SOUNDS OF LEARNING IN AFTERSCHOOL: The Importance of Music and Music Making in the Lives of Young People

VOICES FROM THE FIELD Briefing Paper

By Sam Piha and Samantha Fasen
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sam Piha has served as founder and president of Temescal Associates since 2007. Sam began his career in 1974 as an afterschool worker, an experience that led to 13 years of classroom teaching and work as a child and family counselor and school social worker. Between 1989 and 2006, Sam managed school-based youth programs at the regional and national levels. He later founded Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation, both dedicated to improving the quality of afterschool programs. Sam served as editor and contributing author of several important practice guides and journal articles on afterschool programming. Sam holds a master’s degree in Social Welfare.

Samantha Fasen joined Temescal Associates and the How Kids Learn Foundation in 2019 and has fully embraced her work with the afterschool field. She helps to coordinate and develop marketing campaigns and multimedia elements to reach a wider audience and share with people the importance of out-of-school time and youth development.

Ren (Stacey) Daraio brings over 35 years of experience working in the field of youth development as a facilitator, trainer, and coach. She has experience training and coaching diverse audience groups, from afterschool practitioners and parents to funders and technical assistance providers. Prior to her work with Temescal Associates, Ren was the Deputy Director at the Community Network for Youth Development and a consultant for the Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who organizations, and policy makers.

The How Kids Learn Foundation (HKLF) is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of settings that support the education and healthy development of youth. This includes schools and out-of-school time programs. The HKL Foundation provides educational and training activities that promote the capacity of organizations that support the education and healthy development of youth. Examples of activities include conferences, speaker forums, screenings of relevant films, training sessions, coaching sessions, the awarding of digital badges to acknowledge exemplar programs and the learning that happens within these settings. Activities also include the development and distribution of educational materials (papers, self-assessment tools, videos, program guides, etc.).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION
We know from personal experience and research that music and music making is important to young people and their development. We also know that it is a great way to engage young people and excite them about learning—something that is more important than ever, post-COVID. We believe afterschool programs are perfectly positioned to do this with great effectiveness.

“The arts are central to who we are as a people, and they are central to the success of our kids. This is not an afterthought. This is not something you do because it’s nice to do. It is necessary for these young people to succeed that we promote the arts.” - Barack Obama, Former President of the United States

Sounds Of Learning in Afterschool seeks to make a compelling case for the incorporation of opportunities for youth to participate in music programs after school, particularly ones that are most relevant to the interest of youth. This paper offers important terms and definitions, as well as comments from afterschool practitioners, youth and researchers. It goes on to profile afterschool programs across the country that have incorporated music and music making into their programs (teaching how to play an instrument, DJ skills, making beats, music writing and recording and more).

“What does music and music making mean to teens? It helps define them as they grow up, it gives them purpose and meaning, and contributes to their success in school and in life.” - Joe Lamond, president and CEO, NAMM Foundation.
TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Afterschool** - There are many terms that refer to school-based and community-based youth programs outside of the classroom. They include “afterschool,” “out-of-school time (OST),” “expanded learning programs (EXL),” “summer programs,” and “youth programs.” For the purposes of this paper, we will use the term “afterschool.”

**DJ Skills:** “There are a number of basic skills to consider when learning how to become a DJ: mixing (process of blending individual tracks in a recording to come up with a pleasant-sounding version of a song. Mixing consists of balancing volume, equalization (EQ), and compression.), EQing (act of boosting or cutting frequencies so that multiple audio tracks blend nicely), scratching, phrasing (to mix tracks together at points in the songs which make sense), beatmatching (to get two tracks playing at the same tempo (the speed at which the song is playing) and phase (the beats from both tracks playing in-time with each other).” – *David Michael, How to Become a DJ: A Beginner’s Guide*

**Making Beats:** Creating music through the arrangement of prerecorded samples such as drum sounds, vocals, or songs.

**Spoken Word:** “A broad designation for poetry intended for performance. Spoken word can encompass or contain elements of rap, hip-hop, storytelling, theater, and jazz, rock, blues, and folk music. Characterized by rhyme, repetition, improvisation, and word play, spoken word poems frequently refer to issues of social justice, politics, race, and community. Related to slam poetry, spoken word may draw on music, sound, dance, or other kinds of performance to connect with audiences.” – *Poetry Foundation, Glossary of Poetic Terms*

