



# **The Summer Safety Funder Collaborative**

## **Summer 2006**

**Final Report**



## The Summer Safety Funder Collaborative Summer 2006

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The Linde Family Foundation  
The Yawkey Foundation II  
The Foundation to be Named Later  
The Hyams Foundation  
The Klarman Family Foundation  
The Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation  
The Lenny Zakim Fund  
The Clipper Ship Foundation

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## The Summer Safety Funder Collaborative Summer 2006

### Grantees

<p>Action for Boston Community Development          Bird Street Community Center          Boston Centers for Youth and Families          Boston Community Learning Center          Boston Learning Center          Boston Urban Youth Foundation          Boys &amp; Girls Club – Charlestown          Boys &amp; Girls Club – Dorchester          Bridge Over Troubled Waters          Brookview House          Castle Square Tenants Organization          Catholic Charities          Children’s Services of Roxbury          CityKicks          Dimock Community Health Center          Dorchester Family YMCA          Dotwell          Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative          E.S.A.C.          East Boston YMCA</p>	<p>Egleston Square Youth Center YMCA          Ella J. Baker House          Generation Excel          Haitian American Public Health Initiative          Hull Lifesaving Museum          Hyde Square Task Force          Mattapan CDC          Metro Boston Alive          MetroLacrosse          Partners in Health          Project HIP HOP          Project Right          Roxbury Multi-Service Center          Roxbury YMCA          Salvation Army - South End          Spontaneous Celebrations          The Fishing Academy          The Home for Little Wanderers          Urban Dreams          Wang Center YMCA          Zumix</p>
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### Department of Housing and Community Development Grantees

<p>Agassiz Village          Boston Neighborhood Network TV          Boys &amp; Girls Club – Roxbury          Central Branch YMCA          City Mission Society          City School          Codman Square Neighborhood Dev. Corp.          Colonel Dan Marr Boys &amp; Girls Club          Dorchester Bay Economic Dev. Corp.          Dorchester Nazarene Compassionate Ctr.          Dorchester Community Ctr. For Visual Arts</p>	<p>Friends of the Hernandez School          Inquilinos Borricuas en Accion          MissionSAFE          Museum of Science          National Black College Alliance          Phillips Brooks House Association, Inc.          Sociedad Latina          South End Technology Center @ Tent City          Whittier Street Health Center          Women Express          Women’s Union          Young Cape Verdean Club</p>
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## **A Summary of the 2006 Summer Safety Funder Collaborative**

In early 2006 a group of local funders came together to discuss ways they could help keep some of Boston's highest-risk teens safe during the coming summer months. At the time, the City was experiencing a surge in violent crime, especially gun use by youth. Worse still, the trend was continuing. While some pointed to the lack of services and programs for teens as reasons for the increase, others blamed the rise on increased gang activities, teen population growth and ease of access to guns. Boston Police statistics showed that most crimes are committed during late afternoon and evening hours, particularly on Friday and Saturday when there is a lack of constructive alternatives for young people.

The Summer Safety Funder Collaborative was based on the premise that teens engaged in structured and supervised activities will be safer during the late afternoon and evening hours. The Collaborative secured funding commitments of \$500,000 and awarded grants to 41 youth-serving agencies that extended program hours and services for teens during the summer months. With the support of a number of faith-based organizations, including the Black Ministerial Alliance, the Collaborative leveraged an additional \$240,000 from the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), resulting in 23 additional grants and a combined total of \$750,000 in funding. In addition to expanding programming during non-traditional hours, many grantees also targeted disengaged and adjudicated teens. Others offered high-quality gender-sensitive programming for girls within both co-educational and single-sex settings. In all, over 4,500 teens were served during the summer of 2006.

Grantees deployed a number of strategies to keep teens safe and engaged. Many large community centers, often anchors within their communities, offered extended hours drop-in activities, some until midnight. Activities included open gym, swimming, computer gaming and arts. Others created new programming both indoors and outdoors. Those activities included basketball and soccer leagues, arts entrepreneurship, media production, hiking and fishing. Other grantees, as individual or in collaboration with other agencies, offered teens classes in leadership skills and self-esteem. Teens were connected to and supported by caring adults.

The many positive outcomes illustrate the need and value of summer programming, as many grantees recognized. The Collaborative provided opportunities for teens to learn and succeed, reshaped the ways some organizations serve youth and contributed to the reduction of crime and violence. A number of lessons were also learned through this Collaborative. Some were expected, such as the need for more planning time, a stronger evaluation system, and more partnerships. Others were unexpected, such as the challenges within gender-sensitive programming for girls and the restrictions that prohibited organizations from collaborating.

