Abstract

Access and Belonging: The Role of the School and Other Community-Based Institutions in the Lives of Immigrant Families

Brittany Kenyon

This dissertation applies place-based assimilation theories to understand the role of the school and other community-based institutions in the lives of immigrant families in a small rural town. The rate of immigration is increasing globally and over time, more and more children and families will be immigrants, finding themselves in a new community, making it imperative to understand the lived experiences of immigrant children and families. For most migrant families with school-aged children the school is the first point of contact in a new community. Thus, the school is well positioned to assist families in the integration process providing them with vital information and connections to resource-rich community-based institutions.

This dissertation explores the relationship between families and community-based institutions in Provincetown Massachusetts, a small, coastal, rural community with a significant immigrant population. It is a narrative inquiry that employs qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured interviews and visual research methods including photographs taken by immigrant students and photo elicitation interviews to answer the following questions: 1) What role does the school play in the process of immigrant families integrating into a new community? 2) How do community-based institutions help or hinder immigrant families accessing resources and developing a sense of belonging? 3) In what ways has the current
COVID-19 health pandemic affected the work of community-based institutions and immigrant families’ interactions with them?

Newly arrived families to Provincetown face food and housing insecurity and a lack of access to health care. There is however, a comprehensive web of community-based institutions with programs and resources to meet those needs. Access to most of these resources requires a referral or connection from an agency like the school, so families are reliant on schools for connection to these institutions. The school has formal mechanisms in place to help families. There are also informal mechanisms in the school to help families. This consists of individual teachers who develop deep and lasting relationships with a particular student and assist this student and his or her family using their own time and resources.

This dissertation also explored the ways in which immigrant children in Provincetown find belonging. The children reported that they find belonging in the natural environment, through enrichment activities such as art clubs and sports teams, and through participation in the tourism work force, either by helping family members or beginning to work on their own. There are many institutions that work with the school and families to provide access to this enrichment programming, but there are barriers to participation. Immigrant children are often prevented from participating in enrichment activities outside of school hours because they have to care for younger siblings or lack transportation to and from afterschool events. There is also a disconnect between institutions and families because some institutions struggle to communicate with families. Some institutions have tried to respond to these barriers by providing transportation and parallel programming for siblings. This study also found that the school was the most successful way for institutions to communicate with families because of the well established
communication patterns, available translation services and presence of school personnel who have taken an active interest in the outside lives of students.

Many solutions in Provincetown are place-specific and the experiences of families in Provincetown are atypical because there are several factors that make Provincetown unique. It is a tourist town with access to financial resources that can fund many institutions and opportunities. The town is small, making the relationship between families and institutions more personal so that individuals and institutions become more invested in the lives and outcomes of individual families in a way that would not be possible in an urban area.
# Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAPE</td>
<td>Center for Agriculture Preservation and Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARES</td>
<td>Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCNS</td>
<td>Cape Cod National Seashore</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Center for Coastal Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEP</td>
<td>Community Eligibility Provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>COA</td>
<td>Council on Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>Education Support Professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAWC</td>
<td>Fine Arts Work Center</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>Healthy Incentive Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Helping Our Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-EBT</td>
<td>Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAAM</td>
<td>Provincetown Art Association and Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCSL</td>
<td>Provincetown Community Support Liaison</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKIP</td>
<td>Soup Kitchen in Provincetown</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Teachers College</td>
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<tr>
<td>UU</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>Women, Infants and Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

List of Charts, Graphs, Illustrations ........................................................................................................... ix  
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................................................ xi  
Dedication..................................................................................................................................................... xii  
Chapter 1: Introduction............................................................................................................................... 1  
  1.1 Problem Statement............................................................................................................................... 1  
  1.2 Research Questions ............................................................................................................................ 4  
  1.3 Theoretical Framework ....................................................................................................................... 4  
  1.3.1 Contexts of Reception ................................................................................................................... 5  
  1.3.2 Place-based Assimilation Theories ............................................................................................... 6  
  1.3.3 A Note on Terminology: Integration ............................................................................................ 6  
  1.4 The Research Site ............................................................................................................................... 7  
  145.1 The Physical Environment and Human Population of Provincetown ............................................ 7  
  1.4.1.1 Summer and Winter In Provincetown ...................................................................................... 9  
  1.4.2 Legal Realities of Migration in the United States ......................................................................... 11  
  1.4.2.1 Legal Designations of Immigrants to Provincetown ............................................................... 13  
  1.4.2.1.1 Economic Migrants. ............................................................................................................ 13  
  1.4.2.1.2 Refugees and Undocumented Migrants ......................................................................... 14  
  1.5 Significance of This Study ................................................................................................................... 15  
  1.6 Overview of this Dissertation ........................................................................................................... 17  
Chapter 2: Literature Review ..................................................................................................................... 18
2.1 Belonging .................................................................................................................. 18
2.2 Immigration ............................................................................................................... 19
2.3 Family ......................................................................................................................... 21
  2.3.1 Defining Family .................................................................................................. 22
  2.3.2 Immigrant Families .......................................................................................... 23
  2.3.3 Families and Belonging .................................................................................... 24
2.4 The Role of Community Institutions in the Lives of Immigrant Families .............. 24
  2.4.1 Schools as Community Institutions ............................................................... 26
    2.4.1.1 The Role of Teachers ............................................................................... 30
  2.4.2 Other Examples of Community-based Institutions ........................................ 31
  2.4.3 Community-Based Institutions Hindering a Sense of Belonging .................... 33
2.5 Belonging and the Natural World ............................................................................ 34
2.6 Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 35

Chapter 3: Methodology .................................................................................................. 36

3.1 Data Collection .......................................................................................................... 37
  3.1.1 Working with the Children: Visual Research Methods ..................................... 38
    3.1.1.1 Recruitment of Student Participants ....................................................... 38
    3.1.1.2 Participants ............................................................................................. 39
    3.1.1.3 Devices Used for Photography ................................................................. 39
    3.1.1.4 Photo Elicitation Interviews ................................................................... 40
  3.1.2 Family Interviews ............................................................................................... 41
3.1.2.1 Family Participant Recruitment ................................................................. 42
3.1.2.2 Family Interview Participants........................................................................ 43
3.1.2.3 Conducting Family Interviews .................................................................... 44
3.1.3 Data Collection at the Community Level ......................................................... 44
  3.1.3.1 Provincetown Schools Participants .............................................................. 45
  3.1.3.2 Community-based Institution Participants.................................................. 46
3.1.4 Digital Ethnography ......................................................................................... 47
3.2 Data Analysis ..................................................................................................... 48
  3.2.1 Visual Research Data Analysis ....................................................................... 48
    3.2.1.1 Compositional Interpretation ................................................................. 48
    3.2.1.2 Analyzing Photo Elicitation Interviews ................................................. 51
  3.2.2 Analysis of Interview Data: Families, the School and Institutions ................. 52
3.3 Ethical Issues ................................................................................................... 54
3.4 Covid-19 and Data Collection and Analysis ...................................................... 55
3.5 Limitations Associated with Remote Data Collection ........................................ 56
3.6 Limitations and Positionality ............................................................................ 58
CHAPTER 4: The School: The Primary Point of Contact ........................................ 60
  4.1 Formal Mechanisms in the School to Aid Families ............................................. 60
    4.1.1 Working and Learning in Provincetown ..................................................... 62
      4.1.1.1 Wearing Many Hats ........................................................................... 62
      4.1.1.2 Collaboration Between Staff Members ............................................... 64
5.5.1.2 Free Lunch for Everyone.................................................................97

5.5.2 SNAP and WIC .............................................................................98
  5.5.2.1 Stigma and Fear in Accessing SNAP .........................................99

5.5.3 Sustainable CAPE .........................................................................100
  5.5.3.1 Leveraging Federal and State Funding .......................................102
  5.5.3.2 Accessing Local Food During the Pandemic .........................103
  5.5.3.3 Specific Considerations for Immigrant Families ......................104
  5.5.3.4 Agriculture and Belonging .....................................................105

5.5.4 Crop Swap at the Provincetown Public Library .........................106

5.5.5 Unitarian Universality Meeting House .........................................108
  5.5.5.1 Food Labyrinth ......................................................................109
  5.5.5.2 Food Bank .............................................................................109

5.5.6 Conclusion: Food Insecurity and Resources ................................111

5.6 Healthcare ......................................................................................111
  5.6.1 Access to Health Care ..................................................................112
  5.6.2 Community-Based Health Care ..................................................114
  5.6.3 COVID on Cape Cod ..................................................................116

5.7 Conclusion ....................................................................................117
  5.7.1 The Wealth of the Community ....................................................118
  5.7.2 Small Town Accountability ..........................................................119
  5.7.3 Respecting Families ....................................................................120
Chapter 6: Visual Research: Children and Place ................................................................. 122

6.1 The Natural World ........................................................................................................... 123

6.1.1 Families in Nature ...................................................................................................... 125

6.1.2 The Economics of the Natural World: Tourism ......................................................... 127

6.2 Shops and Places of Employment: Belonging through Family Connections ............. 128

6.2.1 Employment of Their Own- A New Status ................................................................. 132

6.3 Recreation and Enrichment: Finding Belonging in Public Spaces ............................. 134

6.3.1 Recreational Programming .......................................................................................... 134

6.3.2 Recreation Spaces ....................................................................................................... 136

6.4 COVID: An Invisible Force ............................................................................................. 139

6.5 Looking Beyond the Obvious ......................................................................................... 139

6.6 The Photos Not Taken .................................................................................................. 140

6.7 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 141

Chapter 7: Institutions that Enrich the Lives of Immigrant Students .............................. 142

7.1 A History of School and Community Connection ..................................................... 144

7.2 The Natural Environment: Institutional Exposure ...................................................... 146

7.2.1 The Cape Cod National Seashore ............................................................................. 148

7.2.2 Center for Coastal Studies .......................................................................................... 149

7.2.3 Dune Shack Field Trips and the Peaked Hill Trust ................................................. 151

7.2.4 Repeated Exposure to the Natural Environment ................................................... 152

7.3 In School Enrichment and After School Programming ............................................. 153
7.3.1 Recreation .................................................................................................................. 154
7.3.2 Racial Justice Provincetown at the Universalist Unitarian Meeting House .......... 155
7.3.3 Art Institutions ........................................................................................................ 156
    7.3.3.1 The Fine Arts Work Center ................................................................................. 156
    7.3.3.2 Provincetown Art Association and Museum ...................................................... 157
    7.3.3.3 Community Exhibitions ....................................................................................... 160
7.3.4 School Sports .......................................................................................................... 161
7.4 Barriers Children and Families Face ........................................................................... 163
7.5 Barriers Institutions Face Reaching Families ............................................................. 166
7.6 Possible Solutions for Families and Institutions ......................................................... 167
    7.6.1 Transportation ....................................................................................................... 167
    7.6.2 Caring for Siblings ............................................................................................... 168
    7.6.3 Reaching Families Through School .................................................................... 169
    7.6.4 Families as a Resource ......................................................................................... 170
7.7 Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 170

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion ............................................................................. 173

8.1 A Network of Institutions .......................................................................................... 173
    8.1.1 An Institutional Network Response to COVID 19 ............................................... 176
8.2 Different Immigrant Populations ................................................................................. 176
8.3 Place-Based Assimilation ......................................................................................... 178
    8.3.1 Teachers ............................................................................................................... 178
8.3.2 Flexibility and Creativity.................................................................179

8.4 Tensions..............................................................................................181

8.5 Contribution to the Literature ..............................................................182

8.5 Areas for Continuing and Future Research ..........................................183

References ...............................................................................................185

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Families ..............................................198

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Community-Based Institutions ............200

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for School Personnel .................................202
# List of Charts, Graphs, Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table/Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Participants from Provincetown Schools</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Community-Based Institutions Interviewed, including name and role of participant</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>The Miss Lily by Lila</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Second image of The Miss Lily by Lila</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Blurred image by Kara</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Water by David</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Beach by Lila</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Family Hike by Erica</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Beach by Ellen</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Rabbit by David</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Habitat by David</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Governor Bradford by Hanna</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Shop Therapy by Hanna</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Restaurant by Ellen</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Lobster Traps by Lila</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Buoys for lobster Traps by Lila</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>West End Racing Club by Antonio</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>PAAM by Lila</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Motta Field by Hanna</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Tennis Court at Motta Field by Antonio</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Skate Park by Antonio</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Reflections by Kara</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Institutional Network. Connections between institutions interviewed for this Dissertation</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Expanded Institutional Network: This figure builds on figure 20 to include any institutions mentioned in at least three interviews</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Dedication

To the students and families and educators of the Provincetown Schools Community. My time with you challenged and enriched me and brought me where I am today.
Chapter 1: Introduction

“I think the expression, ‘it takes a village to raise a child,’ I think we're doing it. I think the village is raising the kids and I think that's a beautiful thing.” – Nurse Mary Beth, Provincetown Schools

Provincetown, Massachusetts is a small town situated at the very tip of Cape Cod. A booming tourist town in the summer it has a small year-round population with a significant immigrant population. Life can be difficult in Provincetown, with a lack of affordable housing and reliable transportation options. Year-round employment is hard to come by, food and other basic necessities are expensive and in the winter it can feel like it is a world away from anywhere else. There is however a rich and multifaceted network of community-based institutions that provide food and housing support and also enrich the lives of community members. This dissertation will examine the experiences of immigrant children and their families living in Provincetown and explore the network of institutions that support and welcome these families into the community.

