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## In the Spotlight: Most Popular High School Program Activities



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Have a wonderful holiday season! I am looking forward to another exciting year full of afterschool programming and greater things to come.

**Geraldine Kidwell**  
State Coordinator of Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers

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# In the Spotlight: Top Texas High School Program Activities

High school afterschool programs across Texas include a very wide range of activities. From Folklore at Hidalgo ISD to Roping in Lubbock-Cooper, kids are enjoying unique and enriching activities all over our state. The activities that appear to attract the largest numbers of high school students include those that allow for physical activity, a lot of socialization, real life experiences, and that are all-around fun! Let's take a look at some of the great activities going on across the state:

## **“Design My Ride” at Haskell ISD**

During “Power Hour”, a regular activity at Haskell ISD, students design their own academic activities. Recently a group of high school boys began using “Power Hour” to work on a project they call “Design My Ride”. They are working with one of their community’s local mechanics to build a 4 wheel truck and are learning everything that has to do with designing and building an automobile from start to finish. This activity is highly relevant to the participants, including some who hope to become mechanics themselves. They are learning real life skills while reinforcing their math and science academic skills.



## **Bowling at Atlanta High School in Atlanta ISD**

Getting the chance to go bowling at the local bowling alley in Atlanta is a big treat for the Atlanta High School kids. Prior to being admitted into the bowling group, kids have to pass a scoring test to make sure they know the rules and scoring procedures of the game. When out in the bowling alley, students engage in a physical activity that reinforces their math skills and allows them a chance to have fun with their friends.

## **“Saffel Bucks” at Atlanta High School in Atlanta ISD**

Saffel Bucks is a unique before school activity. Twice a week kids join their teacher, Mr. Saffel, for coffee, snacks and a discussion of current events. This activity helps kids become informed about worldwide events and educates them about politics and international affairs. In spite of its early meeting time, many kids love this activity, and it is highly attended.

## **“Peacemakers” at Travis High School in Austin ISD**

Peacemakers is a student group that meets regularly to build a stronger community through school improvement projects. They also are involved in planning special events for the Travis afterschool program. Recently, Peacemakers conducted an alcoholism awareness campaign. They researched the issue, made banners with facts, and placed an "X" on a number of the students to illustrate the number of students killed by drunk driving.

### **Cooking at Fort Worth ISD**

We all love to eat. That is why cooking is a successful activity all over Texas. At Fort Worth ISD, a former Navy chef who is now the high school chef, teaches a successful cooking class. He is very enjoyable and outgoing and kids in his class have learned to make foods that are significant to them. They learn a lot about nutrition and get to enjoy a nice yummy meal when the lesson is completed.

### **Folklore at Hidalgo ISD**

Folklore is a great cultural and physical activity that kids at Hidalgo ISD really enjoy. In this folklore group, kids concentrate on learning dances from different regional areas in Mexico. The kids learn to identify the music they dance to and what area of Mexico it comes from. They then put on performances throughout the year. Kids enjoy this activity because it gives them a great opportunity to socialize, move around, and because unlike during the school day, they are not being graded on their abilities. Folklore is a great way to teach kids social and physical skills while also teaching them about heritage, cultural expression, history, myths, legends, dance, and traditions.



### **Music Lessons at Travis High School in Austin ISD**

Travis High School students enjoy music lessons in which they learn to play the electric guitar, bass, drums, and piano. The advanced kids guide the beginners, and all kids are given a great chance to jam. This year the Travis program plans to introduce Latin percussion as well.



### **Poetry and Self-expression at Robstown ISD**

Very often kids do not have safe opportunities to express their emotions. They may resort to cutting themselves or engaging in gang activities. At Robstown ISD kids have been given the opportunity to express themselves through a poetry and self-expression afterschool activity that includes paper and art. This enriching opportunity lets them practice language arts, find their creativity, and be safe at the same time.