**Playing in a Band:** This refers to bringing young musicians together to practice and play as a group.
"Research expands understanding about the impact of music making and music education, the importance of music at every stage of life, and relationships between music and physical and emotional wellness... There is an increasingly robust literature of recent research findings that support the developmental importance of music in adolescence.” – The NAMM Foundation
WHAT RESEARCHERS AND EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC AND MUSIC MAKING

We know through our own personal experience that music and music making is very important to youth. However, it is useful to identify research that speaks to this issue. We continue our spotlight on the power of music in afterschool. You can view our previous blogs here. There is an abundance of research on the importance of music for adolescent development. Below we offer a few findings from research on the benefits of music and music making for youth development.

Belonging
“Music creates a much-needed sense of belonging in the lives of teenagers. Teenagers are known for feeling isolated from society and friends. Music, as an art form, can serve as an outlet to express the feelings of frustration that come with feeling isolated. Listening to music can also give teens the chance to feel connected to musicians and other fans of specific musicians.

Music is also something that can be enjoyed fairly privately and away from judgement, allowing teens to tailor their experiences to what they actually would like to listen to or play. Learning how to play music also gives teens real, impressive, marketable skills, making them feel useful and capable. Writing and making music is also a way for teens to express themselves as privately or as publicly as they wish.” – Author and music therapist, Cara Jerniga

Bridging Societal Gaps
“Our society tends to be very racialized, and experiences tend to be very different depending on race or ethnicity. Music provides the opportunity for teens of all races and ethnicities to share a common bond and learn about each other’s cultures and backgrounds. For instance, much of the Rap and R&B genres are rooted in Black culture, and many of the prominent performers and names in those genres are Black. Music is also usually very personal to the experience of the artist, so through those things, music can be used as an educational tool for teenagers to learn about backgrounds differing from theirs.” – Author and music therapist, Cara Jerniga
Executive Functions
“Music may expose the child to challenges and multi-sensory experiences which enhance learning abilities and encourage cognitive development. In particular, music can also engage cognitive functions, such as planning, working memory, inhibition, and flexibility. These functions are known as executive functions.” – Researcher, Dave Miranda

Developmental Resource
“Music influences important aspects of adolescent development; music can represent a protective and a risk factor; and music can serve as an adjunct component in prevention and intervention. Therefore, it is proposed how music is a developmental resource in adolescence. It is argued that research on the developmental role of music can create a window to the everyday psychological, social, and cultural needs of contemporary adolescents.” – Researcher, Dave Miranda

Engagement
“Music provides opportunities in school for teens’ engagement as performers, composers and intelligent listeners, and these activities and qualities appear to be deeply meaningful to them. For teens who are desperately seeking relevance, musical study may give them the balanced experience they require.” – NAMM

Stress Relief and Coping
“Music is a well-known outlet for stress relief. Many people actively turn to music as a coping strategy when processing stress or sadness, because it helps shut out the noise of the world and the noise inside our heads. Furthermore, music is increasingly being used as a form of therapy, and music therapy in some capacity has existed for centuries. Teenagers, especially those going through puberty, conflicts with friends, or the college process, are under a high amount of stress. Listening to music has been seen to help teens process or release difficult sensations or emotions in a healthy way.” – Author and music therapist, Cara Jerniga

“Music helps adolescents release or control emotions and helps coping with difficult situations such as peer pressure, substance abuse, pressures of study and family, the dynamics of friendships and social life, and the pain of loss or abuse.” – The NAMM Foundation

Identity
“What does music and music making means to teens? It helps define them as they grow up, it gives them purpose and meaning, and contributes to their success in school and in life.” – Joe Lamond, President and CEO, NAMM
“Music can also provide teenagers with a skill or hobby that is special to them, which can help further build identity and give teens something to be proud of during a period of life that is often characterized by low self-confidence. Music is an incredibly powerful tool that can be accessed and appreciated by people of all ages and backgrounds, and for that reason alone, it should be appreciated and utilized by anyone and everyone.” – Author and music therapist, Cara Jerniga

Music and the Brain
“Research shows that making music changes the brain, and that these brain changes have tangible impacts on listening skills, learning and cognition.” – Nina Kraus, Ph.D., Director, Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory, Northwestern University