1.1 Problem Statement

It is estimated that by 2040, one-third of all children in the United States will be growing up in immigrant households (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). This phenomenon is not limited to the United States, with current statistical data suggesting that at least 70.8 million people are displaced from their homes worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). Immigration is increasing in both magnitude and pace (Aleinikoff & Klusmeyer, 2013) and the process of migration is a challenging one and does not end upon arrival in a new land. Over time, more and more children and families will find themselves in a new community, making it imperative to understand the lived experiences of immigrant children and families.
For most migrant families with school-aged children the school is “the first sustained, meaningful and enduring participation in an institution in the new society” (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010, p. 2). Enrolling their children in schools is a federal legal requirement, and children are protected in school despite their immigration status (Ontiveros & Drexler, 2007). The school, by definition, provides children with education, which can be helpful in integrating into a new community, but it also provides access to information, services, food and other resources and can be a first step for a family to find belonging in their new community through this meaningful contact with a community-based institution.

The arrival and integration process is not a simple one. For immigrant families, entering a new community involves more than securing work and housing and enrolling their children in school. They must also establish connections and meaningful contact with key institutions as a way to find a social support system and access to resources. As we can infer from the statistics above, this is an experience shared by an ever-increasing number of families. It is important to understand the relationship between immigrant families and their new community in order to allow for more positive and productive relationships between immigrant families and the community-based institutions they interact with to benefit these families and strengthen community-based institutions.

When studying the integration experience of immigrants in a new host country there are many factors that can impact the experiences of these individuals seeking to establish themselves and find belonging within a new community. Some of these factors are related to the immigrants themselves, such as their history, gender, race, education level and legal status (Gonzales et al., 2020), while other factors are related to the legal, economic and social context which they are entering (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Research shows that there are ways in which personal ties
to extended kin networks and community-based institutions can facilitate integration and the development of a sense of belonging (Gonzales et al., 2020).

At its core, development of a sense of belonging comes down to the human connections and emotional attachments that individuals make through participation in a community (Reed-Danahay, 2008). These connections can be social in nature, such as that of a friend, classmate or romantic partner (Gonzales et al., 2020), or of a more transactional nature, through interactions with institutional agents, such as teachers or librarians imbued with access to resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Families can provide the necessary support for emotional attachment, but community institutions must do their part to be perceived as agents of social capital (Small, 2009) instead of unfriendly agents of the state (Jeynes, 2010).

Community-based institutions can help individuals to build these personal relationships within the town and they can also help to bridge the gap between individuals and available governmental and economic resources. The people who work within an institution, the gatekeepers of resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011), and interface with families can provide a friendly and humanizing face that can aid in the process of belonging as they assist immigrant families in establishing personal connections and accessing resources or do the opposite and alienate immigrants. For this reason, it is important to better understand the varied processes of integration and belonging that immigrant families experience as they interact with schools and other community institutions. This is important in order to empower them to better serve the immigrant families in their community. This will benefit not only the individuals who will have accessed resources or found a sense of belonging and the benefits that accompany it, but also strengthen the institutions that make up the wider community.
1.2 Research Questions

This dissertation examined the role that community-based institutions, particularly schools, play in the lives of immigrant families in one small town to add to the literature of place-based assimilation theories and illuminate the ways in which these institutions can foster a sense of belonging. Research decisions were made based on the following research questions:
1. What role does the school play in the process of immigrant families integrating into a new community?
2. How do community-based institutions help or hinder immigrant families accessing resources and developing a sense of belonging?
3. In what ways has the current COVID-19 health pandemic affected the work of community-based institutions and immigrant families’ interactions with them?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This dissertation will draw on modern assimilation theories which take into account the structural factors of the environment and the individual characteristics of the immigrants (García, 2019) and acknowledges that assimilation takes place in racially, socially and socio-economically diverse contexts. The theoretical framework includes the fact that there is no one “mainstream” to consider when studying the experiences of newly arrived immigrants to the United States (Alba & Nee, 2009) because of the diversity of local areas and the populations receiving immigrants. The local mainstream, which varies significantly in the United States according to geography, that immigrants interact with is more influential on their experiences than a presumed Anglo and Protestant mainstream (García, 2009). In studying the immigrant experience in a particular place it is important to acknowledge the political and social realities in a place by examining the concept of reception (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), one type of
assimilation theory, while also drawing on a place-based assimilation theory (Garcia & Schmalzbauer, 2017) that acknowledges the importance of both the built and natural environment of the host area on the experiences of immigrants.

1.3.1 Contexts of Reception

In order to theorize the context in which this dissertation takes place, I will employ the theory of nested contexts of reception, as theorized by Golash-Boza and Valdez (2018). This framework provides a useful lens to understand the ways in which external political and cultural factors impact integration experiences of individuals based on geographic location. It builds on Portes and Rumbaut’s (2006) context of reception model that seeks to understand the immigrant experience by looking at the political and social context in the host country. The assimilation theory of contexts of reception illustrates the importance of understanding not only the legal realities immigrants encounter but also the social climate these immigrants are entering into, and “nested contexts of reception” adds the additional nuance that immigrants are not entering into a single context of reception, but that they are confronted with different legal and social realities at the international, federal, state and local level, meaning the integration experience of immigrants can vary greatly depending on where they settle (Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018).

Immigrants find themselves at the intersection of their own personal characteristics: race, gender, ethnicity, religion (Gonzales et al., 2020) and the legal designation assigned to them. They experience this in a context that is ever shifting and wholly location dependent. Individuals and groups acquire these labels based on their situation, but it is important to note that these categories are socially and politically constructed, not intrinsic to the individual (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012). They nevertheless impact the lived experiences of immigrants, throughout the
migration and resettlement processes, in real and significant ways. This interaction between individual characteristics and the particular context of reception is significant.

1.3.2 Place-based Assimilation Theories

While the social and political context is a key factor in theorizing assimilation, García and Schmalzbauer (2017) seek to anchor modern assimilation theories by attaching them to a specific place. As we will see in this dissertation, the importance of place and "understanding assimilation as locally based adaptation to people and place" (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017, p. 57) is exceedingly important when considering the experiences of immigrants in Provincetown. Place determines the natural environment and where the built environment falls on the spectrum of rural to urban spaces. It also determines the ethnic makeup of the community and their social and political values. This is significant for two reasons. First, the presence or absence of an existing immigrant population from the same place impacts the success of a family. Second, and more importantly for this discussion, the people who work in institutions in the community, what García and Schmalzbauer (2017) call the “gatekeepers” of resources in a community, come from the existing community (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). This importance of place, both in terms of the physical environment (natural and built) and human population (laws, attitudes, and institutions) will be considered in the analysis and discussion of the data here.

1.3.3 A Note on Terminology: Integration

Although this dissertation is employing what is referred to as assimilation theories in the sociological literature, the term integration will be used throughout the dissertation when referring to the process immigrant families go through learning to live in and with the community of Provincetown. This decision was made because while the terms integration and
assimilation have similar meanings integration will be used because in the literature it is employed by those who see immigrants and their diversity as a strength, rather than as an identity to be discarded (García, 2019). Integration and its associated connotations align most closely with the goals of this research.

As there is no single mainstream toward which immigrants are assimilating (Alba & Nee, 2009), it is important to understand the specific context in Provincetown. The following section details the context of the research site, politically, socially and in terms of the natural and built environment.

1.4 The Research Site

In order to situate this research, it is important to understand the specific context of reception in Provincetown. I will apply concepts of place-based assimilation theory to explore the physical environment (natural and built) and human population (laws, attitudes and institutions) in order to illustrate the particular social and cultural context of reception at the local level encountered by newcomer immigrant families in Provincetown. I will then discuss the legal realities of immigration to the United States in general and Provincetown in particular.

145.1 The Physical Environment and HumanPopulation of Provincetown

“Provincetown might look like a pretty little city because of the cluster of the tiny old tightly knit buildings. But it is a small-town community. Everyone knows everyone.” Nurse Mary Beth, the school nurse and a relative newcomer to the community gets at the complexity of understanding the physical environment of Provincetown, which has attributes of urbanity and ruralness (Burdick-Will & Logan, 2017). The livable space in the town is densely populated, like an urban center, but it is remote from other towns, like a rural area. Also, it has a large non-white immigrant community, characteristic of urban centers but the dominant culture in the town
is white, like in much of rural America. These are both factors that can be used to determine whether a town is rural or urban according to Burdick-Will and Logan. By having urban attributes but being fundamentally rural, Provincetown presents a unique location to study immigration.

Provincetown, Massachusetts is a small town at the very end of Cape Cod with a total area of 1.8 square miles and a decreasing population of 2,628 people according to the most recent data put out by the United States Census Bureau in 2018, the American Community Five Year Estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to this data set, the population is 88% white with a median age of 58.8 and a median property value of $622,900. These statistics can be attributed to Provincetown’s status as a tourist destination with a high percentage of second homeowners, specifically white gay males. These statistics mask the day-to-day complexion of Provincetown. This data does not represent the population of interest for this study, families with school-aged children, so a look at the demographics of school-aged children and their families is better represented with an examination of data related to school enrollment.

The demographics of the population of interest for this study, families with school-aged children, can be best accessed by looking at school enrollment figures. Even though the town population is declining the school population is growing. According to data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), (2020), Provincetown Schools, the only school in the town, is a Pre-K – Grade 8 school with an enrollment of 131 students in 2019-2020, and 141 students in 2021-2022. There are an additional 20 children enrolled in the town’s early years care for children younger than three years of age, which is free to the children of town residents and school employees. The school is about evenly split between white and nonwhite students. The racial breakdown of students at the
school as listed on the DESE website is as follows: 51.8% White, 19.9% Black or African American, 17% Hispanic and 11.3% Multi-Race. Additional data of interest to this study is the percentage of children who indicate that English is not their first language (24.8%) which is higher than the Massachusetts state average (23%), which signals the higher-than-average percentage of students from immigrant background. This number is artificially low, as many Jamaican families, whose first language is Jamaican Patois, prefer to indicate English as their first language as it is the official language of their country of origin.

An additional factor of relevance to this study is the high percentage of economically disadvantaged children which is significant because economic disadvantage that would influence a family’s dependence on community-based institutions. According to DESE data, Provincetown Schools has an economically disadvantaged population of 35.1%, also higher than the state average (32.8%) (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020). A related marker of economic disadvantage and the role of the school in supporting families is Provincetown School’s qualification for free and reduced lunch for the entire district, based on a higher than 50% qualification rate for this program (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019).

1.4.1.1 Summer and Winter in Provincetown. “I mean the summer…the whole town is just like vibrating, you know, it's such a different experience.” Amy, the Director at the town library, is describing the mood in the town in the summer, compared to the year-round life. A discussion of Provincetown is incomplete without directly addressing the seasonal nature of the town. The beaches and nature of Provincetown are best enjoyed in the summer and the town tourism board actively courts tourism by the LGBTQ population, hosting theme weeks throughout the year, although primarily in the summer, with themed town wide parties geared
towards different facets of the LGBTQ community, and a family week with activities planned specifically for queer families (for examples see Ptownie, 2022). The population in the summer swells to nearly 20 times the year-round population, peaking during the carnival, a parade and celebration of gay culture. This summer culture has significant impacts on the economy of the town, but also on the social and political leanings of the town, which tends to be more liberal.

