

## The President's Report

By Richard M. Smith

By any measure 2014 was the most active year in The Pinkerton Foundation's 49 year history of supporting programs for the young people of New York City. During the year, the Pinkerton board approved new and renewal grants to 295 youth-serving organizations—62 of them never funded by Pinkerton before—and distributed a total of \$35.1 million. In the process, we launched important new strategic initiatives, refined several existing ones and, far more important, helped our grantees deliver innovative, high quality, in some cases transformative services to more at-risk and disadvantaged young people than ever before.

A few highlights from our major program areas:

**STEM in the Afternoon:** Now entering its third year, **The Science Research Mentoring Consortium** builds on a program at the American Museum of Natural History that pairs talented but economically disadvantaged young people with a scientist to work on an authentic research project. Impressed by the success of the museum's program, Pinkerton challenged other science-based institutions in the city to launch similar efforts. The consortium now includes eleven institutions--ranging from the NYU School of Engineering, Cold Spring Harbor Labs, Wave Hill and Rockefeller University to several campuses in the City University of New York system—all of which now offer programs infused with academic rigor, hands-on research experience and intensive mentoring. More than 325 students have completed the program, and we estimate that 740 young people will have participated by the end of 2015. The Foundation has committed to fully support each new site for two years and to provide 50 percent funding to successful sites in the following two years. To date, Pinkerton grants total \$2.95 million.

While the research program targets academically talented students, we are equally committed to enhancing science, technology and mathematics training for a much broader student population. In 2012, Program Officer Jenny Correa worked with The After-School Corporation (TASC) to initiate the **NYC STEM Education Network**. Designed to bring together educators, scientists and youth development professionals, the network's goal was to envision high-quality STEM learning opportunities for students in out-of-school settings. Two funded projects emerged from these conversations -- **Taking Root: Strengthening STEM**, and the **STEM Academy**.

Managed by the Partnership for After-School Education (PASE), Taking Root addresses perhaps the greatest single obstacle to effective and engaging STEM programming – the shortage of trained science educators working in the after-school field. The program employs a “train the trainer” model, developing fifty “Master Trainers” from twenty-five after-school programs. They in turn train up to 75 other educators to deliver three hours of engaging, hands-on STEM activities per week. The aim is to build a critical mass of STEM educators and create programs that are able to survive the high staff turnover in the after-school field. As far as the students are concerned, the activities are just plain fun: engineering personal robots, building surprisingly hardy structures out of marshmallows and toothpicks, creating their own shake tables and houses from recycled materials to learn about earthquakes, and much, more.

In the STEM Academy, TASC, the New York Hall of Science and the Institute of Play have jointly developed an extended-day learning model with a focus on science. The organizations prepare 30 teams of teachers and after-school educators from community-based partners (90 adults in all) to team teach a rigorous and engaging STEM curriculum. The hands-on activities, closely aligned with school-day classroom work, not only teach children science, but spark their passion for it. Thanks to the supportive network, after-school educators have become more confident about leading science activities, and science teachers are now using a more hands-on curriculum during the day. The early results suggest that by aligning the professional development of the teachers and after-school staff, the quality of the science education has improved. Already, more than 1,500 students have participated in Taking Root and STEM Academy initiatives. Another 1,800 or more will be reached by 2016. Pinkerton’s investment so far: \$975,000.

**Helping Hands for Youth Justice:** The Foundation rarely makes large grants to colleges and universities, but in launching **The Pinkerton Fellows Initiative at John Jay College**, we saw an intriguing opportunity: to provide financial support to some of John Jay’s best and brightest— while delivering creative and capable help to overstretched nonprofits serving court-involved youth. A dozen undergraduate Community Fellows work full-time over two summers and part-time during the school year in alternative-to-incarceration or prison reentry programs. Initially, four Graduate Fellows were designated to help these nonprofits build their research capacity. This year four graduate students in forensic psychology will work directly with at-risk young people. All the students participate in an academic seminar on the role of nonprofits in the juvenile justice system. Since the John Jay student body is the youngest and most diverse in the City University system, the Fellows are credible, contemporary role models for the young people they serve, and we hear nothing but raves from the nonprofits about the impact the students have had. Senior Program Officer Julie Peterson supervises the Initiative for the

Foundation. Through 2013 Pinkerton had made grants totaling nearly \$1.8 million to the program, and at our December board meeting, we approved an additional three-year grant of \$2.1 million.

