

# **Three Tales From the Youth Field: Extending Practice to Theory in Youth Education**

*By Sara Hill (This work was made possible with a grant from The Robert Bowne Foundation. Thanks especially to Danny O'Gallagher and Wahn Yoon) © 1998*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The valuable work of educators for youth out-of-school has seldom been written about in great detail. There are many reasons why this is the case. Although after school education has been in existence for many years, its value as a genuine field is just emerging in the public eye. In addition, there is little interest at the university level in researching this area. Certainly in teacher education programs at universities, the overwhelming emphasis is to train teachers with the aim of placing them in schools. Teacher preparation for community-based education is virtually non-existent.

The books and articles that have been written about after school youth education have seldom reached practitioners themselves. One reason for this is youth educators haven't been the intended audience of professional articles and research reports. Rather, the majority of literature written about youth education has been by academics for an audience of other academics, rather than for those whose work is being written about.

Because of the aforementioned and other reasons, gaps between research and practice exist. In a sense, it may be the law of supply and demand in operation, as youth educators seldom have professional development opportunities to engage in reflective activities; to read professional books and articles and connect these readings to their practice. Sometimes this has to do with material resources. Programs often lack funding to provide coverage so that staff can participate in workshops, meetings, etc. In addition, there is often a lack of recognition on the part of both staff and their supervisors that they both need and require professional development. In many cases (mostly outside of large urban centers) professional development opportunities for those that work with youth just don't

exist. Finally, youth practitioners often do not see themselves as educators who need to keep abreast of current theories in youth education.

When youth practitioners are fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in professional development, as mentioned above, there is a lack of material for them to read and discuss. The material that is available is often difficult. It is full of jargon which conveys theoretical and abstract ideas that youth educators have trouble grasping because it is so removed from their experience. Nonetheless, it is critical that youth practitioners have the opportunity to engage in professional development. Professional activities provide the opportunity to mesh front-line experiences with conceptual issues in youth education. These opportunities help youth educators extend beyond their experiences and stretch professionally and intellectually. In turn, the field of youth education can benefit, as good programs are most times those whose practice is informed by theory or a philosophical framework.

The material that follows was written with youth educators in mind as their audience. It is intended to be used in a variety of settings; workshops, institutes, or by practitioners themselves who just want to talk with each other about their programs and use the material as a springboard for discussion. Rather than start from the abstract and theoretical, the material starts with "tales of the field" drawn from concrete experiences and events at youth programs with people who are involved: tutors, parents, program directors, arts educators, etc. After each tale, there is a discussion section, which extends the tale to more theoretical or conceptual issues in education for youth in non-school settings. At the end of all three tales are suggestions for ways this material can be adapted for staff development.

The three tales that comprise this collection were carefully chosen because they are complex. That is, as in any good story, there may be multiple interpretations. A good story can be discussed at length, re-visited, and thought about again in a new light. In addition, talking to someone else about a story, and hearing other perspectives can provide alternative interpretations. It is important to note that the discussion that follows each tale is only one possible interpretation. In the course of using this material readers may provide alternative interpretations. It is in this anticipated dialogue that these tales can provide the basis for important insightful discussions about the field of youth education.

The first tale was written by a tutor at an after school program. When a child approached her about intervening with her mother, the tutor experienced a dilemma over how to help a student and yet not to get overly involved. In addition, the tale describes the key role that the program director played in creating a bridge between home and school. The second tale is of a counselor who describes his impressions of a young man he calls the "Clinger" and how his perspective changes after meeting the boy's mother. He comes to understand how important it is to see a child holistically. The last tale is based on an interview with an arts educator who ran into cultural conflict with parents when his group attempted to put on a play in a settlement house. It is important that these tales were all based on actual experiences, and revolve around key events. It is the hope that these

stories, while unique to the person who experienced them, will also ring true for readers and provide ways of talking about issues across contexts in youth education.

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## **THE FIRST TALE - *Cupcakes for the Class***

Cupcakes for the class I was sitting at a long table in the tutoring room of the Franklin Houses Youth Center's after school program in the basement of a housing project. Besides myself, there were about 10 children, ranging in age from seven to fourteen. There was also a college-age tutor working one-on-one with a child. Throughout the afternoon people came and went through the room en route to the office of Fen, the Center director. I had noticed that several of the kids regularly hung out there each afternoon. They sat in chairs along the wall observing Fen's interactions with college tutors, staff, parents, housing authority workers and a variety of other visitors.