In this report, you will get a glimpse of the people and programs that made this Collaborative possible. We are certain that our efforts were effective, and as a result, Boston's teens are now safer and better prepared for the future. Thank you to all of the funders and funded organizations that extended themselves to make this effort a success.

## Background

During the 1990s, homicides and gang-related gun violence in Boston fell dramatically, largely as a result of strategic cooperation between law enforcement agencies, community organizations and the clergy. Boston's success, widely known as the "Boston Miracle", served as a model for many urban cities across the country. However, since 2000, due to many factors including a rise in Boston's teen population, an increase in individuals returning to the community after incarceration, easy access to guns and a significant shortage of services and 'safe havens' for youth, violent crime, particularly homicide, has trended upward. While still well below the record high of 154 homicides in 1991, the statistics are alarming, as illustrated by several high-profile youth murders over the past few years that have prompted widespread outrage and demand for greater action on the part of the community, police, policy makers and funders. These incidents—a 10-year-old girl murdered while playing at the Jermaine Goffigan Park in Roxbury, the shooting death of a 15-year-old girl in a Dorchester park, the slaying of a basketball coach during practice and the December 2005 murders of four youth in a Dorchester basement apartment—dramatically underscore the need for actions to reduce violence, including creating safe spaces and providing constructive activities during teens' idle time.

There is also a trend of increasing violence and delinquency among girls. The Hyams Foundation reports that although "girls continue to be a minority in the juvenile justice system, their proportion in the system is growing rapidly." According to the report: "From 1995-2005 the number of girls committed to the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) grew by 168%, far outpacing the rate of increase for boys." Few organizations offer gender-specific or gender sensitive programming for girls, according to United Way's *Today's Girls Tomorrow's Leaders* (TGTL) program.

As Boston entered 2006, violent crime among youth continued to escalate at an alarming rate. According to the Boston Police Department, the most common time of homicides in 2006 was the hours of 9 p.m. to 1 a.m., and the most common neighborhoods were Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Many of them involved teens. The Boston Redevelopment Authority forecasts a 9.2% growth in Boston's teen population between 2000 and 2010 (*Coming of Age in Boston*, The Boston Foundation, 2004). Based on our research and input from the field, youth who are not engaged in constructive alternatives during non-school hours are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime.

For the first six months of 2006, violent crime rose sharply, significantly outpacing prior years. As violence increased, people became more concerned about a potential shortage of summer jobs and programs for teens, especially since there is generally a rise in crime in the summer months. Further, the imminent departure of Boston's Police Commissioner in June 2006 heightened concerns around the City regarding its ability to respond to these challenges. In response, the Boston Foundation, United Way, and other local funders created the Summer Safety Funder Collaborative to expand and strengthen summer programming for teens in Boston's high-crime neighborhoods.

## The Summer Safety Collaborative

Launched in March 2006, the Summer Safety Collaborative is a collaboration of 11 local funders and five private donors. The purposes of the Collaborative are to: 1) Extend program hours and services for teens during the summer months, 2) Reach out to and engage high-risk teens in constructive activities, and 3) Promote gender equity and support gender-sensitive programming for girls during extended hours.

The Collaborative raised \$500,000 and awarded grants to 41 youth-serving organizations between July 10 and September 8, 2006. With the support of a number of faith-based organizations, including the Black Ministerial Alliance, the Collaborative leveraged an additional \$240,000 from the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), resulting in 23 additional grants and a combined total of \$740,000 in funding. Of this total, \$180,000 was designated for girls programming; however, the actual amount spent on girls programming exceeded \$215,000. In addition, the Greater Boston Food Bank distributed 7,500 lbs. of food to 9 organizations, providing meals and cost savings of nearly \$10,000. In all, 104 organizations had applied for funding through this Collaborative, totaling more than \$1.3 million in requests.

