

**DHSP COMMUNITY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT**  
**BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH PROGRAM STAFF AND NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS**

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTES: ABOUT THE REPORT

Community Schools provide enrichment and recreational programming for a significant percentage of Cambridge elementary schoolchildren, as well as hundreds of non-elderly adults and seniors every year. This report represents an effort to take a detailed look at the kind of programming provided by the twelve Community Schools affiliated most closely with the Department of Human Services, the constituents served, and the barriers to providing an even better service. (The Agassiz Community School program, which operates independently as a private non-profit organization, is only briefly referenced in the narrative.)

This report uses data compiled from interviews with the twelve Community School Coordinators, the two Program Managers who supervise them, the head of the Community and Youth Division, and nine of the Neighborhood Councils, and from quarterly reports prepared by the Coordinators for the period Fall 1991 through Summer 1992.

The interview process frequently generated provocative discussions about what Community Schools might do and how logistical and other problems might be addressed. Several Coordinators commented that their day-to-day responsibilities leave little time to step back and look at the big picture; these interviews seemed to present that kind of opportunity -- for both Coordinators and Councils. Perhaps Community School programs would benefit if Coordinators and Councils -- either individually or in groups -- had the chance to participate in one or two facilitated strategic planning sessions away from the stresses of running a program.

This report does not contain any earth-shaking insights. Most of the facts, concerns, and opinions have been previously articulated by program staff. The intent of this document is to assemble in one place all of those facts, concerns, and opinions, and to make available some useful -- albeit limited -- statistics for the purpose of recognizing the strengths and weakness of the program, and framing the discussion about where it might go from here.

Although I have attempted to reflect the mood and opinions of the people I interviewed, the narrative which follows is also colored by the opinions I formed over the course of those interviews.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Schools offer diverse programming to meet the needs of a cross section of Cambridge residents:

- They provide relatively low cost access to enrichment and recreational programming -- including after-school classes in a variety of fields (e.g., arts and crafts, performance, music, language arts, science), homework help and tutoring, supervised sports and physical activities programming, early release day and school vacation activities, trips, parties and other special events, and summer camp or parks-based programs -- for a significant percentage of elementary schoolchildren every year.
- They offer hundreds of seniors a neighborhood based opportunity for activity and social interaction, and sponsor dozens of trips.
- Community Schools and their Neighborhood Councils are often centers of community organizing activity around neighborhood safety, planning/zoning issues, and involvement in anti-hunger programs, as well as sponsors of social gatherings, like potlucks and benefit events.
- Community School Coordinators provide information, referral, advocacy, and support for neighborhood residents.

There is no such thing as a "typical" Community School. Programs vary from neighborhood to neighborhood in terms of:

- the number and kinds of activities offered;
- the cost of activities;
- the nature and availability of scholarship assistance;
- the extent to which pre-teens and seniors are served;
- the extent of Council involvement in local affairs and the operation of the Community School

Program variation is the outcome of twenty-plus years of choices that reflect autonomy and the complex interplay of:

- varied and changing neighborhood demographics;
- diverse perceptions about the needs of area residents and the appropriate role of Community Schools in meeting those needs;
- the varied ability of programs to supplement City funding and staffing support (i.e., the ability of program constituents to financially support Community School programming through payment of activity fees -- which, on average, account for almost 80% of operating revenues -- and fundraising);

- the ability and willingness of the host elementary school and its staff to make available suitable spaces (e.g., gyms, art and music rooms, classrooms, storage areas);
- the personal interests and strengths of Coordinators and Council members past and present (e.g., enrichment programming vs. community organizing, seniors vs young children vs. pre-teens);
- program traditions and community expectations (including the extent to which various constituencies identify their needs to the Council and Coordinator and/or have representation on the Council); and
- the existence of other local programs and organizations (e.g., stabilization committees, recreation centers, crime watch groups, Youth Centers, child care programs, adult education programs, senior programs) with potentially overlapping functions.

As might be expected of any program attempting to serve diverse constituencies with limited funding, staffing, and space resources, Community Schools are unable to be all things to all people: some city residents are less well served than others:

- Although activity fees charged by Community Schools are lower than those charged by the private sector, Community School programming may nevertheless be unaffordable to a significant number of residents. Funding for scholarships appears inadequate to meet potential demand, and reliance on scholarships to improve affordability may exclude constituents who are unaware of, or uncomfortable asking for, assistance
- The Community School Program appears to be largely unprepared to meet the needs of the increasing number of latchkey children whose parents can't afford child care, haven't received one of the limited number of child care scholarships, and seek an affordable daily two- or three-hour program of supervised after-school activity. Lacking a formal Community School extended day option, Coordinators report that increasing numbers of parents rely on program staff to "watch" their children before and after scheduled Community School activities.

Whether such extended day programming belongs within the purview of Community Schools is an unresolved policy question.

- For the most part, Community Schools appear to be unprepared to meet the after-school programming needs of pre-teens, who, seeking to assert their independence and to separate themselves from younger peers, seem to drop out of Community School activities (except for trips) by fifth or sixth grade, when they may be too young to comfortably fit into youth center programs.

- For the most part, Community Schools appear to have only a very limited ability to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of limited-English and non-English speaking constituents. Although Coordinators make an effort to distribute some information in Spanish, Kreyol, and/or Portuguese and, where available, take advantage of multi-lingual day school staff to communicate with non-English-speaking parents and children, most programs do not have staff who can converse with constituents who speak these languages.
- Community Schools may have difficulty serving children whose families are unable to provide a needed escort or ride home.
- Public awareness of Community School programming and of the availability of financial assistance may be inadequate, especially among limited-English-speaking and low-literacy households, parents of children attending non-local elementary schools, and seniors not connected to an information grapevine.

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The report which follows examines these strengths and weaknesses in greater detail; provides an in-depth look at operating budgets and the sources of variation in program spending and revenues; describes some of the staffing-related concerns of Coordinators and Councils; touches upon the relationships between Community School programs and other municipal providers; attempts to explore the diversity of sometimes conflicting program priorities; and proposes a framework for future planning efforts.

## Section 1. Introduction

Community Schools provide enrichment and recreational programming -- including after-school classes and homework help, early release day and school vacation activities trips, family and seniors trips, Halloween parties, neighborhood potlucks, and summer camp or parks programs -- for a significant percentage of Cambridge elementary schoolchildren and hundreds of non-elderly adults and seniors every year.<sup>1</sup> Community Schools and their Neighborhood Councils are often centers of community organizing activity around neighborhood safety, planning/zoning issues, and involvement in anti-hunger programs.

Each Community School provides a somewhat different mix of services, reflecting differences among neighborhoods, the strengths and interests of Coordinators and Neighborhood Council members past and present, the existence of other local organizations and programs whose missions and functions overlap with the mission and functions of the Community School, and resource limitations.

Coordinators are the glue that hold Community Schools together.

- The Coordinator is the most consistent and visible component of a Community School program: she conducts program enrollment, provides on-site supervision of after-school programs, answers the phones, greets all comers, leads trips, runs summer camp, coordinates SHARE or USDA food distributions, staffs or coordinates meetings around neighborhood quality of life issues (crime prevention, parks, parking, etc.), coordinates special events programming, and sweeps the floors at the end of the day. Most Coordinators teach classes; at two or three programs, the Coordinator is the principal instructor of Community School classes. For many parents and seniors, the Community School and its Coordinator are one and the same entity.
- Coordinators also play a critical behind-the-scenes role. Among other things, they recruit Council members, put together outreach and coordinate mailings, devise program schedules, shop for supplies, negotiate with school administrative and janitorial staff, recruit and supervise teachers, and, in most cases, manage the budget and day-to-day finances of the program.
- In addition to their programmatic responsibilities, Coordinators provide information and referral, advocacy, and informal counseling to hundreds of neighborhood residents. Several members of Neighborhood Councils described how the Coordinator had introduced them to the neighborhood when they were newcomers.
- Just as no two Community Schools provide the same mix of programs

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<sup>1</sup>Coordinator's records, which double-count an unknown number of participants, and which do not distinguish, for example, between one-time participation on trips and ongoing participation in classes, indicate that Community School programs served over 2,500 children (44% of the total elementary school population) and over 1,900 non-elderly adults and seniors during the Winter/Spring '92 quarter. The Division of Community and Youth has revised record-keeping procedures and the quarterly reporting form to develop a more accurate unduplicated count of program participants, and to gain a better statistical picture of program utilization.

and services, no two Community School Coordinators have the same mix of job demands and responsibilities.

Each Community School program is governed by a Neighborhood Council. Councils vary in size, composition, and level of involvement:

- All but one of the Councils hold monthly meetings, the exception being a Council whose two members consult with the Coordinator by phone. Councils that meet regularly have anywhere from three to as many as ten or fifteen active members.

Some Councils consist primarily of seniors, while others consist primarily of parents of young children enrolled in Community School activities; a few Councils include parents of older children who no longer attend regularly scheduled Community School programs. Because seniors often don't go out at night and parents tend to be unavailable during the daytime, it is hard to build simultaneous representation of both constituencies.

Many Council memberships are not demographically representative of the neighborhoods they serve. Most Coordinators emphasize, however, that Council members do the best they can to represent the diverse communities they serve.

- Among Councils that meet regularly, seven could be classified as active, hands-on Councils, while the other four are less active, and leave most of the planning, budgeting, and management decisions to the Coordinator.

