

# Where are the gaps in After-School programs in Georgetown, SC?

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## Abstract

In America today, millions of young people are alone and unsupervised in the hours after school, before parents return home from work. This situation places children and teens at grave risk for juvenile crime, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and other problems. It means students are wasting precious time when they could be learning. And it leaves millions of working parents worried about their children when they should be focused on their jobs. This unproductive, untenable and unacceptable situation would be remedied if our nation invested more fully in the after school programs that keep kids safe, support working families, and help young people succeed in school and in life. Young people with nothing to do during out-of-school hours miss valuable chance for growth and development. The odds are high that your with nothing positive to do and nowhere to go will find things to do that negatively influence their development and futures. The main benefit of after-school programs is it widens your child's interests. It helps him discover innate talent for some activity and provides an opportunity to hone it further. Constant practice makes him more confident. In this age of endless possibilities, the child needs a portfolio of skills besides academic learning to succeed. Georgetown County is located on the coast of South Carolina. This small city, along with surrounding areas has a high level of children coming from low-income houses. Children living in these conditions tend to do poorly in school and often need the benefits that an after-school program can provide for them. Therefore, this project show where programs are and where programs need to be implemented to excute academic nurturing in those areas.

## I. Introduction

Today, more parents than ever work outside the home, and many struggle to secure adequate after-school care for their children (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Consequently, many children are alone and unsupervised when school ends (The After School Corp., 1998). Studies have shown that the after-school hours can be dangerous ones for children. After-school programs are often seen as an effective way to keep children safe and supervised. Professionals also believe that the after-school hours are an opportunity to further engage students in academic, social, and physical activities. As former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley noted, "Children's minds don't close down at 3 p.m." (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). And now, neither do many schools. This project looks at the availability of after-school programs in Georgetown County and explores where after-school programs are needed.

## II. Literature Review

There has been a lot of research done about elementary school aged children and their academic success. Some people have concluded that after school programs have been shown to help tremendously in educationally nurturing today's student. An article by Jill Posner and Deborah Lowe Vandell discusses the fact that after-school programs provide an outlet to lessen some of the harmful results of urban poverty on children. This article entitled, "Low Income Children's After-School care: Are There Beneficial Effects of After-School Programs?" examined approximately 216 low-income children with 4 different types of after-school programs. These programs were: 1) formal after school programs, 2) mother care, 3) informal adult supervision, 4) and self-care (Posner et al). These researchers formally concluded that the formal after school programs provided the children with experiences that enhanced their development. The point of the article was that formal programs located in the community of the child showed great potential as a protective factor for the children living in low-income homes or with caregivers with low educational attainment (Posner et al). Prominently discussed in "The Effects of Homework Programs and After-School Activities on School Success", is the impact of after school activities on the performance of children in school. In this article by Merith Cosden, the Gevirtz Homework Project was implemented and studied children from three different after-school programs and their school performances. The researchers concluded there are many benefits that result from participating in after-school programs. These benefits included reduced juvenile crime and after-school programs served as an aid to working families to offer the children needed help with their schoolwork (Cosden). Additionally, Teresa Tuason et al presents, "The Refuge: An After-School Care Program for African-American Children in Poverty; this study examines an after-school care program in the southeastern United States that provides for African-American children both psychologically and academically (Tuason et al). The researchers utilized different methods to gather their data. They conducted interviews with the staff, held small group discussions with children, and carried out persistent observation. Through their research they conclude that the study supports children's want for after-school programs to keep them safe during the hours of the day that they are most at risk (Tuason et al). For the reason that these after-school programs nurture positive relationships, encourage academic and vocational yearnings and provide for the psycho-emotional needs when students are exposed to poverty (Tuason et al). Concisely, after-school programs have proven to be a help to elementary and middle school aged children especially programs with stronger concentrations in reading tutoring.

