



The Beacons Young Adolescent Initiative

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Beacons

History and Reach

- Established in New York City in 1991 as part of the Safe Cities Safe Streets program
- Serve more than 150,000 children, youth, and adults annually
- 100 Beacons in five cities
 - Nationally they reach more than 250,000 individuals in San Francisco, Minneapolis, Denver, and West Palm Beach, Florida.



Beacons

Features

- Located in schools and operated by community-based organization
- Innovative collaboration between the public and non-profit sectors to turn the school building into a true public resource
- Community-Youth Development Strategy as opposed to just Afterschool
- Offer Education, Recreation, Adult Education, Arts, and Family Programming after school, before school, on weekends, and during vacations



Cypress Hills/East NY (CHENY) Beacon

- CHENY is a multiservices, community based organization, serving over 8000 Cypress Hills/East New York, Brooklyn residents. The agency is comprised of five divisions: Youth and Family Services, Career and Education, Community Development, Economic Development and Community Organization. The Agency also has a Child Care subsidiary and has co-founded two schools.
- Cypress Hills/East New York is an low-income community with a large population of immigrants from Caribbean and Latin American countries.
- The Cypress Hills/East New York (CHENY) Beacon was founded in 1993, and is one of the 16 New York City Beacons with a foster care prevention Family Counseling Program.



CHENY Beacon

The Beacon Week

Monday to Friday from 3 to 6 pm

- K to 5th Afterschool program for 100 participants offering snack, homework help, project-based learning and sports and arts enrichment
- Middle School after-school program for 100 participants featuring groups focused on leadership and youth development
- Heirs 2 the Community (H2C) - 6th and 7th grade group focussed on community exploration, assessment and service
- Intergenerational Services (IGS)- 6th to 8th grade group focused on service to Senior citizens



CHENY Beacon

The Beacon Week (continued)

- Leaders-in-Training (LIT) - 7th and 8th grade group, focused on developing and implement arts and recreation project for elementeray-grade after-school groups.
- Counselor-in-Training Program (CIT) - 9th to 11th grade volunteers (stipended) serving as assistants in the after-school groups



CHENY Beacon

The Beacon Week (continued)

Monday to Friday for 6:00 pm

- Range of programming aimed at youth and adults including Sports leagues (for girls + boys, Middle school and High School, Variety of sports), Martial Arts program for all ages, Dance Program for youth, Fitness program for youth and adults, Drop-in program for youth, ESL for Adults, GED for young adults and adults. 5 to 6 activities per night.

Saturday from 9 to 4 pm

- Sports, fitness, arts and leadership programs for children, youth and adults
- The Beacon also serves as community hub, providing space for and collaboration with other community groups and institutions offering resources to the community as well as producing community and school-collaborative events.



CHENY Beacon

Participation in BYA

Why Practice Development?

- Good programming, but siloed
- Gaps in ladder of leadership and in serving specific populations

How did BYA help?

- Thinking as a Group
- Theory of Change
- Using data to plan and reflect
- Intermediary support to follow-through and be accountable
- Better supervision

