



# PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

K-12 Grade Programs  
2008-2009 Program Year

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Hope Through Housing Foundation's  
After School & Beyond: Growing Strong

Joelle K. Greene, Ph.D. & Yoon Elle Uh, M.A.

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HOPE through HOUSING  
FOUNDATION

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# Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank the following members of the research team who have contributed to the *After School & Beyond* program evaluation. These include: Heather Fikel, Stefanie Leite, Emily Wear, Christine Whan, and Michael Uh. This study would not have been possible without the cooperation of the *Hope Through Housing Foundation* and *After School & Beyond* leadership and staff. We wish to thank George Searcy (Executive Director), Susan Neufeld (Director of Youth Development Services), and Laura Fitzpatrick (Program Coach). They gave generously of their time throughout the year and facilitated our presence in the program sites. We also thank the *After School & Beyond* site staff and program partners for being open to numerous site visits, surveys, and observations.

Lastly, we wish to thank the children, youth, and parents who participate in *After School & Beyond* programs for sharing their experiences with *After School & Beyond* with us.

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## Executive Summary

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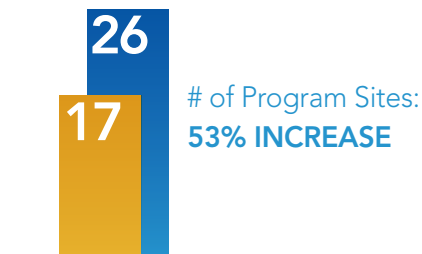
Hope Through Housing's *After School & Beyond* is serving more children and youth in at-risk communities than at any other time in its history. The program shows strong preliminary evidence of creating meaningful academic impacts in program participants and is highly rated by participants, their parents and program staff.

This program year marked new efforts to improve program quality. Program leadership has a strong commitment to high standards of program quality, engages in rigorous data-based decision making around issues of quality and has begun to develop and implement targeted training that moves sites towards desired levels of program quality.<sup>1</sup>

### During 2009:

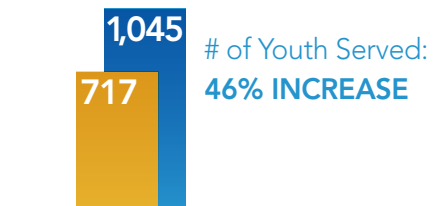
The number of program sites grew from 17 to 26 (a 53% increase) and the number of youth served increased by 46%, from 717 to 1,045.

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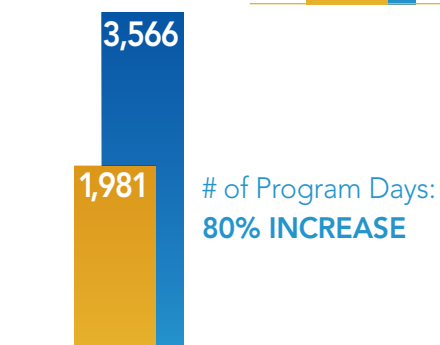
Program days combined across all sites grew 80% from 1,981 days in 2008 to 3,566 days in 2009.

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The number of sites offering program 3 days or more per week increased from 88% to 92%; 69% of sites offered 4 or 5 days of programming a week.

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Across all program sites average daily attendance was at 70% of goal but there was a large amount of variation. The lowest performing site achieved 44% of target ADA for the year, while the highest performing site achieved 96% of target.



<sup>1</sup> This report does not include Citrus Grove High School program. Due to its specific high school focus, this program is evaluated separately.

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## Executive Summary *(continued)*

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### During 2009 (continued):

Parents express their need for assistance to support their children's academic success. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of parents reported that they do not have enough time to help their children with homework and 50% reported that they do not know how to help; altogether 63% reported one or both reasons.

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Sixty-one percent (61%) of parents with children enrolled in AS&B reported their children were eligible to attend a program at their school. Parents chose AS&B because;

- AS&B is closer to home than school-based programs (81%),
- AS&B has better hours (19%) and
- AS&B has no cost (10%).

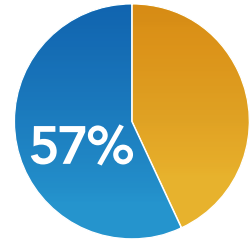
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Youth in grades K-6th experienced statistically significant improvement in academic self-efficacy, (their feelings that they can have a positive effect on their school performance), over the program year. Research demonstrates that youth who believe they are capable of learning new things are more likely to persist at difficult tasks and to have better school outcomes than kids who do not feel like capable learners.

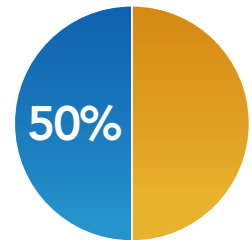
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There was a significant improvement in overall program quality from fall to spring across all sites. The average SACERS score increased from 3.32 to 3.76 across all sites, indicating overall improvement.