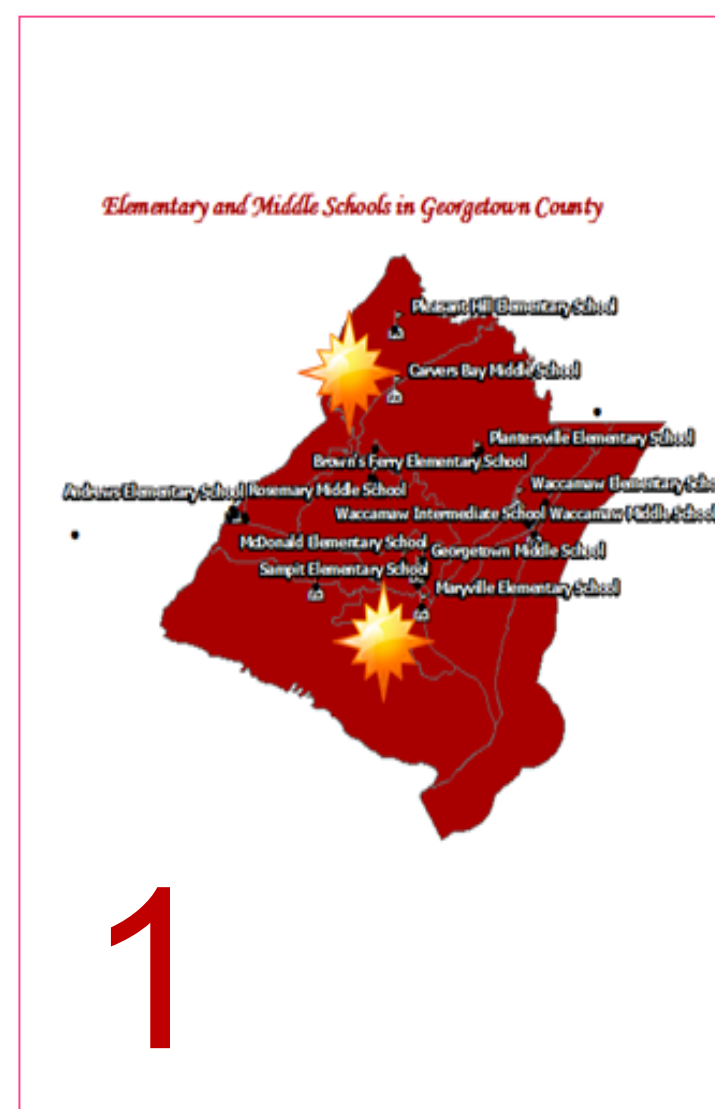
## III. Methodology

I obtained the address of every after-school program in Georgetown County from the South Carolina After-School Alliance. SCAA is an online resource used to find out about after school programs. Their mission is to raise awareness, help to increase sustainability and promote the importance of quality after school programs in South Carolina (SCAA). After entering the addresses into an excel spreadsheet, categorizing each entry by name, address, city, state, and zip code. Then, I copied and pasted the data into Batch Geocode online. From here, I created a Keyhole Markup Language file of the address. From there, I converted the KML file to a layer and added it to a shapefile of Georgetown County obtained from Tigerline files. Now, I was able to see the clusters of after-school programs. I did the same thing with the elementary and middle school addresses within the county. Therefore, I ended up with location place marks for each after-school program and school within the county. This information is displayed in Map (1). The black dots are the after-school programs and the schoolhouses represent each elementary and middle school within the county at the Census Tract level.