Most Councils are involved in identifying neighborhood needs and helping to shape programs, including decisions about what kinds of classes to offer, what kinds of trips to schedule, and how to provide scholarships. Many Council members volunteer time to help with mailings, registration, and the planning and staging of events and fundraisers. A smaller number of Councils get involved at the next level of detail -- recruiting teachers, identifying local children who "ought" to be enrolled or who may need scholarship assistance, and helping with program scheduling. Although most Councils participate in the development of general spending policies, only two Councils exercise direct oversight over day-to-day check-writing.

- Neighborhood Councils are, in many ways, like the boards of directors of private non-profit agencies: their members have different levels of involvement and commitment, and different interests and strengths; they rise to the occasion when their programs are in crisis, and sometimes have trouble summoning the necessary interest to sustain an active membership when their programs seem to run smoothly without much intervention, when the possibility of growth appears to be perennially constrained by a lack of resources, or when other organizations offer potential members a more attractive civic opportunity (e.g., stabilization committees have \$250,000 to distribute in the neighborhood).

Perhaps, Neighborhood Councils could benefit from the kind of "Board trainings" that private sector agencies arrange to help spark energy, creativity, strategic planning, outreach and recruitment campaigns, and new fundraising ideas....

## Section 2. Overview of Strengths and Weaknesses

Two of the most important strengths of the Community School system are its penetration into the community and the diversity of its component programs and services:

- Community Schools offer hundreds of seniors a neighborhood-based opportunity for activity and social interaction. Although the Council on Aging sponsors a broader range of programs -- and the new Senior Center will greatly expand on that capability -- both Councils and Coordinators believed that many seniors may prefer to stay in their own neighborhoods, and may be unlikely to travel to Central Square to participate in Senior Center activities.

Nearly all of the Neighborhood Councils interviewed expressed interest in developing an area within the Community School that could serve as a drop-in site for seniors. Two other Councils cited nearby community facilities that already serve that purpose. In a number of cases, the Coordinator's office -- or the cafeteria where she stations herself during program hours -- reportedly serves as an informal drop-in site for seniors (and parents) who come by to chat and "see who's there".

- Community Schools provide relatively low-cost, safe, supervised after-school enrichment and recreational programming, and vacation and early-release day activities for large numbers of Cambridge elementary school-aged children. In the Winter/Spring '92 quarter, programs provided up to 2,400 participant-hours/week of regularly scheduled programming (classes, sports, etc.), and another 2,400 participant-days of early release day, school vacation, and special events programming.
  - > Arts, music, performance (including dance and theater through the Performance Project<sup>2</sup>), science, and language arts classes that provide exposure to subjects and experiences not part of the usual public school education.
  - > Tutoring, homework assistance, and big sibling programs, staffed by college students volunteers (Harvard Hand).
  - > Sports, dance, gymnastics, and other supervised physical activity programs that supplement School Department-administered intramurals and the two periods/week of elementary school physical education.

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<sup>2</sup>The Performance Project is a private non-profit organization, spun off from a program originally operated by the DHSP, which offers classes in dance and theater to young children and pre-teens from all over the City at five Community School sites and the Central Square Public Library. The Performance Project is largely funded by participant fees, the Mass. Cultural Council, eight or nine other grantors, and some 50 individual contributors, but also receives \$2,300 from the City. One of the Community School Program Managers provides part time assistance in administering the program.

The Performance Project is the only program offered through Community Schools with a standardized financial assistance policy. Half the 100 children enrolled in Performance Project classes during the Winter/Spring '92 quarter received partial or full scholarships.

- > Special programming on early release days and during school vacations that fills an important gap for families unable to find/afford child care during school breaks.
- > Summer camp programs, typically running 6-8 hours per day, that last year served some 450 children in age groups ranging from pre-school to pre-teen. Children enroll for one or more two-week sessions in programs which typically last from 4-8 weeks. Program focus varies from camp to camp, and may include adventure, arts and crafts, trips, and multi-culturalism.

Camp programs serve federally funded breakfasts and lunches to campers, and in qualifying neighborhoods, drop-in youth.

Programs which do not run a camp sponsor a summer parks program that brings arts and crafts, performance, and/or games to local parks. One program sponsors a camp and park activities.

- Community Schools organize and subsidize trips to places many car-less seniors and families might not otherwise go, broadening their horizons, and helping neighbors get to know each other.
- Coordinators are among the most accessible staff in the school-building. Parents call upon them for informal visits, as well as for assistance in addressing school-related problems. They are often the only school-building-based City employees who answer a phone after school dismissal, so they become critically important resources to parents with after-hours concerns. Over time, Coordinators can build trusting relationships with parents that may endure for the duration of a child's elementary school years.

Members of a Neighborhood Council that serves a community targeted to host a "school-based family center" suggested that any new program should build on their Community School's success at building bridges between parents and their children's school, rather than setting itself up as a separate entity.

- Community Schools serve as "little City Halls": Coordinators broaden access to city and community agency services through provision of information and referral, advocacy, and informal counseling to constituents who have grown to trust them.
- Neighborhood Councils staffed by Coordinators are often at the center of community organizing around efforts related to neighborhood safety, substance abuse prevention, local clean-ups, parks improvement, etc.

Two Community Schools participate in the USDA Surplus Commodities distribution program, and half the Community Schools have become referral and/or food distribution sites for the SHARE program.

The weaknesses explored in this report relate to barriers that limit Community School penetration into the community and/or needed program evolution:

- Although activity fees charged by Community Schools are lower than those charged by the private sector, Community School programming may be unaffordable to a significant number of residents. Some low- and middle- income parents may be able to pay for one or two activities. However, the cost of after-school programming for more than one child, or for more than one or two hours per week, may quickly exceed the family's ability to pay.

The need for scholarships appears to exceed their availability. A majority of programs have chosen not to widely publicize the existence of scholarship aid for fear that demand would outstrip their ability to offer assistance (or evaluate need).

The result, according to a number of Coordinators and Councils, is that many parents who cannot afford activity fees -- and especially parents who speak limited English -- are unaware of financial aid, and therefore do not enroll their children.

- The Community School Program appears to be largely unprepared to meet the needs of the increasing number of latchkey children whose parents seek an affordable daily two- or three-hour program of supervised after-school activity. Likewise, the Program seems unprepared to serve children responsible for younger siblings.

Traditionally, licensed child care has addressed the need for such extended day programming; Community Schools, on the other hand, have been looked to for enrichment classes (arts and crafts, gymnastics, music) to round out a child's education.

Whether Community School programming should be augmented to include both discrete classes and extended-day programming; whether such programming would require child care licensure; and how such programming could be kept affordable -- remain serious unanswered policy questions.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime, Coordinators report that an increasing number of parents who can't afford child care and who haven't received one of the limited number of child care scholarships are looking to Community Schools to provide an affordable alternative. Lacking a formal Community School extended day option, Coordinators report that parents are relying on program staff to "watch" their children between arrival after elementary school dismissal and their first Community School activity, between program activities, and until the parents pick up their children.

- For the most part, Community Schools are not meeting the after-school programming needs of pre-teens, especially pre-teen girls.

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<sup>3</sup>By way of comparison, the focus of the Agassiz program seems to be extended day programming. The program offers OFC licensed five-day pre-school child care and either a full week or 1-3 day package of after-school child care for children in grades K-4. Only for children in grades 5-8 does Agassiz offer discrete classes.

Coordinators report that pre-teens -- seeking to assert their independence and to separate themselves from younger peers -- seem to drop out of Community School activities (except for trips) by fifth or sixth grade. At present, only a few Community Schools offer specialized pre-teen programming other than trips.

Youth Centers provide daily programming for pre-teens at the very affordable charge \$5/year; however, a number of the Coordinators felt that a significant percentage of the children who have "dropped out" of Community School programs either don't feel comfortable joining youth center programs or are unable to safely travel to or from the closest Youth Center.

A number of Coordinators and Councils expressed interest in developing a Community School-based membership model combining structured programming and informal socializing to attract pre-teens who have been "turned off" by the traditional Community School format, which requires class attendance and resembles day school. One program is currently going ahead with that proposal.

At present, the appropriate role of Community Schools in serving pre-teens is an unresolved question.

- In general, Community Schools appear to have only a very limited ability to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of limited-English and non-English speaking constituents.

Most programs do not have staff who can converse with the growing number (and variety) of non-native persons. Coordinators make an effort to distribute some information in prevailing languages and, where available, attempt to use multi-lingual day school staff to reach out to non-English-speaking households. However, Coordinators and Councils from programs serving communities that include non-English-speaking persons are concerned about:

- > Lack of awareness among non-English-speaking households about Community School programming;
- > Lack of knowledge among such households about how to access financial assistance, and/or discomfort in seeking such assistance in the face of language/cultural barriers; and
- > The impact of language/cultural barriers which impede the development of the personal, trusting relationships between Coordinator and parents that are important to generating and maintaining youth involvement in the program.

A few Community Schools host or co-sponsor ESL classes. Prior to cutbacks in federal and state funding of the Community Learning Center and a local community college sponsor of these classes, they were offered at many more sites. Community Schools that would like to expand ESL programming do not believe they have sufficient resources to adequately subsidize a class.

- Community Schools have difficulty serving children whose families are unable to provide a needed escort or ride home. Coordinators are sometimes able to find teachers or other parents who can provide such escorts -- or they escort children themselves.