% of Parents Who Do Not Have Enough Time to Help with Homework:

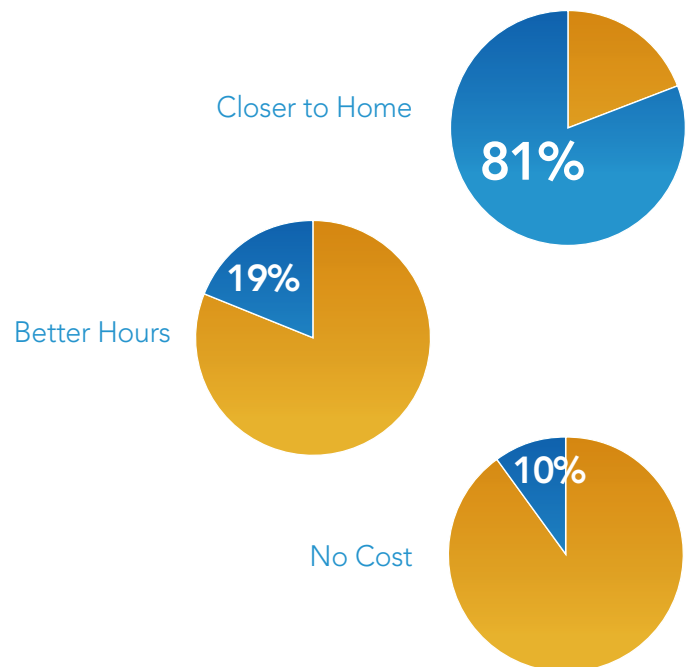


% of Parents Who Do Not Know How to Help with Homework:



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### Why Parents Chose After School & Beyond



2008-09 also marked the second full year of the **PeaceBuilders** Violence Prevention implementation. Evaluation of program and student performance showed that the curriculum is being delivered consistent with program goals. This success has led to overall program performance improvement as sites achieving fidelity in Violence Prevention program delivery are more likely to meet attendance and quality benchmarks than sites without the program or with poorer levels of implementation.

## Recommendations

- **The quality of Hope Through Housing programs has improved relative to one year ago, but there is still considerable variation among sites.** Comprehensive, systematic training for staff should be expanded so that site staff are able to consistently implement high quality programming.
- **Retention of participants is a serious challenge that should be aggressively addressed because it directly limits the program's ability to demonstrate impact.** Identifying and implementing strategies to improve retention could stabilize attendance, allow staff to focus more on program quality than recruitment and insure that the program can achieve maximum impact.
- **Attendance and program quality are strongly related.** Site specific interventions may be more successful if focused on programmatic quality rather than on recruitment. Enhanced recruitment efforts may create temporary increases in Average Daily Attendance but are unlikely to result in sustained attendance if program quality is not good, especially if staff lack effective behavior management skills or the ability to form good relationships with kids and each other.
- **Implementation of the Violence Prevention Curriculum directly impacts program quality and attendance.** In order to achieve maximum impact, implementation of this curriculum should be closely monitored for quality assurance throughout the program year. Sites with poor execution of the curriculum were no more effective in creating a prosocial and emotionally safe climate than sites without the curriculum at all. Minimum thresholds for implementation should be established and met by all sites. There is room for stronger implementation program wide. Even those sites with relatively higher implementation levels in this evaluation have room for growth, with no sites reaching near the maximum possible implementation scores.

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# HOPE THROUGH HOUSING'S AFTER SCHOOL & BEYOND: GROWING STRONG

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Program Evaluation Report K-12th Grade Programs<sup>2</sup>  
2008-09 Program Year



The stakes for children living in low-income neighborhoods have never been greater. The increasing digital divide, low-performing public schools, reductions in education funding, higher rates of crime and delinquent behavior and persistent generational patterns of poverty all combine to create barriers to improved social outcomes. There is

overwhelming evidence that high quality out-of-school-time programs produce positive outcomes for at-risk youth, leading to increased academic success, increased graduation and college entrance rates and reduced juvenile delinquency.

Historically, most after school programs were located on school campuses or in centralized community locations (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, community centers). With the introduction of federal grant programs (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers), school-based programs have grown tremendously in the last five years. While school-based programs reach many children they still present significant barriers for some of the most at-risk children in the community – those children with parents whose employment hours or transportation challenges prevent participation in traditional programs.

Hope Through Housing has intentionally addressed this gap with a “place-based” model for out-of-school-time programs. After School and Beyond, Hope’s signature after school program serving youth in grades K-12, is offered in the community learning centers of National Community Renaissance’s low-income affordable housing. Services are offered where children and families live, sometimes only steps from home. All services are free of cost. While residents are given first priority, children from the surrounding neighborhood are eligible to participate.



<sup>2</sup> This report does not include Citrus Grove High School program. Due to its specific high school focus, this program is evaluated separately.

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## Hope's Program Model

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Hope's vision is that children and youth are healthy, stable and successful. To this end, Hope provides programs and services that are consistent with after school industry best practices. For example, all curricula are grounded in research and are evidence-based; program leaders are experienced professionals in the field; and there is a high value placed on the professional development of all staff, professional and para-professional. There is also a strong commitment to evaluation for program improvement and monitoring. Outcomes and impact are regularly tracked by program leadership and data is used to make programmatic decisions.