**Let's Get Literate:** The Foundation had long been concerned that the many literacy programs in the city rarely seemed to work together. To address the issue, Senior Program Officer Laurie Dien convened a group of providers in our office, brought in representatives from the three big library systems, and, voila, the Literacy Network was born. Its first project, supervised by Program Officer Danielle Pulliam, is **South Jamaica Reads**, an ambitious effort designed to help lift the shockingly low elementary grade reading levels and create a literacy rich environment in the neighborhood as a whole. South Jamaica Reads pulls together ten separate agencies: Reach Out and Read and Parent-Child Home Program for mothers of infants and toddlers; Jump Start for pre-schoolers; Literacy Inc., Experience Corp, READ Alliance and Reading Partners for in-school tutoring; Literacy Inc. and Learning Leaders to train parents to volunteer in the schools, community gathering places and the two participating neighborhood branch libraries. (Literacy Inc. also coordinates the project.) It's far too early to know whether the project will lift the neighborhood's shockingly low elementary reading scores, but the activity in the first six months alone has been impressive: the South Jamaica partners launched a successful summer program for 195 children, in-school tutoring grew dramatically, one branch library reopened on Saturdays and 45 local businesses began offering discounts to children and their families who carry the South Jamaica Reads "passport." The Foundation's first year commitment to the multiple programs: \$1.3 million.

**Career Readiness—Engaging Employers, At Last:** In 2014, The Foundation made grants of nearly \$15 million to fund a continuum of programs to help young people prepare for a fulfilling future. From middle-school and high-school career internship programs to college access and retention efforts, our goal is to help young people in disadvantaged neighborhoods achieve academically and ultimately move on to productive careers.

The employment piece has been a particular challenge. While it's accepted wisdom that the earlier young people begin to work the more likely they are to be productively employed in later years, career development programs have had only modest success at best. One of the major stumbling blocks: how little even well-meaning job placement developers seem to know about the needs of employers. Led by Laurie Dien, Pinkerton has worked with the job training experts at JobsFirst NYC to address the problem. The result has been the creation of an ambitious program called the Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project, a series of **true** partnerships between employers and social service agencies that work with first-time job seekers. The industry partners--in health care, technology, transportation and logistics--provide

guidance on the specific skills their new employees require, while the community-based social service agencies offer the general job readiness and ongoing job retention services that reassure the employers that they won't have to play the role of social workers. In addition to supporting JobsFirst NYC, Pinkerton has provided funding to four initial partnerships. Our total investment so far: \$1.05 million.

**A Family Legacy:** Over the years, the Foundation has made only a handful of capital or endowment grants. We prefer to focus on programs that deliver immediate benefits to young people. This year, however, we made a dramatic departure by announcing a \$20 million challenge grant to endow programming at a new **Madison Square Boys & Girls Club** Harlem clubhouse. When completed, the clubhouse will serve an isolated neighborhood in northern Harlem dominated by the Polo Grounds and Rangel housing projects—home to an estimated 6,000 young people. The building will be named **The Pinkerton Clubhouse** in honor of Robert and Louise Pinkerton who created The Pinkerton Foundation in the early 1960s. During their lifetimes, the Pinkertons never sought recognition for their charitable giving, but they both loved Madison and the work it did with young people. After almost 50 years and nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in Pinkerton grants to serve the young people of the city, we thought that funding new Madison programs in an underserved neighborhood was an appropriate way to honor what the couple set in motion.

Inevitably, the focus on facts and figures in a report like this tends to obscure the real joy that all of us at Pinkerton feel in working with the many unsung heroes in community-based organizations around the city. To capture a little of that flavor, I asked our program team to reflect on a moment—great or small—during the year that reminded them why they do the work they do. Those vignettes appear on a nearby page (<http://www.thepinkertonfoundation.org/presidents-reportstaff-reflections/test-report>). Take a look. I think you'll be glad you did.

For me personally, the year produced a cascade of highlights: Meeting with the talented leader of the Immigrant Justice Corps Nisha Agarwal and then congratulating her a few weeks later on being named the City's new Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs. Joining in a discussion with high school interns at the Intrepid Air & Space Museum as they demonstrated their newfound skills as tour guides and explainers. Listening to a group of teens from the Possibility Project describe the impressive film they made about the trauma of foster care—and how it reflected their own life stories. Seeing the Literacy Network take root at meetings just down the hall from my office. Getting to know Rob Gore, the charismatic Kings County Hospital emergency room doctor who recruits teens who've just been shot or knifed to join his program, Kings Against Violence Initiative. Spending a morning at our office with the delightful Dr. Angela

Duckworth (I call her the “Guru of Grit”) talking about social and emotional learning. And trading rock and roll trivia with Vy Higgensen, who grew up in the music business and now runs an exciting Harlem music program called Gospel for Teens.

There were a hundred others, but in all of my memories, one theme stands out: the pleasure of working with the talented, funny, smart and dedicated Pinkerton team. As their vignettes suggest, they take the same care with fledgling startup programs as they do with large and well-established ones. They understand that no matter the scale or the mission, it is ultimately the people running the programs who make the critical difference. Above all, they are committed to being steadfast and supportive partners to the organizations we serve and to living up to the profound responsibility that comes with our work: to do our very best every day on behalf of New York City’s young people. It is my great privilege to join the Pinkerton team in that mission.