The large summer population has an influence on all of the institutions in town, which are funded and operate as if they were serving a much larger community than the approximately 3,000 year-round residents. Several of the institutions interviewed talked about how they have to staff like they a larger institution than they really are year-round, in order to be able to accommodate the summer rush. The librarian explained it well,

We have to be ready to accommodate the summer. This is the crazy thing about Provincetown, right? The whole town has to be ready to respond to what summer is and then keep everything going when nobody's here, you know, like town staff and police and you know, all this stuff that has to be in place all the time for those three months.

Amy the librarian is getting at an important aspect of Provincetown’s institutions. There is intense demand on them in the summer, which impacts their operation year-round. When considering they are the “gatekeepers” of resources (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017) this has an important impact on the ways families access resources. Other institutions such as the health clinic find it more of a challenge to scale up their year-round operations with limited staffing and resources, leading to delays in care for adults especially. Leo from the health clinic explained,

We have these influxes of populations in the summertime, comparatively to, what that looks like in the off season. I think it makes staffing really difficult. To have a year-round staff that is adequate to take on the surge of visitors that come in in the summer whether that is visitors or whether that is a migrant workforce.

Because of the seasonal, tourist serving aspect of the town and its economy, the many hotels, restaurants and shops are dependent on immigrant labor of economic migrants during the
summer months with little work in the winter. Economic migrant adults without children often spend half the year working in Provincetown and return to their home country, mostly Jamaica, in the winter months. For families with children in school this is not an option. In order for children to be enrolled in school, parents must stay year-round, even when there is little available work in the winter months. Affordable housing is a particular burden for these families as will be discussed in chapter five. Within this local context, at the outermost tip of Cape Cod, this research will be situated in this diverse and complex town, starting with the school and radiating out into the wider community.

1.4.2 Legal Realities of Migration in the United States

Immigrants to the United States are subject not only to federal laws, but also state and local laws as well. In the polarized United States this can lead to radically different experiences of immigrants in different states and towns (Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018), with local laws having a more direct and forceful impact on the lives of immigrants (García, 2019). Many states, counties, cities and towns have passed laws making the day-to-day lives of immigrants difficult while others have declared themselves sanctuaries, deciding not to enforce federal immigration laws inside their jurisdiction (Bauder, 2017). In recent decades there has been a significant increase in the number of state and local laws aimed at governing immigrants. In 2017 alone, there were almost 500 state and local laws passed around the country that impact the lives of immigrants, negatively or positively. Some of these laws are symbolic, to broadcast an agenda, like sanctuary designations, and others are more substantive, impacting education, housing and employment funding and institutional policy

Aside from their obvious legal power, federal and local immigration laws yield the power to impact the experience of immigrants socially and economically (Freeman, 2004).
“Immigration laws, observed or violated, necessarily precede and often constrain the migrants’ interaction with markets, welfare, and cultural regulations” (p. 950).

In the aftermath of the Trump administration, as the Biden administration has left many policies in effect, there is a hostile reception with immigrants, particularly those seeking to enter into the United States. Policies like the Muslim Travel Ban, Remain in Mexico and tightening of asylum procedures have made it nearly impossible for immigrants to enter the United States legally (A. Aleinikoff, 2019). Despite the difficulties they faced, some families have successfully entered the country but still face significant, legal, political, social and economic barriers at the federal level because of the current climate.

The current legal context of reception for immigrants in the United States dates back to the 1996 welfare reform act, which limited access to public benefits for immigrants and created immigrants as a separate, lesser class of people changing public perception of immigrants (Aleinikoff, 2000). Losing public benefits like food stamps and other forms of welfare changed the economic context for immigrants and also signaled a shift in thinking of immigrants as others because they are considered separate in the eyes of federal law. This distinction has pervaded public opinion and policies at all levels contributing to a negative context of reception (García, 2019). The current iteration, Public Charge, in which immigrant families are scared to access public benefits they are eligible for because they are worried it will negatively affect their visa applications and immigration proceedings (Daval, 2020) is a topic of discussion in the findings of this dissertation.

States too play an important role in determining the context of reception of immigrants in a given locality. States can pass their own laws and set a social climate that can help or hinder these immigrants as they seek belonging in a new place. A small New England state with a
population of about 6.9 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019) Massachusetts hosts a significant immigrant population, which makes up 16.8% of the state population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019) higher than the national average of 13% (Joseph, 2016) with some cities and towns within the state having a much higher density of immigrants than that.

Massachusetts has a long history of immigrants, beginning with the Pilgrims, who first landed in Provincetown 400 years ago on the Mayflower before moving on to the now famous Plimouth Plantations. In more modern times, Lawrence, MA became the first majority Latino city in New England (Barber, 2017). A traditionally “blue” democratic state, Massachusetts (MA) and its liberal voters have generally provided a friendly reception for immigrants. An example of this positive reception for immigrants can be found when considering health care. The federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) left undocumented immigrants unprotected by the health insurance mandate, but Massachusetts extended health care coverage to these immigrants who are not covered under the ACA (Joseph, 2016).

1.4.2.1 Legal Designations of Immigrants to Provincetown. The immigrants in Provincetown typically fall into two groups. The majority are economic migrants, primarily from Jamaica, but also from Mexico or eastern Europe. A smaller group are refugees or undocumented immigrants, fleeing gang violence in Honduras. Both of these groups face unique social and legal realities that determine their experience, so a brief discussion of economic migrants and refugees follows here.

1.4.2.1.1 Economic Migrants. Economic migrants are a diverse group that migrate in search of economic opportunity for themselves and often educational opportunities for their children. Most migrants living outside their home country gain access to that country legally (Aleinikoff, 2000) meaning they have secured a visa prior to traveling to a new country and as
such are formal legal members of the economic and political landscape. Typically being an economic migrant gives the status of near citizenship (Aleinikoff & Klusmeyer, 2000). In the U.S. context economic migrants share much of the same rights and responsibilities as citizens but they still face the threat of being removed from the country if, for example, they break the law, (García, 2019) and have limited access to certain public benefits (Aleinikoff, 2000) including health care.

1.4.2.1.2 Refugees and Undocumented Migrants. Despite the significant media attention given to refugees and asylum seekers entering the United States, they comprise a smaller proportion of non-citizens than do economic migrants (Aleinikoff, 2000). Refugees are a diverse group, but their shared vulnerability is significant when considering the social and economic realities they encounter.

Refugees occupy a unique space in the international legal landscape. Those migrants who receive the refugee designation are protected by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and all of their policies and guiding documents. This entitles them to international protection with specific guiding principles: safety from harm, enjoyment of asylum and the possibility of durable solutions to their problems, and the promise of nonrefoulment, or not being returned to a country where you will face persecution or harm (Aleinikoff & Zamore, 2019). While far from complete in addressing the issues migrants face, these basic principles should offer a level of legal protection for refugees, but this is not always the case in practice. Even in developed countries with relatively strong supports for refugees, there are circumstances in which rights are promised, such as the right to education, but they not realized or implemented in all contexts (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Ultimately, refugees are looking for a durable solution to the problems forcing them to flee their homes. They are looking for a security and economic
and educational opportunities for themselves and their children (Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017). Refugees who end up in the United States are positioned to achieve both long term

1.5 Significance of This Study

This dissertation will advance the literature in several ways. As was discussed in the theoretical framework, local context matters when studying immigration experiences. Much research on immigrant communities is conducted in and around major cities, where large populations of immigrants live (see for example García, 2019; Gonzales, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999). By contrast, this research will be conducted in a very small town with a year-round population of less than 3000 people with a significant immigrant population among school-aged children and their families. Studying the immigrant experience in this context is advantageous because in such a small town there is less variety in the institutions and resources available to all families. There is, for example, one school for all children in town, equalizing access to the types of resources students have regardless of neighborhood or immigration status. Additionally, immigrant enclaves which develop in larger cities (Logan & Zhang, 2010) are absent in Provincetown because of its small size. This makes it more necessary for immigrant families to engage in the wider community outside of their ethnic group.

It is significant that this research is centered in the school, even though it is studying family outcomes. In Provincetown the school does provide a particularly fruitful place to explore the experiences of immigrant families because of its singular nature in town.

One of the things I love the most about the school here is it is one of the places I believe in town that all of the many different peoples and backgrounds and experiences that make Provincetown what it is, it's the only place where they all are together. That is very profound and not to be overlooked by the broader community, and is a source of conversation at the moment” - Tessa, Provincetown Art Association and Museum
The roll of the school in town, as a meeting place for the many cultures of Provincetown, is currently being discussed at the local level, making this a timely addition to the conversation.

For such a town with such a small population, Provincetown has a large budget, driven by the tourism economy that dominates the town throughout the summer and shoulder seasons and the property taxes paid by second-home owners who own most of the (expensive) property in town. Thus, the community-based institutions are well funded allowing them to offer goods and services on a larger scale than may be available in more cash-strapped areas. In short, there are more resources to go around. Additionally, there is an extensive network of institutions in the town that exist to support struggling families, immigrants included. The community in Provincetown is a compassionate one, with the resources and nimbleness of a small town to make a change when they see a problem. Or, as the town Library Director puts it, “this is what's so cool about Provincetown, right? [Its] that something happens and the community gets upset and says we have to fix it and then they create a program to fix it.” This availability of institutional capacity and willingness to help within the community allows for the study of the way immigrant families access resources when there are ample sources of aid. The struggle in this case for families to know about and be connected to these institutions and this depends on a referring agency like the school.

Additionally, the natural experiment created by the corona virus pandemic adds an additional layer of context, for families and institutions which will add to existing literature. By studying what has happened in this time of disruption for both families and institutions, it will be possible to understand what is most essential about a place and the human interactions that take place there.
1.6 Overview of this Dissertation

This chapter has introduced this dissertation and established the theoretical framework and context for the dissertation. Chapter two of this dissertation will present a review of the literature related to family immigration processes and the institutions they interact with. The third chapter will describe the methodology, both data collection and analysis. The findings chapters, four through seven, are divided according to the ways immigrant families access resources and the ways they find belonging. Chapter four will discuss the context of reception in the school, which will be followed, in chapter five, by a discussion of the housing and food insecurities in Provincetown and the complex network of institutions that support families. Chapters six and seven will shift to a discussion of belonging. Chapter six will share an analysis of the visual data collected from the children about the ways they find belonging in town, and chapter seven will detail the institutions that provide enrichment for families and facilitate that sense of belonging. Chapter eight will conclude the dissertation with a brief discussion of the overall findings and some recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will review literature related to the role that community-based institutions play in the lives of immigrant families brokering access to resources and shaping their experiences to create belonging, in order to support the contextual framework and underpin the work that this dissertation is aiming to achieve. First, it will discuss citizenship as it relates to belonging and the legal context of belonging immigrants experience in the United States. Next it will discuss the ways families and community-based institutions, particularly schools, can both help and hinder the formation of a sense of belonging.

2.1 Belonging

In addition to the theories explained in the theoretical framework, this research is framed around the concept of belonging. Belonging is a central concept in this research because it is a significant indicator when studying the likelihood of success of resettlement or integration experiences of immigrants (Gonzales, 2016). The concept of belonging is useful for the study of migration because it allows us to approach migration from two perspectives, both from the perspective of the individual and that of the community. “Immigration is fundamentally about belonging in a new society” (Malsbary, 2014, p. 1314) thus making it an important metric to understand in the study of the experiences of immigrant families.

Yuval-Davis (2006) offers an analytic framework for the study of belonging based on classical and current sociological and psychological theory. Within this framework(2006), she suggests three levels on which belonging must be studied: (a) the social location of the individual, such as race, gender or class; (b) the identifications emotional attachment individuals
have and level of identification they form with groups; (c) the ethical and political value systems with which people judge belonging, either their own belonging or someone else’s.

Belonging has previously been framed in the social science research in terms of assimilation, an inherently subtractive perspective (Rodriguez, 2019). To that end it is important to define belonging taking an asset-based perspective. This paper will employ the definition of belonging as framed by Malsbury (2014). She defines belonging as that in which an individual maintains his or her identity while simultaneously aligning oneself with others in the community with dignity in such a way that counters anti-immigrant sentiment.

2.2 Immigration

In the current geopolitical context of increased control of borders, the current immigration laws enacted and practiced around the globe are redefining identity and belonging, for citizens and noncitizens alike (Yuval-Davis, 2019). Legal immigration status impacts an individual and their identity in intensely personal ways. Immigration status shapes how people perceive themselves, how they relate to others, how they participate within their community and their relationship to their home country (Menjivar, 2006). Legal status also affects physical and emotional health and well-being. It can impact an individual’s access to healthcare and can make individuals more vulnerable to domestic or societal violence (Menjivar & Abrego, 2012).