The overarching purpose of After School and Beyond (AS&B) is to provide youth with supports and opportunities for learning and positive youth development. This larger mission is based in the Community Action Framework for Youth Development. This research based framework stems from longitudinal data that showed that long-term success for youth is more likely when youth have opportunities to be productive (do well in school, develop other interests and skills), connect with others (form positive peer relationships, participate in civic groups), and navigate various settings (interact appropriately, take responsibility for their choices; Gambone, Klem, & Connell, 2002). In this framework, programs that make a difference emphasize:

- adult-child relationships
- emotional and physical safety and
- program curricula and activities that respond to student and community needs (such as violence prevention and reading literacy), extend and enhance school and home learning, and expose youth to diverse thinking.

While individual sites retain the latitude to customize the program day to meet the unique needs of their community, the basic program model is consistent across sites and is comprised of the following components:

- Homework help
- Access to high-speed internet and computers
- A healthy snack
- Physical recreation
- Violence prevention (using the **PeaceBuilders** curriculum)
- Project based learning (with each site determining specific activities within general guidelines)



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# The **PeaceBuilders** Program

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In May 2007, National Community Renaissance was awarded an Edward Byrne Justice Memorial Grant to develop and pilot a violence prevention program in 10 Hope Through Housing Foundation programs. Program year 2008-09 was the second year of the **PeaceBuilders** (PB) implementation in After School and Beyond. An additional 4 sites were added for a total of 14 *After School & Beyond* PB sites. PB sites are denoted by an asterisk in Table 1.

**PeaceBuilders** is an evidence-based curriculum designed to prevent violence by supporting children's appropriate emotion regulation and by encouraging prosocial behaviors. While the program includes specific activities, such as a daily pledge and thematic projects, the real thrust of the program revolves around creating shared values about positive behavior, healthy emotion expression and clear communication. The Year 1 evaluation of PB included staff focus groups where program staff specifically mentioned that PB provided them with a clear method of handling conflict and managing both positive and negative behavior.

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## Programs, Sites & Services

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Program Year 2008-09 brought tremendous growth for AS&B program in both the quantity and quality of services provided. The number of program sites grew from 17 to 26 (a 53% increase) and the number of youth served increased by 46%, from 717 to 1,045.

In 2008-09, the majority of programs were implemented in partnership with area youth organizations. Three programs were delivered by staff hired and managed by Hope Through Housing Foundation. A fourth, Colony, was delivered by Hope staff and work study students of University of Redlands, a local private university.





Table 1: After School & Beyond Sites and Partner Organizations

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM SITE
Camp Fire USA – Compton Council	Hawthorne Terrace
Camp Fire USA – San Diego & Imperial Counties Council	Melrose Villas*, Shadow Hill*
Pazzaz (tutoring only)	Parkside Apartments, Spring Valley
Camp Fire – Mt. San Antonio Council	La Quinta, Monterey Village*, Mountainside*, Sunset Heights*, Promenade*, Sycamore Springs*, Impressions at Valley Center
City of Montclair Parks and Recreation	San Antonio Vista
National City Collaborative	Vista del Sol*
Family YMCA of the Desert	Vista Dunes
YMCA of Riverside City and County	Mission Pointe
YMCA of Yorba Linda Placentia	Arbor Villas
Escondido Education COMPACT	Cobblestone*, Paseo del Oro*, Sierra Vista*, Villa Serena*
City Year of Little Rock/North Little Rock	Ridgeview Terrace Apartments
Hope Through Housing	Crossings, Renaissance Village*, Citrus Grove K-8*, Colony (in partnership with University of Redlands)

\*Site participated in **PeaceBuilders** Program

Programs grew in two ways: new sites were added and existing programs added days of services. In total, program days combined across all sites grew 80% from 1,981 days in 2008 to 3,566, days in 2009. The number of sites offering program 3 days or more per week increased from 88% to 92%; 69% of sites offered 4 or 5 days of programming a week.

Several sites experienced unexpected program closures in 2008-09, including Vista del Sol (due to a flood caused by a county sewer line). Other sites experienced closures because of staffing issues. For example, Paseo del Oro and Villa Serena experienced intermittent closures because of challenges recruiting AmeriCorps volunteers in a timely fashion or because of low attendance. Staff mitigated these challenges by combining the two programs into one site location (they are adjacent).

Sycamore Springs closed for one week because of staff turnover. The site was closed so that new staff could be hired and so that programs could reopen with a fresh start.

Other programs had additional disruptions throughout the year; some schedules changed in order to respond to community needs. For example, Sunset Heights altered their K-12, 3-6 p.m. program so that K-8 youth were served from 2-5 p.m. and high school youth were served from 5-6 p.m. This was done because of behavior management issues and challenges with mixing the two populations.

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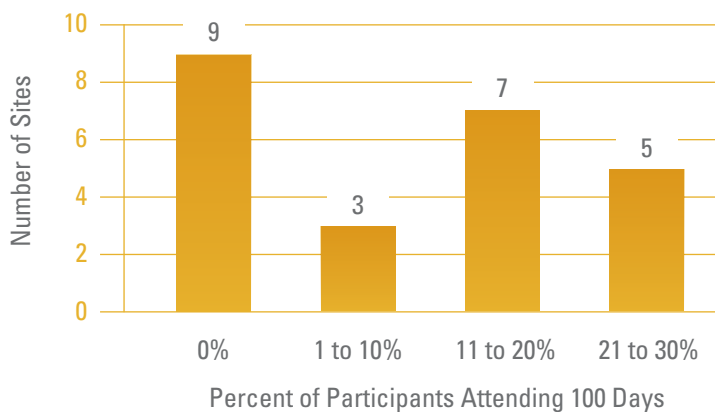
## Program Attendance and Retention

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AS&B staff established attendance targets for each program site based on center size, days and hours of operation and historical attendance trends. Across all program sites, average daily attendance was at 70% of goal but there was a large amount of variation. The lowest performing site achieved 44% of target ADA for the year, while the highest performing site achieved 96% of target.