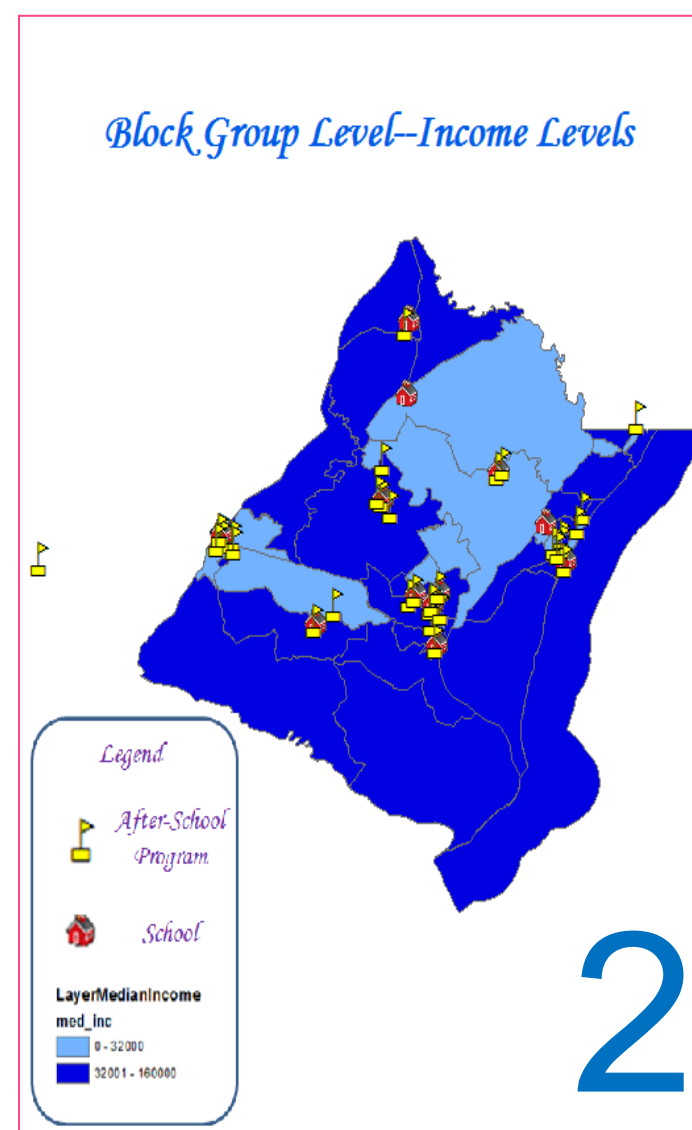
Map (2) is at the block group level. Extracting data from American Fact Finder. I obtained the median income for each block group. This information then had to be joined to the county shapefile. I chose \$32,000 to serve as a threshold. And, the light blue areas show that the median income in those areas are less than \$32,000. The dark blue areas show that the median income in over \$32,000 for those block groups.

Map (3) serves to be very interesting; taking data from American Fact Finder at the census tract level about the median income. I joined the data to the county shapefile and placed stacked charts showing the level of income by household in each census tract. The black dots again serve to represent the schools in each census tract area. This was attained by adding the school layer as aforementioned.