I asked the children around the table (feeling a bit at a loss because my regular tutee, Letty, was out sick) if anyone would like me to help them with their homework. Rose, a little girl of about seven years old, leaned over and asked me to read a paper she held in her hand. It was a daily report from her teacher. I read it to her. On it was a statement that Rose had not done her work adequately, especially during the reading lesson that day.

After I read it aloud, Rose appeared scared in a wide-eyed quiet way. I questioned her about what had happened. Though told in a halting manner, I made out that she had gotten stuck in her work during reading lesson, and not knowing what to do, had stopped. Another incident occurred during the lesson, Rose explained, when she was sharing a book with a friend and the teacher grabbed it out of her hand. Rose said she was going to get "whapped" when her mother came to pick her up and saw the note.

I was completely at a loss. It appeared to me that Rose's teacher was not taking the time to find out what was going on with her, and furthermore, was down-right rude. I was also aware that I was limited in my knowledge of what had actually happened in the classroom, and I wanted to reserve judgment until I knew more. I had the sense that Rose, a fairly quiet, shy girl, didn't articulate her side of things very well, at least with adults. I was torn between feeling that I wanted to intervene on her behalf, and not wanting to get too involved

Fen, a tall athletic man in his thirties, walked in, greeted me and went to his office. I tentatively stuck my head in the doorway, explained that Letty was out, and said that I was available for tutoring. I mentioned the situation with Rose, and told him that I didn't know how to respond. Could he make a suggestion? Fen shook his head, saying that Rose's mother "flies off the handle," and that it was a problem.

I sat back down at the tutoring table. At this point Rose's cousin was reading to her from a book in the "Berenstein Bears" series. An older girl walked in, turned on one of the computers and began revising a school essay. Another girl peeped over her shoulder and made recommendations. Several children grouped around a picture book, looking at and commenting on the illustrations. They regrouped and everyone moved on to something else. A girl at the table worked on a school project, pasting Xeroxed pictures of animals onto a large oak tag board. In the office, a child of about ten was giving a slightly

younger child a lesson in the multiplication tables, drawing on the blackboard next to Fen's desk.

I asked Rose if she would like me to read to her (her cousin had stopped and was working on something else). She agreed, and walked around the table to my side. We carved out a corner of it for ourselves. I asked her what was going on in the story. She wasn't able to tell me. I asked her several more questions about the story, and became alarmed that she could give me no answers and that she didn't seem to comprehend what had been read to her.

I began to read the book aloud to Rose, starting at the beginning and stopping every so often to talk about the story and ask her questions. She answered them all. I realized she had merely needed to become more personally engaged with the text (assuming she was interested in the story at all). After I read a certain amount and we discussed it, I did a modified Language Experience, that is, I wrote down what Rose told me about the story in her own words. Then I read the text out loud, had Rose read it together with me, and then asked her to read it independently. Again, she did well, and even spontaneously pointed out that I'd written the word "neighbors" several times. This showed me that she could read words in isolation

All of a sudden the children in the room were collectively alert, aware that Rose's mother had arrived to pick her up. Rose asked me, very scared, if I could talk to her mother. Feeling really bad, I replied, "I'm new here, and I can't say anything because I don't know your mother. If you were my regular student I would talk to your mom." The older cousin proceeded to ask everyone sitting around the table, "Do you hope Rose doesn't get whapped?" She included me in her survey, and I concurred with the rest of the children.

I had to leave to pick up my son from daycare. As I walked through the hallway which connected the tutoring room to the entrance of the building, I encountered Fen speaking to a woman whom I assumed was Rose's mother. Both were looking serious. I was surprised at how quickly Fen had headed her off before she had gotten to the tutoring room. I nodded to them both as I passed by, and Fen pulled me into the conversation. At his request, I re-told the story Rose had related to me that afternoon and gave my interpretation of the situation. At several points in the encounter Fen said to the woman, "If you go in there hollering they won't listen to you." The mom ended up by saying that she was going in to school that night to talk to the teacher.

Two days later Rose showed me another report from the teacher. On it was a thanks to the mother for bringing in cupcakes for the class.