Recent research conducted by CRESST (Center for Research in Evaluation and Standards of Student Testing) suggests that for after school programs to have an impact, students need to receive at least 100 days of service. This year we began to examine attendance patterns of individual children within sites to benchmark the program against this new standard. Across all sites, 10% of participants attended program 100 days or more, however attendance patterns varied widely by site. As illustrated in Figure 1, sites ranged from no children attending 100 days to nearly 30% of children attending 100 days.

Figure 1: Percent of Participants Attending 100 Days by Site



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## Children and Youth Participants

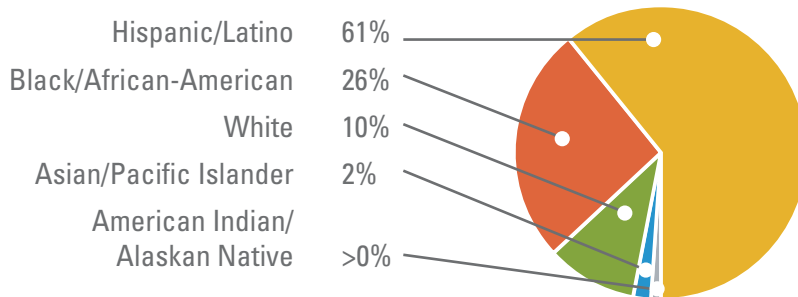
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Hope Through Housing continues to serve children and families with high levels of need. Nearly all participants are residents of affordable housing developments and families typically earn 50% or less of the area median income for their community. Median income of families served by *After School & Beyond* in 2008-09 was \$15,000, down by nearly 4% from last year's family median income of \$15,650. Nearly 60% of program participants reside in single female adult headed households and 83% of program participants receive free or reduced lunch at school. Across all sites, 77% of program participants are residents of National CORE properties; the remaining 23% of participants are from the surrounding neighborhoods.

77% of program participants are residents of National CORE properties and 23% are from the surrounding neighborhoods.

Hope through Housing serves a diverse group of children and youth (see Figure 2 below). More than 60% of participants are Hispanic/Latino and nearly 14% of participants are considered Limited English Proficiency (LEP) by their school.

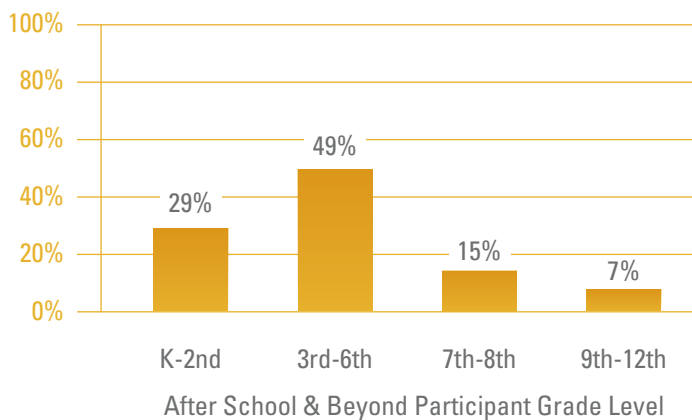
Figure 2: Participant Ethnicity



As AS&B continues to expand, there is an associated increase in language diversity. While participants’ home languages are predominantly English and Spanish, families also reported speaking Farsi, Portuguese and Bengali.

*After School & Beyond* is open to children in grades K-12; however the majority of children attending are in grades K-6th (78%). Middle school (7th & 8th grade) youth make up 15% of program participants and high school youth account for about 7% of participants.

Figure 3: Participant Grade Level



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## Program Need

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Over the past few years, we have learned that families need the services AS&B provides for many reasons, ranging from access to computers and the internet (only 52% of households have a working computer and only 40% of those households have an internet connection), homework help and the opportunity to form relationships with program staff who are positive role models. This year, parents' top-ranked reasons for sending kids to AS&B were for homework help (50% ranked this as the most important), to form relationships with staff who are positive role models (22%) and to receive a nutritious snack/help with math (17.6% each). While we did not ask parents directly, it appears that families may be experiencing food need this year that has not been present in the past, as snack has not been this highly ranked in previous years.



Table 2: Why Parents Want Their Kids to Attend AS&B

	% PARENTS RANKING MOST IMPORTANT
1. Homework help	50.0%
2. Form relationships with staff who are positive role models	22.1%
3. Nutritious snack	17.6%
4. Math help	17.6%
5. Access to computers & the internet	16.2%
6. Become a better reader	16.2%
7. Get some exercise/recreation	10.3%
8. Learn to get along with others	10.3%
9. Get to know other kids in our apartment building	2.9%

Parents were asked to rank each item from 1 to 9 with 1 being most important and 9 being least important; percents reflect the number of parents ranking the respective item most important

Overwhelmingly, parents need the program to help them support their children's academic success. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of parents reported that they do not have enough time to help their children with homework and 50% reported that they do not know how to help; altogether 63% reported one or both reasons. While these numbers are slightly lower than last program year, they illustrate the need to support parents and students with homework completion assistance in program.