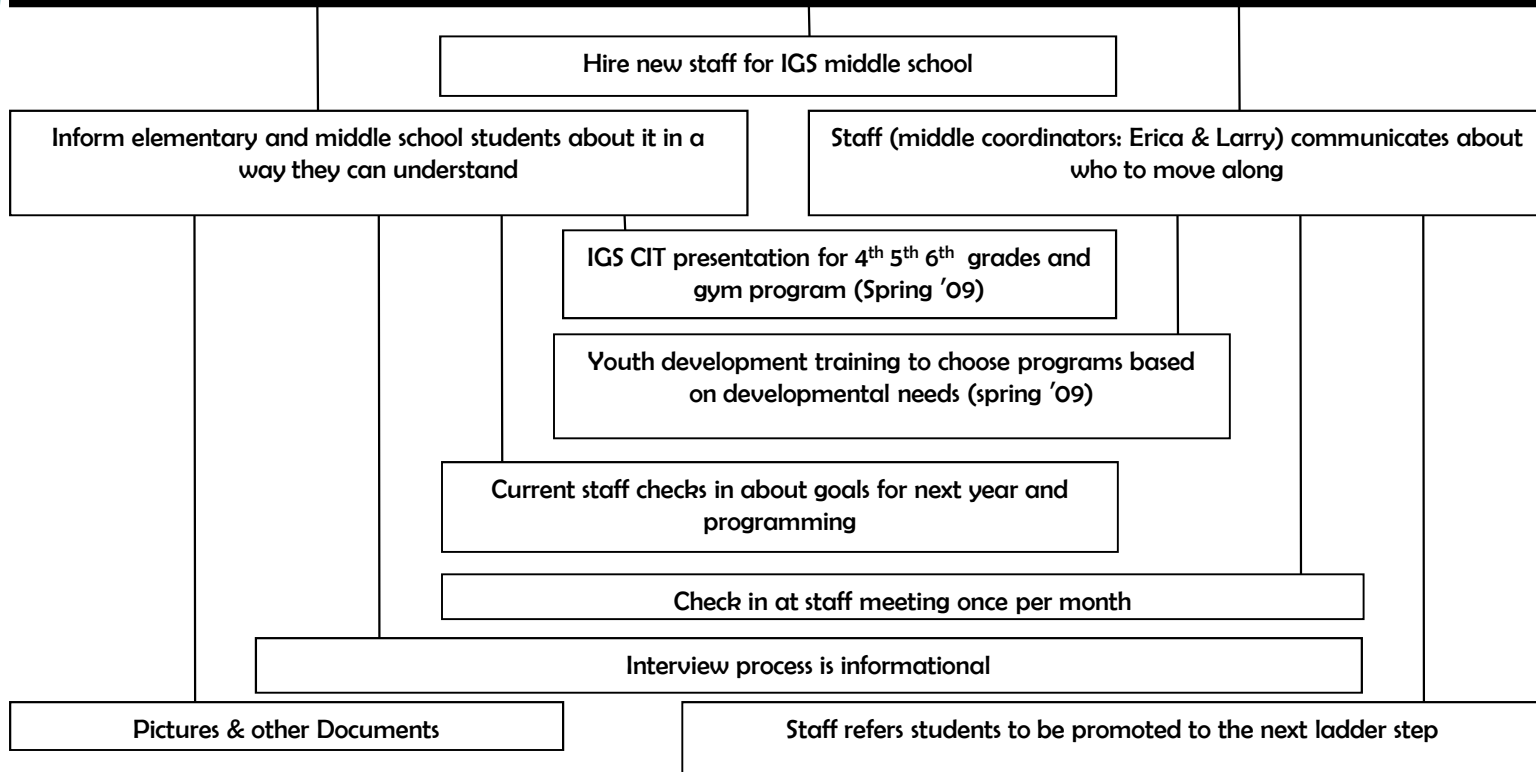
Results of BYA for us

- More and more diverse young adolescents through the door
- Clearly articulated and functioning ladder of leadership
- More youth decision-making
- More consistent and targeted outreach, recruitment and retention

CHENY Beacon

Increase Participation, retention, and engagement of youth ages 9 – 14:Cypress Hills LDC

Strengthen Ladders of Leadership





Youth Development Institute (YDI) Capacity Building Strategies

1. City-Wide Networks
2. On- Site Support to Multi-Level Teams
3. Trainings and Learning Opportunities
4. Local and National Partnerships



YDI

Capacity Building Strategies

1. City-Wide Networks

In these Monthly Meetings Practitioners from 7 Beacons:

- Discuss challenges, strong practices and ideas related to participation, retention, engagement of adolescents.
- Review research and data and discuss implications for work in the field.
- Experience the types of learning communities that sites hope to form at their Beacons.



YDI

Capacity Building Strategies

2. On- Site Support

YDI works with Beacon staff to create multi-level teams consisting of supervisors, line staff and students. These teams:

- Focus on early adolescent issues and strengthen programming.
- Develop outcomes-based plans.
- Review information about research-based and field-based promising practices.
- Build their capacity at the supervisory level.



YDI's Capacity Building Strategies

2. On- Site Support (continued)

YDI supports Beacon staff to increase their capacity to use data to inform programming and assessment. Staff learn to:

- Conduct quality assessments of their programs.
- Gather student and staff input via focus groups.
- Analyze quantitative data.
- Do continual revisions of their theory of change/outcome based plans using data.



YDI's Capacity Building Strategies

3. Trainings and Learning Opportunities

- BYA Cross-Site Training (e.g. Youth Development)
- BYA National Conferences by practitioners for practitioners
- BYA Forums on promising practices co-facilitated by practitioners/youth



YDI's Capacity Building Strategies

4. Local and National Partnerships

- YDI supported the San Francisco Beacon Initiative, an intermediary, to strengthen its capacity building effort with San Francisco Beacons.
- YDI developed a network of Beacons across several cities to share information and support.
- YDI collaborated with our advocacy partner, the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition to help leaders in each city protect the Beacons from funding cuts. YDI also helped NYC sites to articulate their strengths and bring their issues with policy and funding to city government.