“Music training leads to greater gains in auditory and motor function when begun in young childhood; by adolescence, the plasticity that characterizes childhood has begun to decline. Nevertheless, our results establish that music training impacts the auditory system even when it is begun in adolescence, suggesting that a modest amount of training begun later in life can affect neural function.” – Tierney, Adam T., Jennifer Krizman, and Nina Kraus

VIDEOS: MUSIC PARTICIPATION BENEFITS
Below we cite three animated videos that explain the benefits of music and music making in the lives of young people.
The Benefits of Music Education for Children Extends Beyond Childhood

How Playing an Instrument Benefits Your Brain - Anita Collins

5 Benefits of Music
VOICES FROM THE AFTERSCHOOL FIELD

Source: Third Street Music School Settlement
WHAT YOUTH HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC PARTICIPATION IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

“We will do well to listen to what teens tell us about music as a common need and a constant presence in their lives. Music is their social glue—a bridge for building acceptance and tolerance for people of different ages and cultural circumstances.” - Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ph.D.

Anytime we want to better understand what things mean to youth, we should ask them. Below are some summaries and statements on the importance of music in young people’s lives originally published on the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation website.

“Music is my life. It’s a safe haven.” - Student at Skaneateles High School.

A study conducted by Patricia Shehan Campbell Ph.D (University of Washington), titled “Adolescents’ Expressed Meanings of Music in and out of School,” was based on responses by 1,155 teens who submitted student essays to Teen People magazine as part of an online contest. Throughout their essays, students expressed their thoughts regarding learning and playing music and revealed that they value music making as a central aspect of their identities. Their themes include:

“Playing music provides a sense of belonging for teens.

Making music provides the freedom for teens to just be themselves; to be different; to be something they thought they could never be; to be comfortable and relaxed in school and elsewhere in their lives.

Music helps adolescents release or control emotions and helps coping with difficult situations such as peer pressure, substance abuse, pressures of study and family, the dynamics of friendships and social life, and the pain of loss or abuse.
Teens believe developing musical skills and performance is important since it paves the way to musical opportunities as skills develop.

Teens long for more variety and options for making music in school, including the expansion to instruments and technology used in popular music.

Adolescents are genuinely committed to their instruments and their school ensembles because they love to be involved in these musical and social groups.

Teens believe that music is an integral part of American life, and that music reflects American culture and society.

Teens feel that playing music teaches self-discipline such as “there are payoffs if you practice and stick with something.”

Adolescents are of the opinion that playing music diminishes boundaries between people of different ethnic backgrounds, age groups and social interests.

Teens associate playing music with music literacy, listening skills, motor ability, eye-hand coordination and heightened intellectual capabilities.”

WHAT AN AFTERSCHOOL ALUM HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Kevin Peraza is a Youth Institute (YI) alumnus (2007), who was fortunate to participate in all of their music activities in his afterschool program. This included learning guitar, taking part in YI’s youth band and working on video productions with Change Agent Productions. Today Kevin is a filmmaker and still plays in a band. Below he responds to a few of our questions.

Q: Why do you think music is important to youth?
A: I think music is an important part of finding identity, culturally speaking. Different genres can affect a young person’s personality. Going further and learning how music is made allows youth to dissect the parts of music that resonate with them. Which can be a really cathartic experience.
Q: Give one example of how the Youth Institute program engages youth with music?
A: On a base level the YI gives youth their first and, in some cases, only experience with music. The equipment that’s readily available makes it so easy to try it. Whether it’s Garage Band on the macs or picking up a guitar that many mentors have lying around. In my experience, the YI bought band equipment so that some of the youth could try their first experience at playing music with a collective group of like-minded individuals. In the past they have even held a battle of the bands for local Long Beach high school bands. Which was for most participants their first experience of being on stage performing for a crowd. I think the YI understands the importance of music and the positive effect it can have on youth with a deep desire to express themselves.

WHAT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM LEADERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

We believe that opportunities for youth to participate in a music program is important for their development, especially because many schools have eliminated music education to make more time for math and reading instruction. We also believe that afterschool programs are perfectly positioned to fill this gap.

To learn more, we reached out to afterschool programs across the country to share their thoughts on this topic. We heard back from program leaders across the country, serving all ages of youth. These programs reported that they engage youth with music in a number of ways, including listening to music, teaching how to play an instrument, teaching DJ skills, making beats, recording music, spoken word, playing in a band, song writing, singing and drumming. Below are some of the responses we received from afterschool leaders to our questions.
Do you think music is important to youth? If yes, why?