Thus, it is important to understand the ways belonging is experienced and expressed in the current legal context. Belonging is an important indicator of the potential social and economic success of immigrant families because integration into a community allows access to the social capital of the dominant culture which can lead to social and economic resources (Small, 2004). Additionally, and more significantly for this study, it provides a way to better contextualize the lived experiences of immigrants and the local level interactions that shape
those experiences. Belonging is also closely linked to the concept of citizenship, another widely discussed and debated concept in these times of heightened immigration control (Yuval-Davis, 2019). Belonging is considered a foundational element of citizenship and a legal indicator of membership within receiving society (Bloemraad et al., 2008) but not all immigrants are seeking permanent legal citizenship. However, most individuals are looking for belonging, regardless of their intention to formally become citizens of a new country. (Smith, 2008).

Before discussing the situations of non-citizens, it is useful to have a brief discussion on the role of the state and citizens in the current geopolitical context as a way to contrast the rights, responsibilities and experiences of economic migrants and refugees. Any meaningful discussion about migration and resettlement cannot avoid the concept of citizenship and the legal, economic and social implications of possession or absence of this status.

In addition to legal implications of citizenship, there are social and economic implications as well. Citizenship manifests itself in specific behaviors. Socially, citizenship is comprised of political and other types of participation and a sense of belonging (Bloemraad et al., 2008). Living, working, owning property and attending schools in a community may allow individuals to participate in society, in much the same way that citizens do. Thus, immigrants may find performative membership in a community that is limited in nature. The day-to-day lives of non-citizens may appear similar to those of citizens, but there are limits to access public services and a lack of certain protections that make pseudo-citizenship a significantly different experience than citizenship (Gonzales, 2016).

The integration process is a stressful and difficult one with immigrants often facing an unwelcoming context of reception, racism and discrimination, and exposure to school and community violence (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009) in addition to the stress of settling in a new
place and securing work and housing. Federal governments do have the power to ease the resettlement process and create a more accepting social climate.

2.3 Family

The next section will discuss existing literature related to families, the unit of analysis for this study. When studying migrant families and their efforts to find belonging in a new host community it is important to first discuss the family’s role, both for the individuals within the family group, and the role of the family as a unit within wider society. According to some early sociologists, the family unit is an essential building block in the formation of communities and societies, tasked with the essential role of education and preparing children for participation in society (Durkheim, 1961). Families, especially extended families, play an important role in the maintenance and transmission of culture (Leichter, 1997). They pass on family norms and dynamics, both those specific to a religious, racial, or ethnic group, and also those part of the larger cultural dialogue (Stack & Burton, 1993).

On a more intimate level, family members support each other, emotionally, financially, and practically (Leichter & Mitchell, 1967). Families provide love and support, which is a crucial foundation for establishing new relationships outside of the family unit (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009) which is essential to belonging. Families also provide children with support in their learning, either through direct involvement in schools or more general culturally appropriate ways of support by placing a high value on education and making sacrifices to prioritize learning (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). This too facilitates belonging as education is key to the integration process as will be discussed in a later section.
2.3.1 Defining Family

The definition of family is socially constructed depending on the temporal, social and cultural context (Becker, 1991). Cohen (2017) describes family as a social unit defined by boundaries. That is, a family is defined by understanding who is in and who is out of the family group as defined by members of that group. As suggested by Cohen, this paper will assume that a family unit is defined by those within that family unit, not limiting the discussion to biological connections. Families are sometimes defined by cohabitation, or who shares a home (Becker, 1991). In the context of extended immigrant families, especially in a place where affordable housing is scarce, cohabitation creates newly defined family units which are observed in the participants of this study.

In the U.S. context there is presumed preference for a nuclear family and many policies are premised on the assumption that the natural form for families is two heterosexual parents and their biological offspring (Leichter & Mitchell, 1967). While there may be historical precedent for these assumptions, families of all kinds are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of membership. Nuclear family composition may depart from this traditional definition because of same sex marriage (Moore, 2008), single parenthood and blended or step families (Carlson & Furstenberg Jr, 2006). Additionally, as people live longer and transportation technology improves, the constellation of family members in a given household is ever in flux (Riley, 1983) with extended family members traveling to each other or spending significant time cohabiting. As we look beyond the typical middle-class American model of a nuclear family, we see that families take many shapes and sizes, with the prevalence of two biological married parents cohabitating with their children decreasing steadily (Yeung & Glauber, 2008) among both immigrant and native born populations. For the purposes of this study, the definition of a given
family will be defined by the members of that family, as they identified by members within the family group.

For the purposes of this discussion this forms an interesting parallel to definitions of belonging which frame it as also defined by its boundaries, that in order for one to feel belonging as part of a group, there must necessarily be an out-group and a way to determine who is in and out (Bloemraad et al., 2008). This comparison between definitions of family and belonging draws further parallels when considering that belonging is often described as feeling “at home” (Yuval-Davis, 2019) and families are sometimes defined by cohabitation, or who shares a home (Becker, 1991).

2.3.2 Immigrant Families

While no two families are the same, there are certain characteristics common to many immigrant families that merit discussion in the context of the family’s role in facilitating a sense of belonging. Immigrant families in particular have an increased likelihood of living in an extended family model (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010) which has social and policy ramifications for families and those organizations and institutions that interact with them. In many cases children live with, are cared for and supported by extended biological relatives, such as grandparents, aunts or older siblings (Blair & Taylor, 2007), and also care takers that are not biologically related, such as step parents and others (Nord & West, 2001). These unconventional networks can have many benefits for the family unit such as increased income potential and sharing in responsibilities such as childcare. For children in these families, such a network provides additional opportunities to form relationships with supportive adults, something that has been found to be crucial to future success, socially and academically (Gonzalez, 2005).

23
In addition to family size and composition there are other factors that distinguish immigrant families from the presumed white middle class majority. Immigrant families are often set apart from the middle class in appearance and socio-economic status. While some immigrant families in the United States are wealthy and may speak English at home, the majority are likely to be Asian or Hispanic and poor with low English proficiency (Schwartz & Stiefel, 2011). These factors can create difficulties in the integration experience.

Families and extended kin networks are typically the first line of support, for youth and adults alike. There are, however, limits to the support that family members can provide and families are dependent on outside institutions to provide access to things like education and religious activity (Leichter & Mitchell, 1967). In the case of youth, parental figures and caretakers often struggle to help children with homework because of a low level of English proficiency and they lack the contextual knowledge of host country culture and ways of life, such as how to apply to college (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). For these reasons it is important to look at the community institutions that form a wider network of support around families.

2.3.3 Families and Belonging

As mentioned above, social relationships are key to establishing a sense of belonging (Gonzales et al., 2020). Families can facilitate social connections through their own various involvements in the community and access to resources and institutions through, work, housing and social organizations (Reed-Danahay, 2008).

2. 4 The Role of Community Institutions in the Lives of Immigrant Families

Communities are organized into a network of institutions that fulfil a variety of roles for the members of the community. This network of loosely connected individuals and institutions make up a community and are ideal for the spread of information and resources (Granovetter,
Community-based institutions include churches, schools, libraries, social organizations such as immigrant associations or fraternal orders, government agencies, commercial centers and even social media (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). These institutions fill a particular niche and help to meet the physical and social needs of individuals in the community through the resources they provide, such as food pantries and access to medical care (Stanley, 2008). Contact with these types of institutions can impact the integration experience of immigrants (Bloemraad et al., 2008) and have been found to have a beneficial effect on immigrants (Kesler & Bloemraad, 2010). Institutions can help foster a feeling of belonging by providing membership in a social group. Gonzales and his colleagues (2020) define “community membership, then, as a feeling that one has invested part of themselves to become a member, earning the right to belong,” (p. 64) a useful way to conceptualize the ways that connecting with community institutions provides for personal identification with the larger group in a new place (Yuval-Davis, 2006) which is a necessary element for development of a sense of belonging.

In addition to tangible resources, involvement in community-based institutions provides access to social capital. Stanton-Salazar (2011) provides a useful definition of social capital, saying it consists of resources and other forms of social support that are embedded within an individual’s network which are accessible through direct or indirect contact with individuals situated within community institutions. He points out that non-family adults play a crucial role in the integration experiences of immigrant youth, and typically relationships are formed with non-kin adults through interactions that take place within the context of community institutions.

The concept of attachment to place is also a relevant one in this discussion. Community institutions do not exist in isolation. They are a product of, and contributing members to, the neighborhood in which they are situated. There is strong evidence that the characteristics of the
neighborhood itself and the institutions within that neighborhood have significant effects on the outcomes for residents of that neighborhood (Sampson, 2012). This is important for this discussion because belonging also has a spatial component as individuals form an attachment to a place. The neighborhood and local community have been found to be significant in feelings of belonging felt by youth and adolescents (Gonzales, 2016) and so it is important to look at the neighborhood context of community institutions.

2.4.1 Schools as Community Institutions

While there are myriad community institutions that can aid in the integration experience of immigrants, for families with school-aged children, schools in particular can play an important role in developing belonging for children and their families. For those families with children who are eligible to attend kindergarten to grade 12, public schools are an almost universal experience for migrant families entering the United States because children are legally protected and guaranteed access to education in the U.S. public schools regardless of immigration status (Aleinikoff, 2000). Because of their early contact with nearly all migrant children and their families, schools are uniquely situated among other community institutions to impact the integration process of migrant families and facilitate feelings of belonging for migrant youth and their extended family networks.

Schools are positioned to address the needs of migrant families in several ways, including access to academic learning, social skills and cultural understandings necessary to acquire the norms and behaviors necessary for success in society and the performance of belonging (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018). In fact, in industrialized nations, engagement with schools has been found to be essential to future economic success so that students can learn the skills needed to participate in the modern economy (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). Schools also shape the identity of immigrant
youth. Enrollment in school provides youth with a new status, that of student, which can provide youth with a sense of belonging by allowing them to augment their status as immigrant with one that connotes community belonging in the dominant group (Gonzales, 2016).

Foundational sociological theorists, such as Durkheim, have theorized that schools are necessary for the reproduction of society because they serve as a means for transmitting to children the norms and expectations of society (Durkheim, 1961). They serve a key role in cultural assimilation and political socialization necessary for participation in modern society (Feinberg & Soltis, 2004). This is true for children growing up in society and culture they were born into, and it is just as true for children relearning the norms of a new society. Schools provide a way for immigrant children to integrate into society, learning modes of behavior and cultural knowledge that will aid them in their quest for belonging (Stanton-Salazar, 2011).

Academically, schools are structured to assist students in learning the skills and knowledge needed to participate in a new culture. They provide language instruction increasingly targeted towards the needs of language learners along with specific pedagogy and curriculum targeted to meet the needs of newly arrived students (Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017). For students in higher grades, as they learn the language and become able to participate in traditional curriculum they gain access to civic education, which teaches the fundamental knowledge needed to be a citizen (Knight & Watson, 2014) starting with essential performative aspects of citizenship such as the pledge of allegiance (Gonzales, 2016).

For this discussion on belonging and the role of schools as community institutions, it is important to acknowledge that schools consist of much more than the academic curriculum carried out during the academic day. A school, as a community institution, provides access to before and after school care, homework-help and direct access to many important resources for
families. Adults can also benefit from the education opportunities provided outside of school hours, such as through language or literacy classes (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). For children, extracurricular activities offered by the school, such as homework help, clubs or sports teams provide opportunities for students to make connections that facilitate integration (Gonzales, 2016).

Educational institutions also provide families with access to a social network and resources such as information related to healthcare, cultural information and community development. They also facilitate access to services and material goods at a reduced cost through partnerships with outside organizations that can assist families with accessing health care, child care and cultural enrichment opportunities (Small, 2009). In a case study of mothers at a day care institution in New York City, Mario Small (2009) found that the day care institutions served as agents of resources through the social ties they facilitate. Mothers made friends within the institution, increasing their access to a larger social network and its attending social value. The childcare center itself also provided access to important resources (Small 2009). This example, while not specifically focused on immigrant families is a clear demonstration of the value having a child in school brings to the entire family in the form of information, resources and social capital.

Like in Small’s study, the social aspect of schools cannot be underestimated, for children or adults. Schools put children into contact with peers (Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017), both immigrant and native-born, on a daily basis allowing for friendship and social learning, relationships which have protective functions for immigrants seeking to find belonging. Peers and classmates help each other with assignments and can ease the climate of fear that many newly arrived immigrants experience when faced with a new school (Suárez-Orozco et al.,
Gonzales and his colleagues (2020) write about the importance of personal and social relationships as “spaces of belonging.” These spaces develop when individuals make personal connections with others, as friends, classmates or romantic partners.

