

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



THE FORUM FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT IS THE PROUD PARENT COMPANY OF:

READY BY 21

Ready by 21 is a set of innovative strategies developed by the Forum that helps communities and states improve the odds that all children and youth will be ready for college, work and life. readyby21.org.

DAVID P. WEIKART CENTER FOR YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY

The Weikart Center empowers education and human service leaders to adapt, implement and bring to scale best-in-class, research-validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development. These include an evidence-based intervention model (Youth Program Quality Intervention, or YPQI) and a core set of instructional quality metrics (Youth Program Quality Assessment, or Youth PQA). cypq.org.

CHILDREN'S CABINET NETWORK

The Children's Cabinet Network, managed by the Forum, is composed of policymakers who lead state and local Children's Cabinets. Through the network, members share best practices and get technical support, coaching and tools to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their efforts to improve outcomes for all children and youth. forumfyi.org.

SPARKACTION

SparkAction is the Forum's collaborative journalism and advocacy site to mobilize action by and for young people. It brings together the best stories, tools and resources to help people get informed and involved. sparkaction.org.

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS GROUP

CSG, an affiliate of the Forum, is a national leader in evaluating the work of community coalitions. It helps coalitions diagnose the causes behind specific issues of concern to the community and develop plans to effectively address those causes. communitysystemsgroup.com.



The Forum for Youth Investment helps communities get young people ready for life.

We provide state and local leaders with tools, training and technical assistance to:

Strengthen **PARTNERSHIPS**

that focus on children and youth. The Forum works with collaborations of state and local leaders from all sectors, including government, nonprofit, education and business.

Improve **PRACTICES**

by improving quality. The Forum works with networks of youth service providers, including school systems, local and statewide afterschool networks, and affiliates of national youth-serving organizations.

Align **POLICIES**

to make them more effective. The Forum works with coalitions of leaders who influence and implement government policies at all levels, including legislative staff, the heads of executive agencies, and policy advocates.

Celebrate **ALIGNMENT**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen J. Pittman".

Karen J. Pittman
Co-founder,
Chief Executive Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Merita Irby".

Merita Irby
Co-founder,
Chief Operating Officer

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

When was the last time your community celebrated alignment?

Alignment is hard and essential work, but it doesn't garner lots of attention. It's typically carried out behind the scenes and methodically: leaders collaborate to develop plans, implement surveys, make calls, collect data and analyze results. These efforts are rarely celebrated in a public ceremony or on the local news home page.

We celebrate those efforts here. Because effective alignment is critical for achieving change through collective impact. When the Forum looked back at 2014, we saw that alignment, always supported in theory, is spreading in practice – at least when it comes to improving systems and supports for young people.

The Forum helps state and local partnerships align many things: Organizations, missions, resources, goals, data and measurements, to name a few. We think alignment stories are important and exciting enough to share; here are a few stories that you'll find on these pages:

In King County, Wash., out-of-school time providers needed a common way to measure the impact of their work on young people. Our Weikart Center teamed with a partnership of youth development executives to create a tool for all providers to measure the attributes – such as social skills, creativity and health – that OST programs can influence.

All over the country, state and local leaders said they could make their services to needy youth more effective if they had the flexibility to align the myriad regulations and processes that come with funding from Washington. Our policy team helped the White House and Congress craft the Performance Partnership Pilot initiative to provide that flexibility, and is helping communities create effective plans to implement the pilots.

In Fort Worth, Texas, government, school and out-of-school-time leaders needed help in building a collaboration to increase access to high-quality programs. The Forum implemented its Partnership Characteristics Survey to assess the capacity of local organizations to play specific roles in the collaboration, which is using the results to make decisions about its governance and accountability.

In Nashville, Tenn., a youth master plan developed several years ago with the help of our Ready by 21 field services team called for sharing of data among agencies that serve youth. Last year, the public schools and an afterschool alliance launched a formal process of sharing data about young people and better aligning their work.

In Hennepin County, Minn., a successful movement to reduce teen pregnancies was threatened by a looming funding cut. Our team guided local leaders through the development of a fiscal map to identify state and county funding sources for healthy youth development, and to show how that funding lines up with youth populations, needs and services.

Let's take a few moments to applaud, to learn, and to embrace the potential of aligning systems and resources to fundamentally transform the way we do business for young people.



Forum Headquarters: The Cady-Lee House

Strengthening **PARTNERSHIPS**

The Forum helps leaders ...

