

Shaping Summertime Experiences: Aligning Practice to Recommendations Transcript

May 1, 2020

Jennifer Harris ([00:00:02](#)):

Well it is the top of the hour. So we are going to get started. So excited to see so many individuals, so many familiar names in the chat who are introducing themselves. So welcome everybody, my name is Jennifer Harris and I am a senior portfolio manager with the Weichert Center, which is a unit of the Forum for Youth Investment. And I'm excited, just delighted to be able to be here today with some great presenters to be able to engage in some great conversations as it relates to summer. Summer time provides us a unique opportunity for community partners and schools and families and young people to work together to provide programs and services that promote the social, emotional, and cognitive development of youth. And so today what we are going to do is we're going to have a little time to focus on a 2019 report that was released by the national academies of sciences, engineering and medicine that was titled Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Wellbeing for Children and Youth.

Jennifer Harris ([00:01:07](#)):

And so briefly, I'm going to introduce our panelists that are going to be with us today who bring a lot of wealth of background in this content area. We're going to start first with Deborah Moroney. She's a managing director at the American Institute for Research, otherwise commonly known as AIR. There she is the director of youth development and supportive learning environments and her real background is in methodological expert as it relates to implementation sciences and the context of both rigorous research and the design of program evaluations. You'll also see we also have Chris, Chris Smith who is the president and executive director of Boston Afterschool and Beyond. He brings tons and tons of experience over two decades of work in creating and scaling and leading cross sector partnerships and education and workforce development. And so under his leadership, Boston Afterschool and Beyond has developed a nationally recognized model of summer learning that improves student outcomes and really helps to build a citywide program performance measurement system that both is cultivated in a network of 300 programs that serve over 21,000 youth.

Jennifer Harris ([00:02:23](#)):

So welcome both of you. We're excited to have you here. So we're going to just go over a couple of logistics before we get started, so please feel free to submit... We know we're doing lots of introductions. We have a lot of people that are registered for this webinar today. So far we have over 500 people in attendance, so feel free to submit your question and comments using the chat feature. Some of the slides that I'll be sharing with you today is really just about providing some background context as it relates to the reports that we're going to be talking about and highlighting some of the recommendations that Chris is going to talk about as it relates to the work that Boston Afterschool and Beyond has done.

Jennifer Harris ([00:02:59](#)):

But really the majority of this is really around an unscripted conversation at the very end and that's where we're going to really welcome your questions. It's already been noted this session is going to be recorded and we'll make it available early next week. Okay, so here's another look of our presenters, how they look in their pictures with their backgrounds and we're excited to kick things off. And so I'm going to actually turn this over to Deborah Moroney. She was actually served, much like Chris did, on the national academies of sciences committee on summer learning and adolescent development to allow her to kick us off and talk more about this report. Deborah.

Deborah Moroney ([00:03:44](#)):

Thanks Jennifer, and thanks to the Forum for Youth Investment for having Chris and I here today. We're really excited to share some of the conclusions and recommendations from the report, but as Jennifer mentioned, also thrilled to have this opportunity to have a real talk as advertised about how these findings and recommendations relate to summer 2020, right around the corner. So I don't know about you Chris, but this was my first opportunity to serve on a National Academies of Sciences committee. So it was a new experience for me and I think the process was rather interesting. I believe in 2016 the National Academies of Sciences brought together a workshop and as I was seeing many friends sign into the chatbox, I remember some of you being at that workshop where the national academies really explored whether or not it was a good time to look into the research opportunities and gaps as it related to summertime and child and family wellbeing.

Deborah Moroney ([00:04:43](#)):

And indeed as a result of that workshop, they decided it was worth a deeper dive and with the generous support of the Wallace Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, endeavored to pull together a consensus committee that Chris and I were a part of to really carry out this charge. Jennifer, would you mind advancing? Thanks. And so this was our statement of task, which was modified a little bit from the beginning, but you can see it up here on the screen that our charge was to examine summertime experiences affecting school aged children. We did put parameters around that from rising kindergartners through seniors in high school. It was tempting to go beyond that, but the charge was broad enough across four areas of wellbeing, certainly academics and opportunities for enrichment, which have been well studied, social and emotional learning and development, physical mental health and health promoting behaviors, and safety and risk taking. So you see this ambitious charge up on the screen and the national academy has really endeavored to pull together a diverse committee that represented all of these areas.

Deborah Moroney ([00:05:52](#)):

So Chris and I, who've partnered over the years and known each other from our shared field for long time, had the pleasure of working with other committee members from university based researchers and city planning and medicine from the corporate sector. There was someone really interesting from the Walt Disney Corporation who was over all of the health initiatives that Walt Disney to a gentleman who was an advocate in the juvenile justice base in Massachusetts. So together we really learned a lot from each other and also brought in these diverse disciplines to inform our charge in answering these questions. Would you mind clicking? Sorry. Thank you.

Deborah Moroney ([00:06:37](#)):

And so we really came to these seven overarching conclusions and I am going to go through them in a little bit of detail. And as I do that, I'm just going to ask, I know so many of you and I know that for many of you, these conclusions might not be front page news, but as we go through the conclusions, Chris and I were really hoping you would think about two things. One is how these conclusions might resonate with other stakeholders that you work with, other partners that you work with in the allied youth fields who might not be as familiar with structured summertime experiences. And the second

is certainly this study predates the current health crisis. And Chris and I want to acknowledge that and talk about that a little bit through our time here together today.