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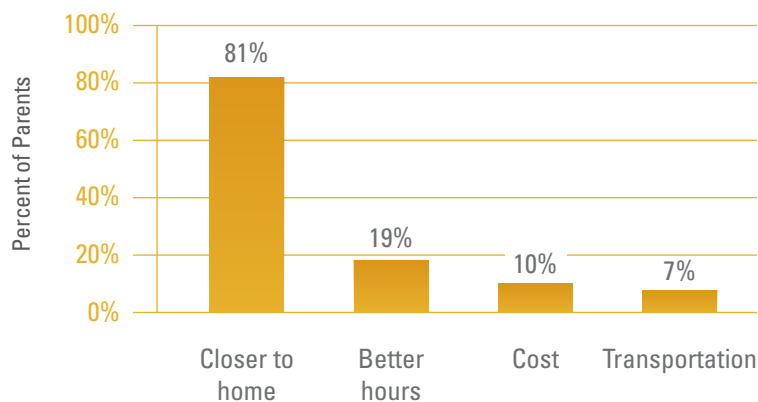
## Why After School & Beyond?

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For the first time this year, we explored the question of why parents choose AS&B rather than a school-based program. Sixty-one percent (61%) of parents with children enrolled in AS&B reported that there was a school-based program available to them. Most parents chose AS&B because it is closer to home than school-based programs (81%), has better hours (19%) and has no cost (10%).

Figure 4: Why Parents Choose AS&B

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Parents could choose all reasons that apply, so percentages sum to more than 100%

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## Program Impact

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Program impact data indicates that AS&B impacts participants in several ways. Academic self-efficacy showed a statistically significant increase from Fall to Spring for students in grades K-6th, indicating the program is helping kids feel empowered and capable at school. Parents and students also believe the program helps youth do a better job at homework and has helped them become better readers (see Figures 6 & 7 on page 12).



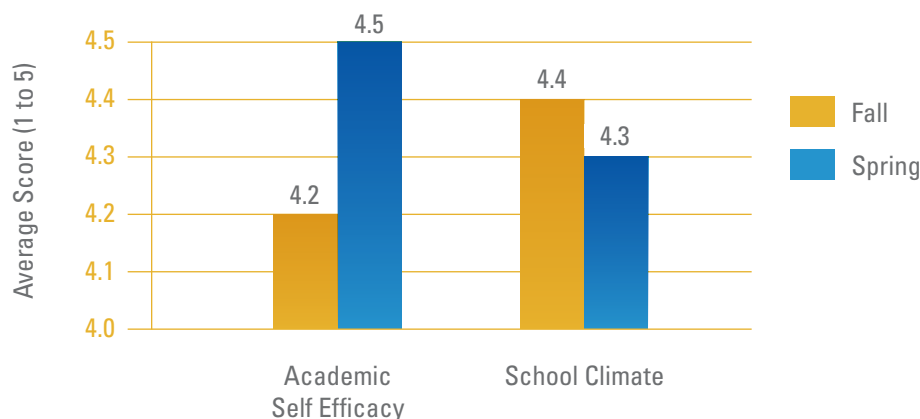
## Academic Self Efficacy - Feeling Like a Successful and Capable Learner

How children and youth feel about themselves and their ability to learn has important implications for their long-term academic achievement. Kids who believe they are capable of learning new things are more likely to persist at difficult tasks and to have better school outcomes than kids who do not feel like capable learners. After School and Beyond activities are designed to both support and expand participants' in-school learning by providing homework support, computer research skills, and project based learning experiences. Thus we expect this program to increase academic self-efficacy for participants.

The impact of the program on academic self efficacy was measured in the fall and spring using age-appropriate validated measures. Children and youth in grades K-6 completed the Feelings About School Scale (FAS) and youth in grades 7th -12th completed the school context scale of the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP).

Youth in grades K-6th experienced statistically significant increases in academic self-efficacy over the program year. Fall and spring scores were available from a total of 111 program participants. At each assessment, scale scores could range from 1 to 5, with higher scores representing higher levels of self-efficacy. Academic Self Efficacy scores increased an average of .3, indicating that over the course of the year children became more confident of their knowledge in math, reading and writing and more confident in their ability to learn new things in each of these areas. In contrast, children's feelings about school, their teacher and their classmates did not change from fall to spring. These findings, along with self-report data discussed later in this report suggest changes in self-efficacy were more likely due to the after school program than school.

Figure 5: Academic Self Efficacy & School Climate



Program Impact: Academic Self Efficacy & School Climate  
K-6th Grade After School & Beyond Participants

While a total of 111 7th – 12th graders participated in evaluation activities, only 17 youth contributed both pre- and post-test data, so sample size was not adequate for analysis of changes in academic self-efficacy for this age group.