## ***DISCUSSION***

One interpretation of this tale speaks to the key role that staff at youth programs play in the lives of children and their families. Because youth practitioners often come from the community where the agency is located, or have gone through the program as young people themselves, they are often well-poised to be "bridges" between the community

and other institutions such as schools. Even if youth practitioners do not come from the community, they may have been at the program long enough to see and hear about the needs of youth in a relaxed, informal context. As community "bridges," practitioners can coach parents, for example, in the best ways to approach or negotiate schools when there is a problem, as in the story when Fen advised, "If you go in there hollering, they won't listen to you." Conversely, youth practitioners are good contacts for schools to approach in order to address problems with individual students or gain insight into community issues.

### ***The role of tutors and volunteers at youth programs***

The story can also shed light on the role of tutors and volunteers in programs. While some programs rely only on paid staff and teachers, many programs rely on volunteers to provide homework assistance and academic support. However, using volunteer tutors is not just a simple, cost-effective way of running a program. There are many time-consuming and complex issues that arise. For example, in this story, the tutor was in the dilemma of if and how much to get involved in the situation between mother and daughter. Luckily, she communicated her fears to her supervisor who was able to draw upon her as a resource for discussing and addressing the problem. When we think about tutors and volunteers questions arise such as, "How are we in partnership with them?" "How do we include and integrate them in the overall program?" "How can we use what they have to offer in the best way?" "How do we provide tutor education and support?" and "What do young people get out of their relationship with tutors?"

### ***The role of youth at programs***

We often neglect what young people have to offer in the way of volunteer and tutoring services. We sometimes fail to observe many examples of spontaneous peer tutoring that takes place at our programs. For example, young people of various ages will often group around a book and take turns reading it or providing guidance for younger children in their reading attempts. In the tale "Cupcakes for the class," for example, an older child is described as giving a younger one help in math. In addition, young people may be very interested in the work of a gifted adult tutor at the program, and learn much about teaching just by observing him or her.

There is much that can be gained socially and academically by young people when we give them direct responsibility for tutoring or mentoring a younger child, peer, or even facilitating a group activity. Young people benefit in multiple ways when we draw them into community projects such as those stressed by service learning models. Finally, thinking about tutors and volunteers and the roles of young people at your program is an important aspect of program planning, implementation and management.

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## THE SECOND TALE - *The Clinger*

The Clinger I walked into the Uptown Youth Center for the afternoon program. I was a counselor, and had been at the program about a year. The kids were all there, as it was 3:15 p.m. Many of them were sitting and working on homework. Others were working on computers or downstairs finishing up an art project they had begun last week on the color "blue." Maritza, the art teacher, had taken the kids on a field trip. They had walked around pointing out everything in the neighborhood that was any shade of blue. Then they had created poems after talking about their experiences and had written and illustrated them. Some of the finished poems were hanging on the wall, and my eye landed on one that was a picture of a gun. Below the picture were written the words, "Blue is the barrel of a gun."

David, a skinny boy of about twelve, ran up to me and I felt my heart sink. He was waving a piece of paper, yelling, "Look at my poem. What do you think?" I quickly stepped back, afraid I would get knocked over by his enthusiastic charge. "Man, why doesn't he ever leave me alone?" I thought to myself. I took the paper from his hand, read it quickly and said "Hey, great! Good work!" Then I walked off in the direction of my office.

I couldn't stand David, not because he was a bad kid, but because he latched on to me all the time. He seemed so starved for attention; he was a clinger. He followed me wherever I went, interrupted me when I was doing my work, asked me a million questions. He didn't just annoy me, he annoyed to all the counselors, and we had had several discussions about what to do with him. I had personally come to the conclusion that the best thing was for me not to give him the attention he clearly wanted so badly. Instead, I thought he needed to develop some self-sufficiency, to not crave so much affirmation.

After I had done a couple of things I needed to do in my office, I walked down the hall to pick up my mail. In my box there was an announcement of scholarships to send a few of the kids to camp that summer. I thought a few minutes about who to select. Jorge would be a good pick. He'd been involved in the youth leadership project, and had been very responsible when we did our lobbying at City Hall during the budget cuts. The other one to go, I thought, should be Victor. He was a solid kid, and had been coming to the program regularly since school started. I called them both in to the office and asked if they'd be interested in going. Neither one of them could, it turned out, because they both were going to visit relatives in Santo Domingo for the summer. "Never mind," I said, "Just pass the word, o.k.? Tell kids who want to go to let me know."