Deborah Moroney ([00:07:25](#)):

And so we ask that you also reflect on how these conclusions and related recommendations, which Chris is going to go through, might relate to how we're thinking about summer 2020. So our first conclusion is that all children, and really families, all of us have basic developmental needs that must be met as a precondition to structured summertime programs and those include nutrition, health, and safety. And that once those needs are met or as those needs are being met, that summertime experiences can in fact affect academic, health, social and emotional, and safety outcome for children and youth. But for those in less advantageous circumstances are at higher risk for worse outcomes and face more obstacles in accessing high quality summertime experiences. We were, and Chris and I were charged with the systems section of this particular report. I'll just say from my perspective encouraged by the many opportunities we were able to know and observe to implement innovative programming and extend effective practices that might happen during the school year into the summer.

Deborah Moroney ([00:08:36](#)):

And that's not limited to summer school. That's talking about nutrition programs and afterschool programs that extend into the summertime. And through all of this, the committee really recognized that it was crucial to elevate the assets and priorities of families and communities in the design development and implementation of summertime programs. The last two findings, we're confident in these conclusions, but we also need to recognize that research is scarce and it's scarce for a variety of different reasons. One is simply that summertime is a very short period of time to measure stuff and research stuff. The second, as I noted in our charge, is that the academic domains have been well studied, but the rest haven't been as well studied. So for many of you who know me know that I would be happy to talk about these last two findings around research and federal data systems ad nauseum, but we're not going to cover them today, but they are really important in helping us better understand how children and youth experience summertime.

Deborah Moroney ([00:09:40](#)):

So the committee came up with nine recommendations, which you'll see in the brief that was sent along with the webinar invitation. And those really fall into three categories. The bolded categories Chris is going to talk about in a little bit more detail and share his Boston Afterschool and Beyond story that really entail improving planning, administration, and coordination of summertime experiences. And this is at the local, state, and federal level and clearly improving availability, access, and equity. The third piece is what I alluded to in the conclusions is advancing data collection and research. So together the committee was able to concoct an updated view of summertime, which we're curious how well this resonates with you, but that summer really provides a unique, and I want to emphasize the word unique here, window of opportunity during the year to engage families and leverage the strengths and resources of families, communities, and other stakeholders to improve the education, health, safety, and wellbeing of children and youth.

Deborah Moroney ([00:10:51](#)):

And so I'm going to paraphrase, I'm going to use my own words, not the words of the committee. Summer's not simply a bridge from one school year to another. It is really an opportunity to take a systemic perspective and approach to supporting young people, families, and communities in their journey towards thriving. With that, I'll pass it to Chris to tell us more about the recommendations.

Chris Smith ([00:11:16](#)):

Thanks Deb, thanks Jennifer. And thanks to the Weichert informed community for being with us today. It's great to talk about summer at this point in the planning process. Very timely, relevant and though I'm on this end of the screen, I and happy to share our experience. I'm equally curious what each of you is thinking about the summer and how we put these recommendations to work. Could you advance the slide please? So Deb mentioned that the committee took a systems approach and a lot of people say, "What does a system mean?" And here you see it's that many sectors are involved but decision making around summer independently or with limited or no coordination. So the number of players involved, the way decisions are made, the rounds in which players operate from education and youth development, but also public health and safety coupled with the number of actors who are involved.

Chris Smith ([00:12:21](#)):

So you think about summer, you think about teachers, youth development specialists, you think about neighborhood nonprofits, sports-based nonprofits, higher education, the business community. It's really an interesting and diverse array of players and because of that diversity, having a good summer requires planning, administration, and coordination. So not surprisingly, that was a key recommendation of the committee and it gets a little more specific than that. If you could advance the slide, you'll see that the committee actually concluded that intermediaries play an important role in connecting public, private, and nonprofit entities around shared goals. I'm not going to read the rest of that to you, but if you need proof of that, just consider this call. The Forum is playing its role as a national intermediary bringing together so many diverse organizations around one agenda to talk about this. That happens at the state level as well and at the local level.

Chris Smith ([00:13:30](#)):

We happen to be one such example as a citywide intermediary. There are others who come together through the every hour counts coalition, so intermediaries can vary, but they all play a similar role in terms of how they function and if you go to the next slide, you'll see some of the details. The reason that the committee concluded that we need to work together is that there are examples of how this is happening. And so I like to think of intermediary work as professional work. And to that end, the committee felt comfortable recommending that philanthropy should augment their funding and support for intermediaries as part of the infrastructure of serving young people doing what they know how to do well, which is pulling together resources around shared goals, measuring efforts toward those goals, and measuring and sharing outcomes around the goals and then finally getting better.

Chris Smith ([00:14:32](#)):

And that's what all of you do through your local efforts and collaboration. And I like to think about it as individual programs are incredible, but once you get beyond a single program, it necessitates more coordination and the guiding principles that we can do more together than any of us can do alone. And so an intermediary should enhance the collective efforts of different players in the system. And when it comes to summer learning, which is our domain, that means a wide variety of nonprofits working with schools, universities, and others. And to simplify it in a hashtag which our superintendent, Brenda Cassellius always says, all hands on deck.

Chris Smith ([00:15:18](#)):

And just one more point on this, the way Boston Afterschool and Beyond thinks about intermediary work is we try to enhance work that's already happening, not compete with the programs we organize. So to that end, we are fairly disciplined about thinking what we can do together that we can't do alone. If a single agency can do something alone, they should. We step in and coordinate resources where one agency cannot accomplish everything on its own. We think about diversity

strengthening our model. So diversity is a strength because kids present so many diverse needs and interests. So it takes a coordinated approach of diverse players to meet the...

