

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

March 2007

Site of the Month

On February 28, 2007, four of our Nevada KIDS COUNT Executive Committee members, Louise Helton, Brian Kunzi, Norma Moyle, and Fernando Serrano, joined Dr. Schwer and me in Carson City to present the *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book 2007* to the legislators and governors. Between the legislative sessions we ate a delicious lunch at The Basil and discussed many issues related to children, one being the effectiveness of after-school programs in keeping youth engaged.

Coincidentally, I received an issue brief from the Chapin Hall Center for Children this week on after-school programs. Chapin Hall researchers looked at a Chicago-based after-school program, After School Matters (ASM), to determine whether it influenced the academic achievement of participants during fall 2003.

ASM, “which is offered in some of Chicago’s most underserved schools,” offers paid internships to teens, in what appears to be “hip” places of employment, for example, in the arts and entertainment. The catch is that students have to go to school the days that they participate in ASM programs.

What did the researchers conclude? ASM participation influences academic achievement and the rate of participation influences school-performance outcomes. For example:

- AMS participants missed fewer days of school than non-AMS participants.
- Very high-attending ASM participants (attended more than 27 of 30 days) missed fewer days of school than low-attending ASM participants (attended fewer than 13 of 30 days).
- ASM participants failed a lower percentage of their core academic courses than non-ASM participants.
- ASM participants were more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to drop out of school than non-ASM participants.
- Two semesters or more of ASM participation decreased the odds of dropping out of school at age 18.

The seven-page issue brief, “After-School Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago’s After School Matters” by Robert Goerge, Gretchen R. Cusick, Miriam Wasserman, and Robert Matthew Gladden, is available at: www.chapinhall.org.