RISE Partnership in Action

IMPLEMENTATION COHORT CASE STUDIES

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ACLAMO FAMILY CENTERS

RISE PARTNERSHIP | ACLAMO

Overview

ACLAMO Family Centers is a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive education, health and wellness, and social services to Latino, Spanish-speaking, and low-income residents of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. ACLAMO has been a staple in the community since 1977, but the organization has transformed itself in recent years with a new strategic plan, a team that has doubled in size, and more structured programming.

ACLAMO is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

> "We are trying to implement systems to help our lead teachers and staff, and measure outcomes in a way that's easier for all of us."

Beatriz Gasiba, Senior Director of Programs
ACLAMO Family Centers

"One of my passions is impact, but it was challenging in the beginning to try to measure impact when the program was struggling," says Executive Director and CEO Nelly Jimenez, who joined ACLAMO in 2015. "We applied to RISE because we felt like 'okay, now we're ready,' we could start doing this and learn and have the support that we needed from RISE."

Beatriz Gasiba, senior director of programs at ACLAMO, works closely with a RISE consultant, Vivian Figueredo, on developing objectives and strategies for measuring outcomes and impact to improve programs. "We talk about the challenges we are facing and how we can measure outcomes in a better way," says Gasiba, who oversees the organization's educational programs. "We are trying to implement systems to help our lead teachers and staff, and measure outcomes in a way that's easier for all of us."

The RISE Partnership has been a source of growth and discovery, but also accountability. "I'm not going to lie, sometimes it's challenging," adds Jimenez. "It keeps us real, keeps us accountable to keep thinking on an

ongoing basis about developing the models to improve our program."

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for ACLAMO, which serves an almost exclusively Latino community – a community disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The RISE Partnership has helped.

"When you're handling crisis after crisis, sometimes it's hard to stop and think: 'wait, why are we doing this again, why are we tracking this?' It's hard to get out of your comfort zone, your box," explains Jimenez. "It's a great opportunity to have someone from the outside, who sees it in a different way, challenge you and help you rethink and reflect: 'maybe I need to change that or maybe this is not working or maybe, yes, we're doing awesome.'"

When the pandemic hit, it quickly became clear that ACLAMO would need to alter how they deliver their education services and measure their success.

"We needed to change and shift how we were measuring outcomes in ways that were more realistic for the pandemic," Jimenez says. "This change wasn't

chosen by us but by the environment that we are in."

ACLAMO is committed to basic needs like food, housing, and safety, but the pandemic created new urgency around issues of access to technology. "Our families didn't have email accounts, they didn't know what Zoom was… 80% of our families had no computers at home, no internet," explains Jimenez. "So, yes, we're going to make sure that people are eating, but we also need to make sure that everybody has access to the internet because internet is education."

ACLAMO moved quickly to get their families devices, email accounts, and internet access, and these became among the types of new outcomes they started to measure. By summer, 68% of families said they had received help to create an e-mail account, Zoom account, or get internet access. 83% of families said that they have a least one device, such as a computer, tablet, or smart phone.

In addition to making necessary changes to better serve their families and students, ACLAMO also looked inward at their own staff – the people serving the community.

"We have tried to help and protect and empower our clients, but what about our staff? Can we offer better benefits, can we offer better support? When we talk about impact, we have never included them," says Jimenez.

So ACLAMO made big changes. They switched insurance companies so they could provide better benefits. They raised money to avoid layoffs. Some staff even got raises. And as an organization run mostly by women, they started offering more schedule flexibility; training and professional development; conducting more wellness checks; and asking for more feedback.

"Social justice starts at home, and that's what we want to do," says Jimenez. "We cannot talk about social justice for our clients if we don't internally talk about social justice for our staff."

Jimenez and Gasiba are now developing a 365-evaluation tool to evaluate not only their program, but their staff and their performance and the work as a team.

"I think being in RISE has helped us to always have impact measuring in front of everything we do," says Jimenez. "If our family in ACLAMO is well, then we all are going to be well and we're going to be able to serve our community."

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> **Nelly Jimenez,** Executive Director and CEO
> ACLAMO Family Centers

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RISE PARTNERSHIP | ACLAMO

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

> " The logic model we worked on with RISE helped us identify a lot of issues that maybe we never thought about before."
>
> **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

> " [Evaluation] became very much part of our culture in a way of doing things."
>
> **Kelly Woodland,** executive director
> ASAS Philadelphia & Camden

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.

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RISE PARTNERSHIP

AFTERSCHOOL ALL-STARS PHILADELPHIA CAMDEN

CASA YOUTH ADVOCATES, INC. OF DELAWARE & CHESTER COUNTIES

RISE PARTNERSHIP

Overview

CASA Youth Advocates, Inc. of Delaware & Chester Counties (CASA) recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers to serve as advocates – known as Court Appointed Special Advocates – for children who have experienced abuse and neglect and are therefore in the dependency court system. Many of these children are in foster care. Volunteer advocates appear in court on a regular basis, give recommendations, and provide information to help judges make the best decisions about a child's immediate needs and long-term future.

As a member of a national organization, CASA formed locally in 1992, building on the work of volunteers supporting children in Delaware County since the 1970s. In 2015, CASA expanded to begin serving children and youth in Chester County. Today, more than 140 volunteers in the local program annually serve over 250 children aged birth to 21 years old.

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> [RISE] really helped us take a lot of data that was already in some format and look at it in a way that was meaningful.
>
> **Leigh Anne McKelvey**, Executive Director at CASA

Children with an advocate are more likely to find a safe, permanent home, succeed in school, and they are half as likely to re-enter the foster care system.

CASA is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

CASA's work with RISE started with the development of a logic model, a process the organization had never gone through in detail before. After several iterations, the logic model is now ready to share with funders and guides internal checks of the organization's work and practices.

"Not only did we get a logic model on paper describing the pathway that our work takes and what it takes to be impactful and successful in our work, but going through that process actually helped us better understand those steps ourselves," said Leigh Anne McKelvey, executive director at CASA. "I inherited one when I became the executive director but, looking back now, knowing what I know about developing logic models, I wouldn't even say it was a logic model."

Following the logic model process, CASA started to look deeper into its data collection and analysis process.

The organization started questioning the data it collects and what should be done with it.

"[RISE] really helped us take a lot of data that was already in some format and look at it in a way that was meaningful," said McKelvey. "And also helped us focus in on 'what do we truly need to be tracking and what is unnecessary'?"

This new approach to data collection and analysis led CASA to start looking at outcomes by various demographics like age, gender, race, and cultural background. The organization wanted to answer questions like: Who is most vulnerable? Who is most likely to have the worst outcomes? And who is most likely to have a difficult journey through the child welfare system?

From there, advocacy practices and interventions could be tailored to better support children's needs.

"We wanted to tailor our advocacy so that we can do everything we can to better those outcomes," said McKelvey. "We're in the process of really looking at how we appropriately train people who are going to become their advocates to be the best advocate possible."

> **"** Not only is it helping us to improve our services internally, but we used the data we collected by demographics to propose and launch a task force for Delaware County's Child Welfare System around equity.
>
> **Leigh Anne McKelvey**, Executive Director at CASA

CASA found that children of color, particularly African American children (and specifically African American teenage girls) were the most marginalized group, with the most time in foster care, most number of placements, or most likely placed in residential care.

"Really every data point you can think of in child welfare, their outcomes were worse than their white counterparts or their male counterparts," explained McKelvey.

CASA wasn't convinced that this data was unique to their local program, but rather reflective of a larger problem in the child welfare system. So the organization launched the Equity Child Welfare Task Force consisting of CASA, Children and Youth Services, as well as

the Dependency Court judge, attorneys, and community leaders who work in the county's child welfare system. The task force examined data at the county level and found similar disparities to CASA.