Strategies for Wider Application

- Focus on supervision
- Networks/Learning communities
- Support sites to use data to inform programming
- Support sites to develop outcomes-based planning



BYA Evaluation

Key Study Questions

- How and to what extent does Beacon programming and structure change?
- How effective have the BYA intermediaries been in terms of support for Beacons and of the network?
- How and to what extent do enrollment, attendance and retention change over time?
- How do youth feel about their Beacon experiences?
- How has BYA contributed to participants' engagement and retention?
- Is there evidence of sustained change?



BYA Evaluation

Evaluation Activities

BYA Evaluation: Spring 2007 – Spring 2010

- Multiple site visits and phone contacts to interview Beacon Directors and key staff, agency officials, BYA intermediaries, & T.A. providers
- Observations & focus groups with youth participants
- Secondary analysis of online enrollment and attendance data for 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10*

BYA Cohort Study

- Administration/analysis of three comprehensive surveys to multiple, regular-attending respondents (Spring 2008, Fall 2008, Spring 2009)
- Focus groups with former participants (Spring 2010)



BYA Evaluation

Summary of Key Findings

- Establishment of Effective Intermediary Mechanisms for Supporting BYA
- Practice Changes at All 6 PD Beacons
- Increased Enrollment, Attendance, Intensity of Participation and Retention at BYA Beacons
- Changes and Challenges Regarding Engagement and Retention
- Successful Documentation and Dissemination of Promising Practices
- Potential for Sustained Change
- Remaining Challenges



BYA Evaluation

Key Findings: Increased Participation

- Substantial numbers of participants, enrollment changes at all BYA Beacons
- Increased attendance and intensity of attendance at BYA Beacons
- Young adolescent's acknowledge attendance-related changes
- Indications of sustained change in attendance.
- Increasing and maintaining retention
- Attendance benefits for those retained



BYA Evaluation

Increased Attendance 07/08 – 08/09

	PD	DOC	SF
Avg. Total Hours 2008-09	146.5 ↑	166.9 ↑	141.0 =
Avg. Total Hours 2007-08	78.0	132.0	142.1



BYA Evaluation

Continued Increases in Attendance for Connected Youth 12 - 14: PD Beacons

	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD*
Summer/Fall 2009 12-14	135.4 ↑	155.7 ↑	164.1 ↑	108.5 ↑	59.5 ↑
Summer/Fall 2008 12-14	111.1	142.6	131.8	94.7	52.9

Attendance results determined for those with 15 or more hours of attendance.



BYA Evaluation

Youth Acknowledge Importance of Attendance

Suggested Beacon Attendance Spring 09,
According to "Older" Participants

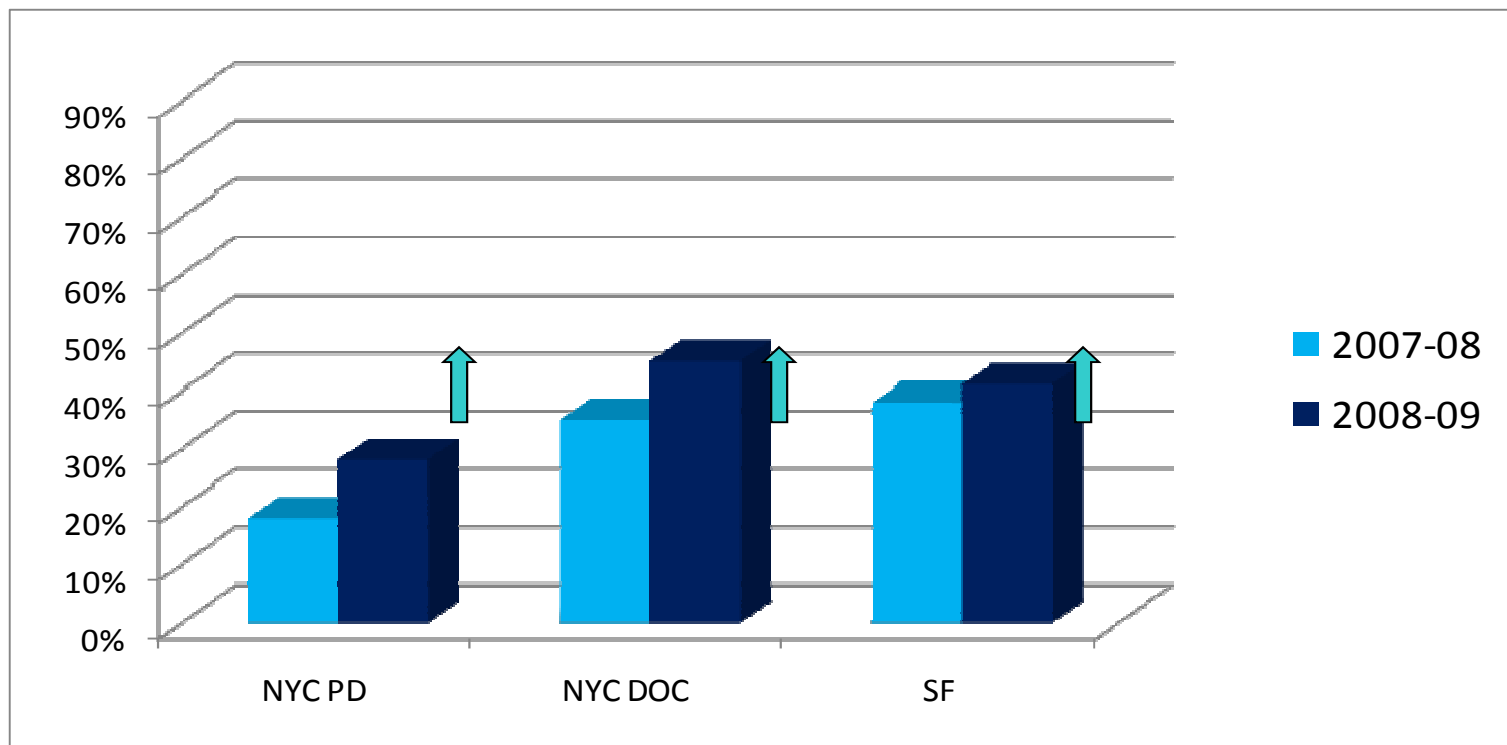
	<i>TOTAL</i>
6TH , 7th 8th GRADERS BELIEVE...	
Youth should come 4-5 days each week	63%
Youth should come AT LEAST 2-3 days/week	87%
It really doesn't matter how often youth come	12%