Coordinators and Council members express concern that many parents simply don't register their children in after-school programs if they can't assure safe conduct home. To address this need, a number of Coordinators and Councils suggested:

- > development of an escort resource to help children attending Community School classes in their neighborhood school, and
  - > operation of a late bus to carry back to their neighborhood school children Participating in after-school Community School activities in non-local school buildings.
- Limited access to gym space constrains the ability of Community Schools to offer physical activity programming. Coordinators and Councils were especially concerned about access during the School Department-sponsored intramurals season, when gyms are unavailable to Community Schools for four out of five days. It was suggested that if Community Schools could offer more sports and exercise programming, they would attract more pre-teens.
  - There was concern among Coordinators and Council members about inadequate awareness of Community School programming, especially among non-English-speaking and low-literacy households, parents of children attending non-local elementary schools, and seniors not already connected to some information grapevine.

Reasons cited for lack of awareness included a lack of funding to support community-wide mailings, a lack of attention by residents to mailings when received, a lack of people-power to do more than an occasional door-to-door canvass, and the unreliability of children as couriers of flyers distributed at school. Some Coordinators believe that the twice/thrice-a-year DHSP flyer is an effective outreach tool, while other Coordinators believe that it is not well-read or understood by many parents. In as diverse a city as Cambridge, it may be that what is an effective outreach tool in some communities is ineffective in others.

- Community Schools have few programs specifically designed to meet the recreational and/or enrichment needs of non-elderly adults. While many programs offer an evening of adult volleyball or basketball, and a few offer exercise classes, most Coordinators and Councils assign a low priority to adult programming, citing examples of minimal interest and participation in past offerings. Coordinators frequently could identify no clear constituency for adult programming other than ESL students, primarily served by Community Learning Center classes.

A Division brochure states that "Community Schools provide educational and recreational activities for residents of all ages." It is not clear whether there is an as-yet unfilled role for Community Schools in serving non-elderly adults.

- As discussed more fully in the next section, the availability and accessibility of Community School programming and financial assistance varies significantly from neighborhood to neighborhood, leaving some residents less well-served than others.

### Section 3. Variation Among Programs

Having pretty much lumped Community Schools together in the preceding overview of strengths and weaknesses, it is important to emphasize, once again, that, despite overall similarities, Community School programs are strikingly different from one another.

The same autonomy/flexibility that has allowed Coordinators and Councils to shape programs to meet the needs of neighborhood residents while avoiding duplication of other locally available services has also contributed to the evolution of a network that provides City residents with uneven access to programming and financial assistance. For example,

- One program may offer dozens of classes and fewer or less heavily subsidized trips; another may offer fewer classes and more trips.
- One program may attempt to provide inexpensive enrichment classes that cost no more than \$15, while another program may pay higher prices to instructors and pass that cost on to participants through activity fees of \$40, \$60, or more.

One program may promote affordability by keeping fees low and using City funds to subsidize costs; another may attempt to build a scholarship fund by charging higher fees. On the one hand, setting activity fees at levels that reflect their cost to the program enables a Community School to offer a wider array of activities and more scholarships; on the other hand, higher fees may limit participation by children whose low income parents are uncomfortable seeking financial assistance.

- Homework assistance may be available on a daily basis at one program and on a weekly basis at another.
- One program may offer a mix of classes and supervised physical activities for children; another may concentrate on classroom programming only.
- As noted earlier, except for the Performance Project, which maintains a formal sliding scale fee/scholarship structure, there are no uniform standards with regard to scholarship eligibility or amount, either within programs or across programs.
  - > One program may actively publicize the availability of scholarship assistance, while another may rely exclusively on word of mouth and referrals, for fear of generating more demand than it can handle or of generating an imbalance in scholarship utilization based on cultural or other differences which affect aggressiveness in seeking aid.
  - > One program might maintain formal policies of discounting the cost of second or third classes or reducing the charges for families with more than one enrolled child; another program might informally negotiate tuition reductions or squeeze non-paying children into fully enrolled classes at no loss to the program.

- One program may offer programming specifically designed for pre-teens; another may focus entirely on younger children. One program may put significant resources into programming for seniors; another may sponsor only a few activities for seniors.
- One program may actively participate in safe neighborhood and/or substance abuse prevention activities, or other community-building initiatives; another program may focus almost entirely on enrichment and recreational programming.

These differences are the result of twenty-plus years of choices that reflect the complex interplay of changing community demographics; diverse perceptions about the needs of area residents and the appropriate role of Community School programming in meeting those needs; the availability of funding, staff, and space resources; the personal interests and strengths of Coordinators and Council members past and present; program traditions and community expectations; and the existence of other local programs and organizations with overlapping missions and functions:

- The demographics of each neighborhood are different, and the needs of community residents are different, depending, for example, on economic circumstances, employment status, marital status, age of household members, and ability to speak English:
  - > Some neighborhoods have a higher concentration of elders than other neighborhoods.
  - > Some parents look to Community Schools for specific classes to round out their childrens' education, and can afford to pay a market rate. Other parents are more concerned with finding affordable programming to fill the gap between school dismissal and the end of their work day.
  - > Although subsidizing bus trips takes a big bite out of a program's budget, some Community School programs feel bound by the expectations of neighborhood residents who have grown to expect heavily discounted outings; Community Schools in other neighborhoods experience little or no interest in such trips. Some neighborhoods love family trips; programs in other neighborhoods can't find enough participants to fill a bus. Some programs are known for great school vacation ski trips; other programs spend little effort and resources on vacation programming in response to low demand.
  - > Some elementary schools serve a largely local population; others serve a high percentage of children from other neighborhoods; and some fall in-between. Likewise, some Community Schools serve mostly local children, some serve mostly non-local children, and others fall in the middle. Many children who attend non-local elementary schools participate in their neighborhood Community School, because bus transportation is only available at school dismissal.

- Both the demographics of individual neighborhoods and the needs of their residents have changed over the past two decades:
  - > Many City neighborhoods have significantly larger and more diverse ethnic and linguistic minority communities whose members may have trouble accessing traditional Community School programming, as well as financial assistance.
  - > Although Census data indicate that household income is up, there seem to be more single parent households, more low income households, and more households unable to provide or afford necessary childcare.

In some cases, Coordinators and Councils have experienced these changes as increased demands for programming; in other cases, the needs of these constituencies have apparently remained hidden. In some ways, programs and their Councils have kept up with these changing needs and demographics; in other ways they haven't.

- Perhaps one of the most significant ways in which neighborhoods vary is in terms of residents' ability to financially support Community School programming through payment of activity fees and/or fundraising contributions. As is discussed in the next section, community-based funding plays a significant role in determining the volume and quality of programming a community is able to sustain, as well as the level of scholarship assistance the program is able to offer.
- The resources available to address community needs are different in each neighborhood. The existence of a nearby stabilization committee, tenants' council, independent crime watch group, recreation program, community center, or senior center changes the nature of demands placed on the local Community School, and affects the level of participation in activities and may undermine interest in serving on the Neighborhood Council.
- The ability and willingness of elementary schools and their daytime staffs to host Community School activities varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. Some school buildings simply don't have a full-sized gym, a kitchen, music and art rooms, or extra storage areas. A gym may be reserved for intramurals up to four days/week. Competition for other spaces may come from school or community-based programs, or from a Child Care or Youth Center program run by the Department. In some cases, day school staff are willing to share the auditorium, cafeteria, and gym, but not individual classrooms or resource areas.

The availability of usable spaces plays a large role in shaping - and sometimes limiting the scope of - a Community School program.

- Coordinators and Neighborhood Council members bring different strengths, interests, and perceptions about whom the Community Schools should be serving and what services they should be providing to their respective positions:
  - > Some Coordinators are teachers, some are administrators. Some feel most comfortable working with seniors, others with young children, and others prefer working with pre-teens.

Some are drawn to the community organizing aspects of the job, while others prefer to focus their attentions on running a strong activity-centered program.

- > Some Coordinators and Council members see the Community School as a locus of neighborhood organizing; others see it primarily as a source of enrichment programming. Some see young children and their parents as the principal constituents; others are committed to serving pre-teens; still others prefer to focus on the needs of local elders.
- > Council members are frequently drawn from the constituencies historically served by Community Schools. Like other decision-makers in positions of responsibility, Council members are most knowledgeable and concerned about the programs they -- or someone they know -- have utilized, and/or fought hard to build up. In some cases, program traditions may go back more than twenty years.

As neighborhoods change, the roles that Community Schools may be asked to play can also change. Many of the potential constituents of Community School programming lack a tradition of program involvement, and consequently lack representation in the decision-making around the allocation of scarce resources. To the extent that Councils do not include representation from all potential constituencies, they are less able to identify "true" community priorities.

- > Coordinators and Councils don't always share the same priorities or share the priorities articulated by City leaders and DHSP management-level staff (see Section 7). A few Coordinators described being caught between two "masters" -- their City employers and their Councils -- each of whom believes they are reflecting community interests.

Although DHSP management-level staff strongly encourage participation in these high priority initiatives, and actively support efforts intended to broaden access, the intent has never been to impose a single vision of the role of Community Schools on any individual program. In fact, any attempt by the City to impose such uniformity on the Community Schools would likely be strongly opposed by Neighborhood Councils that value their statutory autonomy.

If program resources were unlimited, Community Schools could be all things to all people. In the real world, however, there will continue to be gaps in access to Community School programming, including gaps not filled by other local service providers. A challenge that Human Service administrators will face is finding ways to fill the most important gaps, without threatening the autonomy of the programs whose priorities may have created those gaps in the first place.

