

---

## Editor-in-Chief's Notes

Dear Readers,

*NEW DIRECTIONS for Youth Development* is now in its fourth year. This is our 12<sup>th</sup> issue and we have very exciting new ones planned. When we began, there was a great deal of skepticism about how viable a journal would be in the field of youth development. We were told it was not really a field, that people in this non-existing field neither read nor write, and that research, policy, and practice do not meaningfully inform each other. The closing of a number of publications supported this perspective. Fortunately, not everyone was a pessimist. In fact, many people we talked to were very excited and saw the need for an in-depth topical journal. But the worry about fragmentation and lack of intellectual coherence was great enough that few publishers dared to pursue a new publication initiative. But Jossey-Bass, an imprint of Wiley, with their large journal offerings in related fields and their Internet presence, joined with us to build a journal that could succeed.

It was clear that to achieve this goal we would have to address topics of relevance to the field, from changing educational practices to the growing afterschool movement, to critiques of punitive practices through zero tolerance and prison pipelines, to trauma, mentoring, and youth worker training. We also wanted to expand the contributors and to create a forum for a vibrant group of theorists, researchers, and policy-makers. We further wanted to present an opportunity for practitioners to convey the amazing creativity in the field. We want the boundary between readers and authors to be a fluid one. Authors read and readers can write, and that includes youth! So far, over one hundred authors have written pieces, and

each issue continues to expand the group of authors. And from what we can tell, the Journal is receiving increasing numbers of unsolicited proposals for issues and articles. The growing correspondence also indicates that readers are engaged and want more.

And more is needed. We want to be the preeminent journal and intellectual source for the youth development field. We want to reach the multiple audiences of youth workers and program leaders, scholars and rabble-rousers, policy-makers and funders. We want to contribute to an intense and needed dialogue between school leaders and teachers and youth development practitioners, between mental health and health professionals and community organizers, between politicians and academics and families. This is the exciting part of all of our work: it does not belong to any one party or group, one organization or institution. Instead it exists in-between and across boundaries—something I have termed in this journal the “intermediary spaces” of innovation, scholarship, and practice.

To reach the potential of interdisciplinary dialogue on a large scale, we have taken a very exciting step: Judy Nee, the president of the National AfterSchool Association (NAA), and I are excited to announce a partnership between the Journal and the NAA (previously NSACA—National School Age Care Alliance), an 8,500-member organization with a visionary president, a great managing director, Peter Howe, and a very accomplished publication committee headed by Selma Goore. We will jointly publish one issue per year on a specific topic. This issue is the first fruit of our joint labor.

Dale Fink, an active member of the publications committee of NAA, served as the editor of this issue. The topic of ethical development is a critical one. While a great deal has been published on character development and moral education in schools, very little writing has occurred for the out-of-school field. Afterschool and summer experiences are typically viewed as ideal settings to increase social skills, interpersonal empathy, and civic engagement. But this reality has not led to systematic thinking about the role of setting in enhancing this essential strand of development. This joint

issue between NDYD and NAA is an example of how we can insure the growth of a topic that has direct implications on how we work with young people. Dale accomplished this task in record time and with excellent editorial judgment and care.

We look forward to a long working relationship with the NAA, and will ensure that the annual issue will be ready for the NAA conference held each February. We will name two members of NAA who are contributors in their fields to join the editorial board. David Famiano, an editor of journals at Jossey-Bass who has a special interest in youth development, has been flexible and supportive in making this and other arrangements possible.

To continue to assure not only inclusion but also highest quality, we have decided that the Journal will become more fully peer reviewed in 2006. We are lucky to have the best advisory board one can hope for, and the board members as well as many other contributors to the field will determine the quality of issues and help us to support writers in producing the best work possible.

One more change is occurring: We are receiving a growing number of manuscripts that are not topically linked to a specific issue in preparation. For that reason we will also publish issues that will highlight the best papers that have undergone a rigorous peer review. This way we can support the careers of young investigators who up to now have had a difficult time publishing their work on specific topics of youth development, and youth development influenced education, health, and mental health. There also has not been a peer-reviewed journal that has developed scholarly criteria for publishing programs and innovations and exciting new practices and case studies in youth development. We are currently accepting papers for the first non-topical issue of *New Directions in Youth Development*, and you are welcome to send yours to us.

We feel lucky that we can make all of these additions to our journal without losing the very special aspect of our work: that each issue is also sold separately, available in bookstores and from Amazon.com and many other sources. I strongly believe in bringing together authors that have a wide array of knowledge to address a single topic in depth. I find it very exciting when a

program director and funder read one of our issues to get support for their ideas when they write a grant or fund a project. Or when a program is in touch with another program because they heard about a new practice through an article in our Journal. We want more policy-makers to use the insights developed in these issues and for that reason we created the executive summaries. But it is not easy to cross all of these boundaries. For that we need all of us to work together, and the Journal is a vehicle enabling us to do so. I am sure we can continue to help in this significant work of creating momentum for an intellectual and practical movement to support youth by building on their strengths, abilities, and ingenuity without losing sight of the challenges and risks for them and for the hundreds of thousands of people who dedicate their careers to their well-being.

Sincerely,

Gil G. Noam  
*Editor-in-Chief*

P.S.: To stay in touch with new developments of the Journal and to get information about future issues and information for authors and editors, go to [Pearweb.org](http://Pearweb.org) (PEAR stands for Program in Education, Afterschool and Resilience, an initiative of Harvard University and McLean Hospital in collaboration with a variety of community health, education, and youth-serving organizations).