"Not only is it helping us to improve our services internally, but we used the data we collected by demographics to propose and launch a task force for Delaware County's Child Welfare System around equity," said McKelvey.

The task force also conducted a best practices scan to learn what other child welfare programs across the country were doing to advance equity in their systems. As a result of the learnings, CASA advocated to bring a series of professional development trainings to

child welfare stakeholders, including attorneys and case workers. The impact of RISE extended beyond CASA to the entire countywide child welfare system.

"We advocated to bring a series of continuing education opportunities around diversity, equity, and inclusion," said McKelvey. "It really had ripple effects at a systemic level and at a countywide level, the work that we started with RISE three years ago."

With the help of RISE, CASA accomplished a lot in three years – but believes it can do much more.

"I look at it as just the beginning of the journey and setting us on the right path," said McKelvey. "It's a long process and a long-term journey, but I'm excited about where we're at and where we're trying to go."

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CODED BY KIDS

Overview

A core belief of Philadelphia-based nonprofit Coded by Kids is that "equality aims to promote fairness but can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help," says Program Manager Jesse McKevitt. Coded by Kids provides young people from underrepresented groups with education programs in software development, digital design, computer science, and tech startup-focused entrepreneurship. "There is no equality without equity," adds McKevitt. "There is significant social and economic inequity created when people from underrepresented groups aren't able to participate in the tech and innovation economies. We are leveling the playing field and creating opportunities for these young people to excel and become leaders in technology through project-based learning and mentorship."

Taking our programming online allows us to continue to provide high-quality coding education to our current students while also giving access to every internet-connected child with a computer in the City of Philadelphia."

Sylvester Mobley, Founder and CEO
Coded by Kids

Coded by Kids is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

"The RISE Partnership has helped underscore the centrality of data in our work and helped us to create a clear vision of how we can use our data to continuously improve our students' experience," says Melanie Hidalgo-Britt, Coded by Kids' Chief Revenue Officer.

Coded by Kids' involvement with the RISE Partnership could not have come at a better time for the organization. After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Coded by Kids needed to adjust how they delivered their programs. They applied their learning from the RISE Partnership to use data to implement cost-cutting measures to be more resilient, such as implementing a hiring freeze. They also launched a free, fully virtual tech education program for children, CbK Academy. The Academy is the online version of the Coded by Kids in-class tech and innovation education programs.

"Taking our programming online allows us to continue to provide high-quality coding education to our current students while also giving access to every internet-connected child with a computer in the City of Philadelphia," says Sylvester Mobley, Coded by Kids founder and CEO. "The antiracism movement has highlighted the importance of our work to help youth overcome systemic racism and create generational wealth."

The Academy is already in its second iteration.

"After the very early days of the pandemic, we learned what works in an online setting and what doesn't for the students we are trying to reach," says McKevitt. "As we navigated this new normal, and worked to develop and then enhance CbK Academy, we were able to apply what we learned from the RISE Partnership to approach this new challenge in a structured way. We are now using a hybrid approach with more virtual hands-on interaction to a smaller group of students."

The collaboration with the RISE Partnership has also enabled the organization to create a shared understanding with staff of all levels about the importance of program evaluation and data collection.

Before RISE, Coded by Kids staff were already thinking intentionally and strategically about long-term outcomes for kids and they knew what those desired outcomes were, such as preparedness to pursue a degree in technology. After joining the RISE Partnership, the team applied their logic model to take their strategic thinking a step further. This model is a detailed, step-by-step description of how a program is expected to work by indicating the activities to be carried out and the outcomes to be achieved. This model helped CbK clarify and chart a tangible path from their inputs, or activities, to the outcomes that they want for students, and ultimately the vision of their organization.

As part of the RISE Partnership, McKevitt works with Amy Griffin from YaleEVAL of The Consultation Center at Yale University every two to three weeks. Together, they created a matrix outlining these inputs to determine what data they have, how they are gathering it, and what is missing.

"The team learned that they collected a lot of useful data during registration, as well as some inputs in the classroom and at the end of class," says Griffin. "Using the logic model, they can now streamline, extract, and filter the information so they can slice and dice the data to make a bigger impact."

According to the Coded by Kids team, Griffin has been an invaluable resource and thought partner. The team feels she helps them see the data in terms of the big picture, so they can advance the work of the organization and be more effective.

"The RISE Partnership has helped us lay out our vision in a structured, coherent, and transparent way that will serve us for years to come," says McKevitt.

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>
> **Jesse McKevitt,** Program Manager
> Coded by Kids

CRADLE OF LIBERTY COUNCIL, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

RISE PARTNERSHIP

{ **Coded by: Kids** }

RISE PARTNERSHIP | BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CRADLE OF LIBERTY COUNCIL

Overview

Cradle of Liberty Council, Boy Scouts of America (COLBSA) is headquartered in Wayne, Pennsylvania and serves thousands of youth and their families across Philadelphia, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties. Led by thousands of volunteers, COLBSA aims to teach young people leadership skills, team building, practical knowledge, active citizenship, resilience, and personal responsibility through an array of activities and programs.

In 2018, the Council developed the Afterschool Scouting Program in partnership with Philadelphia Public Schools to bring Boy Scouts to students during afterschool hours at no cost to families. The program was created with funder support to address disparities that have existed for decades between "traditional programs" operating in suburban, more affluent communities and the lack of programs in urban, less-resourced communities. The goal was to provide youth the benefits of Boy Scouts of America's programs regardless of zip code or means.

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We realized that we actually had the software and the ability to do a lot of the things that we wanted to do. RISE helped our team build a data collection system and train our part-time staff to use it properly.

— **Lonce Scott,** field director at COLBSA

COLBSA is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

At the beginning of COLBSA's journey with RISE, the afterschool program included more than 50 programs housed within local schools and supported by school administrators, staff, and a paid part-time program specialist at each site. The Council wanted to know if the program was having an impact, but there was no centralized, easily accessible way to collect even the most basic information like attendance.

"Is this something that is actually making a difference in the lives of these young people? Is this something that is a good financial investment from a funder standpoint? These were the big questions we needed answered and we couldn't even get reliable attendance data," said Lonce Scott, field director at COLBSA.

The afterschool program specialists needed a system for collecting information like student enrollment and attendance, the number of activities and events planned, and the number of

parents involved – and reporting that information in a timely manner back to COLBSA. Collecting and reporting this data was the first step and served as the foundation for eventually capturing how students are advancing through the program and assessing impact.

"Our hope was that the afterschool programs would eventually integrate into the network of traditional programs that exist across the state within the purview of Cradle of Liberty and then become a model for how to do this effectively in an urban setting," said Stacy Graham, former coordinator of afterschool scouting programs at COLBSA.

RISE helped the afterschool programs implement Scoutbook, a tool used by the traditional programs to track scouts' information, achievements, and advancements. At first, some afterschool program specialists had trouble using or accessing the platform, due to less technological proficiency or to a lack of access to a smartphone, computer, or internet connection.

"We realized that we actually had the software and the ability to do a lot of the things that we wanted to do," said Scott.

"RISE helped our team build a data collection system and train our part-time staff to use it properly."

RISE helped COLBSA work through these challenges by hosting training sessions, communicating the value of data collection and use, and building buy-in among the afterschool program specialists by helping them understand the power of data.

"RISE brought to the forefront why it was so important for us to have this data for purposes of promoting equity, for purposes of ensuring that these youth are given a chance to participate in a program that can provide life-changing opportunities and benefits to them," said Graham.