Spaces of belonging can also be found by interactions within a classroom or on a sporting team, feeling part of a “community of practice” (Reed-Danahay, 2008). This explains another key role that schools play in the lives of migrant families. Schools serve as a meeting ground for youth to find others they can relate to. (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). When schools host after school or family based events they can also provide a platform for migrant adults to meet their own adult peers in the community (Martinez & Wizer-Vecchi, 2016). In rural settings such as this one, schools have a particularly important role within the community, adding a life and vibrancy to an otherwise quiet town (Corbett, 2009).

While schools have the potential to facilitate belonging amongst new-comer families, schools are often unprepared to meet the complex needs of immigrant students (Rodriguez, 2019), in and out of the classroom. Additionally, schools can hinder the development of the sense of belonging in youth and their families. In some cases, especially in schools with large immigrant populations, immigrant students are discouraged from engaging with and practicing their own culture norms in an effort to help students integrate. However, these students are not fully prepared to engage in mainstream culture because they lack the knowledge and practices necessary to do so. The school may even actively try and replace a student’s home culture and identity with that of the dominant culture. Subtractive schooling, as this phenomenon is called, arises when many of the above mentioned school level supports for successful integration, such as caring relationships with school adults, are lacking (Valenzuela, 1999). Additionally, schools can create climates that are unwelcoming to migrant families, especially those with limited
language skills, or fail to appreciate the strengths diverse families bring to education (Baquedano-López et al., 2013) or they may be perceived by families as surveilling institutions or agents of the government (Jeynes, 2010).

2.4.1.1 The Role of Teachers. Another important social aspect of schools is the caring adults that youth are exposed to. Teachers, administrators, coaches, counselors and specialists are a part of the larger school institution and form a significant resource that children are put into touch with as a part of their schooling experience. Research has shown that non-kin adults play a significant role in easing the transition experience of newcomer youth (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009) and schools are a key place for forming relationships between youth and non-kin adults. These adults may provide access to institutional resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011), or improve academic outcomes. In a qualitative study employing visual research methodology, Mendenhall and her colleagues (2017) found that caring relationships between students and teachers positively impact academic outcomes and allowed for academic inclusion of refugee students.

Teachers are often the main point of contact for immigrant families because they work directly with the students. They also determine the way in which curriculum is delivered and to what extent it is culturally responsive and relevant, which has been shown to impact the learning experiences of immigrant youth (Bartlett, 2005). This gives them an insight into what is going on in the lives of the students, and their families. As we will see in this dissertation, teachers can develop deeply personal relationships with their students.

When considering the academic and social emotional success of diverse students, teachers play a key role (Gonzales, 2016). Student-teacher interactions are governed to some extent by the structure of the school and the identity of the teachers. When teachers are able to create a safe space for negotiation of identity between newly arrived students they are better able
to integrate into the dominant community in a way that helps them to maintain their own identity, including national identity (Cummins, 2009). Some students, whose home life is substantively culturally different from their school life struggle with this disconnect (Getzels, 1975), but teachers can help to overcome this gap.

Many teachers, and I would argue most in Provincetown, become teachers because of an inherent “call to teach” (Hansen, 2021). The feel an inherent desire to educate and this can extend beyond the academics of the school day. In the context of this dissertation teachers will be viewed for their roles in “attending with care and concern to students” (Hanson, 2021 p. 141) in a way that confirms their identity and allows the students to grow and thrive and learn to work within the institution of the school.

2.4.2 Other Examples of Community-based Institutions

While schools are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of families as they seek belonging because they are typical first points of contact, other community-based institutions assist in this process as well. One common institution known for supporting families by fostering the feelings of membership and belonging, is the church or other religious institution. Looking at research done in religious communities provides an example of the multifaceted nature of the role that community institutions play in the lives of immigrants. Religion is an important cultural connector and immigrants and native-born people alike attend religious institutions in order to form a connection with a larger group. In a multi-sited ethnographic study of immigrants from Central America to the United States, Menjivar (2006) found evidence of the extremely important role the church played in the integration experience of those immigrants. She found that in addition to allowing individuals a place to worship and practice their faith, churches provide access to a ready-made community, imbued with social capital, and access to
myriad tangible and informational resources such as legal advice, language classes or assistance with finding or paying for housing and utilities. Some religious institutions in her study served a primarily immigrant group while others hosted a mixed congregation of immigrants and citizens. In the case of mixed congregations, interactions between citizens and immigrants, as facilitated by a preacher and religious teaching of tolerance and acceptance, can provide citizens with a more compassionate lens through which to view and understand immigrants. Being members of the same community encouraged native born churchgoers to provide aid to immigrants, further facilitating the belonging experience (Menjívar, 2006).

In other cases, churches can be used as a vehicle for migration and immediate social citizenship within a church as many churches have powers that reach across borders superseding political citizenship with social citizenship. Migration within a larger Christian community provides newly arrived immigrants with immediate resources and status and legitimation that can lead to belonging (Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2008). Churches are also used as a way to mobilize individuals to act for community or national benefit and exercise their civic rights (Bloemraad, 2006) making them integral in the transmission of social capital on a community level and able to influence decision making and institutional practices.

Libraries are another community-based institution that can easily become a natural hub to foster belonging in individuals. They offer community programming to meet the needs of community members and can often host Graduate Equivalency Degree or English Language classes. They also have computers and free access to the internet (Naficy, 2009). In a study conducted in Hartford, Connecticut, a local library, in partnership with the local high school created a particularly effective program for immigrant high school students of diverse backgrounds (Rodriguez, 2019). Through the program, participants found belonging within their
immigrant community, situated in the larger city community by participating, as equals, in a community where they felt united and comfortable in their “newness” to the country and participation in a curriculum focused on helping them learn about themselves in relation to their new community (Rodriguez, 2019).

2.4.3 Community-Based Institutions Hindering a Sense of Belonging

Just because community-based institutions can help to facilitate belonging does not mean this is always the case. In a previous section, the negative effects of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) and the impact of schools unprepared to meet the needs of immigrant students (Rodriquez, 2019) were discussed. Likewise, in community-based institutions it is possible for the implicit or explicit preference for local cultural norms to lead to efforts to change behaviors of immigrants that can have detrimental effects by seeking to erase home culture or discourage supportive relationships. Social workers, for example, when working with immigrant families have been known to discourage reliance on extended family members in preference for the dominant cultural model of the nuclear family (Leichter & Mitchell, 1967). While attempting to socialize and integrate the family into the wider society, these social workers were in fact distancing the family from the supportive capacity of their extended kin network, which has been shown to aid in the integration process (Gonzales et al., 2020).

Many immigrant families use a network of extended family and acquaintances from the same country of origin as a way to establish themselves in a new place, finding work and housing through these connections (Menjivar, 2006). There are many benefits to this arrangement, but in locations with particularly large immigrant enclaves this can isolate families from the wider community and hinder the integration process. An immigrant community that is well developed with its own community-based institutions may insulate newcomers from
interaction with individuals and community institutions in the wider society, thus limiting contact with and slowing integration (Bloemraad, 2006). In a large scale quantitative study of neighborhood effects in Chicago, Sampson (2012) found that with an increase in immigrants to a particular area the cultural capital native to that area was dispersed, meaning the relative strength of community institutions and their ability to assist families in integration was reduced.

2.5 Belonging and the Natural World

Place-based assimilation theorists have begun to theorize on the roll that the environment, both built and natural plays in the integration experiences of immigration families. In one study García and Schmalzbauer (2017) found that immigrants from rural areas in Mexico to rural Montana found that the natural environment, mountains and open spaces, helped to facilitate a sense of belonging, even in a socially hostile white mainstream when compared to immigrants from Mexico to a city in Southern California with a more friendly Latino mainstream. Even though the immigrants to Montana faced difficulties because they were minorities and were questioned about their legal status, they reported an intimate connection with the natural environment.

In another study set in urban Los Angeles, Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017) found that community gardens created a “home-like” public space that provided for feelings of connections for the Latinos who gardened there. In part, this belonging was attributed to the ability to grow fruits and vegetables from their home country, but more importantly, the contact with plant-life and sense of ownership in a public space were found to lead to feelings of belonging. A gap in the literature exists here because little other research has been done to understand the role of the natural environment in the lives of immigrant families.
2.6 Conclusion

As can be seen from the above literature much is known about the ways that families find belonging through schools and other community-based institutions. This dissertation will seek to add to the dialogue by providing an additional example in a context not yet explored. As the theoretical framework of this study points out, much of the integration experience is determined by local context, and thus, it is valuable to look at a variety of local contexts. As will be seen in the following section, Provincetown, MA has a small population, and an even smaller immigrant population, but small size and unusual geographic location make it an interesting context through which to better understand these contexts.
Chapter 3: Methodology

In conducting the research for this dissertation, I was seeking to capture the story of Provincetown and its immigrant families. I was also seeking to illuminate the varied and multiple institutions that serve the community. The interviews and other data collection were aimed at understanding the some of the many narratives of Provincetown that seek to provide an alternative narrative that looks beyond the tourist haven “Gay Disney Land,” as Lisa, one of the mothers interviewed here, described it, to illuminate year-round life there. The data collection revealed the struggles and successes of families there and the network of institutions that support them. This drive to understand the narratives underpinned all decisions involved in data collection, described here in this chapter.

With this focus on the narrative comes a move away from looking at cause and effect, which is most typical in sociological research (Small, 2013). Instead with this research I am paying more attention to the mechanisms through which immigrant families access resources and find belonging, by paying attention to how individuals and families respond to the social conditions and interact with institutions and other individuals. I am also examining the phenomena of aid for immigrant families in Provincetown and how it develops based on individual and institutional interactions (Small, 2013). By moving away from cause-and-effect variables, “The mechanism perspective sees the core of causal explanation not in the irrefutable proof that changes in one variable tend to cause changes in another but in the clear understanding of what process might produce such changes” (Small, 2013, p. 598).

This research project sought to link lived human experiences of immigrant families to macro-level processes of immigration at work, structurally, within a community employing
ethnographic and qualitative research methods to make that link (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). In order to address the research questions of this project and understand the role of community institutions in the lives of immigrant families as they establish themselves, access resources and find belonging in a new community, I employed qualitative research methods by conducting ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979), drawing on visual research data (Rose, 2016) and conducting digital ethnography (Murthy, 2008). The research design will be centered around the experiences of immigrant families and the mission and operations of community-based institutions.

Before discussing the data collection, it is important to note that the data collection for this dissertation was conducted in 2021 and early 2022, during a time of widespread disruption and restrictions aimed at containing the corona virus pandemic. Restrictions at the state, local and institutional level governed the ways that interactions could take place, with a strong preference for remote communication. As such, the data collection for this project was conducted remotely per Teachers College Internal Review Board (IRB) requirements. All interviews took place over the phone or via Zoom. Meetings with classes of students took place over Google Meets. Communication with students and families took place through text and email.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection was an iterative process. It began with the children in the school, asking them to take and share photographs of the community with me. I also simultaneously pursued interviews at the school with key staff members I had previously identified for inclusion in the project, such as the school nurse, the chef and educators that work with immigrant children in the school. From there I pursued interviews with people within the school and at institutions outside
the school that were recommended by people I had already interviewed, institutions that came up in other interviews and based on my own experiences. I pursued interviews with family members throughout the process using connections and referrals that arose.

3.1.1 Working with the Children: Visual Research Methods

In order to address the first research question and determine which factors contribute to a sense of belonging amongst immigrant families in Provincetown, MA, the research began with the children participating in a visual research project and photo elicitation interview (Luttrell, 2010; Templeton, 2018). Children were the focus of this portion of the data collection and analysis as a way to bring their voices to the front of the conversation (Cook & Hess, 2007). Listening to children is a vital and sometimes overlooked part of education research (Yoon & Templeton, 2019) and so efforts were being made in the research design to build in time to listen exclusively to children. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child guarantees that ‘parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child.’ To that end, children were asked to initiate the study by taking pictures of significant places in town to represent their own experiences to inform the later research. This was accomplished through engaging students in the data collection process by asking them to take photographs of the significant and unique aspects of their lives in and around Provincetown. Students were prompted to take pictures of places of significance to them as a way to express their views and values, visually (Templeton, 2018).