Chris Smith ([00:16:00](#)):

It takes a coordinated approach of diverse players to meet the collective needs of our city and presumably of your cities, regions and states as well.

Chris Smith ([00:16:10](#)):

Finally when we work together through an intermediary, we can get better together. We can understand our relative strengths and weaknesses, not only as individual programs, but also as a city because we're working together. That enables us to draw on best practices from within our network to create new solutions and fund them as a network and to try things together. There's strength in numbers. There's strength in diversity. That was a major recommendation that came out of this that I would put in a very tangible space of how we can get this done and what we can do next.

Chris Smith ([00:16:49](#)):

Next slide please. Now, when it comes to the issue of summertime and how young people spend their time, when you read the report you'll see that not surprisingly kids do not spend their summer months in the same ways. In fact, it's largely dependent on where they live and family resources in addition to other aspects of geography. If you just take one example of what that looks like, consider the average cost of a summer camp, which is \$288 a week. Those in the middle class and up spend this routinely to make sure their kids are cared for during the summer, have access and exposure to caring adults, skill-building opportunities and enrichment. That's not necessarily affordable for all young people.

Chris Smith ([00:17:45](#)):

The committee recommended that we improve availability, access and equity. What that looks like is subsidizing summer learning and employment so that it's part and parcel of growing up in America. It's not something that's nice to have, it's something that's necessary to have. When you think about it in public policy terms, so many young people find their own way to summer programs. In Boston, we work with 100 programs who serve roughly 10,000 kids who find their way to those programs. We then work with them to ensure that we're coordinating efforts and measuring together.

Chris Smith ([00:18:25](#)):

But there are some kids who would not find their way to those programs if not for a concerted effort to connect them to those natural settings, museums, workplaces and neighborhood programs, nor would it happen if we did not have a public and private subsidy to do so. Like many of you, we raise and deploy public and private resources to ensure that kids who otherwise would not be connected to those programs are connected to those programs. That's a major finding of this.

Chris Smith ([00:18:58](#)):

I think just to pause for a moment and talk about the current situation. When schools are out, parents lose access to childcare, kids lose access to caring adults, to learning opportunities, to skill development opportunities, opportunities to build relationships that then turn into social capital down the road. This happens every year. It's structured into our public school schedule that kids don't have that in the summer. But groups like yours and ours are looking to fill that gap, that discontinuity between school years. In a way the COVID crisis is lifting the veil on what's already

been. This is an opportunity to show those who had not noticed before or weren't looking before what's possible.

Chris Smith ([00:19:46](#)):

Let me move on to the final recommendation we'll cover today among others in the report. That's also specific to summertime and how you'd spend it. This is to promote summer employment for youth. Deb mentioned that we went through lots of literature and research findings. One area where the research was particularly strong was around the value of summer employment. There are three randomized control trials in major cities, Chicago, New York City and Boston, that found strong effects for those who are connected to summer employment. Those effects were at the community level in terms of public safety and at the student level in terms of skill development and even in some cases academic performance.

Chris Smith ([00:20:36](#)):

We know this works. We know summer learning works. RAND's comprehensive view of summer learning, the report on summer learning from a couple of years ago called Learning From Summer documents that high-attending participants outperformed their peers by 25% of a school year's worth of learning in math and English language arts. They also had an advantage over their nonparticipating peers in social and emotional skills. Coupled together you see that summer learning and summer employment works. It's been proven. This report shines a light on that work and recommends that we as a society invest in the resources to pull together the opportunities that will enable more work and learning so that it's available to all kids, not just some kids who can afford it.

Chris Smith ([00:21:28](#)):

I'm going to pause there and turn it back to Jennifer. Thank you.

Jennifer Harris ([00:21:36](#)):

Thank you, Chris. Thank you, Debra. We're going to just start kicking off. This is going to be a great opportunity. I want to just start with a couple of questions, but this is really a time and space for our attendees to really start asking, to start drafting some questions. We'll be reviewing those to ask the panelists.

Jennifer Harris ([00:21:53](#)):

I think one thing that I want to be able to start with is as you think about the report and the recommendations, what ideas from this report really resonate with each of you the most today considering as we're looking at this upcoming summer and even looking into the summer that lies ahead due to our health crisis? What are some of the most important things that you think resonate?

Jennifer Harris ([00:22:20](#)):

Go, Deb. Why don't you go first.

Deborah Moroney ([00:22:24](#)):

Thank you and thanks, Chris. I enjoyed listening to you. One of the things that struck me as Chris was talking actually is that one of the things we've found in the report that is certainly amplified right now are just the gross inequities and access to health and nutrition, safety and enriching opportunities all the time. This has certainly put a magnifying glass on that and made it more varied from state to state and city to city and locale to locale as we all respond to the crisis and deal with essential workers differently. I'm struck by the tension right now between that the finding and the

recommendation we're looking at on the screen now. Where we're seeing local jurisdictions understandably divert resources from things like summer youth employment to services for basic human needs, employment, housing and nutrition. Really what we're left with is what are we to do? What are young people to do? I am a parent of teenagers, as many of you know, and this really stands out to me as a critically important issue as we want to continue to move away from young people engaging in risk and going into systems that we don't want them to be in and they don't want to be in and into systems that work, as Chris so nicely articulated, like summer youth employment programs.

