

After School Program Elementary ASP & ASTEP



The Brotherhood/Sister Sol (BHSS) understands that the after school hours are a prime time for engaging young people. Our programming offers a safe space where young people, ages eight to 18, can learn and grow, form lasting friendships, have fun, and be enriched by a curriculum that fosters:

- Knowledge of self, creative expression and a sense of personal agency
- Respect and empathy for one's peers, families and communities
- Healthy relationships and lifestyle choices
- Individual and collective responsibility within and beyond the program
- Ongoing opportunity to explore and practice leadership



from need to opportunity

BHSS provides daily after school activities to address:

- **Access gaps:** The young people we work with have limited access to adequate (no less stellar) **schools, employment** opportunities and **enrichment/leadership** experiences.

BHSS is located in the only overcrowded school district in Manhattan. One of our partner high schools, *Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning & Social Change*, was in 2001 the first new school built in Harlem in 50 years. In recent years the high school graduation rate in New York City has hovered at about 55%, though for Black and Latino boys it is closer to 35%. Teenagers living near BHSS or in similar neighborhoods also have limited employment opportunities. Finally, in a community of 23,000 youth age 19 and under, **BHSS is the only comprehensive and holistic youth organization** available to them in a 10 block radius of our doorstep.

512 West 143 Street
New York, NY 10031
T 212.283.7044
F 212.283.3700
www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

• Youth risk factors:

All young people are at-risk as they face myriad challenges in moving from childhood to adulthood. However the risks our members daily confront are exacerbated by the access gap, and without sufficient support and guidance, can lead to devastating outcomes.

Our neighborhood is the main distribution point in New York City for cocaine, yet there are limited options for healthy food, medical services, and useful commerce. The teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates are unacceptably high, and access to the clean air and green space is unacceptably low.

- **Impact opportunity:** The access gaps and risk factors speak to educational, economic and environmental systems that are failing to serve our young people. These impacts however do not speak to the **innate curiosity and capability of youth that is all too often untapped**. BHSS works to close gaps and minimize risks through programming that challenges young people to defy the odds laid against them. Where after school programming seems to have become passé in recent years, at BHSS we continue to offer it knowing it is essential for helping our members thrive, achieve, and commit to social change.

I think a lot of organizations are said to save lives, but The Brotherhood/Sister Sol does not do this. They do not attempt to save lives. They give youth and their families the resources to change and save themselves.

- ASTEP alumni

programs

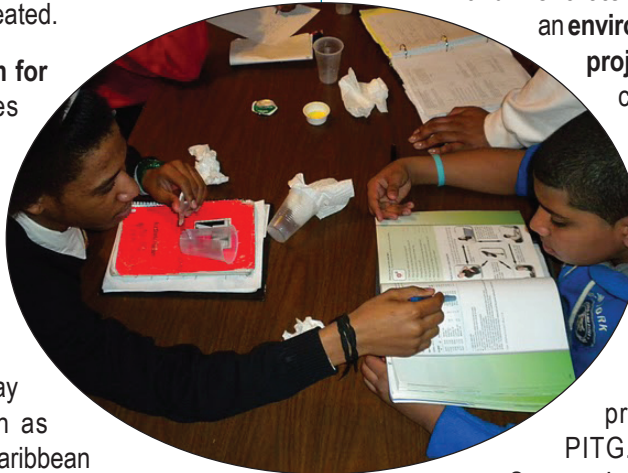
BHSS after school programming provides an entry point for children and youth into our organization and more expansive experiences for members in our **Rites of Passage Program** and **Liberation Program**. After school programming coincides with the school calendar, though is designed to lead to year around, long-term involvement. Our youngest members transition into teen programming, our teens move into our **Summer Leadership Program**, and a cycle of participation and leadership is created.

ASP (After School Program for children ages 8-12)

operates 5-days-a-week from 3:00-6:00pm, with extended hours to 7:30pm once a week for the **Mentoring Program**. A typical afternoon begins with a healthy meal and time for children to unwind before starting their homework. The day ends with **enrichment** (such as multi-media arts, karate, Afro-Caribbean drumming, nutrition & cooking) and **leadership activities** (**Young Brothers** and **Young Sisters** introduce them to our Rites of Passage Program, tweens participate in activities that will help them transition into ASTEP).

ASTEP (After School Teen Enrichment for youth ages 13-18) operates 5-days-a-week from 3:00-7:30pm and on Saturdays. Teens have access to a computer lab and Teen Lounge for study or chill time when not engaged in one or more of the following activities:

- **Media Arts:** Youth produce the blog, **Reality Check** (realitycheckonline.org), while acquiring computer programming, software, graphic design, and editorial skills. They deconstruct mainstream media messages and develop literacy of the field while creating work that is reflective of their reality.
- **Writers Collective (WC):** Youth hone their creative voice through poetry, spoken word and creative writing in a process of nurtured reflection and exchange. Workshops and discussions enable them to examine social justice issues to understand the world and their place in it. WC members develop performance skills and compete in slam and writing contests.



- **Bro/Sis Arts:** Youth explore the performing arts (acting, writing, dramaturgy, producing, directing) to deepen their understanding of social justice issues and to build the **Bro/Sis Repertory Company**. They examine the history of the arts and its impact on social movements, learn from diverse professional artists, and collaborate on the creation of original theatre pieces.
- **Environmental Program** includes **Gaia Renaissance** and **Prove it to Gaia (PITG)**. **Gaia Renaissance** is an **environmental leadership development project** for youth ages 14-18. Members create a *Mission Statement* and definitions for “environmentalist,” “leader” and “team partner” that they strive to uphold. They maintain the **Frank White Community Garden** adjacent to our brownstone, collaborate on environmental justice projects with other organizations, and provide guidance and support to PITG. (PITG is a component of our Summer Leadership Program. Teens are paid to work in the garden on landscaping, construction and maintenance projects.)

strategies & resources

- Low adult-to-youth ratio
- Respect for young people’s needs and interests
- Youth-centered, developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant curriculum and activities
- A sense of order, high expectations and accountability
- Deep caring, fun and a sense of belonging
- Staff trained in the BHSS model and utilizing reflective and collaborative practice. (Staff average 7 years tenure at BHSS and several are BHSS alumni.)
- A healthy meal
- Homework help and tutoring
- College and career advisory
- Volunteers (including alumni) who lend their support, expertise and passion for children as mentors, tutors and instructors.