3.1.1.1 Recruitment of Student Participants. In order to recruit students, I partnered with one of the middle school teachers who allowed me use of her class time to present my project and helped with the school end communication and recruitment efforts. In April of 2021, I presented my project to each of the sixth, seventh and eighth grade classes, four in total. The
presentation began with a demonstration of my own visual research data which I collected in my neighborhood in New York City and a discussion of the ways we share information through photographs. This was followed by a presentation about the logistics of the project and time for any student questions. Students who had previously participated in the pilot data project in the summer of 2019 shared some of their experiences with their classmates as well.

3.1.1.2 Participants. Nine student photographers, seven females and two males, participated in the project. Of these, seven were able to complete photo elicitation interviews. All photographers will be referred to by pseudonyms. These young photographers included three young women from Jamaica (Kara, age 11, Anna, age 13 and Hanna, age 12), a young woman from Puerto Rico (Erika, age 11), a young man from Mexico (David, age 13), a young woman from Honduras (Iris, age 14), and a young man of Mexican American decent (Antonio, age 12). Additionally, two young native-born women from long time Provincetown families participated in the project (Lila, age 13 and Ellen, age 11).

In remote data collection special steps were required in the process of attaining consent and assent. Per Teachers College Institutional Review Board recommendations steps were taken to attain consent from adult participants and assent from minors who participated. Permission forms were emailed to adult participants or parents of minor participants for review prior to participation in the process. Parents were asked to review the documents with their children. Then, during a zoom recorded conversation the participant was asked for consent or assent following any clarifying questions the participant may have regarding the study.

3.1.1.3 Devices Used for Photography. The children were given the choice of using their own smart for this project or borrowing a camera which I purchased with a grant from the
International and Transcultural Studies department at TC for my pilot research. Four students used the cameras, and five students used their own phones.

For the pilot research I had required all students to use the cameras that I purchased. However, several of them complained about the low quality of the pictures they took. The cameras were inexpensive, and the resulting photos were often blurry. For these students who are used to taking high quality images with high tech camera cell phones or borrowing the school’s digital HDLR camera this was frustrating. Several participants in the pilot study noted this and suggested using better cameras. Even when I explained that I was more interested in the content of the photo than the quality of the shot, they were not happy with the photos they took. Several students in the pilot project deleted pictures that were too blurry, or maybe were not Instagram worthy, resulting in lost data.

In order to avoid losing data during this dissertation research I allowed students the choice of which device to use. Some students like the convenience of having their phone in their pocket all the time already, and even the most basic smart phone camera has far superior technology than the cameras I had given them. Others preferred the novelty of borrowing a digital camera and a dedicated device for this project. One student did not have her own phones to use. There was not a discernible difference in the type or quantity of pictures taken according to which device was used.

3.1.1.4 Photo Elicitation Interviews. Seven of the nine participants were able to participate in photo elicitation interviews. These interviews took place over zoom and ranged in length from 11 to 30 minutes with most interviews taking about 15 minutes. Prior to these interviews the students uploaded the images from their phones or borrowed camera and shared their images with me in a password protected google drive folder. I checked to confirm the
images were there but did not look closely at the photos prior to our interview so as not to put my own interpretation on these images. During the interviews, which took place on zoom outside of school hours, I shared my screen with the participants and we clicked through each photo in the order they were placed in the google drive. In all cases I asked the students if they wanted to share their screen so they could be in control of the images we were viewing, and all students declined and asked me to share my screen. This could be because of their lack of familiarity using zoom or because of the dynamic of my being an adult and teacher figure (or former teacher) and therefore more in control of the screen. One student volunteered that this was because of her lack of familiarity with zoom, but I did not ask the other students why.

I clicked through the images with the students allowing them to talk generally about the photos and asking specific follow up questions based on what they said or what I could see in the picture, asking them to get at issues of belonging and where they felt “at home.” At the end of every interview, I asked the students if they had any advice for future students participating in the project, and I asked them what they did not get to photograph but wanted to.

3.1.2 Family Interviews

In addition to data from the children I tried to understand the perspectives of the adult family members as well. Interviews are the most effective way to get at this information because interviews prioritize accessing the lived experiences of participants over obtaining answers to a specific set of questions (Seidman, 2013).

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured ethnographic interview protocol (see Appendix A) (Spradley, 1979) and audio recorded. Ethical interviewing procedures were employed, keeping in mind the needs of the participants (Fontana & Frey, 2005), being sensitive when they were asked to discuss personal and potentially sensitive information. Immediately
following each interview an analytic memo was written by the researcher to record relevant contextual information and immediate observations, intuitions and reflections (Horvat, 2013). In order to protect the participants, pseudonyms will be used when referring to family members. (Seidman, 2013).

3.1.2.1 Family Participant Recruitment. Because of the remote nature of this dissertation, recruitment of family interview participants was challenging. As was planned in my dissertation proposal I began recruitment by following up with the families of student participants in the photography project. This yielded one mother willing to be interviewed: Analia, the mother of Erika. Because it was the spring, and the beginning of the busy tourist season, I thought that some parents may have not responded because of time constraints they had due to their busy work schedules at the time. So, I approached these families again, by email or text message, in the late fall and winter, when families typically have more time, but none were interested in being interviewed. Next, I reached out to families I have worked with before in the school, or the families of students who expressed interest in the photography project but for one reason or another did not participate. Additionally, I reached out to non-immigrant parents I was connected with via Facebook for help getting in touch with immigrant families, none of whom I am connected with on Facebook. The PTA voted and agreed to send out a recruitment email on my behalf, which yielded one participant, Lisa, who was interested to help with my dissertation and was interviewed. Her children were too young to participate in the project so they did not collect visual data. Finally, I asked staff members that I had personal connections with for help recruiting families, which led me to the interview with Maria, who is the aunt of student photographer participant David and the other of two children who have attended Provincetown Schools.
3.1.2.2 Family Interview Participants. For this dissertation I was able to interview three mothers who self-identify as part of the immigrant community at Provincetown Schools. Two of them are adult family members of student photographers, and the third has children too young to be a part of the project. They will be referred to here by pseudonyms. Analia, her husband and her three children moved to Provincetown from Puerto Rico after her husband was recruited to work as a chef in a small chain of local restaurants. Although they are legal citizens of the United States because they are from Puerto Rico, Analia felt that because of the way they arrived in Provincetown, and because of her membership in what she calls “the Spanish speaking community,” she self-identified as an immigrant and wanted to share her experiences as a part of this dissertation. Analia weren’t sure if they wanted to leave Puerto Rico behind, but in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, with limited access to electricity and hot water they decided to make the move. Although her husband came directly to work in Provincetown, she and the kids tried settling near Boston for a few weeks, then in Virginia, for a few months, and finally reunited as a family in Provincetown. She is the mother of student photographer Erika. Analia currently works part time as a teacher in a day care and pre-school in a neighboring town.

Maria moved from Mexico City with her parents and brothers when she was fourteen and was herself a student at Provincetown Schools. She graduated from Provincetown schools and grew up and is now the mother of two children, aged 10 and five. She has several nieces and nephews who attend the school as well. Her children speak only Spanish at home and spend the majority of their free time with their extended family, all Mexican. For this reason, Maria explains that her children have had similar experiences to her upon arrival at school, without knowledge of the language. She talks about how difficult it was to adjust to being here, but how
it was all worth it. She is the aunt of student photographer David. Maria currently works full time in the kitchen at Provincetown Schools.

Lisa, her husband and two daughters came to Provincetown at the beginning of the pandemic fleeing the coronavirus in Myanmar, because of concerns about her husband’s health. Lisa is American, her husband is from Uganda, where the family owns property and considers to be “home” although they have lived in southeast Asia for many years because of Lisa’s work. Her daughters are four and six years old. Lisa works full time remotely as a nurse midwife in public health for an NGO. All family interview participants are being referred to by pseudonyms.

3.1.2.3 Conducting Family Interviews. All three participants participated in remote interviews, Analia via zoom and Lisa and Maria over the phone. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes and covered a range of topics including their arrival to Provincetown, day to day life, before and during the pandemic, the interactions they and their children have with various institutions in town and advice they would give to newly arrived families.

3.1.3 Data Collection at the Community Level

Key actors at each community-based institution selected for inclusion in the project were identified and recruited to participate in a semi-structured ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). The purpose of these interviews was to understand the way these key actors understand and execute their role as a part of the larger institution in assisting immigrant families by asking these key actors to explain their role and responsibilities within the institution and to describe their interactions with members of the community. A semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B) has been drafted and was tailored to the specifics of each institution. Additionally,
because the school plays such a central and unique role in this research, a specific interview protocol (see Appendix C) was drafted for use with school employees.

These interviews sought to understand how the mission and operation of the institution and the relationship they have with the local community. Because no research conducted in the aftermath of the pandemic can be conducted without acknowledging the effects the corona virus pandemic has had on all levels of individual and community life, additional questions were asked about how their institution has adapted to the ever changing restrictions that are a part of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like in the family interviews, analytic memos were recorded immediately following the interview (Horvat, 2013).

### Table 1: Participants from Provincetown Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role at Provincetown Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>School Chef and Food Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Educational Support Professional (ESP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant to the Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>Teacher: Primary Years English Language Learners (ELL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcia</td>
<td>Primary Years Resource Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary-Beth</td>
<td>School Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maude</td>
<td>Middle School Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Educator (preK-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick</td>
<td>Middle School Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.1.3.1 Provincetown Schools Participants. Nine staff members from Provincetown Schools were interviewed for this project. I began by reaching out to staff and faculty I had indicated in my proposal including the chef, the nurse, the English Language Learner teacher and the school resource officer. As these data collection progressed, and I continued working with the student photographers I began pursuing interviews with more school staff based on recommendations from other faculty and staff, or based on topics and themes that arose from student and family interviews. The participants, which are listed above in Table 1 consist of two
men and eight women who have worked at the school between two and 40 years, with the majority having worked at Provincetown Schools for around 25 years. Two of those interviewed are also graduates of Provincetown Schools themselves. This group of nine faculty and staff include two middle school teachers, one primary school teacher, an educational support professional (ESP), a special needs teacher, the teacher of English Language Learners (ELL) at the primary level, the school nurse, school chef and the administrative assistant to the principal. These staff members will be referred to either by their first name, or a pseudonym of their choosing.

3.1.3.2 Community-based Institution Participants. In addition to the staff members from Provincetown Schools who were interviewed, I interviewed 10 additional individuals who work within institutions that work with the wider Provincetown Schools community, which are listed below in Table 2. These interviews came about through a series of recommendations, based on interviews with students, school staff, parents and other institutions. Some of these interviews were achieved through introductions from someone in the community who recommended them. Others came as a result of emails to the institution asking for an interview.

Table 2: Community-Based Institutions Interviewed, including name and role of participant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cape Cod National Sea Shore</td>
<td>Aleutia</td>
<td>Supervisor of Interpretation and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Coastal Studies</td>
<td>Jesse</td>
<td>Marine Education Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexter Keezer Community and Fleet Funds</td>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Client Liaison and Board Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC)</td>
<td>Sharon; Susan</td>
<td>Executive Director; Institutional Giving Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Cape Health</td>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>Director of Community-Based Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM)</td>
<td>Tessa</td>
<td>Curator of Youth Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincetown Library</td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Library Director</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I began this phase of data collection pursuing interviews with institutions who provide families access to basic or public services. This included Outer Cape Health, the Dexter Keezer Community Fund and the Fleet Fund, Public Library, and the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House. I also interviewed institutions that provide education (and more) during and after school hours. This included Sustainable CAPE (Center for Agriculture Preservation and Education), the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC), and Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM). Finally, after hearing so resoundingly from the child participants the importance of nature I interviewed representatives from the Center for Coastal Studies the Cape Cod National Seashore. All participants from community-based organizations will be referred to by their first name or a preferred pseudonym.

3.1.4 Digital Ethnography

The realities of conducting social research during a pandemic meant that I could not conduct ethnographic observations in and around the various institutions that are included in this chapter. Instead I conducted a digital ethnography (Murthy, 2008) of the websites and social media accounts of the institutions and individuals (when appropriate) that I was studying. The process started with a “slow search” (Hine, 2015) of the institution’s website and any recent coverage in the local independent newspapers. This helped me to prepare for the interviews and provided some context. Some of these websites were out of date and in most of the interviews I was directed to the social media accounts, especially Facebook and Instagram. I have been following all of these institutions on social media for several months to track the various events
and updates at these institutions. Whenever I observed a post relevant to this research, I wrote an analytic memo to contribute to the analysis.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis was ongoing and reflexive with data collected from children and interviews with adults informing later data collection and analysis. The analysis process generally followed the steps laid out by Marshall and Rossman (2014) for effective management and analysis of qualitative data. Generally the analysis moved through these stages: immersion in the data, finding relationships through open and closed coding, coding itself, analytic memos and the eventual writing and presentation of the dissertation (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Detailed analysis procedures for the specific types of data will be outlined in the sections that follow.

