

# THE RESOURCE-FULL READER

INEXPENSIVE AND FREE RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE GREATER ROCHESTER AFTER SCHOOL ALLIANCE AND COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

## WELCOME BACK: KEEP PLAYING!

Our summer days were filled with the sounds of play: shrieks of surprise, claps of joy, the pounding of feet running across the basketball court or field and voices occasionally raised in quickly-forgotten conflicts. Programming takes on a different feel during July and August, one that allows for the natural process of learning through play and discovery. When September and October roll around, however, the atmosphere changes. School is serious stuff.

Well, this is a friendly reminder that learning takes place in many forms, that play is one of the most fundamental ways intelligent creatures interact with their environment and safely problem-solve. ELT/OST programs are an opportunity to provide informal, yet intentional, learning options to children that support what is taught in the structured classroom. By expanding, not simply extending, learning, we can keep the essential ingredient of play and continue to hear those shrieks of surprise throughout the entire year!

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Give your students the following math problem:  $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111$ . Put the answer on the board and have your students discuss it. I was surprised myself, looking at the factors!

## WHERE ON THE WEB...?

Looking for some cool science with real kid appeal? Go to <http://www.scholastic.com/nascarspeed/> and download the Nascar Hands-on Aerodynamic STEM activities for grades 5-7. Your students will learn about force, momentum and speed while making paper model cars to race and

research. The free downloads include lesson plans, assessments via a pre and post test, additional paper resources and links to relevant videos! With the popularity of movies like “The Fast and the Furious” and “Tokyo Drift,” most of us know what a car

looks like when it is drifting, but what about drafting, drag and downforce? What’s the science behind it all? This well-constructed lesson packet is a free resource that supports exciting learning and creates a foundation for more investigation. Don’t miss this one!

## A MORE FREELY INFORMED YOU!

As youth workers, we are often required to show hours of continuing education. When these are our second jobs or part-time positions, finding relevant, affordable options for continued improvement can seem impossible.

Appearances can be deceiving, though. Here are some ways to promote your own growth and learning for little or no financial investment.

### 1. Professional Development Organizations

Check to see if there are organizations in your community that support the work you do, and join them. Here in Rochester, the Youth Services Quality Council (YSQC) is a membership-based network that provides learning and sharing opportunities for a wide variety of youth-serving agencies. If your agency isn't a member, you can pay \$35 a year and join as an individual. With free presentations at each monthly meeting and a number of free and inexpensive workshops provided throughout the year, YSQC is a way to connect to your chosen field. And if you are one of those people who is always looking at quality improvement, you can join a working committee and have an impact on how the network functions. For more info, drop an email to [ysqcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:ysqcinfo@gmail.com). And don't stop there. While you are on-line, do a search for other professional development organizations for educators. There are

plenty, many are quite affordable and all will allow you to connect to peers who may share many of your concerns and have some great ideas for you.

- 2. On-line Courses and Webinars** In September, I participated in a four-week webinar on Project-Based Learning (PBL) through You 4 Youth (<https://y4y.ed.gov>), a government-sponsored online resource that provides professional development and technical assistance for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Registering is free and allows access to all sorts of resources in areas like parent engagement, literacy, aligning with the school day, all of which make a difference in our programs. In addition, I found Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org>) and have access to free online classes from more than 120 top colleges and universities around the globe. Schools like Stanford, Yale, the Universities of Zurich and Peking sponsor classes with actual professors, homework and discussion boards. You can pay a fee to receive proof of completion, which may be a good move for you, personally.

- 3. Community Classrooms** Check recreation departments in local towns and you will find classes, both free and paid, for youth and adults on a variety of topics. You can learn a new creative skill, like watercolor painting or

crocheting, or explore career options, learn business writing, anything that can add to your value as an employee. In the city, be sure to check out The Brainery at Village Gate (<http://rochesterbrainery.myshopify.com/>) for classes taught by your friends and neighbors.

- 4. Employer-supported Training** Some of us show up for a training that our supervisor said we had to attend as though we were being forced to join a chain gang. I don't always appreciate every topic, but I know this: if my job requires it, there is a reason. If I'm being paid to be there, then that is my job for those hours and I owe it to the person paying me to participate and give my best. And if it's a repeat? Well, there are very few things in my life that I mastered the first time I was exposed.
- 5. Self-directed study** I know this is my adult brain's favorite way to learn. Give me the book (video, podcast, power point, whatever) and I will devour it. A library card is the free key, but all my other low-cost resources come into play here. The more willing I am to learn, the better prepared I am to work with our youth.

