**APT Observation Write Up and Feedback Form**

**Program Site:** Piers Park "Science of Sailing" East Boston  
**Observation Date:** 7/11/18  
**Number of Activities Observed:** 5  
**Brief Description of Activities Observed:** Yoga, Sailing Instruction (2), Ultimate Tag, Chalk Talk

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<th>1. Generally, what were your findings regarding:</th>
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<td>a. <strong>Structure of program (e.g., scheduling, transitions, space):</strong> The program has its own building, tent, piers, boats and outdoor space in the lovely Piers Park. The day was gorgeous so every moment of observation was outdoors. (In inclement weather, they use the tent.) It was the middle of the second week of the program (a new structure) and students knew the routine well. There is adequate time for each activity with some unstructured relaxing time at lunch. A central aspect of this program is the staff - everyone (lead instructors and junior instructors) all grew up in this program. This has a positive impact on relationships, commitment, leadership development, culture of the program, positive role modelling, etc. It also is an inclusive program with adaptive equipment to allow students (and adults in other programs) with physical challenges to get on and off the boats and learn to sail.</td>
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<td>b. <strong>Organization and nature of activities in program:</strong> The focus of this program is teaching students (aged 10-18) how to sail. They are placed in a particular group in a particular boat with a particular instructor that will remain the same for the two weeks. This creates a sense of group cohesion and pride as relationships develop. They mix experienced and new students in the same boat to enhance peer learning. Non-sailing activities (yoga, games) teach other helpful skills and allow for some release of energy.</td>
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<td>c. <strong>Staff and their role in promoting youth engagement, stimulating thinking, and positively guiding youth behavior:</strong> There is a very respectful atmosphere in this program, instructor to instructor, instructor to student, and student to student. Interpersonal challenges were rare and settled with &quot;rock/paper/scissors&quot; (during games). Playful banter within a boat and between boats was common. Each student got a turn at the helm, managing the main sheet, and managing the jib sheets. The instructors were patient with the less experienced as they guided their actions, and were supportive and complimentary of all. It was a windy day and the boat heeled over quite often. If someone was nervous about that, adjustments were made in a caring non-judgmental manner.</td>
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<td>d. <strong>Relationships between staff and youth:</strong> Most students in this program are repeaters, as are staff, so relationships are deep. Students are allowed to make mistakes, as long as safety isn't a concern. (These boats literally can't capsize, which helps a lot.) Staff participate in all the activities. Junior staff had a meeting at the end of the day to debrief; this helps them develop their leadership skills and makes them feel valued and professional.</td>
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| e. **Youth participation in activity time and peer relations between youth:** On the boats, participation is high, as each student plays an active role as part of the crew or as "captain". One instructor shared lots of historical facts and stories about Boston harbor which added to the experience. Each group took pride in their boat and their team. During non-sailing activities, students are allowed to participate or not, though they're encouraged to get involved. During lunch, students gathered in groups on the lawn as they ate. Some tossed a ball around. Others just relaxed. It was a nice break from the intensity of the time in the boats.
2. Overall, what are some strengths of the program?

- The skill, commitment, longevity and passion for sailing of the staff
- The relaxed pace
- The succession from student to junior instructor to senior instructor to executive director
- The space and equipment
- The student/staff ratio
- The respectful relationships among staff, between staff and students, and among students

3. Overall, in what areas could improvements be made?

- There are different levels that students can achieve. On the day of this observation, not much was said about that. Perhaps students could set goals for themselves and reflect on those at the end of each day/week/session.
- Since crews have varied experience, perhaps the more experienced students could share what's worked for them, as well as the instructors giving direct instruction.