Deborah Moroney ([00:23:49](#)):

That tension has always been there in budget decisions. Chris is probably a part of those conversations in Boston. I think it's even more so right now as we really try to be responsive to families in this current crisis.

Jennifer Harris ([00:24:07](#)):

Chris, what are any thoughts to be able to add to what Deb was sharing?

Chris Smith ([00:24:15](#)):

Yeah, I think the summer, none of us would disagree I think how important summer is as time that could be incredibly well spent and create lasting memories, new skills, new relationships. The summer is at risk obviously. In Boston were thinking about one, framing just what's possible. It'd be easy to conclude that, "Well, school buildings are closed for the rest of the school year. We couldn't possibly ramp up." We're doing our best to show that, for example, our zoo, some of our major partners, the YMCA network are pending public health guidance willing and able to serve kids under public health parameters and physical distancing guidelines.

Chris Smith ([00:25:09](#)):

Of course, we're looking at contingency plans in the event that the time kids get to spend together is abbreviated or the ways in which they're able to spend time together are restricted, which is a likelihood to some degree. Sort of thinking about other ways to stimulate learning engagement, project-based learning that will serve kids down the line, keep them engaged in the current term, and maybe we could even have something to show for it at the end of the day like a badge so that when they look back on this period of time, they'll talk about how they engaged.

Chris Smith ([00:25:52](#)):

All that planning is underway. It's very difficult for programs to plan in an environment of uncertainty. But if you think about it as a muscle that you're developing and then will flex later, I think we're developing different muscles now in thinking about different ways to reach kids in programs and at work so that they can still derive the benefits of this incredible community that we've built over 10 years.

Jennifer Harris ([00:26:22](#)):

Thank you. Thanks, Chris. I guess a couple of things, one of the big pieces if we were to go back to the actual kind of revisited definition, and I'm going to take us back there just for a second so that we can have that in front of us, if we were to go to this updated view of summertime and this unique type of opportunity, we already use this as a time what we're hearing and what I see right here is really leveraging and using the summertime to imagine kind of what true partnerships would look like. Look at truly kind of even building on the work that's been happening over the past two months, how parents and community members and educators and such are all coming together.

Jennifer Harris ([00:27:02](#)):

What are the conversations that are happening? What are some of maybe even some of the highlights of examples from K-12 and youth orgs partnering together to create more of this full-day blended learning of opportunities as we know that summer is going to look different? What are some of your thoughts about that both of you?

Deborah Moroney ([00:27:22](#)):

I can provide some cool examples that I've been hearing about. They might be more at the system level than the program level, which might not be satisfying, Jennifer, for your example, so I'll try to take it through for your question. At the system level, I've really seen this current crisis accelerate collaboration in a way that I haven't seen before. I'm a part of the Afterschool Technical Assistance Collaborative. We work with the 50 State Afterschool Network.

Deborah Moroney ([00:27:53](#)):

For example, there's the state of Georgia, the statewide Afterschool Network in Georgia are bringing together several other networks to create a toolkit to support social and emotional learning during the summer. The tools are really intended to be digestible. Chris could do them at home with his kids. An older young person could do it with a younger person or youth worker could execute it. They're meant to be really flexible and digestible. I think about Stephanie Jones kernels of practice. They're not as research-based yet, but I bet they could be.

Deborah Moroney ([00:28:27](#)):

I'm really excited about that because state by state we're seeing such differences. When I see states coming together to develop something for programs, it makes me feel really optimistic that you could see yourself in that work and want to carry out that work. We've also seen large national organizations like 4-H put all their tools and resources up and available for free so that 4-H programs can pick those up. But our parks and rec program or a faith-based program could pick them up as well.

Deborah Moroney ([00:28:58](#)):

I don't think I should be gossiping on a webinar with a thousand plus people, but I have heard that 21st Century Community Learning Center programs, which are by design diverse both academically and promoting enrichment, will have more flexibility and where those programs could be offered. If you can imagine with social distancing that we can't have the same number of young people and staff in one physical space, with that flexibility you could extend into the community into a school that's not being used over the summer or a faith-based building that's not being used during the day.

Deborah Moroney ([00:29:33](#)):

I think it's those types of collaborations that I'm seeing that I'm very encouraged by. Chris, I'm sure you have others from Boston and the other partners and [all the other 00:00:29:43] accounts.

Chris Smith ([00:29:50](#)):

Yeah. In fact, we've surveyed all of the about 170 programs we work with during the school year to ask, "What are you doing now that school buildings are closed?" the response has been incredible. You see the resourcefulness and creativity and dedication of our program network who are finding ways to reach kids so that they are in-touch and engaged and feel some connection. But some of them are continuing programs virtually and they're doing all sorts of what we now call synchronous and asynchronous learning from ... I'll give you two examples that I felt were interesting. Harlem

Lacrosse made sure that every one of the kids and its network has a lacrosse stick and ball at home. That's something you can practice and do on your own in small ways. Certainly not as good as the real thing, but it's something.

Chris Smith ([00:30:42](#)):

Then we're looking at resources that are available to our network and beyond. The New England Aquarium has made a point, and the Franklin Park Zoo as well, although they're closed to the public and visitors, they have to feed the animals every day. They have made the most of those opportunities when the staff at the aquarium or the zoo keepers are there feeding the animals to do live events and events that can be shared later for kids all across the city and beyond.