### **Mariachi at Houston ISD**

At Jefferson Davis High School in Houston ISD one of the most successful afterschool program activities is the Mariachi program. In this predominantly Hispanic area, activities that tap into culture are very popular. People from the community have come to the school to teach the children, and these kids are learning that becoming a mariachi is a potential career opportunity for them.



### **Video Editing at Southwest High School in Houston ISD**

Afterschool program activities with multimedia opportunities are definitely of high interest to high school students. With technology increasingly a



part of our everyday lives, being technology savvy is always a plus. At South West High School in Houston, kids enjoy a great video editing class. Recently the kids put together a successfully scary movie. They did everything including developing the script, acting out the scenes, filming, and editing the piece on the computer.

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## Hands On Minds On Training has Hit the Road!

**Hands On Minds On! Training and Professional Development for Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers** is a collection of training modules on key elements of successful Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). In the Spring of 2007 two training modules "Hands On TEKS" and "Service-Learning" will travel to local areas of Texas to offer real hands-on training to your staff.

To set up training in your area, contact your 21st CCLC nurturer or call SUMA/Orchard Social Marketing, Inc at 512.371.7585.

**Training has no registration cost and is completely free to all participants.**



### **HANDS ON TEKS (in afterschool)**

Say "goodbye" to work sheets! Say "hello" to creative strategies that support the school day *AND* make your students get out of their chairs and smile. Afterschool is a place for students to practice the TEKS through fun, hands-on activities. In this training, an overview/review of the TEKS will precede the design of innovative activities to engage students and support academic learning.

*Audience:* Site staff working with students including coordinators and day school teachers, and program leadership.

### **BUILDING BRIDGES**

A seamless school day is part of an ideal learning environment for students. When afterschool and school day staff members build partnerships to support students' academic learning, everyone benefits. But sometimes afterschool staff members feel embattled, ignored or just plain invisible. (So do the school day staff). Building essential in-schoolhouse partnerships takes bulletin boards, brownies and quantifiable student outcomes. Learn formal and informal strategies to engage busy principals, soothe the stressed-out teachers and strut your successes.



*Audience:* Program leadership and site coordinators.



## SERVICE-LEARNING

Academic learning teams up with community service. What a great way to engage young people, broaden their vision, and build essential life skills for the working world and community participation. Learn how to engage students in identifying, studying and finding solutions to real-world problems in their own communities. Participants will develop service-learning project ideas that take students into the world within 21st CLCC guidelines.

*Audience:* Program directors and site coordinators.

## SUSTAINABILITY

No question about it! Sustainability is a challenge. Some say all good things must come to an end, but for the sake of Texas students, we really hope your 21st CCLC program won't! Take steps beginning in Year 1 of your five-year grant to help sustain a quality program that benefits your students' academic and character growth. Your sustainability checklist is not just about money. Participants learn how to promote a program, network, build community partnerships and *also* find financial support within the 21st CCLC guidelines.