#### Section 4. Program Operating Budgets: Spending and Revenue

For the purposes of this report, the costs associated with Community Schools are divided into two categories: personnel costs and the cost of program operation. Personnel costs -- approximately \$490,000 for the salaries and benefits of the twelve Coordinators and two Program Managers<sup>4</sup> -- are paid for out of the City budget. Operating costs, which vary substantially from program to program, are funded by a mix of City funds (\$5,000 for each of the twelve programs), participant fees (averaging \$22,883 over the period studied), and fundraised money (averaging \$883), as described in the remainder of this section.

The only funding reflected in the City budget is municipal funding (\$550,000). Participant fees and fundraised money are deposited into separate accounts managed by the individual programs.

#### Overview of Program Expenditures and Revenues

Over the period September '91 - August '92, the average program spent in excess of \$28,000 on programming and overhead (excluding the cost of the Coordinator position). Individual operating budgets ranged from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

Participant fees accounted for almost 80% of that budget. The City's \$5,000 operating allocation accounted for 17.5%, and fundraising accounted for the remaining 3%.

The primary determinant of a program's operating budget size was the amount of activity fees collected. The size of a budget, however, does not necessarily reflect the breadth of a program:

- A program able to minimize instruction costs by utilizing the Coordinator as a teacher, or by finding instructors who charge minimal fees, may offer varied programming on a small budget.
- A \$70 trip with a busload of participants can add more (\$2,800) to a program's budget than the fees collected for half a dozen \$35 classes serving ten children each (\$2,520).

Given that the City's contribution to the operating revenue mix is fixed at \$5,000, and given the relatively small contribution that fundraising has historically made, the ability of a Community School to support diverse programming and to subsidize the participation of low income persons is substantially dependent upon the ability of a critical mass of constituents to pay fees that equal or exceed the cost of that programming. Clearly, the residents of some neighborhoods are better able to support diverse program with higher fees than the residents of other neighborhoods.

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<sup>4</sup>In addition to supervising (oversight, evaluation, goal-setting) and providing technical assistance and emergency back-up to the Coordinators, the two Program Managers devote time to special projects, including activities of the Multi-Cultural Task Force (early release day performances, Community Forums, trainings for DHSP and other City staff, City Hall lunchtime forums, Black History Month activities, and fundraising, including Gospel Night).

Because Community Schools sponsor dozens of activities every program quarter, the fiscal impact of any individual activity as a "money loser" or "money maker" is typically small. What is more critical is whether, over an entire quarter, participant fees are adequate or inadequate to cover activity-related costs. Data from the 1991-92 school year indicate that, on average, fees are not adequate to cover activity-specific costs:

- Ten of eleven programs that sponsored trips incurred cumulative trip-related costs that exceeded cumulative trip-related fees during both the Fall '91 and Winter/Spring '92 quarters. Average losses exceeded \$900/quarter.
- Class fees seemed to be set at levels that better approximated costs. Five out of twelve programs took in fees which exceeded class costs over the course of those same two quarters; however, the average program still lost \$220 on classes each quarter.

Whether these program losses reflect intentional subsidies, informal or formal scholarships, or underpricing is not clear. What is clear, however, is that when fees are set at a rate which doesn't cover the cost of activities, the uncovered portion of activity costs is paid out of City or fundraised moneys, leaving less money for scholarships and administrative costs (outreach, salary of an assistant, etc.).

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In addition to activity-specific costs (e.g., instructors' salaries, classroom materials, bus rental, admissions, refreshments, additional help at special events, scholarships), Community Schools incur "office costs" (e.g., copying, mailing, and supplies) and "other indirect costs" (e.g., equipment purchases and additional salary costs for one or more of the following:

- a building supervisor to locks up on nights that the Coordinator leaves before the end of the Community School day;
- fill-in staff to substitute for the Coordinator when she is leading a trip, sick, or otherwise unable to provide on-site oversight; and
- a part-time assistant or work study students.)

Although Coordinators document most activity-specific costs on the financial quarterly report forms, they do not record scholarship assistance, and they do not uniformly record all of the aforementioned "office" and "indirect" costs. Division staff estimate that "office costs" come to \$600/year, while ad-hoc data from nine Coordinators suggests that the "other indirect costs" may amount to as much as \$1,851. Four programs were able to provide scholarship information for the winter/spring '92 quarter. These programs offered an average of 14 scholarships at a cost that ranged from \$235 to \$1,642 and averaged \$725. (The quarterly report form is being revised to facilitate better documentation of program expenditures, scholarship assistance, and non-activity-specific costs.)

#### City Funding Support for Operating Costs

City funding of program operating budgets has remained constant at \$5,000 for most of 20 years.

In 1991 and '92, the Community and Youth (C&Y) Division was asked by the Department to offset \$10,000 of its City funding as a way of supporting Departmental efforts to live within tightening budget constraints. DHSP leadership felt that since other Divisions augment City funding with other revenue sources, it was reasonable to expect the C&Y Division -- which receives 20% of all City funding for Human Services -- to do the same.

Because participant fees and the proceeds of Community School fundraising are deposited into checking accounts managed by each Neighborhood Council, those moneys do not appear in City budget calculations as an offset of municipal funding; that is, the City Budget document suggests that City funding accounts for 100% of program revenue.

If these fees (\$270,000) and fundraised moneys (\$10,000) had passed through a City account, they would have appeared as a 34% offset of City funding. (See Table 2.)

The City's offset requirement meant that each of the twelve Community Schools and five Youth Centers would have to either trim \$600 from its operating budget, or raise an extra \$600 from fees or other sources.

In 1992, the C&Y Division, like other Divisions within the Department, was also asked to absorb postage, copying, and office supply costs which had, until then, been paid by the City through the DHSP administrative line item. Division staff estimate that, with this change, programs incurred an average of \$600 in increased costs.

The impact in 1992-93 of these two fiscal policy changes was an approximate \$1,200 increase in individual program costs, interpreted by Community School Coordinators and Councils as a 24% reduction in the City's \$5,000 funding support. It was left up to each program to determine how to compensate for that increased liability/lost revenue. Coordinators reported a range of program responses to these changes:

- Four programs indicated that existing revenues and resources would enable them to weather the one-time loss of City funding without any spending changes.
- Five programs indicated they could make the cuts necessary to cope with short-term reductions in City funding, without seriously undermining access to the programming that is most popular with existing constituents by:
  - > increasing the cost (or decreasing the number) of classes and outings,
  - > cutting back on scholarships,
  - > reducing the number of ESL classes, and
  - > limiting outreach (i.e., mailings).
- Three Coordinators indicated that they did not know how they could cope with the increased cost/loss in revenue. They indicated that even if the \$1,200 change had not occurred, their programs would have had trouble making ends meet. Their neighborhoods were unable to support the fundraising or increased fees that would be necessary to make up the \$1,200, they said, and the alternative -- reducing the scope of programming -- would be unacceptable both to their neighborhoods and their Councils.

In response to concerns expressed by the Community Schools and their constituents, DHSP leadership has recommended eliminating the \$10,000 offset requirement in the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 1993. That is, programs would receive the full \$5,000, but would continue to be responsible for the same kinds of administrative costs that all DHSP programs individually assume.

### Fundraising, Volunteers, and Other In-Kind Support

Four of the Community School programs have been successful in obtaining small grants from local corporations (Stop and Shop, Draper, and Lotus) and the Arts Council. One program receives a portion of the proceeds from the Cambridge Revels. Another program encourages participating households to include contributions to the Scholarship Assistance Fund with their registration forms, a strategy which works relatively well in that neighborhood, but would probably raise significantly less in a lower income community.

More typically, Community Schools sponsor benefit events -- bake sales, toy sales, flea markets, raffles, etc. -- to raise money. Two programs have compiled and are selling cookbooks collecting recipes submitted by neighborhood residents. Coordinators report that these often work-intensive events/projects are usually more successful at bringing neighbors together than they are at raising funds, particularly in working class communities.

Organizing fundraising events is seen by a number of Coordinators as an activity that either takes away time from other responsibilities, or substantially increases their workload. (One of the most lucrative Division-wide fundraisers, the 1991 "Great Escape" that raised \$6,000 toward the \$10,000 offset, is remembered by most staff as a never-to-be-repeated months-long exhausting effort.)

Coordinators request and receive donations of supplies and/or services from a variety of sources, including the host school, local merchants, and private individuals. Such donations include arts and crafts supplies, games and sports equipment, photocopying services, food for parties, a refrigerator, and discounts from local merchants.

There are some noteworthy instances of volunteerism on behalf of the Community School program, including an assistant Coordinator who has donated 20 hours per week for seven years, two Foster Grandparents who put in large amounts of minimally compensated time, a few teachers who donate instruction or offer their services at a fraction of its value, and Council members who contribute hours of their time to help with mailings, events, and other behind-the-scenes operations. In addition, many Coordinators report long hours of unpaid overtime.

Volunteers from the Harvard Hand program staff most tutoring and homework assistance programs. Although each volunteer contributes "only" an hour or two a week, the cumulative impact of the corps of volunteers is substantial, saves the Community School program several thousand dollars, and is an important resource for children.

## Section 5. Staffing-Related Concerns

As was noted earlier, the City pays for a Coordinator position at each Community School. (Until the passage of Proposition 2 1/2 ten years ago, every Community School had two City-funded staff positions -- a Coordinator and an Assistant.) As was also noted earlier, every program expends some of its resources on at least one part time staffperson - a building supervisor, an assistant, or a work study student. Most Coordinators feel that this part-time, sometimes erratic, assistance is not enough to support program growth.

