, and other urban challenges.

Tayla continued, "I have leadership skills now and can play the piano. Rainey keeps me involved in positive things. It means a whole bunch to me and a lot of other people."

Rainey recently moved into a new home, The Alexander McAfee Arts Center, just four blocks south of its previous

location. The new facility allows staff to double the number of children served each year, from 650 to 1,300.

The Institute's programs in music, dance, drama, and visual arts are also delivered in several Cleveland schools and in a variety of community settings. Programs include after-school instruction, summer camp, and Saturday classes.

Gifts to the Rainey Institute maintain this vital programming:

- \$100 provides one month of after-school care.
- \$200 yields two months of private music lessons.
- \$600 supports six weeks of summer arts camp.
- \$1,000 purchases instruments for children to use.

For more information, go to www.raineyinstitute.org or call 216-881-1766.

How to recommend a grant to these and other organizations

Complete the grant recommendation form enclosed, or access your Advisor Xpress account through the Donor section of the foundation's website. Also, check out two additional after-school programs on our website: Progress With Chess (www.clevelandfoundation.org/chess) and After School Prevention Resources (www.clevelandfoundation.org/afterschool). For more information about these and other worthy organizations, please call or e-mail the Gift Planning and Donor Relations team.



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