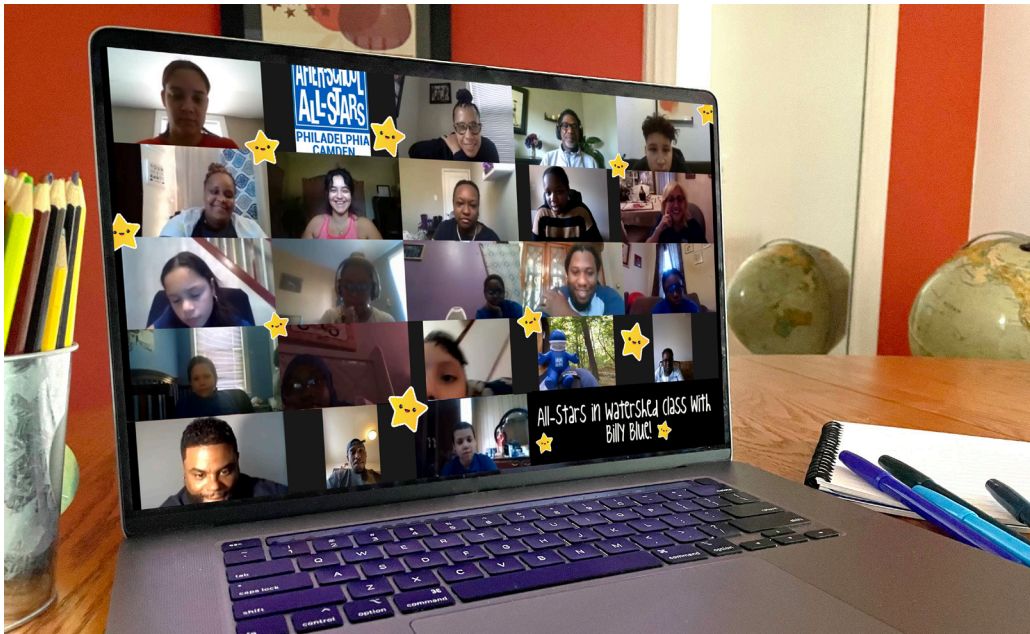


# RISE PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

## After-School All-Stars Philadelphia & Camden



## Overview

After-School All-Stars (ASAS) Philadelphia & Camden is a local chapter of one of the largest free school-based afterschool nonprofit organizations in the country. Committed to serving middle school students, ASAS Philadelphia & Camden provides academic enrichment, transformative experiences, and mentorship to help students develop the necessary skills to successfully navigate opportunities and challenges in life, school, and their future workplaces.

“Our sweet spot is middle school students,” said Kelly Woodland, executive director of ASAS Philadelphia & Camden. “We give them an opportunity to be exposed to things that they don’t get a chance to be exposed to in school.”

ASAS Philadelphia & Camden has always partnered directly with schools to provide its programs, but when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the organization had to adjust



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**Karen Media**, assistant director of programs  
ASAS Philadelphia & Camden

when, where, and how it served students. ASAS Philadelphia & Camden started working with students virtually and beyond its partner schools, including in affordable housing communities, public libraries, and recreation centers. For example, the organization initiated a formal partnership with the housing authority of Camden City to provide programs to students living in public housing.

“When we look at our communities, a lot of young people who live in housing communities don’t have resources right there,” said Woodland. “We want to be as accessible to young people as we can. We want to be where they live.”

ASAS Philadelphia & Camden is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership’s “Implementation” phase.

Working with RISE, ASAS Philadelphia & Camden has been able to better use evaluation and data for continuous improvement. It started with the organization’s new Watershed Education Program, which exposes students to environmental issues and advocacy and aims to inspire their interest in science and science-based

careers. Data collection was embedded directly into the curriculum and student surveys were used to inform changes to program design.

“It all started with the logic model,” said Karen Medina, assistant director of programs at ASAS Philadelphia & Camden. “The logic model we worked on with RISE helped us identify a lot of issues that maybe we never thought about before, and also create a structured, step-by-step plan of what we should do and timeline by when we should do it.”

Using the logic model developed with RISE consultant Jack Tebes from The Consultation Center at Yale University, ASAS Philadelphia & Camden created a tool to assess whether the watershed program enhanced students’ aptitudes and attitudes about the environment and watershed education. The first round of evaluation was carried out at the beginning of the school year to assess students’ baseline, and periodic assessments throughout the year tracked their progress.

The new watershed program was so successful that ASAS Philadelphia & Camden extended this evaluation capacity to its STEM and cooking

“

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programs; the organization hopes to eventually develop logic models and expand evaluation to all programs.

“We had a plan, we followed through, and it’s diffused into other areas as well because of how successful it was,” said Medina.