Figure 6: Student Reported Program Impact

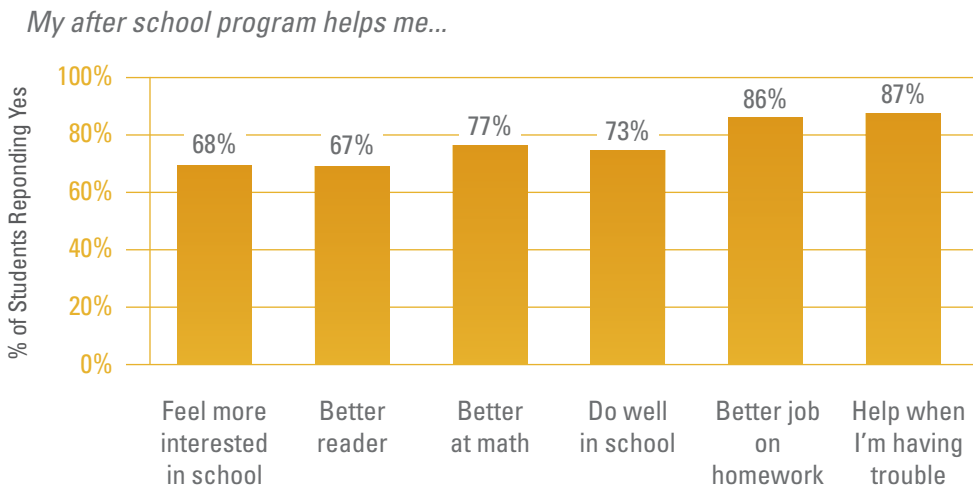
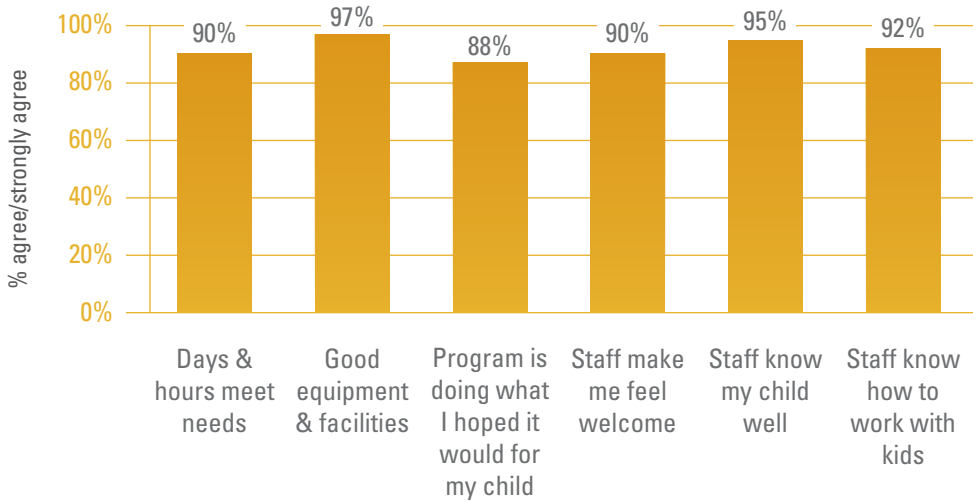


Figure 7: Parent Satisfaction



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## Program Quality

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All sites were formally observed in the Fall and Spring by trained evaluation staff members using the SACERS (School Aged Care Environmental Rating Scale). The SACERS contains a total of 43 items focused on quality in six areas:

- **Space and Furnishings:** 11 items that assess the appropriateness of the physical environment for various types of indoor and outdoor activities
- **Health and Safety:** 8 items that focus on the presence of policies and practices that ensure the physical safety of participants and staff
- **Activities:** 8 items that evaluate the variety of age-appropriate activities available in the curriculum for participants
- **Interactions:** 9 items that assess the quality of behavior management, peer relations, parent relations and staff-staff relations
- **Program Structure:** 4 items focused on scheduling, flexibility and the use of community resources
- **Staff Development:** 3 items that assess opportunities for professional growth, evaluation and quality supervision of staff

The SACERS yields six scale scores and an overall score that can range from 1 to 7. The stated program goal is for all sites to attain a minimum score of 5 in each area, which represents a good quality program. Scores above 5 represent excellent program quality. For the past two years, Hope Through Housing has used this measure in a very deliberate way to target areas needing improvement, both across all programs and within specific programs. In January 2009, sites received report cards that summarized their fall 2008 data and indicated areas where sites were underperforming, at an average performance level, or were hitting the target. Hope leadership worked with site leadership (and with leadership of partner organizations in some cases) to develop targeted plans for program improvement based on the results of fall observations.

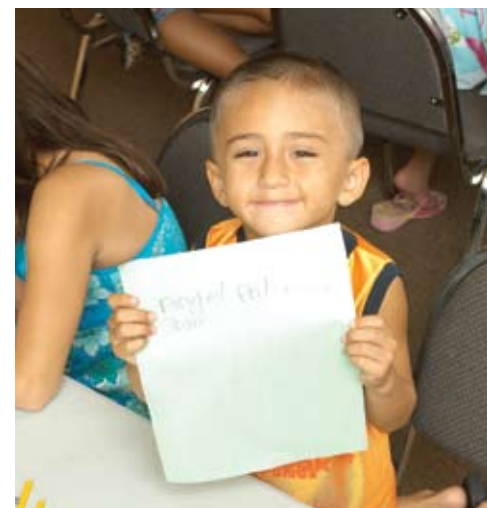
There was a significant improvement in program quality from fall to spring. The average SACERS score increased from 3.32 to 3.76 across all sites, indicating overall improvement. Table 3 below illustrates changes in program quality by content area over time. From Fall 2008 to Spring 2009, more sites attained the benchmark score of 5 in every area assessed. Areas with the most improvement initiative-wide in the 2008-09 program year were Staff Development, Interactions and Health and Safety. These areas of improvement are consistent with training and support provided by Hope's leadership during the program year.