• “We currently have a music program at our site and have witnessed the beauty of music. Kids love to learn and filter their emotions through the music.” – ELP Site Lead, San Joaquin, CA, serving youth ages 5-11.

• “Music provides so many emotional development attributes, that can lead to social, academic, personal and economic accomplishments and endeavors throughout their lives. Further, it’s something that they get that is theirs and stays with them for the rest of their lives to be used whenever and however they want, it’s god’s gift forever playing.” – Afterschool Staff, Cleveland, OH, serving youth ages 12-14.

• “It builds confidence and teaches them how to work with other people. It’s a discipline that teaches students to persevere.” – Instructional Associate, Vista Verde, CA, serving youth ages 5-11.

• “It allows a scholar to be creative. Music reaches the inner depth of a person. A good sound can resonate on the sternum of a person and create calmness. It can also create a release of energy, etc.” – Afterschool Staff, Redwood City, CA, serving youth ages 12-14.

• “I believe music encourages self-reflection. Through reflective moments we are able to engage and analyze our thoughts to help us make more informed decisions.” – Afterschool Staff, Euclid, OH, serving youth ages 5-11.

Please describe one example of how your program engages youth through music.

• “We have a community partnership which places teaching musicians in our programs to teach ukulele. These instruments are affordable for us and fill a needed gap now that our elementary schools no longer have music programs.” – School District Coordinator of Expanded Learning, Vallejo, CA, serving youth ages 5-14.
• “We have had weekly drumming classes and have opportunities for these classes to play at our fund raisers, end of the year performances, as well as performances around the city.” – Director of Staff & Student Development, West Palm Beach, FL, serving youth ages 5-18

• “We partner with Women’s Audio Mission every semester. We have apprenticeships on how to build instruments, like a guitar, we have offered spoken word apprenticeship courses.” – Afterschool Staff, Redwood City, CA, serving youth ages 12-14.

What benefits do you think come from youth engagement with music?

• “There are academic and social-emotional and engagement benefits to the way we engage with music in our expanded learning programs” – School District Coordinator of Expanded Learning, Vallejo, CA, serving youth ages 5-14.

• “It allows children the opportunity to build self-esteem in a skill or something that they love and enjoy.” – School Age Coach, Dayton, OH, serving youth ages 5-11.

• “Youth in the project live mostly in communities that have a lot of high-risk challenges. Many have experienced direct and indirect traumas on a regular basis. Many are faced with making decisions everyday as to whether to fight or flight, being involved in out of school activities that include music is beneficial to their physical and emotional survival.” – Afterschool Staff, Cleveland, OH, serving youth ages 12-14.

• “Children find their personalities in music, it can be soothing and calming in times of stress.” – Afterschool Staff, Redwood City, CA, serving youth ages 12-14.
What benefits do you think carry into adulthood?

- “My hope and aspiration are that these experiences not only create fond memories for them, but that for some it sparks a lifelong desire to make music.” – School District Coordinator of Expanded Learning, Vallejo, CA, serving youth ages 5-14.

- “Music helps connect people and is a great tool for social emotional development.” – School Age Coach, Dayton, OH, serving youth ages 5-11

- “Many attributes carry into adulthood. First, they learn that if you practice, put in the time you will become proficient at your task. Second, they learn discipline, follow direction, and stick to the order given and your results will be good. Third, they learn the importance of teamwork, brother and sister hood and build relationships that can last a lifetime. Fourth, they learn the essence of commitment, how to live up to your decision, to show up on time, follow through on time and to be there on time all of the time.” – Afterschool Staff, Cleveland, OH, serving youth ages 12-14.

**WHAT TWO AFTERSCHOOL MUSIC INNOVATORS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

Because music is so important to young people’s development and identity, we interview two afterschool music innovators who understood the power of music early on. Below are their responses.

**LES PETERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH INSTITUTE & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

We first learned about the Youth Institute (YMCA of Greater Long Beach) many years ago when they were training young people and afterschool staff how to use computer technology to make movies.

Q: In terms of your music program, what ages of youth do you serve?
A: We manage afterschool programs for all ages of youth, but our music programs serve youth ages 15 - 18 (High School).

