

Innovate, the Innovation Center's newsletter, highlights promising practices in youth and community development.

The Innovation Center's approach to youth-adult partnerships is guided by our commitment to unleash the potential of both young people and adults. These partnerships, based on mutual respect and trust, are a powerful tool to create positive and lasting change for individuals, organizations, and communities. In this issue, the Innovation Center highlights accomplishments achieved through youth-adult partnerships by the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA). The following is our perspective on their work with women in the San Francisco garment industry.

Youth and Adults Partner to Reform Garment Industry

The term "youth-adult partnerships" is often bandied about but infrequently acted upon. Real youth-adult partnerships mean more than reserving one seat on your board for a young person. They require young people and adults to share both power and responsibility, to listen and really hear one another, and to set aside all of the stereotypes that each group represents to the other.

Youth-adult partnerships are more than good youth development. Young people are often overlooked assets in their communities. Their fresh ideas, conviction and willingness to work hard make them ideal partners in community change and social justice initiatives.

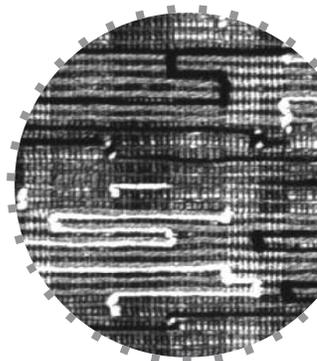
One group that the Innovation Center partnered with, **Asian Immigrant Women**

Advocates (AIWA), found success by pulling together a youth-adult partnership to challenge the garment industry to change longstanding practices that were detrimental to workers' health. Through their partnership, a small group of recent immigrants with limited English and low

incomes were able to change the lives of women in the garment industry.

For years, AIWA has organized immigrant women on behalf of Asian immigrant families and garment workers. AIWA offers free medical check-ups to women garment workers and has found that ninety-nine percent of women had injuries related to their work; all experienced regular pain in their back, neck, or arms. Youth Build Immigrant Power (YBIP) was launched in 1997 to draw in young people to support their mothers and grandmothers.

"A lot of youth joined YBIP because their moms are garment workers," says Stacy Kono, former director of the program, who hosted workshops that attracted mostly young women, ages 14 to 20. In these settings, young people discovered their similar family experiences. One young woman says she began to understand "why it was the humming of sewing machines that put me to sleep as a kid,



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TOOLS from the Innovation Center

■ Learning and Leading: A Tool Kit for Youth Development and Civic Activism

Drawing on lessons from the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative, this tool kit includes practical training, activities and resources on civic activism as a strategy for developing personal, community, and organizational leadership.

■ Building Community: A Tool Kit for Youth and Adults in Charting Assets And Creating Change

This facilitator's handbook makes it possible for individuals and groups everywhere to bring an asset-based approach to creating positive change in their communities. Filled with concrete activities and real-life case studies, the *Building Community* tool kit provides practical information about creating youth-adult partnerships, mapping assets, creating community visions and plans, and mobilizing local change.

■ Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships: Training Curricula for Youth, Adults and Youth-Adult Teams

Printed in 1996, *Creating Youth-Adult Partnerships* leads youth and adults new to group facilitation and to youth-adult partnerships through a 6-8 hour training to build their capacity to work together in true collaboration. The step-by-step curriculum includes detailed scripts, activities, and evaluation materials.

■ Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual

Created in partnership with four national youth-focused organizations, *Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual* provides activities and resources that guide experienced trainers and practitioners of all ages through the process of engaging youth and adults to create community change. The manual explores the foundations of effective youth-adult partnerships and includes "nuts and bolts" skill development activities.

■ Reflect and Improve: A Tool Kit for Engaging Youth and Adults as Partners in Program Evaluation

This practical, easy-to-follow tool kit is designed for adult and youth staff at youth development and youth civic engagement organizations. It guides readers as they assess their organizational needs for evaluation, design evaluations to fit their organizational goals, and use evaluation data to report to funders and other community stakeholders.

From the President

WENDY WHEELER, *President*

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development



When I think about our work, I am reminded of something a young Tohono O'odham woman told one of our partners. She said, "Everyone always tells me what not to be or do, but I want to know who I am." All too often, this emphasis on what not to do or not to be clouds our best intentions. Although adults mean to treat young people as valued members of the community, we often end up focusing on what they do wrong. Although we mean to put our energy toward a more just and equitable world, we often spend our time addressing small problems one at a time.

As social change agents, we need to move beyond the idea of acting only in direct opposition to negativity and injustice and instead seek to discover and embrace who we are and how, collectively, we can build on that strength to make the world better. We need to create new paradigms of partnership where diverse people can bring disparate ideas together in an atmosphere of respect and appreciation. We need to give these partnerships the time, space and resources to develop mutual dreams and work towards achieving them.

All of this brings me back to young people. Young people are particularly good at bringing together diverse views and people to create inspiring, actionable visions. It is part of the joy and insight they bring to the table. Young people are crucial in creating community change not only because of their positive spirit and can-do attitude but because they understand the reality of their communities in ways that others don't. They aren't afraid to share their opinions, no matter how unorthodox. Looking through their eyes, we can see our communities more fully, address issues more comprehensively, and create more powerful and lasting results.