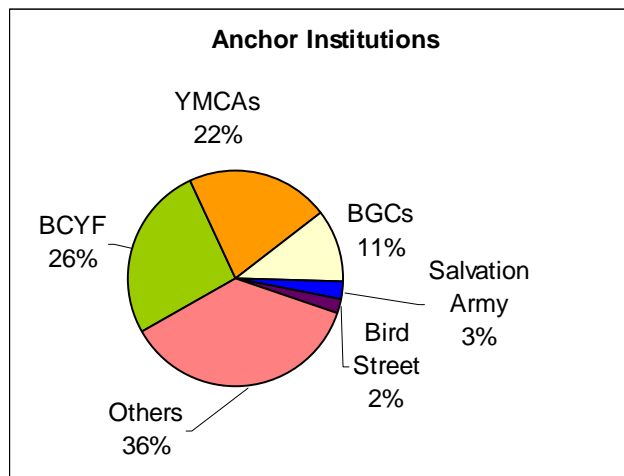
To learn about the impact of this Collaborative, the Boston Foundation surveyed all grantees prior to and at the conclusion of their programs, convened participants in a November 2006 forum and conducted interviews with some individual grantees. Because of challenges with collecting data from the 23 state-funded grantees, this report only includes data from the 41 (non-DHCD) Summer Safety grantees.

### Program Goals and Results

The Collaborative supported a variety of programs to keep teens safe and engaged during the summer months. The different ideas and approaches of delivering programming and services were effective in enabling organizations to serve the many and diverse needs of teens throughout the City. We highlight some of the common themes and tracks below.

#### 1. Support for Anchor Institutions

- The organizations that served and retained the highest percentage of teens were large facilities in targeted neighborhoods that offered a variety of programming. Collectively these programs served 2,600 teens. The grantees included five YMCAs, two Boys & Girls Clubs, a Salvation Army Community Center, the Bird Street Community Center, and nine Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) community center sites. The BCYF accounted for roughly 26% of the total number of youth served. This figure does not include the additional 1,000 teens who were served through its one-time events, which included ten "Safety Nights" and two "Girls Night Out" events. The YMCAs accounted for 22% and Boys & Girls Clubs accounted for another 11%, while the Salvation Army South End Corps served another 3% and Bird Street Community Center at 2%. Investments within these anchor institutions offered tremendous leverage as they accounted for over 60% of the teens served.



#### 2. Expand Access to Indoor/Outdoor 'Safe Havens' During Non-Traditional Hours

– Access to safe, indoor and outdoor spaces, especially after dark, enabled programs to reduce the risks of youth becoming victims of violence. According to survey results, 78% of programs added evening programming (5 to 9 p.m.), 54% added weekend evening programming, and 20% added late evening weekend

programming (9 p.m. to midnight). The Blue Hills Boys & Girls Club reported, *"The Club offered a safe, fun place for teens to be on Friday and Saturday nights until midnight, historically peak times for youth violence on the streets according to police statistics."*

While most grantees operated programs indoors, some grantees were able to establish "safe havens" in public open spaces, even with gangs operating in the area. These activities included games or events in public parks or basketball courts. The Salvation Army Boston South End Corps reported, *"The biggest thing that impacted us this summer was to see members from Cathedral and the Villa come together in front of our building to talk and squash some animosity and beefs that have been building in our community for a while. They declared a truce just so they could play ball."*

Other organizations took teens out of their neighborhoods and introduced them to new places in the city and region. Grantees offered field trips to recreational or social activities in the evenings and on weekends. While working with youth involved within DYS, the Fishing Academy took more than 100 youth on outdoor fishing trips to Cape Cod, Gloucester and other areas outside of Boston. The Hull Lifesaving Museum reported, *"The youths in our programs consistently report that they view coming to the Seaport Boat shop and Boston Rowing Center with relief and happiness. They view the site as a safe oasis in the city in which they can lower shields, make sense of their lives, work and play cooperatively and constructively, and from which they can return home stronger and more balanced young people."*

3. **Connect Teens to Caring Adults** – Access to high-quality staff to work with and to mentor youth is important to the success of any program. Some sites hired short-term staff or extended the hours of current employees. Others hired additional security to ensure that programs maintained safe and supportive environments. One major challenge for grantees was the short turnaround time between the notification of funding and the recruitment of staff. Despite this challenge, organizations maintained appropriate levels of staffing whose regular contacts between teens, intentional and unintentional, fostered healthy interactions and cultivated many formal and informal mentoring relationships. The Brookview House reported: *"We were a place where youth belonged to a team and a positive peer group and where they were both challenged and supported by caring and involved adults."*
4. **Build Leadership Skills and Self Esteem** - Keeping teens safe and engaged may be an effective short-term strategy to reducing violence. A more effective long-term strategy may be changing their attitudes and behaviors. Often, teens experience different forms of violence, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and suicidal behavior, which may lead them to commit crime or engage in risky behaviors. To help teens cope with and combat these inclinations, some grantees organized workshops to educate teens about the risks and consequences of these behaviors, and how they can prevent it or seek help. The Partners in Health reported, *"Because of this grant, our youth were able to engage in healthy activities that built self-esteem, mindfulness, and hopefulness. They learned about conflict resolution, communication, trauma containment, and violence prevention. They learned how to reach out to others and practice harm reduction. They learned about the power they hold within themselves and the power they hold within each other as a group of youth committed to change and social revolution."*