I had finished facilitating the Teen Group and was cleaning up the room with a couple of stragglers from the meeting. We were throwing out trash, putting the chairs up, that kind of thing. Suddenly I heard a familiar voice at my elbow. It was David. I put a false cheerfulness in my voice, as I was dead tired and really wanted to go home. "Hey, Dave, what's up?" "Umm," he hedged. "I heard from Vic that kids should let you know if they wanna go to camp. Can I go?" "Sure, no problem, you can come to camp," I replied. "Come to my office before you go home and I'll give you some forms for your mom to

fill out. She needs to come in to talk with me, though, because she needs to know some stuff." "Great!" David's face lit up like a light. "I'll tell her. Thanks!"

The next afternoon David's mother came in and poked her head around the door of my office. I had seen her around at some of the events at the center, but I had never talked to her personally before. "David tells me that you picked him to go to summer camp," she began. "That's right" I replied, "We need to talk about some things, like he needs to get a tetanus shot before he goes, that kind of thing." David's mom started talking fast, bubbling over with enthusiasm. "Well, I wanted to let you know that David's so excited that you picked him." "It's just me and David," she explained, "and I work a lot of hours, and I didn't know what to do with him this summer. I was worried, I couldn't afford to send him away to camp, and I didn't want him to get into trouble just hanging out all summer in the neighborhood."

All of a sudden I realized that I didn't know much about David or what his life was like. I just knew David as an annoying little boy. "You know, David talks about you all the time," his mother went on. "It's been hard on him since I split with his father, and David misses him so much. He tells me how you care about the kids, and listen to the m, and do a lot of fun things. I feel like you're a friend, I know you even though we haven't talked before."

After she walked away, I felt a mix of feelings. Of course, I felt really guilty about brushing David off at times, not giving him much of my time or attention. At the same time I realized that I had been doing some good, after all, even though recently I had been feeling frustrated. I hadn't been aware that I was such a part of David's life, and I hadn't realized until then that the kids valued what I had to offer, or that I made an impact on them.

I saw David differently from then on. He didn't seem clingy or annoying, just a kid who missed his father and needed a guy to talk to. I brought him up to camp and he had a blast. That was four years ago, and he's been to camp every summer since then. I see him now almost every day. I got him a scholarship at a private high school, and he's been doing well. He's a fine young man. After that experience, I saw the other kids at the program differently, too. I hadn't really thought about what they did when they left the program, anything outside of the three hours that I saw them and it didn't concern me. But when I met David's mother, I realized he comes from 3:00-6:00 to the center, and he doesn't have to. He can sit at home, or stay with his friends on the street. He comes to the center because he finds something there that he doesn't get anywhere else. And I give it to him, the other counselors give it to him, the center gives it to him.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### ***Knowing youth holistically***

One interpretation of this tale is that it's very important to know the young people that we work with holistically ñ that we need to know them not only in the time from 3:00-6:00, but also get to know our young people and families, their friends, and what they've been experiencing at school with teachers. This is in addition to getting to know young people's needs and interests in order to create programs and activities that attract and engage them.

### ***The importance of relationships***

Another interpretation of the tale is how important relationships with youth practitioners are for young people. Some young people get their only support and guidance from youth workers at programs, whether they are counselors, teachers, peer leaders or any other staff member. In addition, youth practitioners can and do provide models of mature behavior and ways to interact with others through establishing "caring relationships" (Pitman & Cahill, 1992) which are key in youth's development.

### ***Notions of identity***

Yet, there is another possible interpretation of this story, and that is about identity. As teachers and counselors, we are often concerned with kids developing their identity. Sometimes we attribute a child with an identity or character, such as saying a child is "shy" or "clingy." Often when we talk about identity we talk about something that is either innate or something we're born with. Sometimes we think about it as something that we put on or assume ready-made, like a garment.

Another way of thinking about identity is as a social construction. That is, we are often positioned by social categories such as gender, age, and so forth. We need only think about what our community (or society) thinks is typical behavior for an adolescent and we can easily come up with some descriptions. However, when we look across our geographical, cultural and historical boundaries we find many ways people think about age-specific behavior that has changed over time.