In NYC and SF focus groups, youth noted many young people come to the Beacons very regularly, but some still only "*stop in every so often.*"

BYA Evaluation

Increased Attendance Intensity: All BYA Beacons 2007-08 v. 2008-09

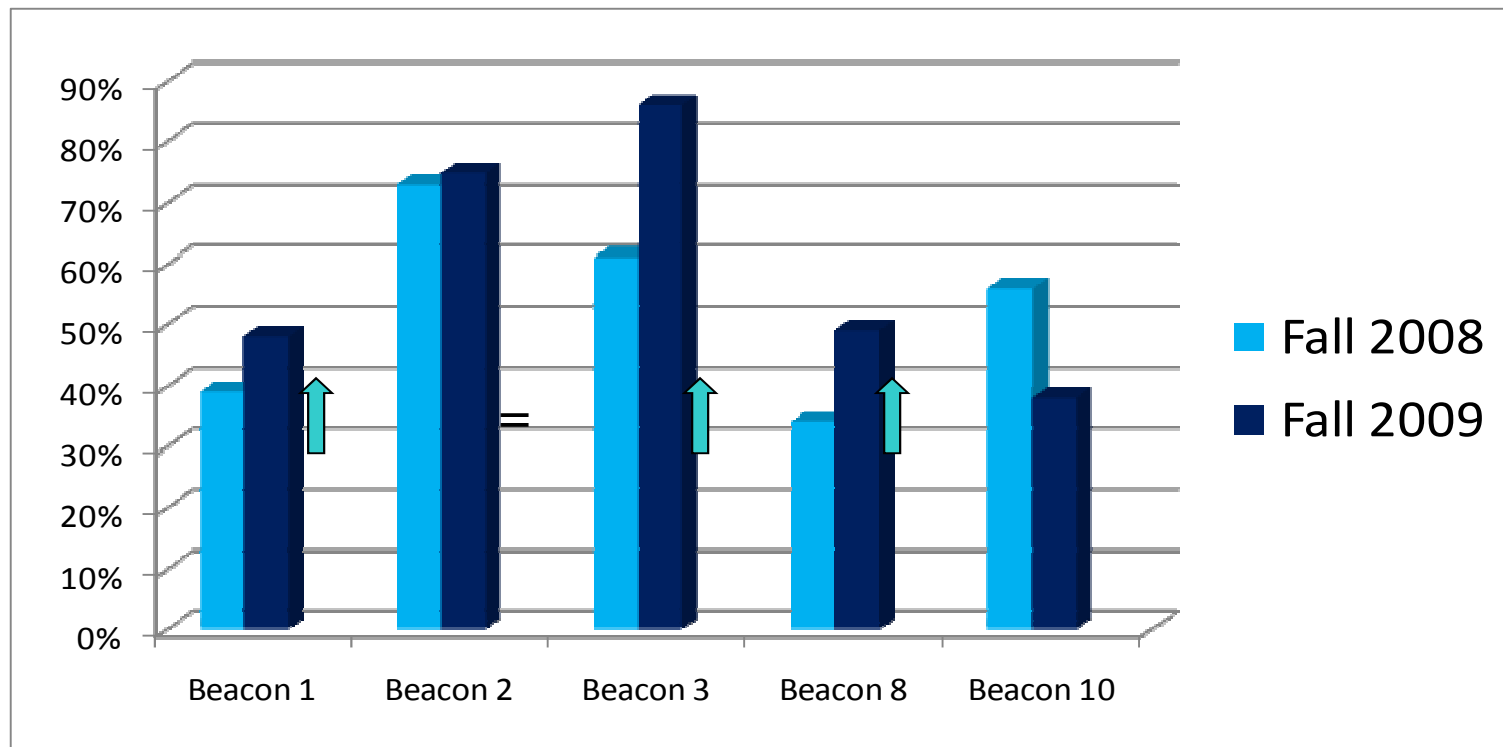
Percent of Beacon Participants with High Attendance (146 or more hrs), by Year