- assess and strengthen the capacity of the partnership to carry out its mission
- collect and analyze data about youth and the supports available to them in order to make informed decisions
- align the goals, policies and work of the partnership organizations so that they collectively fill gaps and minimize overlaps

Making SPARC Fly

Local government, school and out-of-school-time (OST) leaders in Fort Worth, Texas, launched an ambitious collaboration to increase access to high-quality OST programs for all youth, creating a nonprofit (SPARC) to coordinate the work. They needed help in answering some crucial questions: Who would belong to the coalition? Who would be accountable for carrying out strategies? How would it measure and improve program quality?

The city partnered with the Forum, which implemented its Partnership Characteristics Survey to assess the capacity of local organization to play specific roles in the coalition. SPARC is using the survey to make decisions about governance and accountability, and to map out other coalitions that might join effort.

“The survey is having an immediate impact on our strategic business planning and board development,” said Jim Williamson, CEO of SPARC.

The Big Picture on Collective Impact

100 staffers from 45 organizations boosted their ability to implement collective impact strategies, by attending the Forum’s Big Picture Approach institutes. The BPA covers the five key steps in collaborative work, helping partnerships create a community-specific diagnosis and action plan, forge better connections to existing work in their communities, and maintain a holistic approach.

The institutes – held in Silver Spring, Md., St. Louis, Mo., and East St. Louis, Mo., – drew people from United Ways, chambers of commerce, and such agencies as Beyond Housing, Foster Care to Success, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and the Center for Youth Engagement.



Using Data to Gauge Youth Readiness

Nine communities got a more thorough picture of the hope, engagement and well-being of their young people through the Forum’s Ready Youth initiative. Ready Youth gives communities the tools and technical assistance to collect and utilize new data about youth. The initiative builds on the Gallup Student Poll, which measures the hope, engagement and well-being of youth in schools around the country. Nearly 30,000 youth filled out the surveys as part of Ready Youth; communities are using them to craft strategies to better serve young people in school and afterschool programs. Special thanks to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for supporting the implementation of Ready Youth in three Mississippi communities.



Sharing Data About Kids, For Kids

Nashville, Tenn. – How can we effectively serve young people if we don't have a complete picture of who they are and what they do? That question long weighed on the minds of teachers and afterschool providers here, and several years ago they set out to fill in the picture.

In 2010, the mayor's office created a citywide task force to build a child and youth master plan, working in partnership with the Forum for Youth Investment. Using Ready by 21 strategies, the task force brought together all segments of Nashville, including the school and afterschool systems. The task force work strengthened their partnership, and the plan called for them to continue working together to meet specific objectives. For example: the creation of a system to share data about young people.

"The school district can't address all the barriers to student

achievement alone," says Laura Hansen, director of information management and decision support for Metro Nashville Public Schools. And afterschool providers "need to have information on what the district is struggling with, as well as about the needs of individual students."

In 2014, the public school system and selected members of the Nashville Afterzone Alliance (NAZA) began sharing data about nearly 1,500 of the city's neediest youth: data such as grades, disciplinary actions, participation in afterschool programs and the results of the Youth Program Quality Assessments (conducted through the Forum's Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality). Now, staff from schools and the providers meet regularly to review the data and develop strategies to improve youth services.

Aligning **POLICIES**

The Forum helps leaders ...

- assess and align policies and resources that affect young people to make those policies more effective
- determine the financial resources available to help children and families, and analyze if they are being used in the best way
- advocate for changes in policies, processes and funding in order to achieve better results



Opportunity Youth

The National Council of Young Leaders: Opportunity Youth United is a diverse body of youth who advise policymakers and funders on issues affecting low-income youth – and SparkAction helps them amplify their voices. It led trainings for the council on social media strategy and best practices; advised about its online messaging and content; and helped members publish their viewpoints in the media.

Among the successes: SparkAction helped council member Jamiel Alexander draft and place an op-ed in his local newspaper, the York (Pa.) Daily Record. When the council held its Voices of Opportunity Youth Briefing for congressional staff on Capitol Hill, SparkAction prepared social media posts and shareable materials, helped members prepare their presentations and reported on the event.