Coordinators expressed concern that because of the scattered nature of their job, they invariably shortchange one constituency when they are involved in addressing the needs of another:

- leading any activity -- a class, a trip, a meeting -- comes at the expense of program oversight and being available to receive calls and visits by constituents;
- leading a senior activity comes at the expense of attending to the after-school component; leading an early release day outing may come at the expense of attending to seniors;
- networking with school and agency personnel, developing outreach materials, doing program planning and writing curricula during daylight hours may come at the expense of attending to the needs of seniors, parents, and other constituents who call or drop by.

Coordinators expressed frustration with the combination of long daytime hours and frequent evening and weekend activities; with the mix of menial and professional, secretarial and administrative responsibilities that comes of being a primarily one-person program; with having to juggle community organizing responsibilities that compete for time with their very different responsibilities as program administrators; and with feeling like second class citizens in their host school buildings (see Section 6 below).

Although most Coordinators stated that they could use more staff support, bad experiences with well-meaning, but unreliable volunteers have made them reluctant to depend on volunteers to staff classes or trips -- unless the volunteers are connected with a program, like Harvard Hand, that can all-but-guarantee their attendance.

Coordinators have a hard time envisioning the expansion of Community School programming or the expansion of access to existing programming necessary to meet the emerging, expanding, and unmet needs.

Many Coordinators feel that they are overseeing as many activities and programs as they possibly can; even if they had the financial resources to support additional activities, without additional staff support, they do not believe they could significantly expand programming without losing managerial "control".

Although the two Program Managers are available for support and assistance, Coordinators worry that ultimately they alone would be responsible for staffing new initiatives. Without being able to shift some of their responsibilities to an assistant, many Coordinators are unwilling to think about new initiatives.

## Section 6. Relationships With Other Municipal Service Providers

### The Host Public School

As was noted in Section 3, the existence and/or availability of appropriate space in the host elementary school building plays a large role in shaping -- and sometimes limiting the scope -- of Community School programming.<sup>5</sup> School-related activities always take priority over other uses for areas like the gym, auditorium, and cafeteria. Intramurals have second priority for use of the gym.

Use of classrooms is up to the discretion of individual day school teachers, who are often reluctant to risk disturbance of their bulletin boards, blackboards, and furniture arrangement. Such permission typically depends on the Coordinator's establishing a personal relationship with the teacher, or perhaps even hiring the teacher to provide after-hours instruction.

Eleven of the twelve Coordinators describe their relationship with the host school and its principal as cordial, good, or excellent. Some relationships have taken years to build; others benefit from the generally supportive nature of some principals and staff.

- Most Coordinators are members of their host school's Student Support Team. All report having informal relationships with school counselors and teachers who refer at-risk students for enrollment in activities and/or scholarship assistance.
- A few Coordinators participate in some day school activities (e.g., teach mini-courses), or share programming (e.g., homework help) or support services (e.g., duplication, sending information home with the students, broadcasting daily program announcements, writing a column in the school newsletter) with the host school.

Many of the Coordinators -- even some who describe their relationship with the school and its principal as excellent -- mentioned their frustration with second class status in the school building:

- being confined to cramped offices or forced to set up an "office" in the middle of a cafeteria;
- being routinely closed out of most areas other than the cafeteria, auditorium, and gym;
- being subject to unpredictable displacement from a regularly used space when the school needs that space for a meeting or event;
- being unable to obtain useful storage facilities; and
- being dependent upon sometimes uncooperative custodial staff who control keys, lighting, and general building environment.

A number of Coordinators suggested that their programs would benefit from a stronger affiliation with the school, from being perceived as "a member of the same team" by day school staff.

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<sup>5</sup>As the City attempts to develop school-based family centers, it might reasonably expect to encounter the same kind of space constraints that Community Schools experience as secondary "tenants" in the school building. In fact, to the extent that family center activities are distinct from Community School activities, they are likely to compete with one another for access to the limited space available.

### Other Community Schools

Relationships among Community Schools depend upon the relationships between their Coordinators. Most programs collaborate with one or more neighboring Community Schools to sponsor some senior trips and/or early release day activities. Coordinators frequently work together on flyer production. Two Community Schools co-sponsor a SHARE program.

Two Coordinators stated that Community Schools compete with each other for teachers, while two other Coordinators reported sharing teachers. Programs that can afford to offer instructors higher salaries or earlier starting times (because of the earlier schedule of the host school) are more successful in competing for those instructors. Teacher-sharing occurs when two programs combine to guarantee a full afternoon of teaching -- which neither program could offer on its own.

### The Local Youth Center

Relationships between Community Schools and Youth Centers vary across the city, and depend both on the Community School's interest in offering/supporting pre-teen programming and on the relationship between the Coordinator and Youth Leader. Community Schools that focus attention on younger children have few if any occasions to collaborate with Youth Centers. Examples of collaborations include:

- Two Community Schools and their neighboring Youth Centers co-sponsor a "pre-teen club."
- The local Youth Center "comes to the Community School" one or more nights a week (to provide local teens with access to a gym) in several neighborhoods. In some cases, shared use of the school facility defines the depth of the collaboration.
- Three Coordinators report co-sponsoring with local Youth Centers athletic activities and/or dances for pre-teens.
- One Coordinator encourages Youth Center participants to take classes in the Community School, and supplies the Center with games and surplus refreshments.

Program staff report that collaborative programming is complicated by several factors:

- The two programs have radically different fee structures: Youth Center members pay a five dollar fee which covers the cost of nearly all activities, while Community Schools depend on fees to raise the bulk of their operating budgets. When Community Schools invite Youth Center members to participate in their activities, they have to charge participants to recoup costs.
- The two programs operate on different time schedules, so that staff meetings are difficult to arrange.
- Coordinators and Youth Leaders often bring different approaches to working with pre-teens: Coordinators, accustomed to working with younger children, are more inclined to impose structure; Youth Leaders, accustomed to working with teens, are more

inclined to operate a "relaxed" program.

At the time of this writing, the Division has instituted "cluster meetings" to promote cooperation between neighboring programs.

#### Council on Aging

For the most part, Community Schools and the Council on Aging (COA) operate independently, but maintain a working relationship with each other. Most Community Schools announce their trips in Newslines, the COA newsletter. (COA staff report that lack of information about Community School plans occasionally leaves them unprepared to respond to inquiries from seniors interested in specific outings.) Three Coordinators report undertaking joint trips with the COA. One program splits the proceeds of a raffle with the COA. One Coordinator collaborates on geriatric substance abuse prevention activities.

COA staff attempt to coordinate dates for citywide events with Community Schools, to ensure that seniors from all neighborhoods have an opportunity to participate in both local and citywide activities. All but one of the Community Schools (located near the North Cambridge Senior Center) distribute information and sell tickets for COA events.

**Section 7. Program Priorities of Coordinators and Councils, and Perceived Priorities of Neighborhood Residents and City Leaders**

Coordinators were asked to compare the priorities of neighborhood residents, Neighborhood Councils, and City leaders, and to state their own priorities. Subsequent meetings with the Councils suggest that Coordinators accurately read the pulses of their Councils.

**Neighborhood Residents**

Coordinators suggested that neighborhood residents typically are most aware of and interested in the components of Community School programming that affect them personally. That is, seniors focus primarily on senior programming, and parents of young children focus primarily on programming for their children.

Residents count on their local Community School to sponsor the kinds of activities it has offered in the past. Although the Department distributes a catalog describing programs at each of the 13 sites, many city residents have no sense of what other Community School programs offer or charge. More enterprising residents take advantage of the variety of programming available at the different sites.

Generally speaking, residents expect the Coordinator to be informed and accessible by telephone and in person. Seniors expect to be able to easily contact the Coordinator to confirm trip details or obtain schedule information, and expect the Coordinator to personally oversee outings and special events, so that any problems can be promptly resolved. Parents expect Coordinators to "watch" their children during the unstructured intervals before, between, and after classes.

Coordinators reported confusion among neighborhood residents -- and sometimes among school personnel -- about the relationship between the Community School and the school. Coordinators routinely field questions that would be better addressed to school staff or the parent liaison, and must routinely explain why parents have to pay for programming in a school building.

Several Councils suggested that the Department should develop a strategy for more visibly identifying Community School as a DHSP vs. School Department program, both to build awareness of where tax dollars go, and to prepare parents for the fee they will pay.

Coordinators also report confusion among residents and school staff about the relationship between Community Schools and Child Care.

**Neighborhood Councils**

According to program staff, the membership of a Neighborhood Council is typically drawn from the seniors and the parents of school-aged children who have benefitted from its programming. A number of Council members have remained active long after their children have aged out of the program. Some Councils include residents who were involved in the establishment of Community Schools in Cambridge.

Councils are typically most concerned with assuring the continued smooth operation of the kinds of programming their members have grown to appreciate as consumers -- senior trips, enrichment activities for children, and events which bring neighborhood residents together.

Community School programming -- and hence the consumer experience -- varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. The expectations and priorities of Council members recruited from the ranks of consumers reflect that variation, and serve to perpetuate the idiosyncratic strengths of each program. (e.g., One Community School has a long tradition of protecting and developing programming in local parks. That neighborhood's Council's newest members are residents who were largely drawn to the program because they, too, appreciate the parks. Not surprisingly, one of the top priorities of that Council is maintaining the quality of park environments and park programs.)