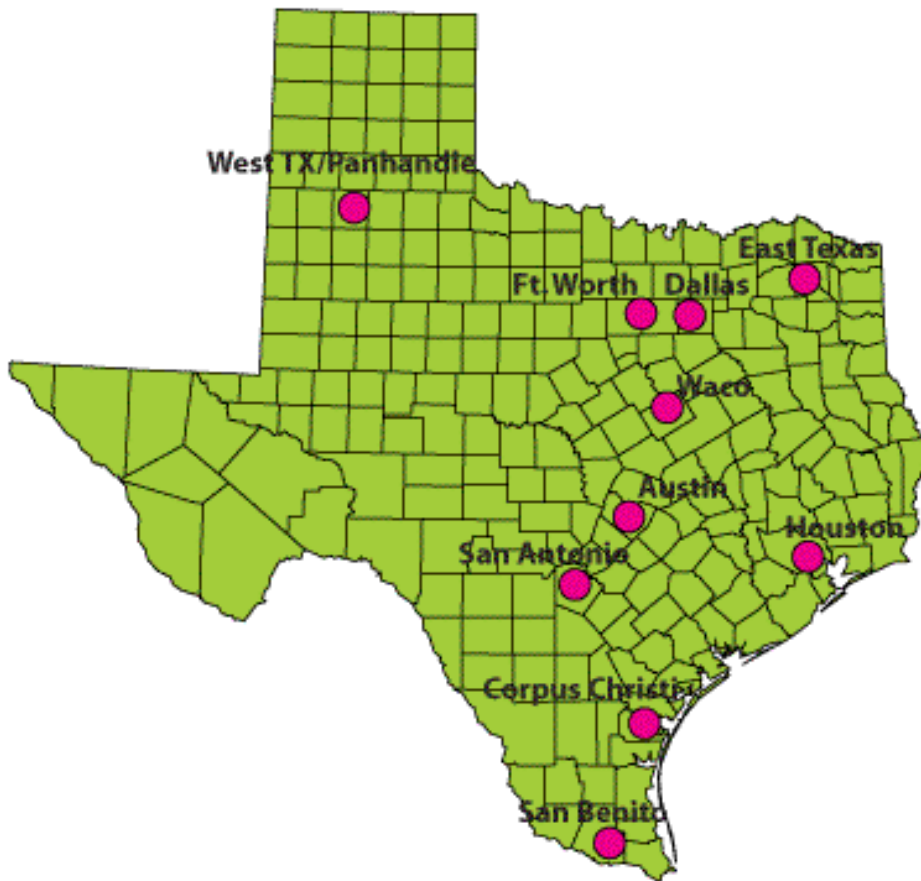


*Audience:* Program leadership and financial partners.

## Training Format

Each training module is three hours in length and consist of a power point presentation, video, and interactive activities. Multiple modules can be compressed into a one day training or you may hold the trainings on seperate days. Experienced and skilled trainers are provided through SUMA/Orchard Social, Inc.

## Local Texas Training Areas:



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## Grant and Funding Opportunities

### Skateboard Parks

Do you want your community to have its very own skateboard park? You are in luck! The Tony Hawk Foundation is awarding grants of up to \$25,000 to support the construction of public parks for skateboarders in low-income neighborhoods or areas with populations of at-risk youths that currently have no skateboarding facilities. This is a great opportunity to get children in your afterschool program involved in a real life service-learning project to help your community. Kids can learn about everything from urban planning to park safety. Take advantage of this great opportunity.

To learn more about the application requirements contact: Tony Hawk Foundation 1611-A South Melrose Drive, Suite 360, Vista, Calif. 92081 [contact@tonyhawkfoundation.org](mailto:contact@tonyhawkfoundation.org) or visit the website: [http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/grant\\_application.asp](http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/grant_application.asp)

### Support for Rural Libraries

<http://www.librifoundation.org/apps.html>.

The Libri Foundation is accepting applications for grants to help rural libraries acquire new hardcover children's books. Grant applications are currently available online at: <http://www.librifoundation.org/apps.html>. The foundation will match grants of \$50 to \$350 from a "friends of the library" member organization or other local group, on a 2:1 ratio, up to a total of \$1,050 for each library. Grants are awarded three times a year and application deadlines are: (postmarked by) March 15th, July 15th and December 15th. Grants are awarded April 30th, August 31st, and January 31st.

**Contact:** Barbara J. McKillip, Libri Foundation P.O. Box 10246, Eugene, Ore. 97440; (541) 747-9655; fax (541) 747-4348 [libri@librifoundation.org](mailto:libri@librifoundation.org)

### Learn and Serve America

Learn and Serve America provides grant support, primarily through intermediaries, to diverse school-community partnerships to develop and sustain service-learning projects. Generally, grants are for a period of three years, renewable annually contingent upon performance and the availability of funds. Learn more at the Learn and Serve America website: [http://www.learnandserve.org/for\\_organizations/funding/index.asp](http://www.learnandserve.org/for_organizations/funding/index.asp)

### Grants Promoting Physical Activity

Nickelodeon is sponsoring a "Let's Just Play" Giveaway for afterschool programs to encourage youth to be more active and play. The grants total \$5,000 each and one winner per month will be randomly selected through December. Winners must use the funding for physical or active play and support a worldwide day of play. For more information and to apply, visit <http://www.nick.com/myworld/letsjustplay/giveaway.jhtml>.