Chris Smith ([00:31:13](#)):

As we plan for summer we're coming to, just as we had gotten really good at program practices to ensure that programs are performing well, we have to learn an additional set of practices around distancing, around hygiene, around plans for quarantining kids. This is forcing this network of programs to incorporate a new set of practices to say nothing of how you fund that and operationalize it.

Chris Smith ([00:31:45](#)):

Similarly, if you look at youth employment, one thing nobody wants to see his kids lose access to work, but also the wages they were planning on. Employers both in the public sector and the private sector are finding ways for young people to work if they're not able to come together in person to do ...

Chris Smith ([00:32:00](#)):

... young people to work if they're not able to come together in-person to do work remotely through digital tasks that are individual and in-person. So they still get the benefit of contributing something for a paycheck. So it's been great ... And this is where the value of a network really comes to life. You see such creativity in all corners that I could give you examples for the rest of the afternoon on what people are doing. I should say, on our website it's called enrichment at home. It shows you a sample of what some organizations are doing now.

Deborah Moroney ([00:32:39](#)):

Chris, I don't mean to be competitive, but have you seen the penguins from the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, because they're giving tours of the aquarium?

Chris Smith ([00:32:48](#)):

I have not, but I'll check that out.

Deborah Moroney ([00:32:50](#)):

You should. It's pretty fun. We've been following it as a family.

Jennifer Harris ([00:32:54](#)):

Well, it's [inaudible 00:32:55] that you mentioned the idea of having to look at programming and kind of support programming in this virtual means in a whole different set of quality standards and practices that have not been things that we've had to really explore. I'm interested in hearing, and I see some in terms of the chat, what are some of the things that people are exploring when they're looking at those practices or having those conversations of how to support, whether from an

intermediary, or even Deb, some of the conversations that you might be having through your [ATAC 00:33:24] support. What are people thinking? How are they approaching that?

Deborah Moroney (00:33:31):

Well, I mean it ranges, certainly. We're seeing States like Alaska starting summer in-person summer programming. And I'm sure they'll be following the CDC guidelines on opening, which I think are coming out, if they're not out already. I think they were slated for the end of April. I encourage folks to check those out. To places that are more impacted, like cities, I live in Chicago, like my own, we're not close to opening up. And so we're seeing programs offering kits, whether they're blended learning where it's partially virtual, to an actual box kit that a parent or a youth work staff could pick up and do with a young person. To things getting mailed home in rural areas, STEM kits and arts and craft kits. It doesn't replace the relational aspect that we all ... [Harold 00:34:23] in his research back to make the biggest difference in young people's lives.

Deborah Moroney (00:34:27):

But Chris and I were sharing before this call, there's just also these old fashioned methods of picking up the phone, texting or engaging, where appropriate, through social media with young people, youth work staff and with young people and checking in how they're doing. We've heard that's been very, very effective and appreciative in program. So it's really ranging based on digital access, geography, state status in reopening. And in addition to the CDC guidelines, I always want to offer resources. If folks haven't seen the Council of Chief State School Officers, people say CCSO a lot, has offered a framework for schools reopening. And of course, our role in the Allied Youth fields with K through 12 is to understand what they're going through and be a good partner to them as they endeavor to reopen in the fall and beyond. So I would think about that, too. We're talking about summer but we're really talking about the next 12 to 18 months.

Chris Smith (00:35:35):

Yes. And I would just add to that, in a similar way, [Jennifer Peck 00:00:35:42] in the chat called out that when we get together, if we're able to get together, it's likely to be in small groups. So we asked programs three weeks ago, summer programs, "What are you thinking for the summer? In what ways are you flexible?" We were planning for the high end because we want to be ready for any scenario, but we want to especially be ready if we can get back together in person. We don't want to be caught on our heels if we can move forward. So we want to be on our toes. And we asked programs, "Would you be flexible in when you'd offer the program? Could you make use of all 10 weeks of summer? Would you be willing to hold it at a different location? Would you be willing to, rather than serve a cohort of 60 kids, cycle through a thousand kids to your resource if you're a park or a reservation?"

Chris Smith (00:36:34):

And we absolutely do need to do this. So we've boiled it down to, A, programs are willing to be flexible, cooperative, and part of the solution. But eventually, they have to make decisions. So while some programs have made the decision to go remote already, some are hanging in there to do limited in-person activity. And that has us focused specifically on how to work with small groups of kids. How do you stagger their arrival, and where they go from there? How do you get them there? A lot of programs say, "We have space once kids get here, but how do we get them there?" So we're trying to think through what does it look like to have buses that are a third or a half full bringing kids to places. Who pays for that? And then all the PPE concerns. How do we get hand sanitizer and washing stations and masks and everything else programs will need in a coordinated way?

Chris Smith (00:37:33):

In Boston, the YMCA has remained open for emergency childcare, so they've learned quite a bit on the fly about how to do this. And we actually had a webinar yesterday with our partner network, where the Y shared some of how to do this. So we envision we'll have a few tracks of learning, one for those programs who still want to do in-person learning, should they be permitted to do so. Another on remote learning. And then one focused on the particular needs of teens, who in some cases are planning to work but will have different needs than younger kids.

Jennifer Harris ([00:38:10](#)):

Thanks, Chris. One thing that you mentioned, and really in terms of some of the initial inquiries that you were doing with the organizations about kind of the changes and such that they'd be willing to consider. In particular, being able to serve more. Was just interested in some of the partnerships, whether it's like libraries or rec departments, those places that may be supporting more equitable access to programmings and offerings, and maybe others. Where are in terms of the conversations that you've been having, or, Deb, that you've been hearing about these entities where there is more equitable access, will they be more relied on for this summer? What is that looking like as a way to be able to serve more youth and families?