The afterschool program specialists eventually learned the platform and began collecting and reporting data and, importantly, that data was used to inform programming decisions. COLBSA determined which programs would continue as is, which would merge, and which would be discontinued. These were difficult decisions for the Council,

but ultimately resulted in approximately 20 well-functioning afterschool programs, which was a much more reasonable number for staff to oversee with limited time and resources.

"For the first time, I feel like I have a team versus a group of people just doing a job or looking at me as their scoutmaster," said Graham. "We are all working together for this main cause."

"I want RISE to be beside us every step of the way as we rebuild, sharing their expertise and resources for how we can use this clean slate to come back stronger than before," Scott added.

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

GIRLS INC. OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA & SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Overview

Girls Inc. of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey (Girls Inc.) was founded in 1961 as Teen Aid. The organization serves girls in kindergarten through twelfth grade year-round with developmentally appropriate in-school, afterschool, weekend, and summer programming and currently reaches over 3,000 girls. Its mission is to inspire girls to be strong, smart, and bold through education, outreach, and advocacy.

Girls Inc.'s programs focus on an array of topics from leadership, sports, and health and wellness to academic enrichment, postsecondary readiness, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The organization has a strong internship program, corporate and college partnerships, and recently received funding to build an alumni program to continue mentoring girls beyond high school into college and even into their early careers.

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RISE was really helpful in helping me to understand the different ways that data can be collected, and how you can use your data and use your results to tell a story.

Cherice Arrington, associate director of programs and advocacy at Girls Inc.

"We really take a holistic approach," said Cherice Arrington, associate director of programs and advocacy at Girls Inc. "We believe that all of these components will help the girl grow up into a healthy, educated, independent young woman."

Girls Inc. is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

Girls Inc. recognized the need to build a more structured and formalized evaluation process to better collect and use data, and their work with RISE began with the creation of a logic model for the in-school Operation SMART (science, math, and relevant technology) program. The goal was to develop a survey to measure students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with the hope that it would become a model for other in-school programs.

"We collected our data very informally and were in need of more structured protocols," Arrington said. "[RISE] opened my eyes to some of the inconsistencies that we were doing and also really put a fire under our team."

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Girls Inc. was unable to pilot the evaluation plan guided by the logic model for the in-school Operation SMART program and eventually adapted the plan for its afterschool programs. The organization made the most out of the challenge.

"We used it as a chance to take a step back to really help us assess – where are the gaps in our evaluation? What do we need to improve? What documents do we need to get? And what are some other ways that we can collect data to inform our funders and partners of the work that we're doing?" said Arrington.

Girls Inc. took full advantage of RISE's professional development workshops, specifically the trainings on data collection and feedback. Through pre- and post-surveys and interviews with participants, parents, and partners, the organization collects the information and creates a story about the overall program and impact on the girls. Girls Inc. shares this data on its website, in newsletters to board members and partners, and in presentations to funders.

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Being a part of RISE helped to really drive home the importance of data to our team, to our leadership, and also the sense of accountability, that the survival of the organization and the work that we do really depends on this data.

Cherice Arrington, associate director of programs and advocacy at Girls Inc.

Feedback from different constituents at different levels also informs how the organization makes key decisions about programming, including what program would be the best fit, for whom, and how often.

"RISE was really helpful in helping me to understand the different ways that data can be collected, and how you can use your data and use your results to tell a story," Arrington said. "From the results, we're able to paint the picture that the girls have grown as a result of being a part of Girls Inc."

Evaluation has become so valuable for the organization that Girls Inc. hired a part-time evaluation outcome specialist whose sole responsibility is to ensure data on programs is collected, reviewed, and managed. This new staff person makes sure the program team submits their survey results and that the database is organized and up to date.

"RISE really taught me to advocate and make a case for why it's important to hire someone and bring in other resources," said Arrington, who also oversees the evaluation and outcomes

department. "That person is helping to drive our goals and I feel like we're definitely in a place where we can grow."

With the help of RISE, Girls Inc. has become a more data-informed organization.

"Being a part of RISE helped to really drive home the importance of data to our team, to our leadership, and also the sense of accountability, that the survival of the organization and the work that we do really depends on this data," said Arrington.

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

RISE PARTNERSHIP | **girls inc.** of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey

GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE

![RISE Partnership logo | greater philadelphia cultural ALLIANCE]

Overview

Established in 1972, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is a service organization for arts and culture in the greater Philadelphia region with more than 400 member organizations ranging from small fiscally sponsored projects to the largest cultural institutions in the area, such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Mann Center for the Performing Arts.

The Cultural Alliance is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

In response to the pandemic, the organization launched the COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL Fund, a pooled emergency relief fund for local artists and arts organizations. "In total, we distributed $4 million to more than a thousand individual artists and over 400 arts

> " RISE really helped us hone in on the key questions that we were asking … it was an opportunity to rethink what STAMP is and where the program fit within our Cultural Alliance priorities."

Allison Vanyur, Senior Programs Manager
Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

organizations," says Allison Vanyur, senior programs manager at the Cultural Alliance.

Until recently, Vanyur was the program manager for STAMP, which stands for "students at museums in Philly," a youth arts and cultural experience program that was the primary focus of the Cultural Alliance's work through the RISE Partnership.

STAMP aims to provide Philadelphia teenagers with opportunities to engage in arts and cultural experiences through free museum admission. The program was designed by a core group of ten STAMP teen council members who served as an advisory committee for the program. Each teen was assigned to work with one or two of the approximately 25 museum partners, serving as liaisons between the Cultural Alliance and museum. The teen council members met regularly with museum staff and helped them develop teen programming, including an open mic night at the National Museum of American Jewish History and a teen photo contest at the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

One of the main projects the teen council worked on was the "Know Before You Go" video series in collaboration with nonprofit organizations Art-Reach and Philadelphia Young Playwrights. "The videos showed a museum from when you walk through the door to when you leave, to break down the barriers that – not just teens – but also families or people with disabilities, might need to know before they enter a museum space," explains Vanyur.

As STAMP evolved over the years and the Cultural Alliance underwent leadership transitions and organization-wide strategic planning efforts, it was time to reevaluate the purpose, target audience, and impact of the program. According to Vanyur, "it was an opportunity to rethink what STAMP is and where the program fit within our Cultural Alliance priorities."

Eventually, Art-Reach took over STAMP – a data-driven decision informed by the Cultural Alliance's work with the RISE Partnership. First, the organization looked at program usage and attendance. STAMP started with

physical passes that were mailed to any teenager who signed up. 37,000 passes were mailed during this era, but usage across the dozens of museum partners was hard to track. In 2018, STAMP launched a mobile app, an idea of the teen council. "They made a lot of decisions about where the program should lead; they were the ones who told us we needed a mobile app, so we got a mobile app," says Vanyur. The app resulted in over 2,000 downloads and seemed promising at first for better tracking usage and attendance, but the data ended up telling a different story.

"The first thing that RISE helped us with was data analysis from the app data; we had a lot of different spreadsheets from a lot of different staff members that we had to go through," says Vanyur. The Cultural Alliance learned that downloads didn't lead to more usage or better attendance tracking. "It was just really hard to tell who was using it and how often … what we learned is that there was a kind of core group of active users that were visiting museums all the time," explains Vanyur.