### Grants Promoting Girls Education and Equity

The American Association of University Women is seeking applications from nonprofit organizations for Community

Action grants that support projects and programs that promote education and equity for girls. Projects must have a direct public impact, be nonpartisan and take place in the United States. One year grants are funded up to \$7,000 and two year grants up to \$10,000. The deadline for applications is January 15. For further information, visit [http://www.aauw.org/fga/fellowships\\_grants/community\\_action.cfm](http://www.aauw.org/fga/fellowships_grants/community_action.cfm).

## **Grants for String Instruments**

Classics for Kids Foundation is offering matching grants for music programs to purchase high quality string instruments for students. Programs should demonstrate need, community support and a commitment to raise matching funds. Programs just beginning a string program, those in need of better instruments and those hoping to expand youth access to upper level instruments are encouraged to apply. For more information, contact Surale Phillips, at 406/587-8183 or visit [www.classicsforkids.org/instrumentgrantsintro.html](http://www.classicsforkids.org/instrumentgrantsintro.html).

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## News You Can Use

### Useful Publication

#### The Road to Sustainability



This 51-page sustainability workbook offers great information. We recommend you review it and gain some great strategies for achieving sustainability.

This workbook was created by The National Center for Community Education in collaboration with the Afterschool Alliance with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Click on the image above to download the workbook in a PDF.

### Sound Bite

More than **89,000** people of all ages and backgrounds are helping to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and increase civic engagement through **236** national service projects across Texas. Serving with national and local nonprofits, schools, faith-based organizations and other groups, these citizens tutor and mentor children, coordinate after-school programs, build homes, conduct neighborhood patrols, restore the environment, respond to disasters, build nonprofit capacity and recruit and manage volunteers.

As service-learning projects continue to grow in 21st CCLC programs, we can expect to see even greater civic engagement across Texas. Let's continue to encourage service-learning projects to make future generations even more proactive Texas citizens.

### Service-Learning Documents

#### [S.T.A.R.S. handout](#)

S.T.A.R.S. is the 5 point philosophy of service-learning. This handout provides a clear picture of what your service-learning projects should entail.

#### [Service-Learning Description](#)

#### [Service-Learning Activity Approval Request Form](#)

This form was recently sent to all grantees from Geraldine Kidwell. This is the official form that should be used for any contract amendment to add a service-learning project.

### High School Afterschool Program Research

High school afterschool programs are drawing increasing focus as interest in high school reform takes center stage in education circles.

In the past few weeks SUMA/Orchard Social Marketing, Inc., a research firm in Austin, Texas has been conducting interviews and focus groups across the state to gain a better understanding of the core issues affecting high school afterschool programming.

Keep your eyes open for this report in our next issue of A-School Times.

## Websites to Visit

In a recent article title *Homework? Help!: Lots of Places to Look and Learn Out on the Internet*, the Washington Post referred the following websites which can offer many ideas for your program.

For **reading and literacy** purposes, check out *Book Reports* <http://www.kidsbookplace.org>. This site, started by 10-year-old Emma Walker of Bethesda, has lots of book reviews written by kids, for kids.

For activities related to **Geography** check out: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/education/homework>. This site offers maps, includes pictures, and has lots of facts about all countries, cultures, and places in the world.

For **Science** related activities: <http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org> This site offers good suggestions for science fair projects and lab experiments and reports science news.

For **Math** related activities take a look at <http://www.coolmath.com>. This site is fun and interactive. It offers tips for both teachers and students.

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