Chris Smith ([00:38:59](#)):

Deb's pointing to me, so ... Yeah, we have a huge variety in our network. And it's a tricky discussion, because what you want to do now you're not allowed to do, in order to keep people safe. So it's been tough. But I would say that the focus from the get go, the day schools were closed in mid-March, the superintendent was in touch with us about what can we do together to make sure our kids, particularly our most vulnerable kids, have access to our resources. Including the ones you enumerated, Jennifer, plus others. How do we think about them now so that when we get a green light we're ready to go?

Chris Smith ([00:39:48](#)):

And so we are starting to think about different groups, what they'll need in particular, what their specific needs are. It's just a lot of blocking and tackling, where can kids get to, how do you make the best use of your public facilities, if they're open, including parks, libraries, other places? We're focused a lot on where we have open space, knowing that we're going to have some parameters around distancing. And a pent up need to get outside.

Deborah Moroney ([00:40:20](#)):

And I'm realizing listening to Chris, and no offense to us, we're both quite city centric, and so I just want to acknowledge that. In Chicago and in Illinois the governor has allowed a 30% increase in childcare subsidies for those working in community based settings, supporting and providing opportunities for children of essential workers. They've also made the parent or family contribution a dollar, I think, for essential workers. So I think there are efforts being made. Is it sufficient? I mean, I don't know. I don't know the data on that. But I do know from my friends and national youth serving organizations that it's a hard time. It's a hard time to stay open. It's a hard time to serve kids.

Deborah Moroney ([00:41:15](#)):

And it's particularly hard, in my observation, for those organizations and programs that might be a single site program, might not have the support of a wonderful intermediary like Boston Afterschool and Beyond, or be a part of a national affiliate organization. And so I think some of the organizations many of us have depended on for summer are also experiencing the challenges of the current economy and have had to close. And I think that's a reality, Jennifer, as we think about equitable

access moving ahead. And something I know many of us care deeply about as we think beyond 18 months and to building it better.

Jennifer Harris ([00:41:58](#)):

Thank you. So I'm looking, there's tons of questions coming through, and I'm looking at those and doing the best to be able to address. So I guess one of the pieces, as we looked at one of the questions as it relates to equity, it was one of the areas that was addressed within the reports. And how Chris talked about removing the veil, removing it even further from the dark space that others had been seen. So as we magnify the inequities within our systems and work, especially for the youth who continue to face these opportunity gaps and those who have been historically marginalized, what ideas do you have? And even thinking about ideas of what we've been trying to experience in the past couple of months to really to help us move forward in trying to minimize these disparities and eradicate this as best as we can. What are some new things that are coming to mind?

Deborah Moroney ([00:43:03](#)):

I'm going to be generic and let Chris be specific, if that's okay with you, Chris. I'm hearing from a lot of our partners, and I was listening with wide ears to Chris's description of what programs are doing in Boston, that because of the flexibility that programs are having to offer young people and the ratios they need to achieve, that we're going to see a lot more multi-age programming. And so I think as we think about older youth and potentially gaps in summer youth employment programs, can we think about opportunities within those multi-age programs to engage older young people, older youth, in the leadership for co-facilitation of those programs.

Deborah Moroney ([00:43:47](#)):

I think that's an innovation that we've all heralded and wanted to see in programs. It certainly doesn't take the place of summer youth employment, but it gives young people a role that's appropriate when they're in the same space as a seven-year-old person. So I think that's one thing. I do think the blended learning that we're experiencing, maybe we would have gotten to it eventually. It does not take the place of in-person relationship building and hands on activities. But it does allow us to innovate a little bit and learn more as a professional workforce, how to stay connected with young people when they're not in the program.

Chris Smith ([00:44:31](#)):

Yeah, I guess I'd add, a friend of mine once said, I thought, in a very clear way, relationships are built on shared experiences. And even though our shared experiences aren't in-person, you can build on what we're all going through together. I saw something ... Now, I have to give credit to Chicago here. We have a Becoming A Man chapter, BAM. Started in Chicago, it's in Boston and thriving now. And I was on a meeting with the young people from that. And it's just an incredible way, not only to connect but to name, recognize, and accept emotions. And you could see even on a 50-person Zoom call how many different emotions kids are feeling. But how many of them are in common.

Chris Smith ([00:45:21](#)):

And it's just such a well facilitated program and group, that I thought that was pretty interesting. And what BAM did in a concerted way was to bring in people like me and others who wouldn't be part of everyday youth circles to see a good social and emotional learning practice. Usually, it's an in-person circle. To see it done on a Zoom call I thought was great. And it makes you think how much more of that we could do without the constraints of transportation and being in-person. So I think all of us are

recognizing some things that could be done maybe better, certainly more cheaply, and for more people, if we can leverage our new online community and skills.

Deborah Moroney ([00:46:09](#)):

Well, and we're catching up with the young people in programs, right? I mean, I've seen some of these great webinars. I think the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning I saw has also some great young people from Chicago joining their webinar in the next week or two. And this is their platform. Right? It's a great way for us to, as a field, enter into that space while maintaining the spirit of relationships and safe and supportive environments.