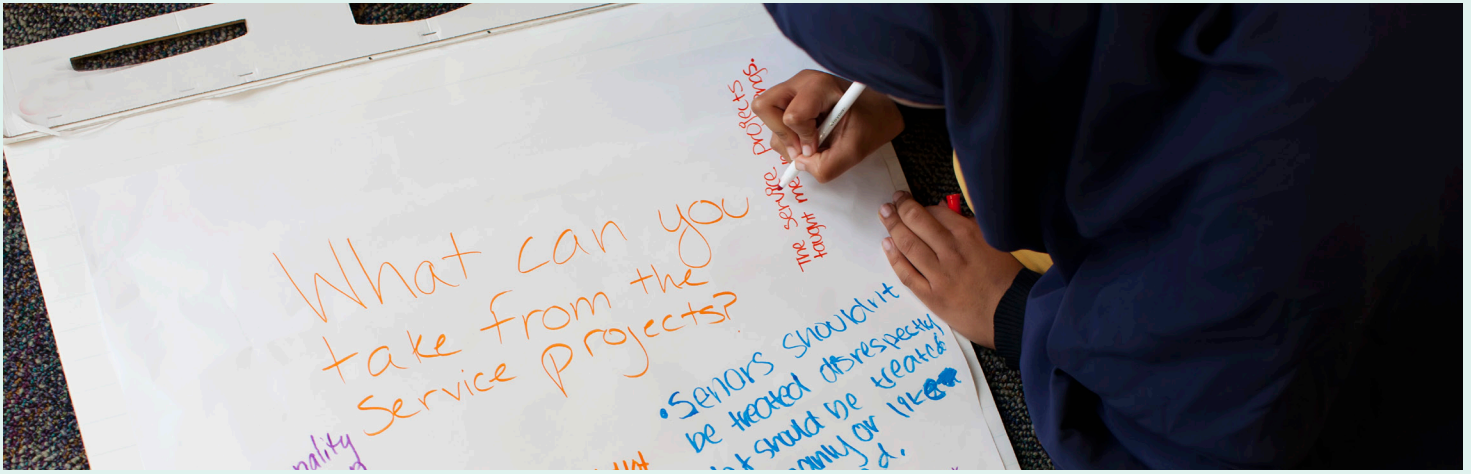
Law to Spur Innovation and Impact

After working with its partners to win congressional approval of the landmark Performance Partnership Pilots (P3) in 2014, the Forum switched its focus to helping communities make the idea work. Under P3, the federal government will give up to 10 communities unprecedented flexibility in using different streams of government funding in innovative ways to achieve stronger results for disconnected youth. With generous support from The Kresge Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Forum and several partners created a help center – including a website, webinars and coaching – to assist communities in developing strong applications and implementing their initiatives effectively.

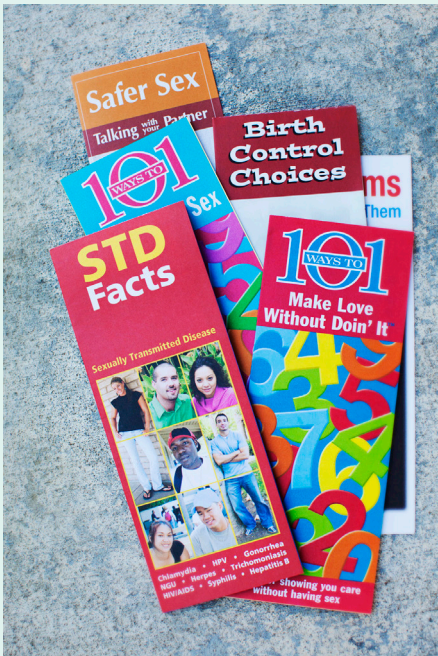
Advocating for Effective Juvenile Justice

With the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act up for congressional renewal, SparkAction partnered with advocacy organizations on a national campaign to raise awareness about the Act's vital role in funding innovative and effective practices. SparkAction launched the JJDPA Matters Action Center (sparkaction.org/jjdpamatters), a hub that provided articles, expert blogs, videos (including youth and key figures in juvenile justice), and ways for people to share stories, contact elected officials and take action to support smarter approaches to youth justice.





Wanted: Stable Funding to Combat Teen Pregnancy



Hennepin County, Minn. – The news was good in Hennepin County, Minn.: Teen pregnancies were down, thanks in part to a county initiative aimed at helping youth delay parenthood. But progress was threatened by the looming expiration of a federal grant that funded the lion’s share of that work.

“We knew there were more resources to support healthy youth development and teen pregnancy prevention,” says Katherine Meerse, manager of the initiative, called Better Together Hennepin (BTH). “But we didn’t know where all those resources were, or if they were being used for the greatest needs and in the most effective way.”