After analyzing the app data, the Cultural Alliance moved to a series of focus groups with museum partners to better understand how much

they prioritized STAMP and teen participation at their institutions. "RISE really helped us hone in on the key questions that we were asking these folks," says Vanyur. Through the focus groups, the organization learned that museums thought about STAMP quite differently, which dictated who was the point of contact and how the museum prioritized the program. They also found that some museums already had robust teen programming and saw STAMP as a great additive, but not necessarily something they needed. For others, STAMP was their only connection to teens and they deeply valued the program, but it wasn't resulting in a lot of young people coming through their doors.
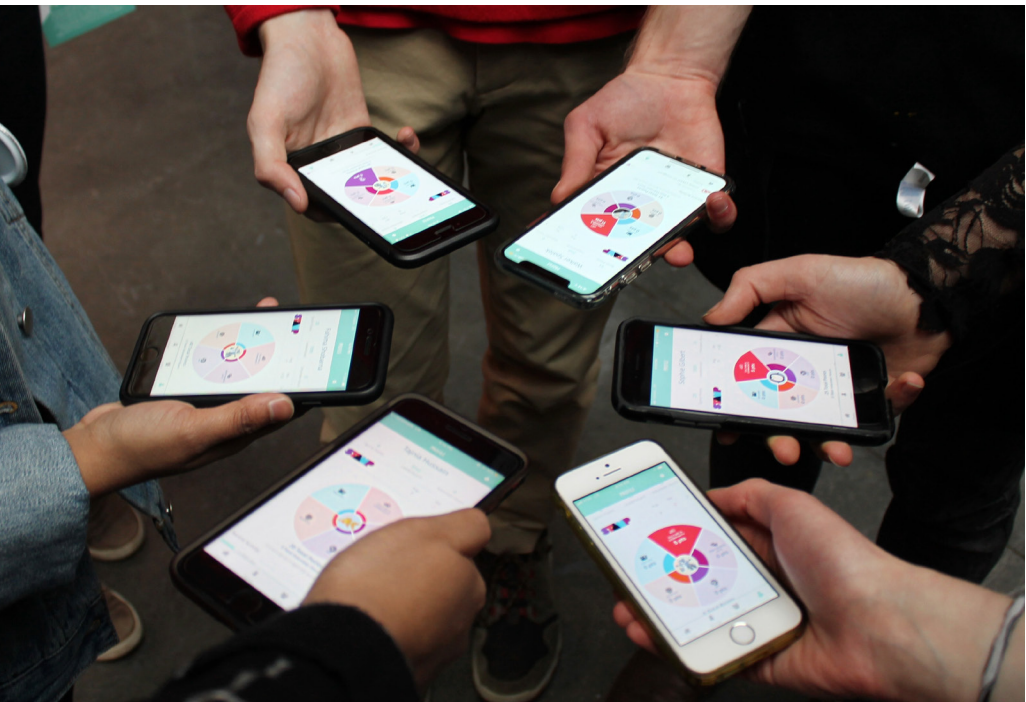
Through the data analysis, focus groups, and an organization-wide strategic planning process, the Cultural Alliance realized they were not the most appropriate administrator of the STAMP program. "We didn't feel that Cultural Alliance was the right organization; the program was great, but we wanted the right organization to manage it. We don't have a direct connection to teens, we don't have a direct connection to the school district – our primary work is through cultural institutions and that's not where high

school students are getting their information," explains Vanyur.

The Cultural Alliance worked to identify and vet organizations to take over the program. Ultimately Art-Reach, an existing partner of STAMP, decided to take over the program. Art-Reach primarily focuses on accessibility in cultural spaces and they work with many high schools, specifically special needs high schools, on accessible

field trips and cultural experiences. Given their mission, programming, and existing partnerships with school districts, it was a natural fit for Art-Reach to take over STAMP.

STAMP transitioned from the Cultural Alliance to Art-Reach in the fall of 2020, a decision that was deeply informed by data-driven learnings from the RISE Partnership. Vanyur says both organizations felt it was the right move.

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

RISE PARTNERSHIP | greater philadelphia cultural ALLIANCE

PHILADELPHIA YOUTH BASKETBALL

Overview

From its founding in 2015, Philadelphia Youth Basketball (PYB) has always been a youth development organization committed to driving and measuring impact. But the nonprofit has recently upped its game by teaming up with The RISE Partnership. **RISE** stands for **Readiness, Implementation, Sustainability** for **Effectiveness** and is a three-year learning program that helps non-profit organizations in the Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey region strengthen their impact. The Partnership builds on similar efforts by Philadelphia's Scattergood Foundation and YaleEVAL of The Consultation Center at Yale, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and has the backing of the United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey and other local foundations. PYB, which uses a holistic approach — providing access, exposure, and opportunity — to build young people as students, athletes, and leaders, was one of

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> If quantitative data is the skeleton of the body, qualitative data is the connective tissue that ties it all together. Pete's foresight in doing a survey during the pandemic this way really helped to advance the work of the organization."
>
> **Derrick Gordon, Consultant**
> **The Consultation Center at Yale University**

15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's initial "Implementation" phase. Participants will leave the program with improved capacity to collect, use, and apply data to deliver even stronger results.

"While many service providing organizations view data and evaluation as offensive — treating poor black and brown children as lab rats or using it simply to chase grant money — our entire staff are excited about using data so we can do our work smarter and more impactfully," says Kenny Holdsman, President & CEO. "Two of our staff — Peter Kaffenberger and Randy Butler — have been working with RISE and have taken our ability to capture data to a much deeper level to fuel our continuous improvement. Randy might do a workshop on trauma using a Social and Emotional Learning framework and data. And the whole room is captivated by this notion that they are getting tools to be even more effective practitioners." As part of RISE, Kaffenberger and Butler work with two consultants from The Consultation Center at Yale University

— Derrick Gordon and Joy Kaufman — every two to three weeks.

"Having access to really smart people that have been doing this work for years like Derrick, Joy, and the folks at RISE, is invaluable," says Kaffenberger.

Gordon and Kaufman help the PYB team figure out the best measurement evaluation practices. During COVID-19, a time when PYB has switched to a virtual program, the group decided it was best to pivot to qualitative data analysis. Kaffenberger developed a survey, which was sent by text to the young people of PYB. The kids responded via text to open-ended questions.

"Working regularly with quantitative and qualitative data as tools can help build programs and build them more effectively," says Gordon. "If quantitative data is the skeleton of the body, qualitative data is the connective tissue that ties it all together. Pete's foresight in doing a survey during the pandemic this way really helped to advance the work of the organization."

PYB learned from the survey how much the kids value the program and its positive emotional impact. The data showed that the coaches understand the organization's mission and effectively communicate results in a positive way.

One surprise learning was that while many students sign up to participate mainly to play basketball, and perhaps struggled initially with the academic component of the program, they ultimately deeply value it.

PYB also learned that they are giving kids a window to the world through some of their learning modules. The Meek Mill module, about American rapper Meek Mill's ongoing battle with the U.S. justice system after a disputed conviction in 2007, focuses on racism in the criminal justice system and was a clear favorite of many students.

"A lot of middle school kids in Philadelphia don't get a chance to understand these issues and develop

a point of view and write and debate it," says Holdsman. "We wanted to build a program that joins athletics and academics, especially real world, contextual learning. 'Why are there not more black coaches?' This is the stuff that middle school kids in high poverty areas want to get their teeth into."

PYB is using what they learn through RISE and with the help of the Yale consultants to collect meaningful data and use it to enhance their capacity and further improve their services.

"In the midst of a double crisis, and with budget cuts on the horizon, now is the time for organizations to show their impact and fight for racial justice," says Joe Pyle, President of The Scattergood Foundation. "Nonprofits need to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and the only way to do that is to know what's working and what isn't."

PYB is doing just that.

"

Our work with RISE and the crisis has helped us get smarter," says Holdsman. "We have actually grown our capacity over the past couple of months."