Jennifer Harris ([00:46:43](#)):

Thanks, Deb. Chris, I have a question for you as it relates to intermediaries. And we have actually a lot of intermediaries represented on today's call. So just really interested, at the very beginning you talked about the intermediary does, and you mentioned about what the work that Boston After School has been doing in terms of that space. I'm interested in knowing over the past couple of months, and even looking into the summer ahead, have you seen any opportunities? Where have you continued to kind of leverage the strengths that you really have that you think are really important as we transition to the summer? And are there any new opportunities or things that you've been involved in that just haven't been part of your work in the past as we look at some of these changing times?

Chris Smith ([00:47:26](#)):

And I see a question as well about, "What is an intermediary?" So there are intermediaries in different domains, different fields, serving different purposes. In our world, it's to connect resources and opportunities for the benefit of young people. That's very broadly defined. And I think as you ask a stakeholder group, what is your intermediary do? I suspect in Boston the superintendent would say that Boston Beyond is a window into hundreds of afterschool and summer programs that I may not be able to manage one-on-one. If you asked an individual-

Chris Smith ([00:48:00](#)):

... be able to manage one-on-one. If you asked an individual program, they would say we are a window into a network in data that they can use and learn from. It depends who you ask. But that's a great question Jennifer.

Chris Smith ([00:48:15](#)):

In some ways it's helped us double down on what we've cared about. Our major issue areas are, obviously, after school and summer learning, but also STEM and project-based learning. And as I discuss with my team that one positive thing about this crisis is that our issues are now front and center. It doesn't take a whole lot of explanation to describe the importance of these issues and why they're needed. I think it's obviously pulling us into the virtual and remote space in ways we hadn't thought about before, but that will serve us better down the line.

Chris Smith ([00:48:58](#)):

If you imagine a situation in the fall where we have to close down again, we want to be ready for that. We want to have the best of what's available in-person, available remotely. It's good that the general public sees the need for this work and it really calls upon, which is our greatest strength, which is our network of programs. It doesn't take much to get The Y, The Boys and Girls Clubs, sports-based programs, the city and the schools together, because they all know one another already. It's good to have those relationships in place when you need them. I think that's what people are valuing now.

How do we bring a bunch of people together who can think through a solution and try something quickly?

Jennifer Harris ([00:49:49](#)):

Thanks Chris. Hey Deb, any other additional insight that you have as it relates to the work that you might be doing with the networks that you've been hearing from any of those conversations around pivots or opportunities to grow, stretch in this space?

Deborah Moroney ([00:50:05](#)):

Well, I think it's certainly front and center that after school and summer programs want to be sure that they are supporting young people's learning and development, now more than ever, and that this period right now is a time when there are more likely to be young people experiencing stress and trauma. That they might have family members who have been impacted or who have maybe lost their job. To Chris's point about intermediaries, after school programs have always been connectors. We've always been able to engage with young people and their families authentically. Even sometimes when families don't feel comfortable going to school day personnel, they'll feel comfortable going to after school program professionals and leaders.

Deborah Moroney ([00:51:01](#)):

So right now, I'm hearing from the networks that programs are eager, and hearing from families that they need help and that the after school programs can be a resource for that help. So not saying after school programs have to do it all, and that staff need to be mental health professionals, and understand trauma informed care, and be an employment office, but that we are connected through these intermediaries, through these after school networks and we can help families get what they need during this time of crisis.

Deborah Moroney ([00:51:35](#)):

It's similar around nutrition. Right? We saw handoffs when schools closed. We saw handoffs of food, free and reduced priced meals, go mostly to everybody. They mostly were distributed from community centers and faith based centers in communities. I think those partnerships we're hearing about through the after school networks and we're hearing that the networks like Boston After School and Beyond in Boston, are really trying to amp up their efforts to support programs as they take on that Herculean task in making sure children and families have what they need as they experience this very difficult time.

Jennifer Harris ([00:52:18](#)):

Thanks Deb. We've been talking a lot about the youth and families, and we also have a whole field of youth workers that have the weight of a lot of this work and the constant learning. Just like youth and adults, everyone's transitioning in this learning. I'm wondering in terms of the conversations that have been happening within your circles about how is now and how we're moving forward. How are we really supporting the field and what are the strategies and ways that we're building and strengthening everybody as we go through this period?

Chris Smith ([00:52:51](#)):

I can tell you what we've done. We've been more connected than ever in some ways. We've started a weekly partner newsletter just so that we could learn from what one another is doing during this time. Keeping them up to date on and trying to distill some of the information that's coming forward. We're now starting to do professional development online. Believe it or not, we've actually continued with our work on program observations. So we're doing virtual online, we're doing virtual program

observations, which I wouldn't have said was a thing three months ago, but it's actually possible to do this. Partners haven't missed a beat. They want to keep working, keep doing the professional work that makes them so good at what they do. Even in places where they've had to furlough or lay off people, they want to put the remaining staff to use.

Chris Smith ([00:53:49](#)):

Over the next ... we're starting a weekly series like this where we can bring a speaker and information and insight. Next week's is with Gil Noam from PEAR, talking about mental health issues and how to address them related to COVID, and what reentry might look like. We've done similar sessions with high level people from the Boston Public Schools knowing that they're learning as they go and building as they fly, by keeping everyone engaged with what's happening.

Chris Smith ([00:54:21](#)):

As I mentioned earlier, where we've engaged them in planning. So it's forward looking as well. I think as a result, nobody has as much free time as they might've thought at the beginning of this closure. But people are busier than ever. We're going to roll out all of our PD, obviously online, in May and June. Just to give you a flavor of what that looks like, we're doing one on social and emotional skills. We're doing one on the district's academic program. We're doing one on project-based learning. How you bring those two domains together in person and remotely.