In addition, we often think of identity as one thing, as fixed and unchanging. The fact is, we have multiple and overlapping identities. For example, we are attributed with ethnic and religious identity, gender and sexual identities, identities associated with our interests, such being academically, athletically, or artistically inclined. We have, as you see, many different identities, and that is because people are not one-dimensional. They are complex. Sometimes we even throw off or reject identities that have been attributed to us and affiliate with different identities. For example, a struggle that boys and girls often grapple with is that of gender roles, and the consequences of crossing boundaries that have been defined for us in terms of appropriate gender behavior.

In addition, creating identities is not a straightforward, linear progression. At times identities come to the forefront, becoming more important to us at certain points in our lives. For example, becoming a parent is often a major shift in the way that we see ourselves in addition to affecting our relations with others and with the institutions that we come into contact with (such as the medical field and educational in situations such as day care and schools). Achieving identities is a dynamic, active process, which changes over the course of our lives.

There are, however, strong societal forces pushing us to integrate all of the many aspects of ourselves. The aim is to be unified, someone who can be portrayed consistently. That is why we say things like, "She's not acting like herself today." Yet, we do a disservice to young people if we are concerned with them creating one identity or see them one way, when, in fact, they have many identities. Think, for example, of racially mixed children, and the pressures on them to assume one ethnic identity. In addition, we do a disservice to young people when we assign them to programs or projects that limit them. For example, why can't a young man be both athletically and artistically oriented? Do our programs stress one over the other? What are the consequences for young people when they have to make these kinds of choices?

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### **THE THIRD TALE – *From Two Sides of the Window***

From two sides of the window I was working as an arts educator with a theater group. We were producing plays for youth in community-based organizations, doing our first one in a settlement house on the lower east side of Manhattan. About two-thirds of the kids there were Chinese, or Chinese-American; either they had been born or their parents had been born in Shanghai. They spoke a combination of Mandarin and Cantonese. My background, at least culturally, is South Korean. I was born there, and that's how I was raised. As far as being a member of the team, I was the closest, culturally, to the kids. And yet, it was like I was on the other side. Think about the distance from Korea to Beijing, and from New York to Beijing. Yes, it's much closer, but is it the same country? No. It's not the same language; there are cultural differences. Yet, there are common sources. Some of the values the families at the program had are what I'd grown up with.

Anyway, we were having a big problem with the parents. They would get off from work and come pick up their kids. They'd look through the glass pane on the door of the room where we were rehearsing the play (an adaptation of "The Wizard of Oz"). The kids would be running around, doing a lot of different things, like rehearsing dialogue or reading scripts. They were using a great deal of English, and they were very excited to be given a part, to have the responsibility for their roles in the play. Through the window, from my side, I could see the parents making faces of anger, frustration, and confusion. Some parents started picking their kids up early if they were off from work even though we asked them to wait until rehearsal was over. They would respond, "Well, they're just playing, so they need to go home to do their homework." Two sisters came to us one day, very upset, because their mother had actually thrown away their scripts.

Culturally, I knew just what the parents were doing. They thought this was a play activity. And there is a deep suspicion of play in Asian culture. A lot of parents, whether they're from Mainland China or Taiwan think that American children spend way too much time playing. They should be "working, working, working!" And this is a problem in our parent countries because children are not given enough opportunity to play, and they are drilled to death. But while I could understand what was going on with the parents, I didn't agree. I thought they needed to loosen up and think about learning in a different way, because the kids were learning, they just weren't doing it in a way that the parents thought they should.

It finally all came to a head with one little girl. She was playing the witch in the play. She loved the part because it was so liberating. She was always perfectly put together. She always came dressed with ribbons in her hair, beautiful dresses that her mother sewed for her. She was supposed to be feminine, almost hyper-feminine, like a beautiful little doll. Playing the witch let her escape from this role. Anyway, one day she came in to us and she was crying. She said, "I couldn't practice, and I don't know my lines." She was miserable. Everyone said, "It's o.k. Don't worry about it." But she had taken it as, "This is my assignment, and I didn't do it and I'm bad." Well, it took a little while to get it out of her, but it turns out her mother had grabbed the script out of her hand while she was practicing and said, "Do your homework, this is nonsense." The girl was torn. She deeply

wanted to come, participate, and play the witch, and she wanted to please her mother, you know, and not get punished.