Q: Do you think music is important to youth? If yes, why?
A: Yes, it is very important. It provides an opportunity to express themselves, if they have difficulties expressing feelings and emotions. It uses the same side of the brain as math and science. We teach digital music production, guitar, and drum lessons to our youth.

Q: Currently how does your program engage youth in music?
A: We currently engage youth with music by teaching participants how to play an instrument, teaching them DJ skills, how to make beats, record music and sponsoring youth to play in a band.

Q: Please describe one example of how your program engages youth with music?
A: For the past 21 years, in the Long Beach Youth Institute (YI) we have used music as one of our engagement strategies to support academic success, creativity expression and workforce development. It began with teaching the guitar to introducing digital music production and keyboard (piano) basics to evolve into making beats for their short films.
For those teens who progressed in guitar & piano playing they started to record themselves and other teens started to use them for their films. Guest musicians and producers would volunteer with the YI to further develop the skill sets of the youth. Those youth who were in band and orchestra in high school would practice at the YI, because they didn’t have the space at home. Our youth formed a rock band and organized a battle of the band event for local area youth. In 2017, the YI was fortunate to have a partnership with Levi’s and a local musician艺术家 who wanted to give back to their community. Rapper and North Long Beach local – Vince Staples came to the YI to provide his experience in the music business and Levi’s provides financial support to expand our Digital Music program. Levi’s shot a commercial at the YI, with our youth as extras.

[You can view a brief video about the Levi’s/ Snoop Dogg project that features Snoop Dogg working directly with kids.]

Then in 2019, Levi’s came back to us with another opportunity – artist Snoop Dog wanted to work with us, and he spoke to the youth about his career, and he brought his producing staff and taught professional beat making, song arrangement, and DJ skills. Snoop Dog even purchased a few of the beats our youth made during that time. At our new building location, the YI has a dedicated music room, with all the equipment we received from Vince Staples, Snoop Dog, and Levi’s. This music room has created an opportunity for our youth to have space to express and create. Our youth have started to create Podcasts, recording, and practicing their drums and guitar.

Q: What benefits do you think come from youth engagement with music?
A: The benefits we see are creative expression, improved social skills, manage emotions & stress, self-esteem booster, and perform better academically. The Youth Institute (YI) historically has been recognized for its ability to engage youth at different levels with a vast array of program activities; with music being one of the most popular. Many of our youth pursue post-secondary degrees in music because of their engagement in the YI. Workforce development is another benefit, with our social enterprise business – Change Agent Productions. Some of our youth are hired to create background music, loops, and narrative for videos and commercials.

Q: What benefits do you think carry into adulthood?
A: As our youth transition into young adulthood, we have seen them have increased self-confidence, social growth, become more creative and have a greater awareness of tolerance. We have seen youth come to us quiet, shy, non-social, but evolve to being social, leaders, and staff in the Youth Institute or other afterschool programs.
MORE ABOUT

Les Peters currently works for the YMCA of Greater Long Beach, Youth Institute, a national recognized Teen Youth Development & Digital Media Arts program as the Executive Director of Youth Institute & Curriculum Development. He has over seventeen years of experience in youth development and over fourteen years in digital media arts technology. He develops and implements after-school and year-round programming for low-income urban youth of color, provides diversity training and develops creative, academic & social skills through the use of multi-media technology.

JON BERNSON, Director of Creative Arts at Bay Area Community Resources

We first met Jon decades ago at the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center (A.P. Giannini Middle School Beacon Center, SF, CA). Jon founded the DJ Club in 1997, which has operated continuously (under evolving names) since 1997. In 2014, Jon founded Sunset Media Wave, which supports high school which supports the creation and publishing of high school music at the SNBC in the Sunset district of San Francisco.

Q: What are the ages of youth served in your middle school program?
A: 12 - 14 (Middle School) / 15-19 (High School)

Q: Why do you think music is important to youth?
A: To some youth, music is life-changing and transformational. To some, it does not speak as loudly, but in my experience, it has profound effects on most teens. Some reasons that come to mind:

1. Music is the language of emotion, which allows for more complex ways of communicating certain feelings than written or verbal language. Developing the ability to express oneself through music allows youth to communicate in ways that are often difficult for them to express with words alone.