Jennifer Harris ([00:54:58](#)):

Thanks Chris. Thanks for outlining those supports. How exciting to know that that work and, of course, the passion is still there and the work to continue to move forward.

Jennifer Harris ([00:55:05](#)):

Deb, any thoughts to add to that?

Deborah Moroney ([00:55:08](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I've been overwhelmed in a good way. Goosebump overwhelmed with all of the efforts to keep people connected and for professional learning and development. We saw the National AfterSchool Association, who unfortunately had to change their conference very early in the crisis, go to a virtual convening. We've seen Ready By 21 have an offering with that last week. So people have shifted very quickly from really rich in-person convenings to opportunities for people to share. I think the chat box, which I'm having trouble watching, is an example of just how people are so eager to share their innovations and learn from other people.

Deborah Moroney ([00:55:55](#)):

To that end, we've seen a lot of communities of practice. Again within the after school networks. We see community practice around topics of interest where networks are working together to solve problems of practice. I recently learned of Learning Heroes, has been convening all of the national family organizations. So, PTA and [inaudible 00:56:16] to simply do this kind of sharing. To talk about a family's needs and resources right now. I'm encouraged by how our field has really rallied. And as Chris said, didn't decide to take this time as a time off but to actually get closer together and learn from each other.

Jennifer Harris ([00:56:37](#)):

Thanks. Thank you Deb. We have lots of questions. One thing that I will note in our last couple of minutes is that we are going to be downloading these questions and forums of the chat and we will

be responding. Some of them are in terms of the general theme, so you'll be able to get those answers. I think one of the things that I'm going to end, in terms of our last couple of minutes, is I'm kind of piggybacking off of your idea as it relates to what you're encouraged by. What you're encouraged. That we are though we are in a situation in terms of this upcoming summer that is still uncertain.

Jennifer Harris ([00:57:13](#)):

As you think about this summer, what makes you hopeful despite the uncertainty. This summer and even looking forward, what are the things that you're most hopeful about?

Deborah Moroney ([00:57:29](#)):

I'm hopeful that we can share everything that we know about summer, which really did stem from creativity and innovation of staff and connecting. As Chris and I learned through the consensus study, connecting sometimes in formal ways through intermediaries or in other ways to offer opportunities for young people to learn and develop that might not look like last year or next year, but that still are deeply rooted in a sense of physical and emotional safety and opportunities to have positive relationships and explore something new.

Deborah Moroney ([00:58:04](#)):

I think we can do it. We're a creative field and we've pivoted several times in the past. Perhaps never like this, but I think the time of summertime is exactly our time to be creative and make sure that happens.

Chris Smith ([00:58:23](#)):

Yeah, I would say in a similar vein, this is an opportunity to step up to a big challenge where we're doing so in a visible way. Schools had to do it over the past two months, unexpectedly. We have the benefit of learning what worked there, what didn't work, and to improve it very quickly for the summer. It's hard. It's especially hard not knowing what you're permitted to do, but I think by exercising these muscles around collaboration and innovation and planning, that in itself is worthwhile, and whatever we're able to do in summer, we're going to be stronger on the backend because of these efforts together.

Jennifer Harris ([00:59:05](#)):

Thanks, Chris. There's some hopeful statements that are in our chat too. Eager to learn in this new normal way, eager to deepen partnerships. We talked about that, creating new partnerships. There's also other pieces in here as it relates to virtual that we didn't get a chance to be able to talk to, but I think we can connect offline about how to ... Some of the things that you talked about Chris, around being able to assess some of the virtual offerings. That's a new thing that people are excited to be able to learn about and such.

Jennifer Harris ([00:59:34](#)):

So we will make sure that we download this chat and do our best to be able to respond. There was also a lot of other resources, so we're eager to be able to share some of the resources that people shared, so that you can be able as participants and guests that we can all be able to learn from one another.

Jennifer Harris ([00:59:50](#)):

I just want to take the moment to be able to thank everybody. Thank everybody for their time. Thank for lending your expertise, being part of the conversation. There is a lot. There is a lot to happen, but once again, hopeful for what we can learn from this report. Hopeful, how we can leverage the strengths that we've been doing and just appreciate everybody for this conversation.

Jennifer Harris ([01:00:14](#)):

Enjoy your day. Enjoy your Friday, and we look forward to seeing you again in the near future. Thank you everyone. Quickly download the chat.

Speaker 1 ([01:00:37](#)):

Saved it into the folder.

Jennifer Harris ([01:00:39](#)):

Oh, you did? Okay, great. Thank you.

Speaker 1 ([01:00:40](#)):

Sure.

Deborah Moroney ([01:00:47](#)):

All right. Thanks everyone.

Jennifer Harris ([01:00:49](#)):

Thank you so much.

Jennifer Harris ([01:00:50](#)):

[crosstalk 01:00:50] Appreciate you and I think what we'll do is we'll follow up. There's a lot of thanks everyone. A lot of thanks going on. Great attendance and appreciate you all in terms of being able to ... Yes, there will be a recording and we'll follow up with some of the questions and such. Chris, maybe you can help direct us to some more of those resources, but thank you. Thank you both for lending your time.

Chris Smith ([01:01:10](#)):

Happy to. Thanks Jennifer. Bye. Bye.

Jennifer Harris ([01:01:12](#)):

Enjoy the rest of your day. Take care. Bye. Bye. Everyone.

Deborah Moroney ([01:01:13](#)):

Bye.