All Councils assign a high priority to community-building activities, though each defines "community-building" somewhat differently:

- supporting Crime Watch activities
- developing a drop-in play space for parents and children
- sponsoring block parties, community breakfasts, and other activities that help neighbors get to know each other
- sponsoring family trips
- sponsoring SHARE and other cooperative self-help programming
- fixing up parks, sharing tips to help residents grow more beautiful gardens, producing a neighborhood cookbook, and other "neighborhood self-esteem building" activities)
- taking an active role in neighborhood planning meetings

Several Coordinators and Councils reported that although their communities were concerned about neighborhood safety, other groups -- stabilization committees, crime watch groups -- were strongly identified with that issue; those Councils felt more inclined to focus on other matters. In a few cases, Coordinators reported that existing crime prevention groups viewed potential Council involvement in safe neighborhoods activities as an intrusive attempt by the City to "control" neighborhood activities. Only a few Coordinators and Councils listed substance abuse prevention as a high priority.

### City Leaders

DHSP and City leadership were seen by Coordinators as placing a much greater emphasis on addressing basic community concerns -- neighborhood safety and crime, substance abuse, hunger -- and much less emphasis on traditional enrichment programming.

Only three Coordinators thought that activities for children and/or seniors were among the top priorities of DHSP and City leaders.

Although Coordinators agree about the importance of addressing crime, substance abuse, domestic violence, and hunger, they are frustrated at being asked to absorb these new initiatives without any additional funding or staffing support. They question City leaders' appreciation of the value of traditional enrichment and recreational programming.

## Coordinators

The top priorities of eleven out of twelve Coordinators focused on activities and programs for children and seniors. (The other Coordinator focused on community building and organizing.) The most frequently mentioned suggestions for program development, assuming the availability of necessary resources, included:

- Increased funding for scholarships;
- Drop-in programming for seniors.
- Development of mechanisms (e.g., escort program, late bus) that would enable programs to serve children whose parents cannot escort them home after activities; and
- Development of programming that would engage pre-teens, especially pre-teen girls.

The most often mentioned idea was a "club" model, incorporating low cost membership (e.g., \$5/year as at Youth Centers), optional participation in regularly scheduled activities, and unstructured time in a supervised environment.

**Section 8. Next Steps**

There are no easy answers to questions about the future of Community Schools, and certainly there is no existing consensus about the details of getting from here to there.

Perhaps as a next step, City and Community leaders, including representatives of the Citywide Neighborhood Council, could use the following questions about the appropriate roles of Community Schools and the resources needed to play those roles as a means of developing some non-binding policy recommendations:

- (1) Whom should the Community Schools (in combination with other providers) be serving and what kinds of programming should be provided?
  - (a) Should there be certain baseline levels of programming?
  - (b) How can programs more effectively reach out to and serve presently under-served populations?
  - (c) Are there some needs which are best met by other programs, for example, the School Department, Child Care, Youth Centers, the Council on Aging, Stabilization Committees, Tenants' Councils, etc.?
- (2) What kind of staffing and funding resources are necessary to enable Community Schools to provide the sought-after level of service?
- (3) What kind of staffing and funding resources are available -- or potentially available -- to support the sought-after level of service:
  - (a) What kind of staffing and funding support is furnished by the City? (In FY 94, funding support includes not only staff positions and \$5,000, but also over \$25,000 in targeted grant funding to support crime watch projects, a children's play space development project, a teen parent education program, and a cultural diversity project.)
  - (b) What portion of program funding should be derived from participant fees?
  - (c) How can individual programs -- or a collaborative of programs -- fundraise most effectively? What is the potential of such fundraising and grantwriting? What kinds of donated resources (including staff assistance) are available?
- (3) If the combination of City funding, participant fees, and fundraised/donated resources is unable to support the sought-after level of Community School programming, what kinds of choices are available to Coordinators and Councils for allocating and/or re-directing resources?

**Table 1: Total Activity-Specific Expenditure Budgets and City Contribution<sup>6</sup>**  
(excluding "indirect" costs and administrative costs)

	Fall '91 total (city)	Winter/Spring '92 total (city)	Summer '92 total (city)	Totals <sup>7</sup> total (city) (pct)
Fitz	8,734 (408)	6,078 (1,344)	7,589 (1,040)	22,401 (2,792) (12.5%)
Fletcher		7,093 (3,029)	14,372 (3,287)	
G&P	2,927 (2,607)	3,610 (1,847)	8,353 (757)	14,890 (5,211) (35%)
Haggerty	10,094 (472)	17,900 (985)	12,303 (1,284)	40,297 (2,741) (7%)
Harrington	7,491 (420)	9,200 (1,977)	8,793 (1,432)	25,484 (3,829) (15%)
Kennedy	7,520 (749)	9,126 (2,317)	7,587 (1,964)	24,233 (5,030) (21%)
King	6,423 (100)	7,246 (350)		
Longfellow	4,259 (1,783)	9,586 (3,084)	1,468 (757)	15,313 (5,524) (36%)
Maynard	3,094 (2,043)	3,942 (1,626)	1,752 (1,110)	8,788 (4,779) (54.5%)
Morse	2,481 (250)	6,929 (50)	24,035 (1,500)	33,445 (1,800) (5.5%)
Peabody	13,868 (2,629)	20,217 (1,286)	14,605 (1,332)	48,690 (5,247) (11%)
Tobin	9,065 (1,132)	12,756 (500)	1,875 (730)	23,696 (2,362) (10%)
Average	6,905 (1,145)	9,474 (1,533)	9,339 (1,381)	25,718 (4,059) (15.8%)

<sup>6</sup>Looking at City reimbursements on a quarterly basis does not provide meaningful information, since City reimbursements are not intended to enable individual activities -- or even the quarterly balance sheet -- to break even. Rather, City reimbursements are intended to enable programs to break even over the course of the year. Some programs seek to maximize City reimbursements at the beginning of their fiscal year; other programs seek to spread City reimbursements more evenly over the course of the year.

<sup>7</sup>The amount of the City Contribution may exceed \$5,000 since the three quarters identified in this chart were not in the same fiscal year. (These three "quarters" do constitute a full calendar year.)



CITY CLERK

1993 APR 13 PM 2:59

CAMBRIDGE MA.



USA 19

City Clerk  
Human Services Committee  
City Council Offices  
City Hall Mass Ave  
Cambridge MA

02139

10 Aug 93

Dear City Council members,

I am unable to attend  
the Tues Aug 13 Human  
Services Committee hearing  
but I would like to write  
in strong support of  
Community Schools. My three  
children attend classes at the  
Tobin, Peabody, Fitzgerald and  
Morse schools in gymnastics,  
dance, violin + recorder and  
we would otherwise be unable  
to afford these fine programs.

Thank you Alison

Sanders-Fleming  
77 Pemberton Street  
Cambridge, MA 02140

ELIZABETH P. BARRINGER

13 April, 1993

to: the city clerk, *Margaret Drury*  
re: the City Council's discussion of  
Community Schools

My daughters have attended classes at the Peabody Community School for the past 4 years. During this time they have been offered a wide variety of courses, ranging from roller skating to Greek mythology; gardening to chemistry; foreign language to maskmaking, not to mention the popular standards: music instruction, art, karate, chess, and drama. Over the years the staff has been capable, knowledgeable, organized, helpful, and accessible. The price has always been reasonable, and scholarship aid is *limitedly available, due to budget constraints*. Isn't this what education is all about?

That the Peabody Community School continues to offer varied, quality activities after school on its shoestring budget is testimony to the dedication and enthusiasm of its staff and instructors. These courses enhance my daughters' elementary school education by exposing them to a wonderful assortment of information which piques their curiosity. In my opinion the Community Schools are a necessary adjunct to public education. To eliminate

or further restrict their funding is to effectively tell our children that we don't care about what they do with their time after school.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Barringer  
4 Leonard Ave.  
Cambridge

RECEIVED  
CITY CLERK

1993 APR 13 PM 2:36

CAMBRIDGE MA.

I enjoying going to the Community School with my children every week.  
Not only they have a variety of things that they can learn,  
They learn to enjoy other ethnic culture with other children.  
I hope ~~continue~~ they continue the program next year. I am looking  
forward to it. Angela Pace

