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The Impact of Afterschool Programs in Low-Income Communities

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Poster Presentation ES

THE IMPACT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

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“Children who are unsupervised after school are not only in danger of becoming victims of crimes or accidents; they are also at risk in other less dramatic but equally troubling ways. These 15.1 million children are at risk of falling behind academically, socially, and emotionally. They are at higher risk than other children and youth of substance abuse, gang involvement, teen pregnancy and dropping out” (America After 3pm, 2009, p. 2). The purpose of this research is to study the impacts of afterschool programs on families from low-income communities.

Children, parents and staff from five central Illinois afterschool facilities, were asked to evaluate the value of afterschool programs on their personal lives and community. Collected through interviews and letter reviews, data showed that programs offered a range of benefits to the lives of families who utilized the facilities. Data also showed that facilities are facing major budget cuts, resulting in fewer families having access to the services they currently rely on. Literature reviews and personal data collection established the vital need of afterschool programs, and the need to keep as many programs open in low-income communities.