Table 3: Percent of Sites that Achieved Benchmark from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009 and Percent of Trainings (2008-09) Targeting each Domain

	PERCENT OF SITES AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK			% TRAININGS TARGETING
	SPRING 2009	FALL 2008	SPRING 2008	
Staff Development	63%	23%	–	100%
Interactions	46%	14%	25%	75%
Health and Safety	25%	5%	–	31%
Program Structure	21%	5%	19%	38%
Space and Furnishings	13%	5%	–	19%
Activities	4%	0%	–	31%

Hope Leadership provided 12 training events between July 2008 and April 2009 to program staff and Hope Leadership attended four trainings provided by industry experts. We used an informal process to categorize the content of trainings by SACERS content area. Column 5 in Table 3 shows the percent of trainings that addressed each content area. (Most trainings covered more than one SACERS content area so percents sum to more than 100%.) Overall there is congruence between areas of quality that were most frequently targeted by training and areas where the most notable growth occurred across the program year as well as across consecutive program years. This confluence of data suggests that targeted trainings get results in this setting.



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## Impact of PeaceBuilders on Program Quality

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We examined the impact of the PB program on program attendance and quality. Based on formal and informal observation, implementation of PB was not the same across programs, so an implementation measure was developed to identify sites with relatively higher and lower levels of implementation.

### Determining PeaceBuilders Implementation Level

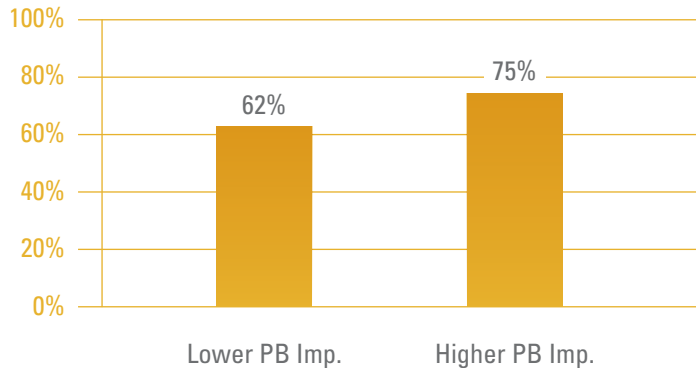
Trained observers blind to program participation rated implementation levels at all program sites. Using the Leadership guide provided by the curriculum developer (Peace Partners, Inc.) we developed an implementation measure consisting of two subscales: PB Artifacts and PB Environment. The PB Artifacts Scale consisted of five items which indicated the presence of overt materials related to PB, such as the Pledge, a Praise Board and Praise Notes. The PB Practices Scale consisted of eight items scored from 1 to 5 depending on the frequency of behaviors and practices, and includes items such as, "Staff use PB language," and "Praise Notes are sent home." Scores were summed to create one PeaceBuilders Implementation score with a maximum value of 45 points; actual scores ranged from 11 to 33.5 points with a mean of 19.5 points.

Lower and higher implementation groups were created using a median split procedure. Eight program sites with an average PB Implementation Score of 14.5 points made up the Lower Implementation Group and six sites with an average score of 26.25 points made up the Higher Implementation Group. The remaining ten sites comprised the non-PB group. Two sites were excluded from these analyses since they are tutoring only programs and do not offer the same level of programming as other sites.

Comparisons between sites with lower and higher levels of implementation suggest that PeaceBuilders positively impacts program attendance and quality. Sites with higher levels of PeaceBuilders implementation had significantly higher attendance (as measured by percent to goal average daily attendance, which takes into account program size and historical attendance trends) than sites with lower levels of implementation.

Figure 8: Impact of PeaceBuilders on Program Attendance

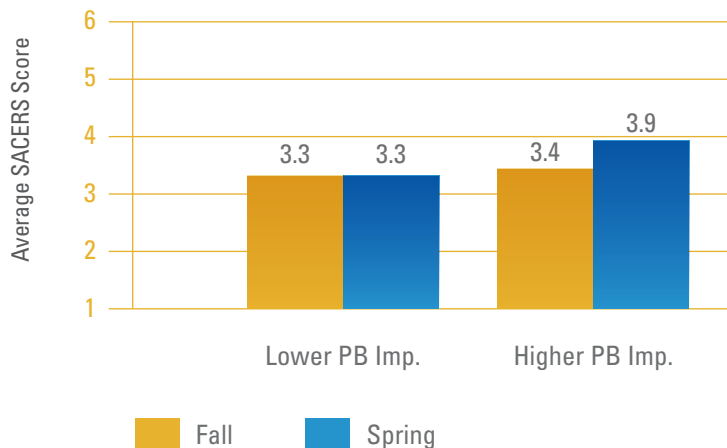
Percent to Goal Average Daily Attendance



Although there were no initial differences in program quality in the fall, higher implementation sites showed significant increases in quality from Fall to Spring while lower implementation sites showed no change in program quality over the same time period. These findings suggest that PeaceBuilders curriculum provides a meaningful structure that helps staff establish a warm emotional climate, appropriate behavior management and good social problem-solving among participants, all of which contribute to program quality.