Today, BTH is finding answers through a fiscal map: a data tool that tracks where public and private funding comes from and where it goes. The Forum for Youth Investment created the map, implemented a survey of local funding sources and analyzed the data.

The map identifies 168 funding streams totaling about \$1.2 billion in annual spending to support healthy youth development, prevent teen pregnancy and support teen parents. With that data in hand, BTH is pursuing new paths toward fiscal stability.

Finally, says Meerse, “We can match our work to the messages that we are giving our young people: Take the long view when working for a better future.”

Improving **PRACTICES**

The Forum helps leaders ...

- assess the quality of their work with children and youth
- implement systems to continuously improve service quality
- design ways to measure the impact of their work on young people



Nationwide Impact

The Weikart Center worked with provider networks in dozens of communities to assess and improve the out-of-school time services offered by their member organizations. Some of these networks cover a community or region; others are statewide. Here is just a sampling:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee
- United Way of Greater Richmond, Va.
- Chicago Afterschool Matters
- Denver Public Schools
- YMCA of the USA
- School's Out Washington
- Arkansas Department of Education, 21st CCLC
- Metro United Way, Louisville
- The Ed Fund, Richmond, Calif.
- Detroit Youth Development Resource Center
- St. Paul Public Schools Foundation
- Michigan Department of Education, 21st CCLC

7,532 Better Youth Workers

That's how many out-of-school time staff and administrators participated in Weikart Center trainings to improve program quality in 2014. Many of them were like Kristen Shiplet – the 500th person to complete the Youth Methods Training of Trainers, which teaches staff how to deliver the Youth Work Methods courses back at their home agencies. The Youth Work Methods course gives frontline staff tools to increase the quality of their instruction and boost youth engagement.

Shiplet, director of program services at Boys & Girls Club of South Puget Sound, says she “grew the most in my profession in those three days of training – more than I ever had before.”

Finding What Works in Social Emotional Learning

With Social Emotional Learning (SEL) getting more attention in school and afterschool programs, providers need to know what practices work best for kids. The Weikart Center, with funding from the Susan Crown Exchange, launched the Social and Emotional Learning Challenge to research and spread the most effective SEL practices from around the country. The researchers found several key features of best practices: safe spaces; caring developmental relationships among youth and staff; authentic work; and youth ownership, interest and input. The research is being compiled into a guide for the field.



Measuring Impact After School



Seattle, Wash. – Meg Pitman wants answers.

She wants to know if the kids who come to her Boys & Girls Clubs are getting experiences that will help them succeed in life. Are the Clubs helping them learn to manage stress? Stay healthy? Make plans to fulfill their dreams?

These are no matters of curiosity for Pitman, vice president of quality, impact and partnerships at the Boys & Girls Clubs (BGC) of King County, Wash. The Club’s youth workers want to know if they are helping youth in a measureable way, and if they can improve their work. Funders want to fund effective practices.

The same is true for afterschool providers throughout greater Seattle. “We need measures to show how our organizations

are impacting kids,” says Jessica Werner, executive director of Youth Development Executives of King County (YDEKC).

They’re starting to get answers. The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality teamed with YDEKC to create a survey that measures the skills and dispositions of youth in afterschool settings. The survey (piloted in 2013 and 2014) focuses on attributes that high-quality OST programs can influence, such as social skills, creativity, civic values, physical and mental health, and motivation.

“Having the data helps us educate our funders and constituents about the importance of the whole child” rather than just the student, Pitman says. “And it really helps the staff understand that they are having impacts on kids.”

Providing **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP**

The Forum advocates for young people through ...

- research-based reports and articles
- keynote addresses and workshops at conferences
- commentaries in mainstream media and outlets that focus on social change

National Meeting Inspires

What does it mean to be ready?

More than 300 leaders from 35 states gathered in Northern Kentucky to explore that question at the third annual Ready by 21 National Meeting. The answers begat more questions: What supports must communities provide to get young people ready? What must national, state and local leaders do to create those supports?

The leaders – from business, nonprofits, education, policy, philanthropy and intermediaries – spent three days exchanging experiences, data and strategies for creating community change and measuring impact. They absorbed lessons from keynote speakers such as Ralph Smith of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, who observed that success hinges on our ability to address chronic inequities, and Patrick McCarthy of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, who reflected on the importance of moving from evidence-based programs to institutionalized practices.