Some programs included an anti-violence message in the content of the curriculum, and trained teens to become activists in their communities. For example, the Bird Street Community Center and Teen Empowerment organized a performance: "*The final show . . . was a phenomenal event of music, rap, dance, theater, spoken word, and poetry. The youth tackled a wide range of issues, including gang violence, dating violence, and anti-gay bigotry. One of the most moving parts of the show was a healing ceremony in memory of family and friends who have lost their lives to violence.*" These performances promoted positive messages, and drew hundreds of attendees, many from different neighborhoods.

Some grantees used media and dialogues to promote youth violence prevention activities. The Roxbury Multi-Service Center reported, "*The students had an opportunity to film and learn more about the community in a positive light, learn how to take pictures and tell a story, and explore the visual elements of multi-media. The students also, learn more about each others cultures and how to resolve conflicts. Also, learning from each other's "side of the track", (i.e. low-income versus middle income, Boston Public Schools versus METCO students, first paycheck versus things given to you. This was a learning experience.*"

5. **Strengthen Collaboration Among Agencies** – The Collaborative provided an opportunity for agencies to collaborate on providing services and programming to teens. Given this opportunity, twelve collaborations applied for support, totaling around 25 individual agencies. In some cases, the collaboration among agencies was already ongoing before the Summer Safety program was conceived; however, funding enabled those collaborations to expand programming during non-traditional hours. Other collaborations were created specific to the Initiative based on new ideas to draw high-risk teens into programming and to better services. In all, the collaborations served around 1,200 teens.

In one example, Spontaneous Celebrations (SC), an organization that creates community change through the arts, collaborated with Hoopz Excellence (HE), a youth mentoring organization that utilizes basketball to serve at-risk youth, to run weekly basketball tournaments on the Stonybrook Court as a way to bring together teens in a safe and positive space. While outreach was initially focused on teens in DSS care and high-risk girls, the program was not able to recruit enough girls for them to have games on their own. At the same time, the program attracted many boys, many of whom wanted to participate. In order to keep the program running, the program became co-gender. According to staff, the collaboration remained a success despite these challenges. The program was able to engage many hard-to-reach teens in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain, many of whom normally would not participate in traditional programming. Further, in some cases, opposing gangs were playing on the same court, while youth workers, serving as coaches and referees, were trying to build positive relationships with the teens. In September, the program discontinued because it began attracting teens who were not meeting the program's age requirements. Currently, the collaboration is in the process of identifying an indoor space to continue the program year-round.

Based on survey results, at least 70% of the grantees indicated they would continue to maintain the collaboration established during the summer beyond the grant period. After conducting follow-up interviews, however, we learned that most programming activities among collaborations have either decreased or stopped since the grant period ended. Many grantees attribute the cessation of activities to the

lack of funding, while others did not effectively plan for collaborative programming to continue beyond the summer months.

6. **Increase Girls' Participation In Programming** – The Summer Safety Collaborative hoped to increase constructive and creative alternatives for teen girls in a gender-sensitive manner in order to reduce self-destructive and violent activities. The interest in providing girls programs was a response to the growing number of young women involved in the criminal justice system and also a response to features of summer programming that reduce girls' participation (e.g., a focus on sports popular with boys, the lack of childcare, and safety concerns). Seventeen of the organizations offered some programming for girls only, and four of these only offered programs for girls. In total, more than 1,500 girls participated in programming.