3.2.1 Visual Research Data Analysis

When analyzing visual data such as the photographs included in this study, Rose (2016) suggests analyzing visual data at four distinct sites: the site of production, the site of the image, the site of circulation and the cite of audiencing. Data analysis for the images collected for this dissertation aimed at examining the sites of production and of the image. First compositional interpretation (reference) was conducted on all 144 photos. Next, photo elicitation interviews were analyzed and coded.

3.2.1.1 Compositional Interpretation. The students took between seven and 144 pictures each. Kara and her 144 pictures were an extreme outlier, and included multiple shots of the same object or scene. So, with Kara’s help during her prolonged photo elicitation interview we reduced this large amount down to nineteen photos representative of the ideas Kara was trying to share with her photography. So, with this revised data, we can say that students took between seven and twenty-eight photos, with an average of fourteen per photographer. After
omitting any duplicates or difficult to decipher photos I arrived at a full set of 112 photos for analysis. Duplicate photos, such as shown above in Figures 1 and 2, which are unique images of nearly identical content were identified by the photographers, specifically Lila and Kara, and grouped accordingly and only coded once per group of photos so as not to overrepresent particular content. Some images, such as the one shown below in Figure 3, I chose to omit because I was not able to discern any distinguishable features and was not able to reach this photographer for participation in a photo-elicitation interview.

Photographs ranged in type, style and content. They included selfies, carefully composed landscapes and quick snapshots of friends. Students took pictures of, among other things, their homes, plants they were growing, beaches, shops, alpacas, a tennis court, an old truck, a mini golf course and a statue of a whale. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the two eighth graders, Anna and Helena, mostly took pictures of their friends and classmates. These girls were weeks away from graduating middle school and moving on to separate high schools from their classmates. As
such, I interpreted that for them, the belonging found in school with their classmates was coming to an end and they chose to focus their photographic energies on their friends and classmates. Other photographers, such as Antonio and David submitted a series of carefully composed landscapes featuring the natural world (David) and the built environment (Antonio) of Provincetown, without a single person in any of the shots.

![Figure 3: Blurred image by Kara](image)

In order to better understand the content of these photos at the site of the image (Rose, 2016), compositional interpretation (Rose, 2001), a form of content analysis specific to the visual image was applied to all 112 images. When a photographer took multiple photographs of the same scene or object these images were grouped and only coded once. Applying content analysis strategies to visual images allows for a more reliable way to view the content of these images (Rose, 2001) by applying replicability and validity to the data analysis process (Krippendorf, 1980). Codes were generated for the content analysis, drawing inspiration from a similar analysis conducted by Luttrell (2010) and her research team. Photographs were coded for the setting (in door vs. outdoor, and specific settings within those categories such as school or beach), the genre (landscape, portrait, snapshot, selfie) and for the people (self, strangers, family, friends) and objects included in the picture. Once the strong presence of the natural world in the
photos emerged, I coded the “outdoor” photos a second time paying attention to the presence of specific frequently occurring natural features such as a body of water, plant life or sand.

In her discussion of content analysis of visual data, Rose (2001) points out that this type of analysis neglects the “expressive” content of the image and the sites of production and audiencing (Rose, 2016). In order to account for this an additional column titled “expressive content” was added to the coding spreadsheet for the researcher to enter information related to the “feel” of the image.

While the intent of the compositional interpretation was not to quantify the data, some interesting trends emerged. More than three quarters of the pictures submitted were taken outdoors, and more than half had no people in them at all. Of the 24 pictures taken in doors, 19 of them were taken at the school. There were 25 images of the beach or bodies of water. Looking at quantified data of the settings and content of these photos points to some trends that emerged in the photo elicitation interviews, particularly the importance of nature. However, the photos interpreted independently of their photo elicitations interviews lack the context intended in the site of production and audiencing that give these photos their meaning.

3.2.1.2 Analyzing Photo Elicitation Interviews. All photo elicitation interviews which were conducted with children, were recorded using the zoom recording feature and transcribed verbatim (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Descript, a computer application for transcription and audio and video editing, was used to assist in transcription. The automatically generated transcriptions were checked for accuracy by the researcher. This program allowed for student photographs to be integrated into the transcript in a dynamic way which aided the analysis of text and photos simultaneously.
The first phase of data analysis consisted of a close reading and rereading of the transcriptions and field notes as a way to immerse myself in the data and gain an understanding of the important ideas that emerge (Bazeley, 2013). Once a holistic understanding of the data was achieved, coding of both the interview transcriptions and analytic field notes was done in two phases, first employing open coding to look for themes that emerged from the data itself selecting key words and phrases to represent codes (Saldaña, 2015). A second round of more focused “selective open coding” was conducted to better understand these themes (Emerson et al., 2011) using the emergent codes as a guide for thematic open coding.

During this phase of data analysis, photos were analyzed in the context of the words of the photographers in the photo elicitation interviews (Templeton, 2018). Using Descript, the photographs were inserted into the transcription of the text so that I could simultaneously listen to the recording of the interview, read the transcript and view the image. I took notes on any discrepancies that arose between my interpretation of the image (when I was coding them) and the interpretation offered by the photographer to inform analysis.

### 3.2.2 Analysis of Interview Data: Families, the School and Institutions

The interviews with family members, school faculty and staff members of community-based institutions were analyzed using Narrative Inquiry (Reissman, 2008). After each interview was transcribed verbatim (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) using Descript, the transcription software, thematic analysis was employed with each of the narratives that arose from each individual interview. Thematic analysis focuses on examining each narrative presented by each participant and finding common thematic elements by focusing on the language used in the interview as a resource. Analytic memos were recorded throughout the analysis process to document emerging themes and not common elements across multiple narratives.
Narrative inquiry (Reissman, 2008) is ideal for the data collected for this dissertation because it allowed me to view the interviews as a series of cases, with each participant creating their own narrative. I purposively sampled the individuals (Reissman, 2008) who were included in this interview to provide narratives about a wide spectrum of experiences. Because participants were from unique circumstances within the participant pool, with typically one person representing an entire institution or part of the school, thematic analysis allowed me to prioritize the main idea of what each participant was trying to convey and the nuances specific to their institution. By looking at each interview as a narrative, or rather a series of narratives about their professional lives, the children they work with or their personal experiences, I was able to find common elements and theorize across narratives. For example, I was able to theorize about the role of increased exposure to the natural environment for immigrant families by comparing elements from the interview from an educational support professional, the marine education director at the center for coastal studies and the interview of a parent. I was also able to connect those to the photos and words of the children, and notes from my digital ethnography for a holistic analysis.

Throughout this dissertation I have included lengthy quotes from the participants. This is a way to honor the language the participants used and the stories they told, as they told them, which is the true essence of crafting a narrative (Reissman, 2005). By employing thematic analysis I was able to focus on what was being said by each participant and theorize across a number of cases (Reissman, 2005). This also allowed me to address the issue of the small number of interviews with parents and how to integrate those interviews and the narratives of the families into the narratives of the institutions.
Special attention was given when analyzing the interviews of the three mothers who were part of the project in a methodologically sound and ethical way. Additionally, the interviews of Analia and Maria were analyzed alongside the interviews of their family member youth photographers in order to understand a family narrative that may emerge when hearing from both the children and adults in each individual family.

3.3 Ethical Issues

Anonymity and confidentiality, for both participants and research sites, are the accepted standard in qualitative and ethnographic research based on guidelines and practices from major educational research associations (Walford, 2005). However, several aspects of this particular project challenge these conventions. The first is the research setting. As mentioned above, Provincetown is a very small town with a specific identity and a limited year-round population. That makes it hard to obscure the identity of the school or individual participants. Special attention was paid to the challenges of protecting participants in a small community where the identity of a participant can be easily deduced because of the small number of possible participants. Identifying information was omitted in the analysis.

Based on her research in the Maldives, Moosa (2013) suggests paying attention to the situated culture when conducting research in a small community as a way of protecting and respecting participants (Moosa, 2013). Thus, I will use my own knowledge of the town, based on having lived and worked there, to determine which identifying details need to be protected. Furthermore, in the International Journal of Research and Method in International Education, Walford (2005) points out that offering anonymity and confidentiality is often impractical and sometimes undesirable. While all efforts will be made to protect the sensitive information shared by this inherently vulnerable population of immigrant families, it is important to note that in such
a context anonymity is nearly impossible to achieve and so, I made efforts at culturally sensitive protection of participants. The name of the town will not be concealed. Pseudonyms were used for all children and mothers. The remaining participants were asked how they would like to be referred to, and some requested pseudonyms.

3.4 Covid-19 and Data Collection and Analysis

One of the research questions in this dissertation speaks directly to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operation of institutions and the lives of families. The changes associated with the pandemic and its lockdown and social restriction measures came up in all interviews before I asked about it and often came up multiple times in response to multiple questions. I also directly asked all the adult participants about changes to their life and work since the start of the Pandemic. It is clear that COVID impacted life in Provincetown, like everywhere else, and that the change has been continuous from the most extreme measures at the beginning to now, with tightening of restrictions and shuttering of many institutions during an early wave of the Delta variant in July that was brought up in several interviews (McCormick, 2022), and most recently the Omicron wave with similar effects. In the year and a half since this dissertation was proposed a lot has changed in regards to COVID and the general attitude related to COVID has shifted to learning to “live with the virus.” As such, there is not a distinct section in the findings that directly addresses COVID-19. Instead, sections of all chapters are dedicated to discussing the impacts of COVID when it is particularly relevant to the discussion or has led to lasting changes within an institution. In this way COVID appears in this dissertation much like it does in the lives of participants. It needs to be acknowledged and addressed frequently, but it is not so disruptive currently as to require a separate examination.
3.5 Limitations Associated with Remote Data Collection

Remote data collection provided some barriers in data collection. Reaching families was particularly problematic without the face-to-face contact that many families are used to at the school. I used email, text message, Facebook, recommendations from former colleagues and the PTA to recruit parents for the study and was still only able to recruit three participants. The small town atmosphere of Provincetown is best negotiated in person and I am inferring from my own experiences in the town that being able to ask for interviews in person would have been much more successful. This brings to mind a particular student whose mother I struggled to get in touch with on the phone, email or by sending a paper note in her son’s backpack when I was a teacher in Provincetown. It felt like she was avoiding my calls. Finally, I realized that the best way to talk to the mother was by going through her checkout line at the supermarket, where she was happy to talk to me and we had a lengthy discussion about her son and his behavior and progress in school. I would repeat this procedure whenever I needed to talk to her. I’ve had mothers solicit an informal conference with me by stopping and rolling down their car window next to me while I walked home from school. Personal contact like this cannot be replicated with virtual communication technology, and negatively impacted the data collection process.

Remote data collection also had a detrimental effect on the visual research component of the study. Following these presentations twenty-five students indicated to teacher they were interested in the project and Qualtrics parental consent forms were distributed. Six families were able to complete the online consent form. Online consent forms were the preferred method for obtaining consent by the TC IRB during the pandemic when conducting remote research. When the digital Qualtrics parental consent forms were not successful, as many of the parents are not used to communicating by email, the teacher sent home printed copies of the forms and reminded
the students to return them. An additional ten more signed and returned paper copies of the Qualtrics form to the teacher. Photographs of these forms were kept as evidence of parental consent. Nine students never returned their consent forms. I have inferred that there were two barriers to submission of the consent form by parents. One was the means of communication, specifically using technology, to get parents to indicate consent. As I will discuss later in the dissertation, email and digital communication is not particularly effective with this school community. Second, the form itself, per TC IRB regulations, is extremely wordy and prepared in Qualtrics, an academic tool best used for surveying. This can be off-putting to some families, as has been discussed in previous research (Knight et. al, 2004).

Once I had the consent forms, I reached out to the families schedule a brief meeting with small groups of students to give them a brief project orientation via zoom. We would read the assent form together, discuss any questions the students had, and the students would complete the Qualtrics form indicating their assent. All interested students were able to complete the assent form digitally. After that we would talk about the logistics of the project and operation of the cameras if necessary. Of the 16 students who had consent forms, 14 participated in these orientation meetings.