Figure 9: Impact of PeaceBuilders Implementation on Program Quality

Program Quality and PeaceBuilders Implementation



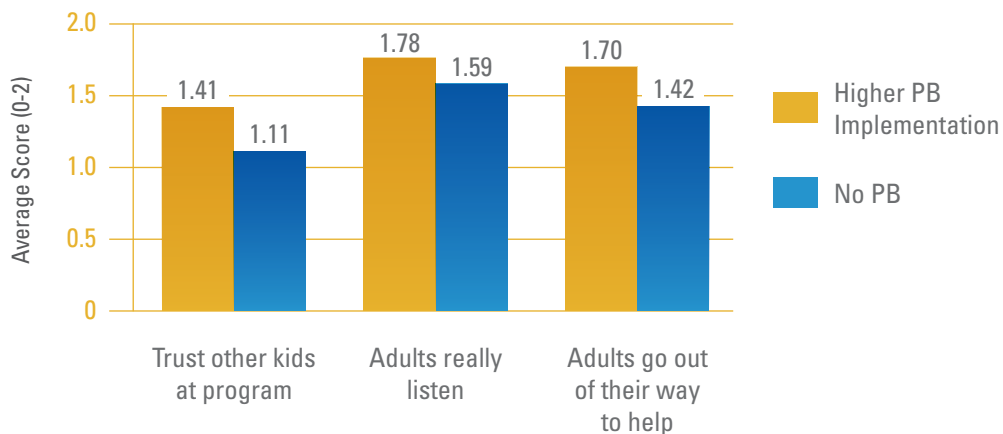
## Impact of PeaceBuilders on Program Climate

Overall there was a statistically significant relationship between PeaceBuilders implementation level and student perceptions of the program. High levels of PeaceBuilders implementation resulted in significantly higher levels of trust among participants compared to participants at sites not



participating in PeaceBuilders. Students in high level implementation sites also reported more positive relationships with program staff (see figure 10 below). For example, they were more likely to feel that program staff really listen to them and that staff go out of their way to help them than did students at non-PeaceBuilders sites. Student perceptions at sites with lower levels of PB implementation fell midway between the two groups and did not differ from either group, therefore data for this group is not included in the figure.

Figure 10: Program Climate and PeaceBuilders



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## Summary

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Hope Through Housing's *After School & Beyond* is serving more children and youth in at-risk communities than at any other time in its history. The program shows strong preliminary evidence of creating meaningful academic impacts in program participants and is highly rated by participants, their parents and program staff.

This program year marked new efforts to improve program quality. Program leadership has a strong commitment to high standards of program quality, engages in rigorous data-based decision making around issues of quality and has begun to develop and implement targeted training that moves sites towards desired levels of program quality.

The second full year of **Peace Builders** Violence Prevention curriculum is likely playing an important role in the overall improvement in program quality. Sites achieving higher levels of implementation are more likely to meet attendance and quality benchmarks than sites without the program or with lower levels of implementation.



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## Recommendations

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- **The quality of Hope Through Housing programs has improved relative to one year ago, but there is still considerable variation among sites.** Evaluation results show that areas targeted by comprehensive, systematic training for staff at all levels resulted in meaningful improvement across the initiative. This has proven to be a highly effective strategy in this context and should be greatly expanded so that all sites achieve good program quality standards by 2011.
- **Retention of participants is a serious challenge that should be aggressively addressed because it directly limits the program's ability to demonstrate impact.** Based on recent research findings, only a minority of students are attending program with enough consistency to expect to reap the benefits. A large percentage (38%) of sites had **no participants** reach the 100 day attendance threshold. Identifying and implementing strategies to improve retention could stabilize attendance, allow staff to focus more on program quality than recruitment and insure that the program can achieve maximum impact.
- **Attendance and program quality are strongly related.** Site specific interventions may be more successful if focused on programmatic quality rather than on recruitment. Enhanced recruitment efforts may create temporary increases in Average Daily Attendance but are unlikely to result in sustained attendance if program quality is not good, especially if staff lack effective behavior management skills or the ability to form good relationships with kids and each other.
- **Implementation of PeaceBuilders directly impacts program quality and attendance.** In order to achieve maximum impact, implementation of PeaceBuilders needs to be closely monitored throughout the program year. Low implementation sites were no more effective in creating a prosocial and emotionally safe climate than sites without PeaceBuilders at all. Therefore, minimum thresholds for implementation should be established and met by all sites. There is room for stronger implementation program wide. Even those sites with relatively higher implementation levels in this evaluation have room for growth, with no sites reaching near the maximum possible implementation scores.





Research completed by Research and Evaluation Division  
National Community Renaissance,  
Joelle K. Greene, Ph.D. *Director*

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National Community Renaissance®  
9065 Haven Avenue, Suite #100  
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

T 909 | 483 | 2444  
F 909 | 483 | 2448

[www.nationalcore.org](http://www.nationalcore.org)