A girls-only program sponsored by Bridge Over Troubled Waters reported, *"Many of the girls involved in the summer program would have been on the streets during the evening instead of participating in the dance initiative. The dance program served as a deterrent from the streets during the hours when they are most susceptible to partaking in crime or being a victim of violence."* Further, they reported that the participants had been changed: *"The summer program has opened their eyes to other forms of dance and expression."*

Another girls-specific program, CityKicks reported: *"With girl-on-girl violence on the rise in Boston, we provided a safe environment where our girls didn't have to worry about getting assaulted. Furthermore, we teamed up with Girls LEAP in Cambridge to provide a self-defense training session for our girls."*

Some grantees argued that creating bonds among girls is an effective way of preventing violence: Spontaneous Celebrations reported, *"The girls benefited tremendously from the program and the majority of the girls shared that they felt they had developed trusting relationships with other teenage girls that they did not have before."* While some grantees acknowledged that their activities were effective in engaging girls, they also realized that the summer was not enough time for the girls to reach their full potential. In some cases, it took weeks for the girls to develop trust with each other.

## Impact

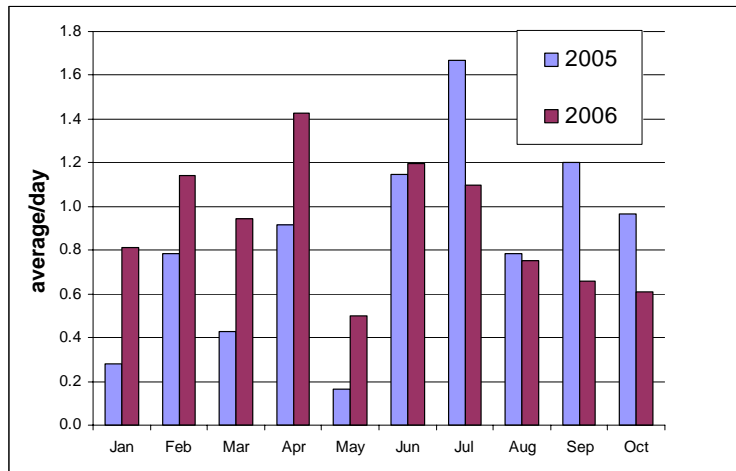
The Collaborative had an impact in three areas: 1) increased opportunities for teens, 2) reshaped policies and procedures of key anchor institutions and 3) reduction of crime and violence.

1. **Opportunities for Teens** - The expansion of summer programming provided a variety of new opportunities for both younger and older teens in the 12 to 20 age range. Teens had opportunities to learn, to experience success through positive choices, and to develop healthy relationships with their peers and adults, all of which are important factors in reducing youth violence. In all, more than 4,500 youth were served. Grantees either expanded existing services or created new programming that helped to draw and engage wide groups of teens, some of whom were considered "disengaged" and hard-to-reach. Program offerings varied and included "midnight basketball", dance, spoken work, music, graphic arts, digital photography, film making, web design, video making, creating writing, business development, performance art and fine arts. Others created additional summer youth jobs. As a result, many learned new skills and came away with career ideas.

2. **Policies and Procedures of Key “Anchor” Institutions** - The Collaborative helped to reshape the policies and procedures of several key “anchor institutions”. For example, the popularity of the Dorchester Family YMCA’s extended hours programming prompted the club to replace two adults-only open gym nights with teen-only nights. The club also implemented a more flexible discount policy to meet the increased demand from older teens who wanted to join, but who did not qualify for the discount under the previous rules. Another organization, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston has already concluded that it will offer late evening programming in future summers regardless of the availability of funding from the Summer Safety Collaborative. Also, the Boston Centers for Youth & Families is exploring opening some of its Centers on weekend evenings in neighborhoods where programming options are needed. Their goal is to specifically target disengaged teens. Finally, 88% of grantees indicated that they plan to continue their programming beyond the grant period and 78% indicated that they will integrate these programs into their year-round schedules.

3. **Reduction in Crime and Violence**

Despite the challenge of demonstrating causality, the Summer Safety Collaborative may have contributed to the reduction of crime and violence in Boston neighborhoods. This is evidenced by the declines in homicides and non-fatal shootings during the grant period after significant trends upward for the first six months of 2006. Grants were awarded for the period of July 6 thru the start of school in September.



**Non-Fatal Shootings**

After a comparatively high number of homicides in July 2006 (11 compared to 12 in July 2005) when the summer programs were just starting, only two slayings occurred through August 2006 with none between August 7 and 30. Similarly, for the first six months of 2006, the number of non-fatal shootings far outpaced 2005, as indicated by the average number of non-fatal shootings per day (See Non-Fatal Shootings *graph*). However, beginning in July, the trend was the opposite, with 2006 numbers trailing 2005. Moreover, the number of non-fatal shootings per month continued to decline each month between July and October.