2. Music is a shared interest that allows youth who may have little else in common the ability to come together around the same passion. In this respect, it can break down geographic, language, cultural and age barriers that other forms of education, activism and education may struggle to overcome.

3. Music soothes the soul; it can take the mind off of one’s troubles. It can’t remove them, but it can offer distance, which gives us time to gain better perspective, as a result of the time spent away from them.

4. Music is a conduit for inspiration. It is a way that artists can speak with one another across time and place. Without knowing another person, youth can feel that they are intimately connected to another artist, whether that is a friend, mentor or someone famous. By hearing another artist, youth get ideas, and are given a yardstick with which they can compare their results and aspire to greater heights.
Q: How does your program engage youth in music?
A: We engage our youth in the following broad categories of musical education:

- Music Appreciation
- Learning to play and compose using software-based instruments
- Beatmaking
- DJ’ing skills
- Music production

Q: Please describe one example of how your program engages youth with music?
A: Since 1997, we have been teaching youth how to DJ and produce their own music. During that time, we have produced 59 compilations (albums) which originally were recorded on cassettes, then CD’s and now uploaded to Soundcloud. In most cases, these albums represent our youth’s first attempts to create an original piece of music. While most youth are encouraged to draw or paint original pieces in art classes, our education system rarely supports the mysterious pathway that leads to creation of original musical work.

Q: What benefits do you think come from youth engagement with music?
A: The tools to express themselves and confidence, if they stick with the process. Community and a connection to a lineage of artists that spans many years, as well as the broader community of artists around the world. Because we use technology and touchscreens to make music, we have helped many youth to understand that our phones and tablets are not merely passive devices, but tools for creativity that can change and influence their peers, their community and their world. This is one of the greatest lessons we try to impart in our program: that it may be harder to create than consume, but it is far more rewarding.

Q: What benefits do you think carry into adulthood?
A: Creation over consumption is a lesson described above that we've seen many youth carry with them into whichever field they choose to pursue, whether musical or not. We are cognizant that most of our youth will not become professional musicians or DJ's (though some do), but everyone will have developed a deeper appreciation for the elements that are needed to create music and the courage to take the leap of faith and follow a spark of inspiration until they are finished making what they started.

MORE ABOUT Jon Bernson is Bay Area Community Resources' Director of Creative Arts, an Emmy-award winning media artist and the founder of the Electronic Music Program at the A.P. Giannini Beacon Center. Initially a DJ Club for middle school students which was featured in Doug Prey's definitive DJ documentary ‘Scratch,’ the program has grown to include a wide variety of musical production skills. Jon is also the founder of Sunset Media Wave, a mixed-media blog run by high school musicians and artists located at the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center which is funded by San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and Families and the California Arts Council.

HOW TO START INCORPORATING MUSIC

| “Think big, start small.” | – Les Peters (Long Beach Youth Institute) |

Afterschool programs are uniquely positioned to offer meaningful participation in music and music making. This is because they are focused on the interests of youth and are very flexible in designing their program.
We conferred with several afterschool leaders who excel in incorporating music in their afterschool programs to gather tips on the best steps to take to begin offering music opportunities. Below are some tips on how to begin:

**Gather Information**
- Bring together a group of youth and staff to ask about their interest and ideas on how to begin.
- Identify local talent – teachers, youth, local artists, etc. to serve as volunteers.
- Identify local afterschool programs or those profiled below, that have successfully incorporated music. Conduct an informational interview or site visit (in person or virtual). Don’t forget to involve youth.
- “Much of what we use is found on our Toolbox.” – Marcus Rosario, Building Beats

**Create Operational Plan on How Best to Incorporate Music and Music Making with Budget. “Think big, start small.”**

**Consider Programmatic Changes**
- Declare one day a week or month “music day” in which youth can bring music to share with others. (Check music for language and misogyny.)
- Start and end your program with music playing. You can use Pandora, Soundcloud, Spotify, Youtube etc. (Check music for language and misogyny.)
- Start a music club for those youth who are interested in going further.
- Invite music artists, speakers, performers to come to your program.
- Sponsor school-wide music talent show.
- Consider music knowledgebase when hiring new staff.
- Solicit volunteers who have the music knowledgebase to serve as instructors.
Gather Equipment: Purchase or Donation

- Blue-tooth speakers or computer speakers.
- Instruments, like guitars or ukuleles, that can be available for anyone who wants to play.
- Turntable(s), mixer, DJ controllers, headphones, speakers, and vinyl records.
- DJ software, such as Serato or others.
- Music recording software, such as Pro Tools, Garage Band or others.