RISE also helped ASAS Philadelphia & Camden improve its capacity to collect and use data in a more intentional, meaningful way. As part of a national nonprofit, the organization is required to collect and report data for different programs, but learnings from RISE have led to a different and deeper focus on data collection.

“One of the first things was making sure we were asking the right questions, and this was really helpful with RISE

and all the workshops,” said Medina.

“Collecting data is not just about collecting data, it’s [asking] ‘why do you need this feedback?’”

Analyzing the data prompted ASAS Philadelphia & Camden to make needed changes to both the watershed and STEM programs to better engage students. This was especially true for the STEM program as the team noticed it was initially not meeting expectations. As a result, ASAS Philadelphia & Camden made modifications to improve student engagement and STEM aptitude.

Support from RISE not only helped ASAS Philadelphia & Camden improve its programs and data collection but also provided an invaluable professional development opportunity for staff and



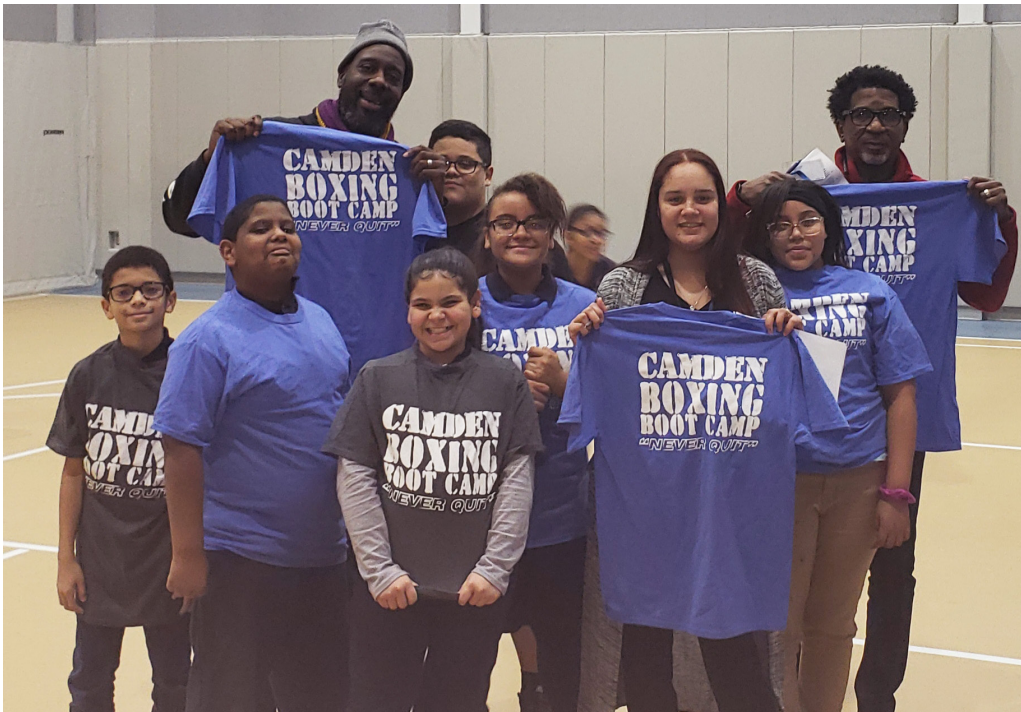
led to a shift in how the organization's culture embraces evaluation.

"We've developed a muscle for doing this now," said Woodland. "That muscle is developed by continually exercising it. [Evaluation] became very much part of our culture in a way of doing things."

Although the pandemic tested and challenged many nonprofit organizations, working with RISE has been a bright spot for ASAS Philadelphia & Camden.

"Being part of this and being able to do it, especially during COVID times, allowed us to also modify our program and hear back from our students about their attitudes and aptitudes ... I do believe RISE helped us a lot," said Medina.

"I would say that coming out of COVID with the challenges that many nonprofits have had to endure, it's good to have this kind of technical assistance," said Woodland.



Established in 2018, The RISE (Readiness, Implementation, Sustainability for Effectiveness) Partnership supports promising Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey nonprofit organizations. The RISE Partnership Evaluation Funders Learning Community is the first convening supported by a network of funders in the region. The Learning Community is a collaborative effort with the Barra Foundation, Campbell Soup Company, Horner Foundation, Nelson Foundation, Philadelphia Foundation, PropelNext/Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Scattergood Foundation, and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, and a partnership with YaleEVAL of The Consultation Center at Yale. The Partnership provides nonprofits with resources and training to strengthen organizational effectiveness and ensure a greater impact on social, economic, health, and educational conditions in communities, including the effects of racism, intergenerational poverty and trauma.

For more information visit [therisepartnership.org](https://therisepartnership.org)

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