**Lessons Learned**

The Summer Safety Collaborative offered funders a strategic moment to intervene in a significant community crisis. Community- and faith-based organizations were asked to “step up” and do more to support the needs of youth during summer hours. These organizations responded favorably with impressive results. Many lessons were learned through this Collaborative that will continue to shape the Collaborative and the activities of the field into the future.

1. **Organizations need sufficient time to plan and carry out new or expanded programs.** Despite a quick response from funders and the Boston Foundation, the short time between receiving funds and starting programs affected the grantees' ability to conduct outreach to youth and to hire additional staff. Further, while there were many examples of collaboration, additional planning time could help to facilitate cooperation among grantees and between grantees and other organizations.
2. **Programs that intentionally considered the design and outreach of programming to girls fared better than those that offered standard existing programs with limited or no outreach strategies.** Some grantees piloted "girls-only" programs, only to learn that many girls would not attend without boys. In other cases, grantees that sponsored programming in public open spaces had a more difficult time controlling the space than grantees in an indoor setting. At times, the popularity of these programs brought about unexpected levels of demand, resulting in an overwhelming number of girls and boys. Some gender-specific programs adapted quickly and were able to integrate the two groups, while others cancelled programming altogether.
3. **The Collaborative revealed an underlying need for summer programming and demonstrated that organizations could respond if asked or if funding were available.** For example, at least three high-capacity organizations now plan to offer late evening program every summer regardless of funding through this Collaborative. One of these reported, *"It had not been our intention to expand our hours and increase programming this summer prior to receiving the summer safety grant. The grant acted as a catalyst to begin our thinking about the structure of our programming. We have now moved to semester-based programs and are attempting to increase our program hours for the fall semester."*
4. **More specific and coordinated outreach is necessary to engage the "highest risk" (disengaged and adjudicated) youth.** Many grantees recruited any teen in targeted neighborhoods. One grantee stated, *"All of our children are at risk"*. To engage the highest risk or adjudicated youth, organizations need to devise outreach strategies that reach these groups. At the grantee forum in September 2006, one grantee stated that policies within state agencies, criminal justice entities and institutions that work with court-involved teens must be re-examined to reduce barriers to participation. At the Fishing Academy, the number of participants was slightly lower than anticipated because state rules prohibited teens under their care from interacting with teens from other youth-serving organizations. Other organizations discussed the need for more female outreach workers and utilizing youth to creatively engage hard to reach youth.
5. **It is difficult to link the success of the Collaborative to reductions in crime** due to confounding factors. While Summer Safety offered one strategy deployed during the summer, there were changes in police practices and tactics as well as ongoing negotiations with gang leaders by community activists and countless others we were unaware of. Still, short-term outcomes, as measured by crime rates, suggest that the Collaborative was a step in the right direction.
6. **Better evaluation tools and more reliable performance metrics are needed to better understand agency and collaborative processes, outcomes and impact.** Despite efforts to track increases in youth served through the grantee pre and post surveys, grantees continued to struggle to accurately track the participation of youth. Several had significant challenges and required extensive follow-up by

staff to get accurate numbers. Finally, because DHCD grantees were essentially contracting with the state, there was no leverage for Foundation staff to require those organizations to participate in the evaluation. While some DHCD grantees did respond, most did not. It is recommended that a future Collaborative develop stronger and more coordinated DHCD tracking mechanisms for participating organizations.

## **Conclusion**

Summer remains an important time for youth across the city. Many participate in recreational programs, summer camp, or employment, while many more remain unemployed and disengaged. Without proper guidance or opportunities to succeed, alienated teens may turn to gangs for acceptance or engage in risky or violent behaviors to cope with their emotions. To prevent teens from heading down this road, it is important that we continue to offer teens healthy alternatives. By engaging teens who are difficult to reach and connecting them with resources, we can help thousands of young people realize their full potential. But to sustain these efforts over time, both sound strategies and continued support from the community will be vital. With the shooting death of a 14-year-old Dorchester teen in January 2007, it is evident that the violence has not stopped, and thus that our efforts are still needed.

## **Acknowledgments**

The Boston Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank all the funding partners, community- and faith-based leaders, city officials and staff who contributed to this Collaborative. We would also like to thank all the young people who participated in the activities last summer and for their positive input. Given the overall success of this effort we look forward to participating with you in this effort in the near future.