Kennedy

100002

April 12, 1993

To Whom It May Concern

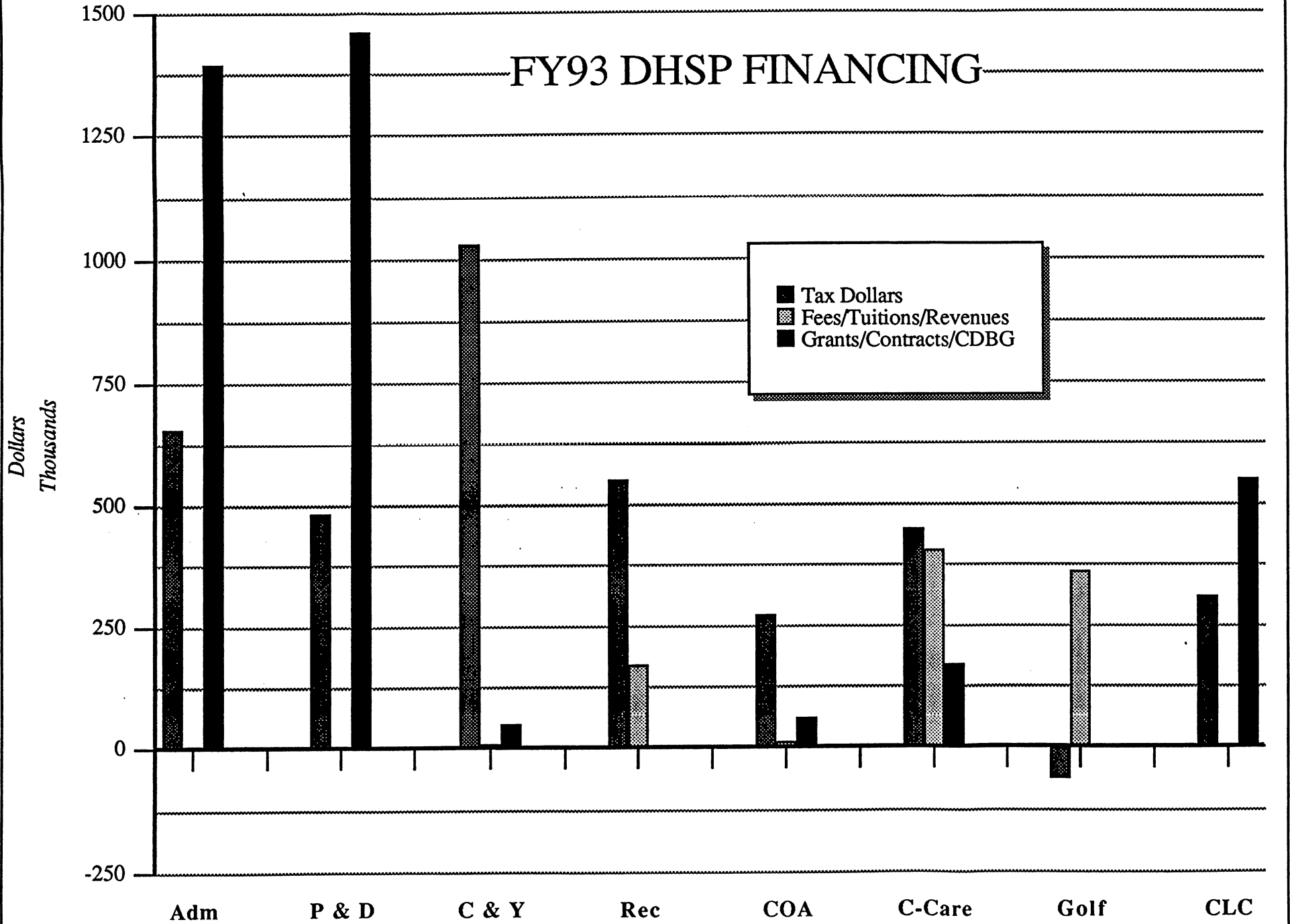
This is written to show my endorsement of the Community School Program. Here in East Cambridge it serves a wide variety of people. From After School Programs to Senior Programs it serves an important function. From a Senior point of view, The Kennedy Community School functions as a social gathering place to play Bingo, learn new crafts, as well as bringing Seniors on trips that they would be unable to go on their own. Many people would be very isolated if there was no Kennedy Community School Program.

Sincerely,  
Phyllis Nowiszeski

**FY93 DHSP FINANCING SOURCES**

<i>Division</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Revenues</i>	<i>Taxes</i>	<i>Grants</i>	<i>Total \$</i>
<i>Adm</i>	655,710	0	655,710	1,392,422	2,048,132
<i>P &amp; D</i>	481,510	0	481,510	1,460,130	1,941,640
<i>C &amp; Y</i>	1,037,715	10,000	1,027,715	51,200	1,088,915
<i>Rec</i>	721,660	171,105	550,555	0	721,660
<i>COA</i>	288,335	14,500	273,835	59,338	347,673
<i>C-Care</i>	1,022,560	405,555	446,240	170,765	1,022,560
<i>Golf</i>	294,560	358,560	(64,000)	0	294,560
<i>CLC</i>	309,575	0	309,575	551,163	860,738
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,811,625</b>	<b>959,720</b>	<b>3,681,140</b>	<b>3,685,018</b>	<b>8,325,878</b>

# FY93 DHSP FINANCING



C.R. ROGERS

architect

617 492-1227

340 Harvard St./Cambridge MA 02139

Remarks Made Before the Committee on Human Resources and Youth  
of the Cambridge City Council on 13 April 1993

Good evening.

My name is C.R. Rogers. I live at 340 Harvard Street.

I am an architect, and I've been an active member of the Long-fellow Neighborhood Council for more than ten years. My involvement with the council has mainly centered on our neighborhood playparks; so this topic will be the focus of these remarks.

In 1977 I was asked by the Dept. of Community Development to draw up plans for the renovation of the Cooper Playpark at the corner of Hancock and Centre streets. Soon after that Judy Bibbins, then our neighborhood coordinator, asked if I'd like to attend meetings of our neighborhood council. This seemed an opportunity to expand my personal advocacy to maintain the park that I had designed into a neighborhood advocacy.

I think that the condition of the Cooper Playpark sixteen years after its renovation, as well as the relative health of our other mid-Cambridge playparks, is testimony to the interest our council has taken in this aspect of our urban life.

What has our council done to foster healthy playparks in mid-Cambridge?

- 1) We have provided, ourselves, and we've encouraged other neighbors to do day-to-day 'housekeeping' in our parks, mainly at Hancock St. and Maple Ave.
- 2) We have provided a liason between the community and the departments of public works, recreation, and police in matters relating to security, maintenance, and programs.
- 3) We have provided a venue for discussion of problems with our parks, mainly the Paine Playground at the corner of Amory and St. Mary Rd.
- 4) Our extremely energetic and resourceful neighborhood coordinator, Penny Kleespies, has for the past several summers, in collaboration with the Recreation Dept. summer workers, organized an extensive and imaginative program of activities for children in our playparks, primarily at Hancock St. and Maple Ave.
- 5) We've sponsored festivities in our playparks: an annual Halloween party, poetry readings, magic shows, puppet shows, potlucks, and musical performances.
- 6) We've bought seasonal flowers for planting in our playparks by soliciting donations from neighbors and by contributing from council funds; and we recently bought picnic tables for the Hancock St. and Maple Ave. playparks.

Playpark Remarks (cont.)

- 7) In 1986, when the city wisely allocated \$10,000 to upgrade the Maple Ave. playpark before it slid into disfunction and lost its constituency, our council worked with Rob Steck of the Dept. of Community Development to gather design input from park users; we collaborated in the design process; and with the help of other neighbors we actually built some of the renovations ourselves.
- 8) We have received grants from the Arts Council and D.P.W. for projects by neighborhood children, as well as by the Enterprise Co-op at Rindge and Latin School, to design and build useful and decorative installations for our playparks.
- 9) We have compiled a computerized mailing list of park users.
- 10) We are currently involved with the Longfellow School and the departments of Community Development and Public Works in planning improvements to the playspace at the corner of Fayette St. and Broadway, and to the Cooper playpark at Hancock and Centre streets.

\* \* \*

How can we judge the relative worth to our city of spending for these types of activity by our neighborhood council as compared to spending on programs for, say, crime prevention?

A New York Times article about a series of studies directed by Ralph Taylor, a psychologist in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University, suggests that there is a correlation between crime in a given neighborhood and the prevalence of, or lack of, feelings of 'neighborliness'. When folks begin to be concerned about each others' welfare, the article suggests, criminal activity declines. (See attached N.Y. Times clipping.)

I strongly believe that having healthy neighborhood playparks goes a long way toward encouraging feelings of neighborliness.

Our playparks are the outdoor 'living rooms' of our neighborhood. Not only do they provide a place for children to exercise, to socialize, and to learn through play, but also they provide an important place for young parents to exchange child-rearing information. This is especially valuable in neighborhoods such as ours, where young parents often don't have extended family nearby.

City investment in programs that help to keep our playparks healthy is wise investment. When neighborhood playparks become liabilities rather than amenities, when they are allowed to deteriorate, the city must pay more for police protection to combat criminal activity originating in neglected parks; and the city must pay more to rebuild entirely parks that have been totally vandalized. And consider the possible loss to the city of property tax revenue when property values fall due to proximity to dangerous and unsightly public spaces.

Playpark Remarks (cont.)

We renovated the Cooper Playpark in 1977. Over the past sixteen years the city has had to expend virtually no taxpayer dollars on this park; and although it is showing signs of wear and tear, the Cooper Playpark is still a valuable amenity for our neighborhood.

We are extremely proud of the achievements of our Longfellow Neighborhood Council in helping to sustain our mid-Cambridge playparks. We believe that taxpayer dollars invested in our neighborhood council are returned to the city of Cambridge with interest.

Thank you.

(3)

play in safety!

4 D.P.W.'s contribution would go toward the flower planting and to continuing other park improvement and maintenance work that we have done during ~~the~~ 1985.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Sincerely,

Encl.

cc. Mark Hinderly

Excerpt from an article by Daniel Goleman in N.Y. Times Science Section of Dec. 31, 1985,

"Scientists Find City Is a Series of Varying Perceptions."

These social bonds, even just nodding acquaintances, play a key role in people's sense of security in the city and in maintaining local order. People feel more responsible for what goes on and are more likely to intervene or seek help when needed. "As local social ties increase, it becomes easier to discriminate between strangers and people who belong," says Ralph Taylor, a psychologist in the Department of Criminal Justice at Temple University, who directed a series of studies in Baltimore.