In this issue of *Innovate*, you'll read stories of young people creating change. You'll also read about proven tools and effective strategies to engage young people as leaders in any community. At its best, social justice is about connecting people and ideas, invoking a positive vision, and engaging in collective action to make that vision a reality. I hope this newsletter inspires you to take a new step along this path.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support of our work.

How to Reach Us: www.theinnovationcenter.org

Share your reactions to this issue, ideas for future issues, or suggestions for ways we can create change together. Contact us at Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development:

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and not the humming of my mother.” That was enough to spark a movement of YBIP members, adults at AIWA, and the garment workers themselves to negotiate healthier conditions in factories. In collaboration, the young people and adults:

- offered important health and safety training to factory owners;
- researched options for funding work station changes and raised \$33,000 from the county’s community grants fund and the city’s economic development fund; and
- successfully installed ergonomically correct chairs in the factory workers’ stations.

There are several principles that youth workers can follow to build successful youth-adult partnerships. Here are a few that we’ve found most helpful:

- **Don’t expect more from a youth than you would from an adult.** If a young person shows up for a meeting 15 minutes late, an adult might think, “Aha, a slacker.” When a fellow adult shows up 15 minutes late, the same person might think, “That’s understandable. They’ve got deadlines and pressures.” So do young people.
- **Treat young people as individuals; don’t make one youth represent all youth.** Young people understand that adults may carry negative images of youth and may generalize from the behavior of a few. Adults should reinforce that they are interested in a young person’s personal opinions and that they do not expect an individual youth to embody an entire population.
- **Be careful about interruptions.** For the partnership to work, young people must feel that they are valued and respected. In many youth–adult relationships, that respect is lacking. When interrupted by an adult, young people tend to stop talking. Both parties need to

respect each other’s right to voice opinions without criticism or censure.

- **Remember that your role in a partnership is not to parent.** Although being a parent may be

the most important role an adult can play, the purpose of youth-adult partnerships is to give both parties a different way to relate to each other. ■

Youth-adult partnerships require young people and adults to share both power and responsibility, to listen and really hear one another, and to set aside all of the stereotypes that each group represents to the other.



Profile

Adam Roybal
CASASTART, Denver, CO



I’ve been working for social justice for almost as long as I’ve been an artist. I’m 25 and over the past nine years, I’ve recorded and released eleven hip hop albums, including my newest release this year. I come from a family that has always emphasized the value of education and making a difference in the world. My mom, in particular, has been my mentor and a long-time leader in the Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition. I’ve always been encouraged to give back to my community and through my work with Mi Casa Resource Center for Women’s CASASTART program, I’m able to combine this passion for my community with my love of music to really make a difference in young people’s lives.

In the CASASTART program, we use music to recognize and draw out the multiple gifts that young people have. Music is a great starting point for hard conversations with young people about their lives and their communities. Music is also incredibly powerful at helping kids understand their world and express themselves. This spring, our group, who named themselves CASASTART VOICES, wrote, recorded and released a CD called “Hear Our Voice” about the importance of listening to young people and appreciating what they have to offer. The song has been used by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as part of the Philanthropy and Volunteerism 75th Anniversary Celebration.

One fourth grade student I worked with was very disruptive in class. His mom, who is raising him alone, said he was difficult at home. We began to work on writing a song and he seemed to find his groove – he started to write a new verse every week. He’d come to see me during lunch and we’d work on music, or we’d work on art, which he has a real talent for. This summer, we performed the song in public twice, and he’s become a real leader among the other kids – he has gotten students together to create sets for the performance – he has found his passion.

I really enjoy helping young people explore and challenge the world around them by understanding and embracing their history. So many of the kids I work with are Latinos, Latinas and African-Americans who have lost the confidence that many younger kids naturally have in themselves. No one has ever told them that they are descended from some of history’s greatest philosophers, architects, and mathematicians. Through music, I try to help them regain their confidence, realize that it’s in their blood to be geniuses, and motivate them to recognize problems in their communities as opportunities to change the world around them.

I always say to young people, “If your mind can conceive it, and your heart can believe it, you can achieve it.”

Calendar of Events

■ October 30 - November 4, 2005

National Association of Extension 4-H Agents
BETTER YOUR BEST IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
Seattle, WA
Pathways to Youth in Governance Pre-Conference and
Innovation Center exhibit

■ November 3 - November 5, 2005

Search Institute
2005 HEALTHY COMMUNITIES –
HEALTHY YOUTH CONFERENCE
Dallas, TX
Workshop on Planning and
Evaluation Resources

■ November 3 - November 6, 2005

Association for Experiential Education
33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Tucson, AZ
Workshop on Planning and Evaluation Resources

A Report of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's 75th Anniversary Event

A CELEBRATION OF YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT ACROSS TIME
AND CULTURE

Battle Creek, MI
October 17-19, 2005

**Featured
in our next
issue!**

**Innovation
Center Tool Kits
can help you engage
youth and adults to
spark change!**



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