



## Program Officer An-Me Chung discusses Mott's afterschool grantmaking strategies

**A**N-ME CHUNG is a program officer in the Foundation's Pathways Out of Poverty program. The Foundation recently re-affirmed its grantmaking strategies aimed at strengthening the quality of afterschool programs, and Chung sat down for a brief interview with Mott.org to discuss a little bit about the history of Mott's grantmaking for afterschool programs, some recent successes experienced by our grantees, and some of the activities Mott funding will support in the coming years. This interview was conducted by Mott Communications Officer Mitch Hurst.

**Mott:** Can you provide a little background on Mott's history of funding afterschool programs and how it's evolved over the years?

**An-Me Chung (AC):** One could actually think of afterschool as a legacy program for the Mott Foundation. In 1935, Frank J. Manley, director of physical education for the Flint Public Schools, came to C.S. Mott and told him that public school buildings in Flint were closing at 3 p.m. and that the space could be used to create opportunities for kids and their families to take advantage of the time after school. He convinced Mr. Mott to support an effort to open the schools after traditional hours. And that marked the beginning of Mott's national and international role in community education and community schools. The Flint program became a laboratory and a place for educators from around the world to visit. Thus, for the past 70 years, Mott has supported afterschool programs and community schools.

The current iteration of Mott's afterschool grantmaking began with a private/public partnership with the U.S. Department of Education in 1998. The opportunity existed to take afterschool programs and school-community partnerships to scale by increasing federal funding. Mott has been able to provide financial support for elements of the partnership that the Department of Education is not able to fund, such as research and evaluation, training and technical assistance, and building public awareness. The federal government, through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Initiative, provides grant dollars directly to afterschool programs.

**Mott:** How have afterschool programs and the afterschool movement changed over the years?

**AC:** Although afterschool programs have existed for decades, it really became an afterschool movement in past seven or eight years, and that continues to grow. The partnership between the Department of Education and Mott was the catalyst for the movement, and Mott, along with other foundations, has supported many efforts to further those efforts. Public enthusiasm for afterschool has been great and continues to grow with bipartisan support across the country. There are caucuses in both the U.S. Senate and House that are supportive of afterschool. I would say that Mott's grantmaking has evolved since 1998 from simply enhancing a promising federal program to focusing more strategically and systematically on improving the quality and effectiveness of afterschool programming in this country, as well as identifying other monies to support afterschool efforts.

**Mott:** What are the biggest challenges facing the afterschool movement in the next three to five years?

**AC:** The challenges right now are fiscal. The economy is not what it could be, and we're faced with a large federal budget deficit. The 21st CCLC federal funding has hit a plateau of \$1 billion for the past couple of years. However, with the efforts to improve the quality and sustainability of programming through appropriate research and evaluation, to enhance staff development, to build appropriate infrastructures to support programs, and to raise people's awareness about why afterschool programs are important, the fiscal challenges are surmountable.

Another major challenge is providing quality programs that all kids can access, no matter what their background or ethnicity. The great thing about afterschool programs is that they are diverse -- and the challenge is also that they are diverse. Programs that are the most effective are able to meet the variety of needs of kids from different age groups and backgrounds; at the same time they can be difficult to evaluate because there is no cookie-cutter model for afterschool programs.



An-Me Chung

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**Mott:** We've just approved some grantmaking strategies based on a long-term vision that was laid out in the late '90s. Can you provide some details?

**AC:** Our grantmaking continues to follow two major strategies -- building quality and sustainability. We're going to continue to fund large-scale evaluations that support afterschool programs and give us a better sense of what works, what doesn't work and how we can improve the programs. The other piece focuses on quality programs. How do we improve the quality? How do we develop the kind of training and technical assistance that is needed at the local level to improve participant outcomes? We want to move the field toward the understanding that professional development is critical to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of afterschool programs.

**Mott:** Will these grantmaking plans bring additional opportunities to fund organizations that Mott hasn't worked with yet?

**AC:** We think it's important to stay with grantees for the long haul, and we have a group of grantees that have already been identified. And while our 2005 grantmaking is completed, we are always interested in hearing people's ideas. Those ideas might not fit in exactly with our strategies, but we might be aware of other afterschool efforts that are out there and find ways to connect them. The best way to approach with a new idea is to either give me a call or send a brief letter of inquiry to see if the work may fit within our funding priorities.