**Link to Crime Rates**

He found that when the psychological meaning of a place, particularly people's sense of attachment to it and to people there, is of major import in determining the level of crime. In neighborhoods where residents have few acquaintances, crime rates rise, as do people's fears.

City Clerk  
APR 13 11:42  
CAMBRIDGE MA.

MADLINE A. EIERMANN  
16 Lee Street, Cambridge, MA 02139

April 12, 1993

Office of the City Clerk  
City of Cambridge  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Ma 02139

RE: CITY COUNCIL HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION HEARING - APRIL 13, 1993  
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

To Whom it may concern:

I was very surprised to see the flyer titled "WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS?" arrive at my home, sponsored by the Cambridge City Council. During the nearly ten years I have lived and worked in Cambridge, I assumed that the City Council was a force behind these kind of programs and have repeatedly voted for the members as a result. It strikes me as odd that the councilors, who publish the resource guides for the Department of Human Services under their aegis, seem unaware of the scope, purpose, and value of the community school programs.

I am a working parent raising two children in the public school environment who has taken advantage of the following programs:

- Summer Camps
- After School Classes
- Department of Recreation Services
- Summer at the Parks programs

As a family, we have benefitted from these programs as individuals, but also in the community sense by having resources available in our neighborhoods that provide outlets and places for our youth to go and be nurtured by the providers of these services.

I willingly continue to live, work, and pay taxes in this community because it provides these kinds of service and stands out among surrounding communities and perhaps even among all communities in the area.

**PLEASE DO NOT DISAPPOINT THE PUBLIC MINDED FAMILIES THAT SUPPORT  
CAMBRIDGE THROUGH THEIR TAX DOLLARS BY CUTTING THESE PROGRAMS!**

Sincerely,

*Madelaine Eiermann*  
Madelaine A. Eiermann

April 13, 1993

To whom it may concern,

I am a Cambridge resident and have been involved with the community schools program for at least two years.

My children ages 10, 7, and 6 enjoy the after school programs offered, especially the gymnastics.

I myself am a member of A.A. and through the community schools at the Fitzgerald school my group has an open meeting (open to the public) on Monday evenings. This is a very important service for our elderly members and those whom rely on <sup>the</sup> M.B.T.A. throughout the North Cambridge area.

I hope this brief letter gives you an idea of how the community schools are needed and do service the needs of all young and old alike.

Sincerely Yours

Diane Lalucata

Brookford St

SHARE Program -

Fitzgerald

Morse Neighborhood Council  
Morse Community School  
40 Granite Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
April 13, 1993

To the Honorable members of the City Council,

The Morse Neighborhood Council strongly supports the efforts and programs offered by the Department of Human Services through the Community and Youth Division. Programs like the Community Schools initiatives continue to encourage residents to participate in local issues regarding 'quality of life' concerns. The Community School programs touch the lives of toddlers thru senior citizens.

The diversity of programs offered reflects the unique talents and individuality of the neighborhoods and their residents. Neighborhoods are able, through the support of Coordinators and DHS management, to initiate and design programs and services that are important to an ever changing and diverse population. The Neighborhood Councils empower residents to participate in many various programs and issues, such as; food distribution, Crime Watch and Safe Neighborhoods awareness, after-school enrichment programs, adult evening programs, summer recreation and camps, community meeting space, senior activities, support to school department staff and curriculum enrichment, as well as providing assistance and referrals for parents, families, and individuals in crisis.

All of these programs are important because they touch so many different people at various times in their life. We hope that you will continue to support the Neighborhood Councils and Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,

*Susan M. Bowdridge*  
Sue Bowdridge, President

*Linda O'Connor*  
Linda O'Connor, Secretary

*Kathleen A. Jordan*  
Kathleen A. Jordan, Treasurer

## City of Cambridge

The Human Services and Youth Committee conducted a public hearing on Tuesday, April 13, 1993, beginning at 7:06 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, Second Floor, City Hall.

Councillor Jonathan S. Myers, Chair of the above referenced committee, convened the hearing and stated that the purpose of this date's proceedings was to gather information on the activities and operations of the various community schools throughout the City of Cambridge. He stated that the committee would receive a presentation by the Human Services Department, Caroline Shipley, Chair of the City-wide Council on Community and Youth, and solicit public comment. Present at the hearing were: Councillor Francis H. Duehay; Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.; Councillor Alice K. Wolf; Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services; and John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk.

To begin the discussion, the Chair recognized Councillor Duehay for his opening comments. Councillor Duehay noted his great pleasure in assisting in the commencement of the Community School Programs back a number of years ago. He spoke of the lack of utilization of neighborhood schools after the completion of the school days during the 1960's and of the powerful and rich community school programs that have evolved and been developed in the ensuing years.

Upon completion of Councillor Duehay's remarks, the Chair recognized Ms. Herold for the department's presentation.

Ms. Herold noted her involvement in the founding of her neighborhood council in 1968 but now she wears a different hat in her present position. Ms. Herold stated to the Committee that the departmental assessment of Community School Programs was the direct result of the City Manager's FY92 Budget message in which he outlined a myriad of programs that would be reviewed to determine efficiencies and economies of scales. Ms. Herold then outlined to the committee the timetable and scope of the review and presented the findings of said review dated April 8, 1993 - draft - by Fred Berman, DHSP Planner. (A copy is attached) Ms. Herold, in reviewing the assessment, stated that twenty-two out of twenty-three pages outline what is going on in the program and the final page outlines next steps. She also noted that no lay-offs have been made but some belt-tightening has been undertaken such as the absorption of some overhead costs, for example, printing and postage. (Estimated at \$600.00 per annum per community school). She also stated that fund-raising has been encouraged by every division in the department.

At this time Ms. Shipley was recognized for her presentation to the Committee. Ms. Shipley stated that her over-site committee was organized to look at different issues. She noted the presence

of a Neighborhood Council in each of the twelve schools throughout the city. These councils decide the programming in each of the individual community schools. She further stated that the Neighborhood Councils try to respond to the socio-economic conditions found within the local geographic jurisdiction. She also noted that programming is constantly changing to meet the needs of the participants. She cited the following three points for this date's proceedings:

1. Inform and educate City Council;
2. Outline of budget constraints/Restrictions; and
3. Lobby for future support.

She further noted that each council receives a \$5,000 fiscal year allotment from the city and that administrative charge-backs are eating into this amount.

Ms. Shipley said of the Berman Report that it was a good one and a valuable one with the interviews providing a wealth of information.

Ms. Shipley concluded her presentation by providing several communications in support of the Community School Programs.

Councillor Myers inquired of any other budgetary concerns with regards to this division in Human Services.

Ms. Shipley in response stated that for the past three years the effort focused on maintaining present-level funding but the time has come for expansion.

Councillor Myers inquired of the "independent" role of each neighborhood council vis a vis the city structured programming.

Ms. Shipley in response cited the Berman Report which outlines the financial impacts by neighborhood regarding programming/scholarships. She also outlined the workings of the Graham and Parks Neighborhood Council and several of their programming activities.

At this time the following persons came forward to state their support for their participation in the various community schools:

Carol Hogan, 63 Clifton Street - Fitzgerald  
Jacqueline Carroll, 36 Market Street - Roberts  
Linda Singh - Fletcher  
Kevin Hill, 23 Hubbard Avenue - King  
Mary Rowe, 148 Corcoran Park - Haggerty  
Bonnie Randall - Peabody  
Dot Cherico, 395 Columbia Street - Harrington  
Leo Lavertu, 3 Roosevelt Towers - Harrington

Peter Payack, 64 Highland Avenue - Longfellow  
Charles Rogers, 340 Harvard Street - Longfellow  
Barbara Shaw, E. Cambridge - Kennedy  
Salpi Rowinsky - Peabody  
Barbara Hayes - Maynard  
Rose Moorehead, Newtowne Court - Maynard, Fletcher &  
Harrington  
Drew Hapgood, 56 Willow Street - Harrington  
Katherine S. Gardner, 32 Chalk Street - Graham & Parks  
Helen Gibbons, 208 Third Street - Maynard & Harrington  
Wendy Thomas, 6 Chetwynd Road - Peabody  
Ellen McBride, 38 Prince Street  
Tom Weed, 14 Foster Street

Upon completion of public comment, the following closing statements were made by the Committee:

Councillor Myers stated that the City Council has never recommended cuts in funding to the Community School Programs and that creative ways could be found to keep operating at program levels before administrative charge backs.

Councillor Duehay requested that the Chair forward to the City Manager and Assistant City Manager for Human Services all the communications received and request a revisit of the FY94 submitted levels for this program. He noted that the \$7,200 allotment needed was not a large one.

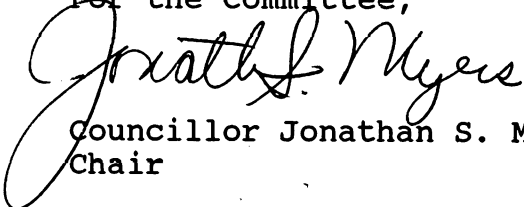
Councillor Toomey thanked those assembled for this volunteerism and stated his concurrence with Councillor Duehay's review request and stated that no one is or has advocated for cuts in this program.

Councillor Wolf also stated her strong support for the Community Schools Program and questioned whether or not the program budget was adequate.

Councillor Myers thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in this hearing.

The hearing was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Jonathan S. Myers  
Chair

Committee Report #1

S 226

Reprot received from the Humand Svs.  
& Youth Committee RE: activities of the  
various community schools.

In City Council,  
May 17, 1993

Report accepted  
placed on file