It was, as one attendee wrote, “Inspirational.”

Commentary

Forum staffers are sought-after commentators, publishing blogs and columns through Forum sites and for other leading organizations in the youth field.

Some of the places our bloggers write for:

- Huffington Post
- Spark Action
- Collective Impact Forum
- Competency Works
- Boost Collaborative
- Students at the Center
- Youth Today



Speaking & Teaching

Some of the events where Forum staff delivered keynote addresses or led discussions and workshops:

- National Mentoring Summit (MENTOR)
- Community Schools National Forum (Coalition for Community Schools)
- What's Working for Young People (Foróige - Dublin, Ire.)
- GradNation Summit (America's Promise Alliance)
- Illinois Afterschool Network Conference
- United Way Community Leaders Conference
- Empowering Professionals to Engage Youth in Meaningful Ways (Michigan Department of Community Health)
- Bridge Conference (School's Out Washington)
- Youth-Nex Conference (Center to Promote Effective Youth Development)

**ENVIRONMENTS****THAT ARE**

community-oriented
relational
resourced
safe and structured
socially and culturally
responsive
strengths-based
youth-centered

**PEOPLE****WHO**

coach and care
equip and empower
skillfully plan and execute
train and assess

**EXPERIENCES****THAT**

are stage and age appropriate
build skills and mastery
challenge and engage
connect to real life
encourage agency and choice
promote group work

**SPACE AND TIME****TO**

observe and explore
practice and demonstrate
apply and connect
reflect and refine

The Readiness Project

What does it take for a young person to be ready for life? What will it take to get all young people ready?

The Readiness Project is the Forum's commitment to help build a national movement around readiness, by shining a spotlight on:

- The abilities and practices that young people need so that they can meet life's demands and responsibilities.
- The common traps in systems and settings that contribute to growing gaps in young people's readiness.

The Readiness Project reaches across sectors, seeking answers from experts, scientific research and society. With support from the Ford Foundation, the Forum

launched the online platform for the project (SparkAction.org/readiness), using multimedia stories, commentary and resources to promote readiness as a civil right for all young people. The Project convened experts – from such fields as education, youth development, afterschool, health, juvenile justice and child welfare – to help fine-tune its first resources:

- **The Readiness Gaps and Traps** – an interactive review of the common impediments to readiness.
- **The Readiness Abilities and Practices** – tools for leaders, parents and youth that define what young people need and what adults must do to create the conditions that support healthy development and readiness.

Funding and GOVERNANCE

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2014

Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,481,087
Grants and other receivables, net	1,538,456
Property and equipment, net	1,346,666
Other assets	1,044,702
Total assets	\$5,410,911
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$312,239
Other payables	49,097
Note payable	1,403,728
Total liabilities	\$1,765,064
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	\$2,677,582
Temporarily restricted	1,114,423
Members' equity	(146,158)
Total net assets	3,645,847
Total liabilities and net assets	\$5,410,911

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ended June 30, 2014

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Revenue and Support			
Contributions	\$1,026,321	\$1,353,480	\$2,379,801
Contract revenue	1,941,802	-	1,885,033
Program service fees	932,620	-	867,084
Publications sales and other income	209,225	-	310,902
Released from restrictions	1,806,140	(1,806,140)	-
Total revenue and support	\$6,045,054	(\$452,660)	\$5,592,394
Expenses			
Program Services	\$7,154,767	-	\$7,154,767
Management and general	323,916	-	323,916
Fundraising	307,389	-	307,389
Total expenses	7,786,072	-	7,786,072
Change in Net Assets	(1,741,018)	(452,660)	(2,193,678)
Net Assets, beginning of year	4,272,442	1,567,083	5,839,525
Net Assets, end of year	\$2,531,424	\$1,114,423	\$3,645,847

The consolidated financial statements include The Forum for Youth Investment, Cady-Lee Properties Inc. and Community Systems Group, LLC.

FUNDERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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The Forum for Youth Investment is fortunate to work with many leading national organizations whose extensive reach and expertise enrich our supports for leaders who are working to improve outcomes for young people. We thank the following organizations for their partnership over the past year:

AASA, the School Superintendents Association
Collective Impact Forum
FSG
The Gallup Organization
SAS
United Way Worldwide
Univ. of Kansas Work Group for Community Health & Development

Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
America's Promise Alliance
American Institutes for Research
American Public Human Services Associations
American Youth Policy Forum
Aspen Forum for Community Solutions
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
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