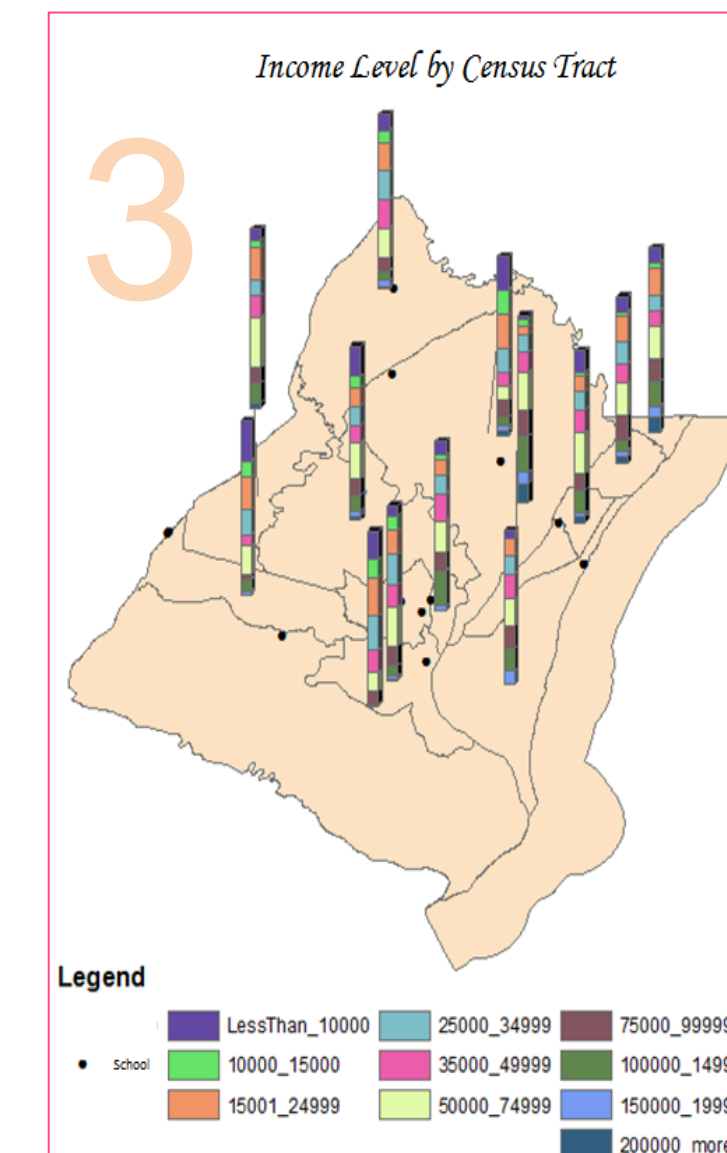
Map (4) is possibly most important. This map was made using the educational attainment information obtained from the American Fact Finder. I extracted the data and made an excel spreadsheet separating the information into less than 9<sup>th</sup> grade, some high school no diploma, high school graduate (and equivalent), some college, an Associate's degree, a Bachelor's degree, or Graduate or Professional degree. Then I created pie charts to be situated in each census tract area to show the percentages of each level of educational attainment.



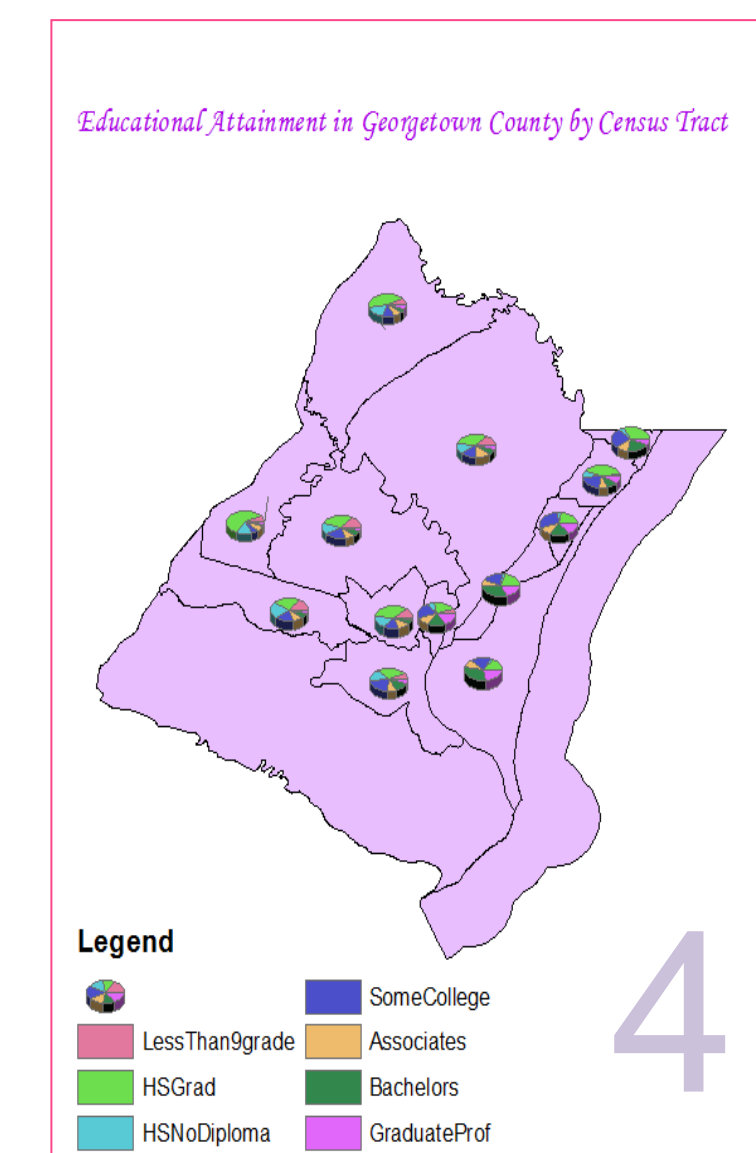
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Legend