Source: NAMM
MUSIC IN AFTERSCHOOL: PROGRAM PROFILES

Source: NAMM
PROGRAM PROFILES
Below we profile several afterschool organizations that have excelled at incorporating music and music making into their afterschool programs.

Long Beach Youth Institute
For the past twenty years, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach Community Development Branch has operated the internationally recognized Youth Institute, a year-round program that uses technology as an integral mechanism for promoting positive youth development and developing pathways to post-secondary education and career readiness of low-income, culturally diverse urban high school youth.

See our interview with Long Beach Youth Institute’s Director, Les Peters on page 17.

Contact Person
Les Peters, les.peters@lbymca.org

Website
https://www.lbymca.org/programs/teens-family/youth-institute

Target Audience
Youth, ages 15-18

Music Program Offerings
• Learning how to play an instrument
• DJ skills
• Making beats
• Recording music
• Sponsoring youth to play in a band.

Challenges And Barriers
The biggest barrier was the cost of the equipment & what type to get, and the knowledge base of staff.
In our experience, we have always shared “think big and start small” when it comes to technology and programming. A strategy that has helped us grow with technology, knowledge-base and the cost associated with it. Many programs want all the toys and used a majority of their budget on equipment and forget to invest in training and developing the knowledge base of staff who will facilitate the activity. The other challenge is staff knowledge base of digital music programs or how to play an instrument and how to provide a positive experience for the youth. Afterschool programs should grow and evolve with the technology and knowledge base – think big and start small.

Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center
The Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center (SNBC) is a community-based organization serving San Francisco’s Sunset District. Their mission is to provide supports and opportunities to ensure the healthy development of children, youth, and adults. Their purpose is to connect people to their passion, potential, and community. The Urban Music Program, initially a DJ Club for middle school students, has grown into a full audio program that provides middle school youth with numerous outlets for artistic expression.

See our interview with SNBC’s Creative Arts Director, Jon Bernson on page 19.

Contact Person
Jon Bernson, jbernson@bacr.org

Website
https://www.snbc.org/

Target Audience
Youth, ages 12-14
**Music Program Offerings**

- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- DJ skills
- Making beats
- Recording music

**Challenges And Barriers**

We have always been a visual culture, but as social media and the internet have placed more and more emphasis on visual communication, it can come at the expense of deep listening. This is a musical skill, of course, but it is also a human skill that we spend a lot of time developing in our youth.

"Don’t make music with your eyes," is an expression that we find ourselves using a lot. "A cool visual pattern in a Garage Band timeline doesn’t make a great beat. A great music video is not necessarily the sign of a great song." Despite the challenges, we don’t dwell in the past. History is important, but each generation reveals new opportunities and challenges, so our job is to teach our youth how to take advantage of their gifts at this particular moment in time.

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**Building Beats**

Since 2013, Building Beats has developed and expanded DJ, digital music production and podcasting programs, instilling entrepreneurship, leadership and life skills in New York City’s youth. They provide in-school and after-school programs at schools and community centers throughout New York City. They provide their own instructors and are super collaborative in how they run the experiences. They also partner with top-notch music and DJ companies in New York City to provide educational and engaging field trips to students.

Their workshops began with the idea of teaching with free cloud-based software and a curriculum based on popular music to counteract the high costs and entry barriers of traditional music programs. If you’re curious about what they use, you can find many of the websites in their Toolbox (https://buildingbeats.org/toolbox) to teach music production.

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*Source: Building Beats*
Contact Person
Marcus Rosario, Community Partnerships Lead at Building Beats, marcus.rosario@buildingbeats.org

Website
https://buildingbeats.org

Target Audience
All ages up to 24 years old.

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- DJ Skills
- Making beats
- Recording music
- Spoken word
- Playing in a band
- They also offer podcasting and music coding classes as well as showcase a plethora of tutorials and educational content on our YouTube channel.

Challenges and Barriers
Most schools and places we work at vary with their resources - many youth do not have access to technology at home. Schools and sites also have technology hindrances as well as staffing issues because of school budgets. Ultimately school budgets make or break our presence at schools and sites.