Well, we had to do something. What we did is get a parent whose son was in the show to act as our parent liaison. She spoke the language and acted as our mediator. She was pretty bi-cultural. We actually paid her for working with us for ten hours a week. She would talk with parents, translate letters home in Chinese, call up parents on the phone and make sure the kids were coming to rehearsal. She was great. We told her about this mother, and she said, "I know the mother, and I know how she can get, I know how these parents can get, let me talk to her." So she talked to the parent and to the other parents and allayed some of their fears. She told them, "The kids do have a half an hour to forty-five minutes for their homework, but the play is really important, the kids are using a lot of English, trust me." And as a parent who was bilingual, they took her seriously, because her children were also bilingual. In other words, she had made it in their minds. So, when she said, "Trust me, this is a way for them to learn English," they said, "Oh, o.k. We'll give this a chance."

The parent liaison was also very clever. She asked parents to bring in articles of clothing to be used as costumes. Some parents even helped sew the costumes. Now, many of the parents in that community worked in clothing factories. The little girl's parent, the one who played the witch, was actually the foreman of a clothing factory. Sewing is what she does best. As soon as we asked parents to participate, and to do things they were experts in, or knew how to do well, they felt a lot more comfortable. They became a lot more involved in the production.

So, the little girl who played the witch was able to do some practicing at home without getting reprimanded. What was so special was that the mother came to the performance, and she saw what her child had been doing. She saw all of the other parents in the room, she saw program directors, even funders were there. The children were speaking their lines, using English, most of which she didn't understand, and people would applaud. At the end of the play the mother made sure she had her picture taken with her daughter, in costume, wearing her tall witch hat and holding her script. In the photograph, which I still have, she's standing next to her daughter and her hand is proudly placed on her daughter's shoulder.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### ***The importance of culture***

This tale points to how important it is to understand culture when we work with young people and their families. Sometimes cultural differences can determine whether or not a program is going to succeed. Yet, culture is a tricky concept. There is a common sense notion that culture is homogeneous, that it can be defined as one thing. When we think of

people who belong to a culture we often believe that they all think the same way, do the same things and hold the same values. The truth is, within a culture there is a variety of points of view, sometimes even conflicting points of view. For example, in the African Diaspora, people were brought to the Caribbean, South and North America. Yet, we cannot say that a child from a Haitian background is the same as an African American child. They have cultural differences, not the least of which is language.

Also, we tend to think of cultures as bounded and isolated, as though they are little islands unto themselves. However, it is not very clear where one culture starts and another leaves off. The more we think about it, the boundaries become blurry. This happens for several reasons. First, cultural definitions are just that. They are definitions made by social scientists. They are words that represent concepts: they stand for cultures rather than are cultures.

Another reason that boundaries between cultures are vague is because in modern day societies people are not isolated from each other. When anthropologists began to study culture in the 19th century, they studied people who lived in isolated and remote places, where it was assumed that they did not come into contact with other cultures. It is now understood that the anthropologists were really making the assumption that the people they were studying did not come into contact with European culture. In reality those studied may have had plenty of contact with other tribes or communities.

Today, even if you live in an area that is predominated by one cultural or racial or ethnic group, one only needs to turn on the television and one is bombarded by portrayals of other groups (although often in very stereotypical ways). Especially in large cities with big immigrant populations, we are constantly in touch with others who belong to cultures that are different than our own, and we become affected by them. We adapt and adopt features of others' cultures, and they ours.

Finally, culture is often meant in a narrow sense, as race or ethnicity. Yet culture may include a wide variety of groups, and people can belong to many cultures at the same time. For example, school is a culture unto itself. It has recognizable features (such as classes, curriculum, etc.) and a group of expectations about how students and teachers are supposed to behave. In addition, there is youth culture, which many readers may be quite aware of. Youth culture, in particular, is important to recognize, because it brings with it a whole range of ways of speaking, identity, and values. Understanding these features can often make clear underlying sources of conflict and failure at programs. Doing so may also be the springboard for special youth-orientated projects and programs.

### ***The importance of parents***

Finally, the tale "From both sides of the window" points to the need to include parents in planning and developing projects. Explicit communication to parents (in the language they understand) about what programs are doing, what the intentions and expectations are, and the benefits associated with activities are crucial if we are to be successful with youth. Drawing upon parents as partners, and recognizing and building upon the

expertise they bring to programs is a way to make programs truly more "community based."

### ***Further Readings***

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