Legend

Map (1) shows the conclusion of this study. The stars indicated where after-school programs should be. The schools are labeled and the children that go to Carvers Bay schools and the students at Pleasant Hill Elementary and surrounding areas could really benefit. Also, the students that attend Sampit Elementary could benefit from more after-school programs in their area. Map (2) shows the block groups by median income. The threshold is set at \$35,000. At first glance, it seems as if most census tracts in Georgetown County are earning more than \$35,000 per household. The map simply shows the places in Georgetown county where after-school programs are located in lower income areas. Map (3) gives stacked percentage graphs of the median incomes by census tracts. In the census tract areas of interest (where after-school programs should be placed). Both census tract area 9201 and 9207 have around 50% of the households with incomes of less than \$35,000 a year. Census tract 9202.01 has a substantial amount of households living off of less than \$10,000 per year, the American Fact Finder reported 22.8%. Educational attainment was important to analyze for this study. And in each census tract area there are a good percentage of high school graduates. Which means that a lot of adult individuals in Georgetown county have only obtained a high school diploma, the highest percentages lie in census tract 9201 and 9207 both hovering at about 25%. And only about 12% of the individuals in the area have about 9-12% of the individuals obtained Bachelor's degrees or higher. This is very detrimental for the children. Living in low-income households and having caregivers with low educational attainment is a combination that after-school programs can help with. They can provide nutritious snacks, homework help, an opportunity for social development, and physical education.

## V. Conclusion

After school programs deeply enrich a child's development socially and academically. From this study, I have concluded that there are gaps in after-school programs in the St. Luke Area and the Sampit Area. These areas are represented by census tract 9201 and 9207. These areas between 20 and 25% of the individuals do not have high school diplomas. And, also between 45 and 50% of the households in these census tract areas have household incomes of less than \$35,000. Because of the low level of income and educational attainment in these areas children are likely to be in homes suffering from poverty. This in turn affects their academic performance and their social development. However, placing after school programs in these areas would solve this problem.

It seems as though the areas that are at the highest risk for children to suffer from poverty are being served by multiple after-school programs. In census tract 9204, 66.7% of the households have incomes of less than \$35,000 a year. Additionally, over 23% of the adults in this area do not have a high school diploma. This is also true for census tract 9203.01. And, only about 9-12% of the adults have Bachelor's degrees or higher. From an economic stance. This area has about 45% of the households with less than \$35,000.

## VII. References

Tigerline files from : US Census Bureau  
All maps created with : \*\*ESRI ArcDesktop 10 (2012)  
U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1998  
U.S. Department of Education, 2000

## IV. Results and Discussion

## V.I. Future Research

For further research I would like to do a participant analyst of the students for selected after-school programs in the county. Looking at the homes that children live in and their overall progress or regression since participating in the program. And, maybe find some instances where the student has not shown sign of improvement nor retreat.

## VIII. Acknowledgements

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