

## *Strategies for Success:*

# Create Solutions Together

**T**his is a new process and there will be a lot to learn about and from each other as you go along. Be prepared; you may encounter some struggles along the way. But stay focused on your commitment to the goals of the partnership and work to keep the lines of communication open. Experienced partners advise not to let problems fester. As soon as you are aware of a problem with your partner, create a solution. Consider some of the following suggestions to help you foster and facilitate a healthy partnership.

### **Agree on responsibilities in writing.**

To help reduce confusion about roles and responsibilities, partners are encouraged to draft a Memo of Understanding (sample) to outline the respective responsibilities of the school and the community-based organization. Use a Responsibility Checklist for the School and CBO to help determine the contents for your own Memo of Understanding.

***“If you don’t have a Memorandum of Understanding, if you are not concrete with what you want, then really it could hurt you in the end.”***

### **Build Consensus.**

In order to have a true partnership, everyone should believe that the after-school program is in the best interest of the school, the teachers and staff, the youth and the CBO. To help build consensus among teachers and school staff, ask the principal to set up a faculty meeting where the after-school director can have 15-30 minutes to talk about the organization, how the after-school program will run and what it will do for young people. Through opportunities like this, teachers and staff can pose questions and get the answers directly from you.

### **Meet regularly.**

Building a relationship takes time and team building needs continuous effort. You’ve already established relationships with the superintendent, principal, teachers, custodians and kitchen staff, now you have to invest time in maintaining those relationships. By meeting regularly, everyone is demonstrating their desire to understand where people are coming from and create solutions to potential problems. Look for opportunities to integrate your work into the life of the school. Everyone stays informed and the lines of communication remain open.