With a little effort, lifelong learning is an option for anyone. Check out these resources and see what works best for you.

## FINGER LAKES HEALTH SYSTEMS AGENCY: HEALTHI KIDS

Take the time to visit the website of Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency's (FLHSA) Healthi KIDS Coalition at <http://www.healthikids.org/> and you will discover the healthy behavior toolkit, an awesome free resource to use with your participants and families.

Click on <http://www.healthikids.org/BeActive/Resources.aspx> and you will be able to download a number of handouts that are targeted toward out of school

time providers. The toolkit has five sections: tips for staff, healthy eating, getting more physical activity, reducing screen time and healthy handouts for parents. The content is concise, colorful and a great way to educate your youth and families!

Under the Eat Healthy tab, you'll also find cool infographics about healthy snacks, eating the rainbow, a 2-pager of game ideas for small spaces and more!

Once you realize how you can integrate these resources into your programming (Wall posters! Family flyers! Student projects!), you'll want to be better connected to FLHSA. Be sure to follow them on Twitter at @HealthiKids and like them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/HealthiKids?fref=ts>.

Special thanks to Jenn Beideman for using the Resource-full Reader to get the word out! This is how we build capacity!

## STACKING THE DECKS...

Even though I never learned to play Gin Rummy or Canasta with my parents, or Euchre with my work friends, I have always been obsessed with cards. Apparently, I'm not alone, as everything from war enemies to sports heroes have been turned into a standard Poker-sized 2.5" X 3.5" piece of heavy paper. Cards for playing bridge are slightly more narrow, at 2.25", because players need to hold a lot more of them in their hand at one time.

There are standard games we play with cards in youth programs, Uno and Skip-Bo being just two of them. Recently, I've stumbled on to some different decks that reignited my excitement for cards. At Goodwill a few weeks ago, I

found a mini card deck with pictures and words printed in English and Arabic. The game is meant to teach antonyms, and is played by matching opposites. Last week, I found a Cards That Talk deck issued by Northwest Airlines, imprinted with simple phrases in Japanese, Chinese,



Korean and English to assist travelers with communication.

My card collection includes a set of the Most Wanted Iraqi playing cards, issued by the military in 2003, and Crooked

Cards, a standard playing deck whose shape is irregular. I have round cards, oblong cards, waterproof cards, jumbo and mini-decks.

We use flash cards to make learning portable, to practice Math and spelling, to study concepts for tests. We use playing cards as grouping tools. We are very confident using cards as two dimensional tools. So what else can we do with them?

Next month, I'm going to introduce you to some great engineering and technology activities that use basic playing cards. Start collecting. The Dollar Tree sells standard decks in two-packs. Round some up and let's see what we can do.

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Want more information on something you read here?

Or have a great tip of your own to share?

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## **Next Month:**

Engineering and  
Technology Activities with standard  
card decks

Resource wish lists



## **YWM: MAKE IT YOURS**

One place I frequently struggled on YPQA assessments in past programs is Domain III, Scale 2, Interdependent Roles. It was sometimes difficult to tease out if the various roles participants were taking in their groups were truly interdependent or not. Recently, I observed a game in a drama program that made the concept more clear for me.

Students counted off by threes to find their scene partners. They were then given four minutes to create an improvised scene in which there was a hungry person, a happy person and a tired

person. Each performer took on one of the roles and all worked together to present their scene.

Once completed, the audience was asked to identify who played which part, and how they were recognized. In order to be successful, each role HAD to be present in the scene. Without one, the group would fail the task.

Interdependence isn't always easy to identify. My brain says someone can always fill in and finish the project. In this activity, I was able to see that all three roles were needed for success.

## **STEM FOR EVERYONE**

There's an unlimited number of STEM activities out there, many of which are fun and inexpensive. Connecting those activities around a theme or a supply item can turn a string of one-hit wonders into a solid learning unit.

Take balloons, for example. Over a five-day period, you could do the following activities: make a balloon car to learn about friction; a balloon rocket to learn about Newton's Third Law of Motion; a magnetic balloon to examine electron charges and gravity; a balloon brain to examine the impact of concussions or the engineering behind protective gear like

helmets; and simple balloon-over-a-bottle chemical reactions to study states of matter. Choose a concept for the week, such as clouds, and find five activities that allow your participants to delve into their physical properties, how they form, what weather is associated with each type and more.

To connect with the school day, find out what your participants are studying in their science or math classes, and parallel your themes with that timeline. Find alternative activities that address the same learning objectives. Your STEM program will have depth and your youth will be able to reflect on real learning.