BYA Evaluation

Continued Increases in Attendance Intensity: PD Beacons

Percent of Beacon Participants with High Attendance
(73+ hours), by Year





BYA Evaluation

Majority of Connected Youth Indicate Retention over Multiple Yrs.

	Spring 09
BEACON CONNECTIONS	
Ever gone to a different Beacon	11%
Attended prior year	76%
Attended prior summer	51%
Attended prior semester (fall 08)	72%
Plans to come next summer	55%
Definite/Probable plan to come next yr.	70%



BYA Evaluation

Most Returning PD Beacon Participants attend More Regularly

Average Hours of Attendance for Returning vs. New Participants,
Fall 2009

	1	2	3	8	10*
Returning	129.0	208.1	178.5	103.4	93.4
New	122.5	123.8	170.8	111.2	75.6

Attendance results determined for those with 15 or more hours of attendance.



BYA Evaluation

Youth Recognized Efforts to Engage Them

Percent of Cohort Survey Respondents Who Reported the Following Happened at their Beacons At Least Sometimes

	Spring 09
	232
Activities were interesting	91%
Youth were encouraged to participate by staff	91%
I got to learn new things	91%
There were things going on that made me want to stay involved	87%
Youth were encouraged to participate by other youth	86%
Activities were challenging	83%
Staff encouraged me to stay involved	79%
I got to do things to make my neighborhood better	79%
I got to choose things I do	76%



BYA Evaluation

Potential for Sustained Change

- PD Beacons continuing to try out new programming and adjust existing offerings. Attributed thoughtful planning to BYA.
- All PD Beacons developed/continued to implement ladders of leadership and/or counselor in training programs.
- All three San Francisco PD Beacons continued increased focus on staff development and supervision.
- Staff across Beacons report increasingly better communication and enhanced collaboration.
- PD Beacons meeting intensively in San Francisco, elected to continue meeting in New York even though funds reduced/finished.



Policy Implications

- The Beacon idea has proven durable over many years in several cities. Currently, Beacons are in Denver, Minneapolis, New York City and San Francisco.
- Beacons bring together community members to support young people and each other, build social capital, and offer young people and adults opportunities to work together and to improve their communities.



Policy Implications

- Prioritize support to organizations that are known and trusted locally, provided they demonstrate that they can provide high quality services.
- Capacity building assistance to providers must address organization-level and point of service-level issues.
- Youth development approaches are effective in engaging young people in youth programs and helping to assure that they have positive experiences.



Policy Implications

- These approaches stress opportunities for young people to have voice and contribute to their program and community, have caring adults to support and connect with them, have opportunities to build valued skills and competencies, experience high expectations and continuity during their participation.
- Support for after school programs at the school system level is necessary to assure that school-based personnel recognize the value and are supportive of after school programs.
- Provide incentives for programs to involve youth who are difficult to reach.



Policy Implications

- Young adolescence is a time of vulnerability developmentally where after school programs can be especially valuable in providing additional supports. However, the supports for young adolescents are most effective as situated in a multigenerational model.
- Funding levels must be higher. They should take into account the costs of hiring and retaining strong program staff and supervisors.
- Systems for collecting and assessing information about program performance should be developed with input from providers in order to assure their buy-in.
- Support for advocacy is an essential element of citywide initiatives.