Kenny Holdsman, President & CEO
Philadelphia Youth Basketball

READ BY 4TH

Overview

Read by 4th is a consortium of organizations and partners delivering on a collective impact campaign that brings the Philadelphia community together around a common goal: increasing the number of students reading on grade level by the time they reach fourth grade. The Reading Captains initiative was one of the campaign's central bold ideas. Based on the political organizing model of block captains, reading captains are neighborhood leaders who connect kids and families with the literacy resources and supports they need to ensure children are reading on grade level and to promote lifelong reading. The volunteers represent a variety of groups – nonprofits, faith communities, library boards, or city or other governmental systems, and they are trusted bridges between families with young children and literacy supports.

"The idea really was to create a sense of connection to natural community leaders who were there to help make sure families and kids and organizations had direct access

Coming to the RISE initiative and being able to put down our thinking about why the Reading Captains initiative works and how it works with a logic model was a huge step for us."

Samuel Fischer, data and evaluation manager, Read by 4th

to resources," said Wanda Mial, vice president of community initiatives at Global Citizen, the organization that coordinates, facilitates, and provides administrative support to Reading Captains. "Various systems and partners have come together to build a network of support for kids and families to ensure and protect a child's right to read."

Read by 4th is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

"Coming to the RISE initiative and being able to put down our thinking about why the Reading Captains initiative works and how it works with a logic model was a huge step for us," said Samuel Fischer, data and evaluation manager at Read by 4th. "To be able to document all the activities we're doing and how we think we go from this network of grassroots leaders to having an impact on kids was a great step."

With the help of RISE, Read by 4th has built an evaluation structure around the Reading Captains program to better measure impact. "The one tool that

has been really useful I think has been the logic model," said Denise Henry, a Reading Captains volunteer in the West Philadelphia region. "Really looking at all of our outputs and looking at the different activities we've been doing over the course of these last several years and seeing, in a global way, where the work is and what we want to do and setting some goals for reading captains across the city and in our different regions."

The logic model developed with RISE informed the use of data from their app, developed in partnership with MilkCrate, to track activities taking place throughout the network of volunteers across the city. At its peak, the app had approximately one hundred consistent users, including a few champions using it a great deal, producing a significant amount of useful data for Read by 4th.

Read by 4th has always collected data on current and prospective Reading Captains volunteers and the neighborhoods they served. Thanks to partnerships with RISE and MilkCrate, the consortium has begun to collect far more data and from a wider variety

> **[RISE]** is not just an incredible partnership, but really increases the ability of staff at all levels, no matter how large or small the organization, to think about and build capacity."

Wanda Mial, vice president of community initiatives, Global Citizen

of stakeholders. On a quarterly survey, partner organizations indicate whether they want to work with Reading Captains, which allows Read by 4th to follow up by setting up meetings, sharing more information about the program, introducing partners to the captains, and learning about the projects they want to do.

Similarly, Read by 4th integrated Reading Captains questions into an annual partner experience survey to better understand how families, partner organizations, and reading captains themselves feel about the initiative. Results showed 90% of Reading Captains volunteers feel they are making an impact on their

community and 86% believe they have the necessary training and resources to make an impact on their community.

"The amount of data that we've been able to collect about the Reading Captains initiative has really grown through our participation with RISE," said Fischer. "That has really helped with our program evaluation and has grounded a lot of our assumptions and feelings in data."

Support from RISE not only helped Read by 4th better measure impact and improve data collection but helped build evaluation capacity overall at all levels of the Reading Captains program.

"[RISE] is not just an incredible partnership, but really increases the ability of staff at all levels, no matter how large or small the organization to think about and build capacity," said Mial. "When I say capacity, I don't just mean hire more people. I mean builds individual learning, experience, and understanding of evaluation and its imperative relationship to the work and the story we want to build and tell on behalf of the work."

"So thankful for the RISE Partnership," said Henry. "I know that it's really helped me to see just the great value of data and understanding it more."

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

Overview

Students Run Philly Style (SRPS) is a youth mentoring program that uses goal-setting and long-distance running to build impactful relationships between youth from Philadelphia and Camden neighborhoods and adult volunteers. Volunteer mentors help students set and reach their goals through mentorship, training, and competing in races alongside their students.

SRPS started as a youth anti-obesity initiative under the theory that increasing activity will result in better health outcomes. But the program has evolved into much more – growing from about 50 youth across a handful of community centers to serving about 1,500 youth across 67 schools annually. For some students, the program might be a draw to school, resulting in fewer days missed; for others, it might be their dream to run in the Philadelphia Marathon.

STUDENTS RUN PHILLY STYLE

What I really appreciate about this partnership is that we were taught the skills. Just learning those skills and being able to modify it to adjust anything that we need, I think is so important to building capacity in the future."

Amanda Millatt, associate director of compliance and project management Students Run Philly Style

Our goal coming into this was finding ways to visualize our data that would help us inform our feedback loop with our volunteers and then students."

Lauren Kobylarz, program director Students Run Philly Style

"It was very evident that the impacts were much greater than health impacts," said Andy Kucer, executive director at SRPS. "From goal-setting to confidence, to even academics, we were seeing the whole plethora of social-emotional impacts."

SRPS is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

For years, SRPS had done a good job of collecting data from participants. From paper to electronic spreadsheets to a database, they would collect data throughout a season and use it to inform the following season. But despite possessing this rich information, SRPS did not have a sophisticated system to analyze it to drive programming and inform current activities.

"We were trying to get a good sense of our data and how it can inform our programming in real time," said Lauren

Kobylarz, program director at SRPS. "Our goal coming into this was finding ways to visualize our data that would help us inform our feedback loop with our volunteers and then students."

With the help of the RISE Partnership and technical partner Tech Impact, SRPS has moved beyond Microsoft Excel to Microsoft Power BI, a database and visualization tool that makes it easy to create reports and dashboards to analyze data more efficiently and effectively.

"We have so much data and we really want to start looking at it and make sure that we're making decisions based off the data we're collecting," said Amanda Millatt, associate director of compliance and project management at SRPS.

This real-time data is deeply valuable. Since volunteer mentors log how many miles students run at practice, the dashboard can help SRPS identify needs and areas of support. For example, if
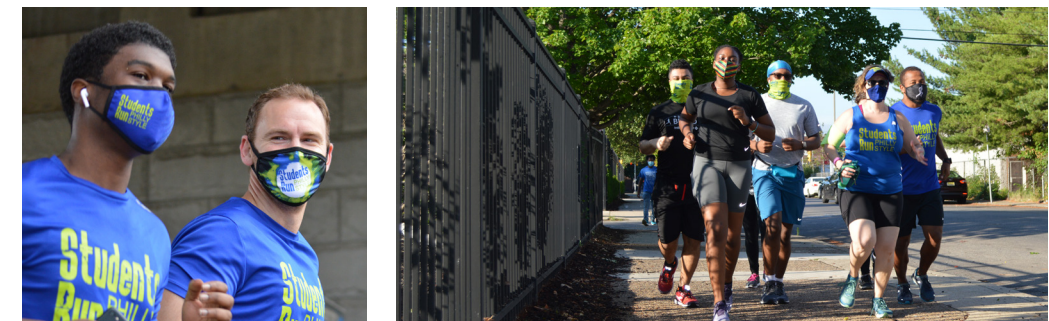
nearly all teams are averaging 20 miles a week, and one team is not, that could mean a team may not know how to log miles yet, or that they haven't been able to hold practice, or perhaps there's an issue at the school. Regardless, the information can prompt SRPS staff to reach out to the team to better understand what's going on and find how they can offer support.

The dashboard also has mapping features to help SRPS better understand city and neighborhood demographics, which inform the recruitment of students and volunteer mentors.

Mapping can be used to match students and mentors based on geography and develop teams based on where students are clustered.

Crucially, the dashboard is not static and can easily be modified to fit the needs of SRPS as time passes – and the staff has been taught how to make those changes.