Third Street Music School Settlement

The nation’s longest-running community music school, Third Street Music School Settlement (New York City, NY), provides music and dance instruction to more than 5,000 students each year. Their preschool program takes place during the school day, but their Music & Dance School is offered after school and on weekends.
Contact Person
Nancy Morgan, Chief Programs Officer, Third Street Music School Settlement

Website
https://www.thirdstreet.nyc/

Target Audience
Youth, all ages

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- Making beats
- Recording music
- Playing in a band
- Voices, Choir, Ensembles large and small, Performances

Challenges and Barriers
We are limited from expanding due to space restrictions.

Harbor House

Harbor House (Oakland, CA) has an after-school program for children from Franklin Elementary. Every afternoon they offer a meal, free play, and academic hour (homework, math, and reading practice) followed by enrichment clubs. This year, they have started a new music club that kids can choose. Currently they have two instruments that they are teaching to youth - violin and ukulele - each taught by a volunteer.

Contact Person
Caroline Lee, caroraro@hotmail.com

Website
hhministries.org
Target Audience
Youth, ages 5 - 11

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument

Challenges and Barriers
There is no dedicated space for music lessons.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Gorgonio Pass

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Gorgonio Pass (Riverside County, CA), they focus on the development of youth and giving them what they want, need and deserve...a place to call their own. Every day the Boys & Girls Clubs strive to improve each child's life by implementing educational programs and activities that increase self-esteem, courage, and positive values through tutoring, computer training, sports education, homework help, mentoring and more.

Contact Person
Amy Herr, CEO, jathherr@gmail.com

Website
www.bgcsrgpass.com

Target Audience
Youth, ages 4 - 18

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- Voice lessons
- Making beats
- Writing lyrics
• Recording music

Challenges and Barriers
Many of our young people have never been exposed to a formal music program, so their experience is very limited. We always need more funding and more time to be able to expose the youth members to different types of music as well as a variety of instruments. In our rural community, we do not have access to live music performances. Therefore, our kids do not know proper etiquette and can be intimidated in new situations.

Vallejo Unified School District

Funded by the California Department of Education’s After School Education and Safety Grant (ASES), programs are located at 13 district school sites. By locating them at schools, they create a seamless experience with the school day community and ensure the safety of our students. Their programs serve approximately 1,600 students through after school and summer programs. Across the district, the program seeks to create a safe and nurturing environment that supports the developmental, social-emotional, educational and physical needs of participants.

Contact Person
Carol Lewis, clewis@vcusd.org

Website

Target Audience
Youth, ages 5-14

Music Program Offerings:
• Listening to music
• Learning how to play an instrument
• Making beats
• Recording music

Cleveland Urban Minority Alcoholism Drug Abuse Outreach Project

The primary objective of the music program strategy is to assist youth in becoming proficient in the necessary basic skills to perform various styles of music. In addition, the music programs provide basic music instruction which emphasizes the development of aural skills, creativity, and the gradual introduction of basic visual symbols used in contemporary music. Youth are provided the opportunity to develop skills on both melodic and percussion instruments. Participants also are provided the theory of music that is necessary for effective playing and performance. Youth receive an initial audition to determine their level of musicianship. Instruction is provided in basic instrumentation, typically used in public school bands. Instruction is provided by two certified public-school teachers on contract, and an African American Djembe Drum instructor.
Contact Person
Jessica Horne, Executive Director cleumadaop@aol.com

Website
https://www.clevelandumadaop.com/

Target Audience
Youth, ages 12-14

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- Playing in a band
- Drumming

Challenges and Barriers
The level of music theory is limited due to resources.

Envisioneers

ENVISIONEERS, Redwood City, CA, was born out of Citizen Schools, a national organization with decades-long experience and a track record for developing and providing a powerful Expanded Learning Time Program (ELT) highlighting the benefits of hands-on learning and volunteer mentors from the community. They have a proven record of impact on student growth and school culture. They are serving 1,200 scholars per year in expanded learning and another 1,000 with their push in support to schools!

Contact Person
Maria Sparagna Drake, Executive Director, maria.d@theenvisioneers.org
Website
https://www.theenvisioneers.org/

Target Audience
Youth, ages 12-14

Music Program Offerings:
- Listening to music
- Learning how to play an instrument
- DJ skills
- Making beats
- Spoken word

Source: NHP Foundation