"What I really appreciate about this partnership is that we were taught the skills," Millatt said. "Just learning those skills and being able to modify it to adjust anything that we need, I think is so important to building capacity in the future."

And while SRPS had been ahead of the curve when it comes to data collection and analysis for continuous improvement, the new dashboard has further strengthened them in their quest to become more of a learning organization.

"Our data is never done," Kobylarz said. "Our collection is never done. Our learning is never done. So, the dashboard is not done."

"This data that you're looking at today is going to raise another question tomorrow, and then you're going to have to go investigate that," Kobylarz continued.

For SRPS, RISE is all about impact and improvement.

"[RISE] really did force us to have conversations that gave us a lot of clarity on how we can really show the impact of our program, but more importantly, how we can improve the program," said Kucer.

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

RISE PARTNERSHIP

Students Run PHILLY STYLE

UNITED COMMUNITIES SOUTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

![RISE Partnership logo | United Communities Southeast Philadelphia logo]

Overview

United Communities Southeast Philadelphia (UCSEP) is a social services agency that for over 50 years has provided a wide range of services to Southeast Philadelphia-area residents and beyond. Serving a multicultural, linguistically diverse community of all ages, UCSEP provides housing and economic empowerment, case management, education, and other programs.

UCSEP is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

Working with RISE, UCSEP's Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) department has learned a great deal about program evaluation, developing logic models, and putting those logic models to use. The department is focused on continuous

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> There's a lot that goes into that actual, completed logic model. It's not just something we create and look at, it's a living document."
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> **Latesha Vosacek,** director of strategic program operations
> United Communities Southeast Philadelphia

evaluation, feedback, and improvement for all internal and external practices across the agency. UCSEP even created a dedicated program evaluation coordinator position within PQI.

"There's a lot that goes into that actual, completed logic model," said Latesha Vosacek, director of strategic program operations and head of the PQI department. "It's not just something we create and look at, it's a living document."

While UCSEP's work with RISE started with its out-of-school time (OST) education program, learnings have spread to other programs as well, like housing and case management.

"We've been trying to take a program at a time and kind of lead them through this [evaluation] process," said Vosacek. "We've placed a higher value on that because of our relationship with RISE."

The organization has been able to build its evaluation skills and capacity at the program level, and this culture

of evaluation has begun to spread throughout the entire organization.

"I think we've gotten a lot of buy-in with it," said Suheidie Santiago, the new PQI program evaluation coordinator at UCSEP. "We just finished our housing logic model and they're already working with it and putting it to use … it shows them a roadmap as to what they're going to be doing."

"Staff are taking it more seriously," added Koungvichaka Noun, PQI compliance specialist at UCSEP. "Before it was just like, 'Oh, whatever. What is this? What do they want from me?' Once they got into the logic model, they started understanding more and realized data is very important."

UCSEP has for many years collected and tracked data using an internal database. However, the support from RISE has helped the agency make better use of its data and track outcomes specifically.

"We were already collecting a lot of data

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> We're literally using everything that RISE has provided … they break things down in such a way that you can understand it, that's easy and relatable."

Suheidie Santiago, PQI program evaluation coordinator
United Communities Southeast Philadelphia

… what we weren't really tracking were the outcomes, and the logic models are helping us track them now," said Santiago. "We already know that we want to provide services, but what's happening afterward? Did that family buy a house? Were they able to keep that house? Things like that are going to be where we see a big impact."

For UCSEP, the logic model process has helped identify activities and outcomes and determine what data questions need answering. Are there data points to support a particular outcome? How is data being measured? Who is responsible for collecting it? UCSEP has long collected a significant amount of information, but deciding how to prioritize and use what is being collected is a new focus for the agency.

"We focus a lot on quantitative data and not qualitative data," said Sokheng Yim, PQI supervisor at UCSEP. "Being a part of RISE has opened my eyes [to qualitative data] … so those are the questions that we're now asking the program directors."

Beyond logic models, UCSEP has taken full advantage of all the resources RISE provides, from PowerPoint presentations to data collection tools, which have been instrumental in bringing evaluation to other departments and creating staff and leadership buy-in.

"We're literally using everything that RISE has provided … they break things down in such a way that you can understand it, that's easy and relatable," said Santiago. "I've used all of their stuff

and made it my own … it's been super easy to explain this to other people."

"As a member of executive leadership in the agency, I can say that working and partnering with RISE has given our work a little more legitimacy," Vosacek added. "My boss is the executive director and he was fully supportive of this [program evaluation coordinator] role. He checks in with me about it often and tries to make the other senior directors do better in terms of their relationship with our department, their relationship with data, with holding their staff accountable for data."

"[RISE] has been like a little feather in our cap," said Vosacek.

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

UPLIFT CENTER FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

Overview

Uplift Center for Grieving Children (Uplift) in Philadelphia helps grieving children heal and grow while strengthening families and communities. Founded in 1995 as The Center for Grieving Children by the Bereavement Program at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Uplift became a separate nonprofit organization in 2000. Its mission is to provide grief support and education, primarily to children who have lost someone important in their lives, as well as support for their caregivers in the community. Uplift supports more than 4,000 children and families each year through peer-to-peer grief support groups, in-school support groups, caregiver workshops, and more.

Uplift, like many youth-serving nonprofit organizations, encountered unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. But Uplift's situation was unique given the sheer number of COVID and COVID-related deaths, paired with an increased homicide rate in Philadelphia. Moreover, the organization's grief support groups and workshops traditionally took place in person, so not only did Uplift need to determine how to bring

[RISE] is giving us a way to think about how to organize the information that we have in terms of how we work with people and what the outcomes are, and really turning that into helping us develop the intake as well.

Kevin Carter, Clinical Director at Uplift

its programming online, it had to do so when the demand for grief support had never been higher.

"It was extremely difficult because what we do is actually directly related to the pandemic," said Kevin Carter, clinical director at Uplift. "We're probably the major go-to organization around grief in the city."

Uplift is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

Uplift sought support from RISE to better gather data and begin doing evaluation that would be useful – not just for program evaluation but with funders as well.

"We were doing minimal kinds of work in that [evaluation] arena at that time, so we decided to get involved with the project," Carter said. "The foundational part of this was actually trying to find a way of thinking about data and organizing data and really utilizing what we have available in the organization to make this [evaluation] happen."

RISE helped Uplift rethink what data it collects and why, resulting in a shift to collect less data on clients and develop a new standardized intake form and process. This helped Uplift focus on what's most important; it also made the data collection process more reasonable for children and families.

"What we're working to do is narrow down what we can get from people because their capacity to answer a lot of complicated questions due to the level of trauma that they're negotiating is compromised," said Carter. "The exciting part about working on these questions now is we can get some good information and we don't have to spend a lot of time with people."

Uplift also created the HopeLine, in partnership with the Philadelphia School District, which students and families can call for support around grief and loss. In addition to serving the community over the phone, the HopeLine is also used for client intake and registering clients for different programs.

"[RISE] is giving us a way to think about how to organize the information that we have in terms of how we work with

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You have to be able to communicate with people about what you're doing, and anecdotes are great, but we need something a little more substantive. I just believe that RISE has helped us to frame all of that and then give us some actual skills to make that happen."
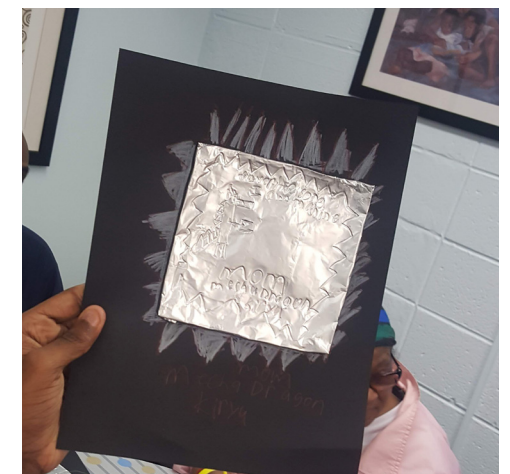
Kevin Carter, Clinical Director at Uplift

people and what the outcomes are, and really turning that into helping us develop the intake as well," Carter said.

Uplift is starting to use the HopeLine and intake forms developed with RISE to help answer several questions. What program components are most helpful? Which are least helpful? And what do children and families perceive as the biggest benefit of participating in services? This information will eventually be used to inform future programing and communicate Uplift's impact to key stakeholders.
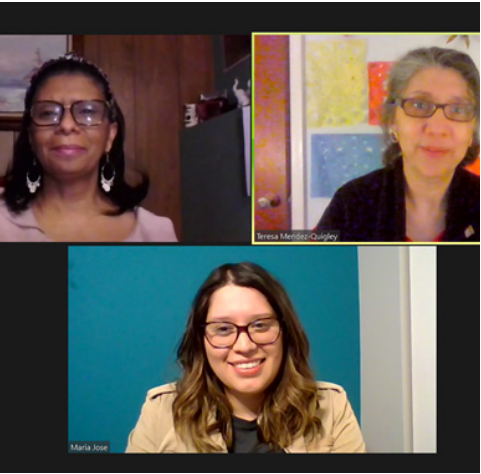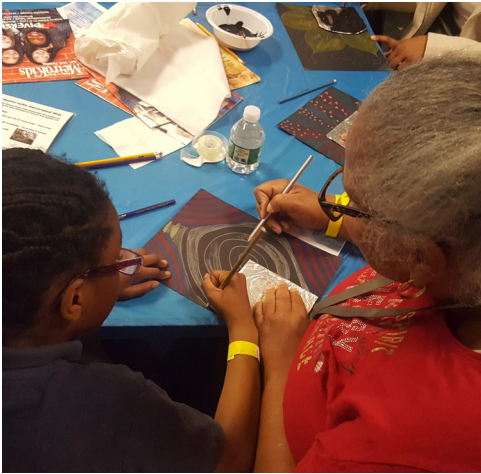
"What we're trying to figure out is, what is it that we can learn about what we're doing that's helpful?" said Carter. "And what can we pass on to funders and partners to say, 'Even amid all of this chaos, this is what families are telling us about what Uplift has helped to do in our lives around grief and loss.'"

Uplift's evaluation journey with RISE is in many ways just beginning. The support has come at a time of great need and great opportunity, and Uplift is now better equipped with the skills to accomplish their evaluation goals and tell their story.

"You have to be able to communicate with people about what you're doing, and anecdotes are great, but we need something a little more substantive,"

said Carter. "I just believe that RISE has helped us to frame all of that and then give us some actual skills to make that happen."

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

RISE PARTNERSHIP | upl*ft

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA DELAWARE VALLEY

Overview

Volunteers of America Delaware Valley (VOADV), a local affiliate for the national Volunteers of America, serves more than 13,000 individuals throughout southern New Jersey and Philadelphia. For 125 years, VOADV has provided homeless services, reentry services, and services for seniors and individuals with intellectual disabilities. VOADV currently runs six homeless, emergency, and transitional shelter programs in four counties and provides wraparound services and case management, from one-on-one counseling to group workshops on financial literacy, housing supports, and life skills. The organization's holistic approach aims to support individuals and families from intake to successful discharge to permanent housing.

VOADV is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

> " Because our program is in the inner city, we were looking for more of an assessment that really spoke to the issues that the clientele faces, not just a broad approach.

Tamika Levels-Hood, vice president of homeless services at VOADV

The primary focus of VOADV's work with RISE was on one particular shelter, the Anna Sample Complex located in Camden, New Jersey. The shelter serves single women and families with dependent children, housing nearly 100 individuals every day. The shelter had always centered its support on adult services, including referrals for medical, mental, and behavioral services as well as providing families resources for their children. But VOADV wanted to try providing children's services, specific to age and grade.

"Our overall goal was to provide parents and children experiencing homelessness with direct services and access to holistic supports as they worked towards getting permanent housing," said Tamika Levels-Hood, vice president of homeless services at VOADV. "We felt like if we start focusing more on the children and the children's services, then we could better support and provide more resources and information and education to the parents."

VOADV's work with RISE started with the development of a logic model, which led to authentic assessments of youth, parents, and staff to inform more tailored services.

"Because our program is in the inner city, we were looking for more of an assessment that really spoke to the issues that the clientele faces, not just a broad approach," said Levels-Hood. "We really wanted to tailor it and then create some type of service plans so that even the children could focus on these goals themselves."

"We wanted to get a feel for what the children were actually going through or what they would like to see while staying at the shelter that could better help them, as well as the parents," added Monique Reddick, regional director of homeless services at VOADV. "We did a lot of surveying and group meetings and came up with the different activities that we would try to put in place at the shelter as it related to the children's different needs."

VOADV learned from RISE the importance of including all stakeholders in data collection and analysis, not just for richer data but for collective understanding and buy-in.

"The goal of the surveys and the feedback and the canvasing was to get the ideas from the actual clients and also our staff because it was important

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> *I think RISE was kind of like our jump start on: How do we correctly collect the data? What do we do with the data? How do we turn it into a story? How do we present it to our stakeholders?*
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> **Monique Reddick**, regional director of homeless services at VOADV

for us to have staff understand what we were trying to do," said Reddick. "So, when we did implement any of the activities or services, everybody would be on the same page and understand the mission or the goals or the outcomes of what we were trying to create."

"The kids are kind of along for the ride and we wanted to give them some voice," added Levels-Hood.

The evaluation revealed insights into children's behavioral and mental health, which led to staff trainings on trauma-informed care as well as connecting children and parents to additional supports.

"A lot of the feedback from the staff was being able to get those trainings to help them interact with kids when they go through crisis moments," said Reddick. "We were able to do a lot of different things as it relates to mental health with children and parents, and we were able to do the trauma-informed care."

"One of the biggest outcomes was to have the kids increase their understanding of their own mental health and the various resources that are out there that will be able to support them," said Levels-Hood.

Not only did VOADV's work with RISE lead to important staff trainings and supports for children and parents at

the Anna Sample shelter, but it helped inform data collection and use across the whole division of homeless services at VOADV.

"I think RISE was kind of like our jump start on: How do we correctly collect the data? What do we do with the data? How do we turn it into a story? How do we present it to our stakeholders?" said Reddick. "It gave us a clearer understanding of how we should do that without being overwhelmed with data and let it reach the people that it needs to reach from the top down."

RISE also helped VOADV tell its story.

"We wanted to tell a story with the data we had and we wanted to tell a specific story," said Levels-Hood. "We keep tons of information on our clientele, but we are really trying to help the community see who the *individuals* are."

For more information visit **therisepartnership.org**

RISE PARTNERSHIP | Volunteers of America DELAWARE VALLEY

THE WAGNER FREE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Overview

The Wagner Free Institute of Science (The Wagner) is a natural history museum and educational institution that is dedicated to free science education. Founded in 1855 in an era when most people did not have access to formal education and the field of science was rapidly advancing, the institution was a place where adults could learn about science. Programs were held in the evening to make them accessible and open to men and women. By the early 20th century, The Wagner started offering children's education and now serves about 10,000 children annually. Located in its original building – which is now a National Historic Landmark – in a low-income neighborhood in North Philadelphia, The Wagner serves the community through classes, talks, field trips, and adult- and children-specific programming. The Wagner's museum and library are also free and draw audiences from across the region and the country.

"We have a rather complex, multi-layered mission, but a big part of it is service to our community," said Susan Glassman, The Wagner's executive director.

> " We've been thinking for several years about how we could do a different, more authentic kind of evaluation. So when we learned about the RISE opportunity, we jumped on it.

Susan Glassman, executive director at
The Wagner Free Institute of Science

One of the institution's longest-standing children's programs is GeoKids, an intensive science education program for children in the community. The Wagner currently partners with five neighborhood elementary schools to offer the program, which consists of year-long classroom teaching, museum tours, and field trips to local outdoor spaces. GeoKids has expanded to include SNAP (Science Nature Art in Philadelphia), a similar program for middle schoolers.

"It's really about being place-based and showing them this natural history museum is in your neighborhood and connecting them to nature and science and empowering them to participate in all those things," said Holly Clark, director of children's education at The Wagner.

The Wagner is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

The Wagner's work with RISE started with GeoKids, and subsequently logic models, surveys, and program evaluations were also developed for SNAP and some of the adult programs.

The museum always had anecdotal evidence from students, families, and community members about the value of its programs, but working with RISE helped to quantify impact.

"It's kind of hard to measure impact or quantify things because we're not doing a standardized test so it's hard to say, 'what did the kids learn?'" Clark said. "[RISE] has given us a concrete way to quantify the outcomes and focus the outcomes and measure the impacts."

The institution has long collected data on program satisfaction, but now has the tools, language, and questions to capture what people are learning from programs. For example, The Wagner has completely retooled the surveys given to students in the adult education classes, asking them for the first time if the class has had an impact on the way they understand science, the scientific process, or protocols.

"We've been thinking for several years about how we could do a different, more authentic kind of evaluation," said Glassman. "So when we learned about the RISE opportunity, we jumped on it."

> " Before RISE, we made surveys, but we didn't really make them like we should have; we didn't consider piloting surveys or using validated questions, among other things.

Holly Clark, director of children's education at
The Wagner Free Institute of Science

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Wagner was forced to shut its physical doors and pivot to virtual programming. RISE helped the museum navigate pandemic-related challenges surrounding data collection and working with minors, supporting the Philadelphia School District's Institutional Review Board approval process to allow the collection of evaluation surveys from teachers and students.

"Before RISE, we made surveys, but we didn't really make them like we should have; we didn't consider piloting surveys or using validated questions, among other things," said Clark.

Learnings from RISE were also applied to inform the museum's reopening

strategy. The Wagner took seriously the idea of feedback loops – collecting feedback and using it to shape and design programs – and created both a focus group and survey to understand visitors' comfort levels and needs. This resulted in a careful, targeted, and responsive reopening.

"We put the feedback loops to immediate use in a very practical way," said Glassman. "We're more targeted in our program design, but also incorporating more voices and perspectives in how we do it."

RISE helped develop a culture of evaluation at The Wagner. Not only did evaluation move beyond the original GeoKids program, but evaluation

principles like creating logic models, building staff buy-in, and especially engaging stakeholders became infused throughout the institution.

"We've engaged with the partners on a different level and I think that's resonated with them, even the kids and the teachers to be involved in that," said Clark. "We realized involving them in planning early on and getting another point of view could be really informative and useful."

"I think the biggest immediate change is more voices in the mix in the creation and the thinking about program ideas from the beginning, instead of at the end," Glassman added. "It's a more dynamic process of creating the programs or planning the programs, even if we're just refining programs that already exist."

Overall, participation in RISE has been a very positive learning experience for the museum's leadership and staff.

"I just want to say that it's the best professional development opportunity I have ever had personally, but also for my staff," said Glassman. "It's been amazing."

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YWCA TRI-COUNTY AREA

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Tri-County Area

> " RISE was incredibly helpful and supportive and constructive in guiding the logic model process. That original logic model that we worked through has become the template, my go-to template for every logic model in the department, or really in the organization.

Kelly Grosser, chief mission impact officer at YWCA

Overview

YWCA Tri-County Area (YWCA) was founded as the Young Women's Christian Association of Pottstown, Pennsylvania in 1908. Its original focus was to provide safe housing for young girls and women who were homeless or came to the area to work in the town's factories. Over the years, YWCA adapted its programs and services to meet the changing needs of girls and women in the community and remains a strong advocate for girls, women, and families. Today, YWCA serves more than 1,500 women, children, and families in Montgomery, Chester, and Berks Counties through early childhood education, before- and after-school enrichment, youth/girls' development, adult education, and workforce development. YWCA is a hub of social services for the community, providing everything from grants to foster grandparents to emergency rent assistance to high school equivalency courses.

"We are really focused on girls of color," said Kelly Grosser, chief mission impact officer at YWCA. "We are really focused on empowerment. We are really focused on dignity for all. That's our mission."

YWCA is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership's "Implementation" phase.

YWCA's work with RISE started with the organization's Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), a suite of educational programs that focus on academic enrichment, health and wellness activities, leadership, and social-emotional learning opportunities for youth and their families. YEP serves more than 500 youth annually and has significantly expanded its programming in the last few years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our numbers really shifted and our relationships really shifted, but we pivoted very quickly and created opportunities for learning for youth," said Grosser.

YWCA's work with RISE focused on YEP's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) Enrichment Program. The first step was developing a logic model.

"RISE was incredibly helpful and supportive and constructive in guiding the logic model process," said Grosser. "That original logic model that we worked through has become the template, my go-to template for every logic model in the department, or really in the organization."

Following the development of the logic model, YWCA used Hello Insight, a nationally vetted youth development evaluation tool, to begin assessing its programs. Although YWCA previously had access to Hello Insight, participating in RISE helped increase the tool's utility in terms of how it could be used differently to inform programs and benefit the organization and participants.

"RISE helped me think through how we are measuring growth and learning and opinions, attitudes, and beliefs," said Grosser.

RISE also helped YWCA think through the types and reasoning behind the data it collects. Questions like "why

> # "
> RISE absolutely has impacted the way that we are empowering the youth we really seek to serve.

Kelly Grosser, chief mission impact officer at YWCA

are we asking this specific question and what do we intend to do with it?" were eye-opening for YWCA.

"I think that one of the big takeaways for me was the simplification of the evaluation tool," said Grosser. "RISE really helped us narrow in on what do we really want to know."

As a result of YWCA's evaluation journey, the organization has begun focusing more on participants who have the most potential for growth by examining their outcomes rather than the program outcomes as a whole. With a better understanding of these differences in outcomes and disparities, YWCA has prioritized the youth who need the most support and has made sure changes in programming are best suited to meet their needs.

"We were looking at the whole program, but we had kids who were already high-achieving, maintaining their high level of achievement and that was factoring in versus really looking at the kids that we aim to support and empower," said Grosser." [RISE] absolutely has impacted the way that we are empowering the youth we really seek to serve."

What started with YEP's STEAM program spread throughout the department – and eventually the entire organization. From developing an evaluation tool for an implicit bias training program to staff surveys on the organization's equity climate work, YWCA has developed a more robust culture of evaluation. The organization even hired a designated data specialist – the first position

of its kind – to ensure evaluation is taking place properly and in a timely manner. YWCA is also in the process of hiring a software and quality manager to improve the organization's data collection and analysis.

"I can take all that I've learned and impress it upon other portions of the organization," said Grosser. "We kept evaluation at the forefront and embedded it in our practices."

Grosser is convinced that improved evaluation is essential to the continued success of the organization.

"No one has to convince me that evaluation is valuable," she said. "No one has to convince me that we should have logic models and be able to tell the story. It's not perfect. We have a long way to go, but I think that RISE brought it into the light in a way that people appreciate."

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