Following these orientations, the students worked at their own pace taking pictures between April and June 2021 with instructions to upload their photos to google drive and let me know when they were finished. In total nine students submitted photos. During several follow ups with students, I learned that some did not complete the project because of other commitments and others had technology difficulties, using or accessing the cameras for the project or uploading photos from their own phones for the project.
More difficulties arose when trying to oversee camera usage from afar. Four students used the cameras I provided for them, which I had mailed to the teacher who was assisting me in the school. Three of them were unable to upload the photos themselves to google drive. I tried to help them trouble shoot remotely but was unable to. The cameras were eventually mailed back to me and I uploaded the photos to google drive. There was a delay in accessing the photos because of the mailing and this meant that I was unable to interview two of the students about their photographs. There was one more student who was interested in participating, but never got to use a camera and did not have her own phone. Had I been there in person I would have been able to help the students upload the photos from the cameras more quickly, which would have allowed me to conduct the interviews with them and for us to pass on the camera to one more student who wanted to participate but couldn’t.

3.6 Limitations and Positionality

In addition to the limitations associated with remote data access detailed above, the remaining limitations of this study arose primarily from two aspects of the research design, my positionality as researcher and the choice of research site. I am a white, female, English speaking, native-born American and worked for three years as a teacher at Provincetown Schools. These various aspects of my identity may limit the information families allow me access to in the interview process in a few different ways. The families I worked with for this project are almost entirely families of color. Thus, I needed to be sensitive to the racial dynamics present in our interactions, as I, asked them to explain personal experiences related to their status as immigrants, which is by necessity occurring at intersection with their racial identity. Additionally, when working with the Honduran families who speak Spanish as their first language, there may be barriers presented by my exclusive use of English in conducting this
study. I had arranged to hire a Spanish speaking research assistant to conduct interviews in Spanish if necessary but this was not required.

Finally, my role as a former teacher, someone associated with the school as an institution may have impacted the freedom families felt in discussing their experiences with the school. My previous role in the school also allowed me to build relationships with many of these families which may have allowed them to be more comfortable sharing information. However my role as a former teacher may have had the opposite effect and they may have been hesitant to speak negatively of the school because of my perceived relationship to the institution and the fear and stigma that some people attach to schools.

While I have previously explained the significance and specific contributions of conducting this research in Provincetown, there are limitations associated with this research site in terms of generalizability. For a small town with a relatively poor year-round population Provincetown is unusually well funded because of the tax dollars associated with summer tourism, meaning there are resources and programs available here that would not be generalizable in towns of similar size or demographics in the United States. Additionally, the seasonal nature of the town, in which the population swells for part of the year, is unusual, and has a distinct impact on the lives of residents and the access they have to community-based institutions in the busy summer months. This is not to say that this type of dynamic is only present in “vacation towns.” Interesting parallels can be found in college towns when the population swells during the academic year and declines in the summer months which may make it possible to generalize more clearly. Nevertheless, this does limit the generalizability of the experiences of these families as compared to immigrant families in communities with a stable population.
Chapter 4: The School: The Primary Point of Contact

“The teachers were amazing with me. Very understandable, very helpful.” These are the words Maria uses when asked what it was like to start at Provincetown Schools as a 14-year-old who had just arrived from Mexico and did not know any English. Now, she works in the school cafeteria, is the parent of two students in the school and the aunt to several more. Maria is not alone in describing the special nature of the school staff, and how welcome they made her feel. This chapter will describe the many ways the school and its members, in official and unofficial capacities help these families as they integrate into the community. It will first discuss the formal channels within the school and the community-based resources that the school steers families towards. It will then discuss some of the informal ways that the school helps families, including an example of the way the staff has supported Iris, one of our student photographers, and her mother.

4.1 Formal Mechanisms in the School to Aid Families

It can be difficult figuring out what needs to be done to enroll kids in the school. There are procedures that can seem foreign to newly arrived families and some adults may fear the school and thus avoid it (Menjivar, 2006). The family that I will refer to as the Hernandez family was the first family to arrive from Honduras to Provincetown, fleeing gang violence. No one in the Hernandez family was interviewed for this dissertation, although the youngest Hernandez son did participate in my pilot research. The Hernandez family came up multiple times in multiple interviews, so, for the sake of the narrative I will refer to them by the pseudonym Hernandez to illustrate the experiences of a single family as they interact with individuals and institutions throughout the town.
They don't know how to put the kids in the new school. 'Cause they don't speak English. Yeah. I do all that application for those kids. Because I know they don't know. It's not only a different culture, different language. They don't have education, even in Spanish. They write and read [only] the necessary things.

In this quote, Analia, a former teacher in the day care at the school and Spanish speaker, describes working closely with the Hernandez family. “I helped this family…with the appliances, with jobs, when they need supplies or would they need [to] translate something…they still call me for help.” She says she helps, because she can, and if she needs help someday she hopes someone will help her.

Analia’s story illustrates some of the struggles some newly arrived families face. It can be difficult to register for school and access resources in a new town, especially if there is a language barrier. While this is not the case for all families that arrive in Provincetown, it highlights the experiences some families face and the importance of researching the integration experiences of immigrants from the very beginning of their interactions with institutions in the community.

“Schools play an important role in the provision of resources with which immigrant youth learn to belong to and navigate their new society” (Abu El-Haj, 2007, p. 288). Schools are particularly well placed to help families access resources because they have frequent contact over a prolonged period of time with families while children are enrolled in school (Small, 2009). They may also be the only institution families have access to (Rodriguez, 2019), making it even more important that the school act as an agent that brokers relationships with resource-rich institutions (Small, 2009). This bears out in Provincetown. It seems that every member of the school faculty and staff are involved in aiding immigrant families as they live, work and find belonging in Provincetown. They aid students in official capacities, such as a school nurse
helping students to receive health care at the local health clinic or the school chef providing information about food assistance programs. They also steer families towards the many existing organizations in place to aid families such as the Homeless Prevention Council or Helping our Women.

As a part of this research, I was fortunate enough to interview nine members of the Provincetown Schools staff. Their experiences and background were unique and they worked in all different parts of the school, from the cafeteria to the classroom to the principal’s office. The personnel I interviewed had either been at the school less than five years or over 20 years, and as many as 40 years. Three of them are even graduates of the school. It is clear they are deeply invested in the success of the school and the town. The staff is generally split between individuals who spend their career living and working in the school and its community, and those who come for a few years and move on, such as myself. Longtime staff members have decades of stories of students and families they have worked with, even multiple generations within the same family. Even those who I interviewed who have been there five years or less have much to say about the families they work with and share a deep affection towards the town and its unique community.

4.1.1 Working and Learning in Provincetown

Two common themes that arose from the interviews with Provincetown Schools faculty and staff is the necessity to assume multiple roles and collaborate closely with colleagues in order to get the job done. Those themes will be discussed here, followed by a description of the way the staff collaborate upon the arrival of a new student.

4.1.1.1 Wearing Many Hats. The teachers at Provincetown Schools are used to taking on a variety of roles as a part of their job responsibilities, it’s just a part of working there. Nurse
Mary Beth likes the variety in her job: “The role suits me because in Ptown you wear many hats.” Another staff member describes his job as a “do everything kind of job.” The small size of the school means there aren’t as many staff members to distribute all the responsibilities, so people end up covering what would be more than one position in a larger school district. Chef Andrew explains the nature of fulfilling many roles well.

My role is to feed the children with healthy and nutritional meals. I do all of the finance claiming from the government. I do all the menu planning. I mean everything from washing a dish to having an argument with my superintendent to not cut my only employee’s pay. It’s kind of a do it all kind of job. I mean, I do everything. I really do it all.

Perhaps part of wearing many hats comes from the general attitude of much of the staff is that if there is something that needs to be done, they will do it. When there was a breakdown in the connections typically made by the school social worker, Maude, one of the middle school teachers, who is also the bus monitor, jumped in. “There was a need and I had some knowledge, so why not, you know, offer the knowledge that I had”

Many of the long-time staff members have held so many different positions in the school they have a holistic understanding of what needs to be done in the function of a school. The administrative assistant to the principal, Judy, has, over her 23 years at the school, held every role from subbing as custodian or in the kitchen, to teaching and library positions, and she is not unique in her experiences. Nancy has taught every grade from high school to pre-k in subjects ranging from STEM classes to fifth grade math. Job titles and responsibilities are constantly evolving and staff members assume new responsibilities and then share others as they take on a variety of roles in the small community.

Sometimes staff members have too many roles or too much work to do. Nearly every member of the school community I talked to, both mothers and school personnel, mentioned the
school adjustment counselor and middle school guidance counselor as integral members to the school community and important to struggling and newly arrived families in particular. Their colleagues described them and the work they do in glowing terms, emphasizing how essential it all is, and also how much they do for individual families and the school community. They are responsible for, among other things welcoming students to the school, tracking and reporting attendance, working with groups of students with social and emotional needs, connecting families with resources related to food and housing insecurity and overseeing the state standardized testing. Perhaps it is telling that these two were the only members of the school faculty and staff to decline my request for an interview, both citing how busy they were. I was able to speak and email with the school social worker informally about how he connects families to funding and other resources outside of the school. He also put me in touch with the client liaison for two funds, Wendy, whose work will be discussed in chapter five.

4.1.1.2 Collaboration Between Staff Members. In addition to wearing multiple hats, staff and faculty at Provincetown Schools spoke about collaborating with a variety of their colleagues to meet the needs of the school community. One clear example of a challenge within the community and a collaboration that addresses the challenge is a partnership between the school nurse and the ELL teacher.

An example of the effectiveness of this outreach specifically to the Spanish speaking community are the flu clinics that the school put on. When flu shots became mandatory for students, the school held two flu clinics for our students, and anybody in their family who wanted to come.” The nurse was proud to tell me that 94% of the school population was vaccinated against the flu. An even bigger success was the turnout among the Spanish speaking families. The ELL teacher reached out to the Spanish speaking families, and “We had a hundred
percent turnout with the Hispanic community, including we vaccinated parents,” according to the school nurse. The ELL teacher also brought up the flu clinic in her interview.

In the beginning of the year, we had a flu clinic that came in and her and I worked together to get the Hispanic families to come in and because, at that time, the flu shot was required for kids to be in school. So we worked on that. In September we had a full clinic and a lot of the ELL parents did show up to make sure that their kids, were immunized, took advantage of that opportunity. So, we do work together on that one.

When asked about the role she plays in collaboration with other staff members in communication with the Spanish speaking families, the ELL teacher downplays the role she does, simply because she does less now than she used to for the Spanish speaking families. However, she does still collaborate frequently with her colleagues, translating during parent teacher conferences, texting families about snow days or field trips. She feels strongly about aiding in communication with recently arrived families with limited English language abilities, “just to facilitate the communication, it makes sure the child gets what they need, or they want to do.” The underlying tone here is that they are working together for the good of the children. In the words of Judy, the administrative assistant to the principal, “You know, that ‘takes a village’ really is just true, in our case here.”

4.1.2 New Student Arrival

By all accounts the school, and its English Learner population, are growing. Enrollment is up, the number of school lunches served are up, and the number of students enrolled in the ELL program are up too. With all these new students it’s clear that there must be procedures in place to get the students enrolled and settled in their new classrooms. When new students arrive at school, they are met by a variety of staff members and administrative procedures designed to help them get settled in school. The first person anyone sees when they walk in the door of the school is Judy, the administrative assistant to the principal. This is true of newly arrived
families. Once they are greeted by this smiling face, there are a variety of forms that need completing, including the language survey, which may trigger a meeting and testing with the ELL staff. Spanish speaking staff members, including sometimes the school chef, are called in as support for families who need assistance completing forms. Once the forms are completed, the students and their information are entered into the school data base, enrolled in classes, assigned an email address, and issued a tablet or Chromebook by the Technology Integration Specialist and given a tour of the school by the guidance counselor.

The school also looks to begin integrating the family into the community right away. Judy also makes sure to give every family information about the Recreation department, which provides after school and summer care, so the children can attend “and get to know their peers before they even enter the school, if possible, so that they feel comfortable.” Someone from the school community give them a tour of the school and introduce them around, pair them with a peer in their class to help ease the transition and tries to make everything as smooth as possible.

One requirement to enroll in school is for families to submit students’ medical records, including a recent physical to the school nurse. Often, newly immigrated families do not have these records, or evidence of a recent enough physical. Since they have just arrived in Provincetown, they don’t have contact with a healthcare provider. The school nurse puts them directly in touch with Outer Cape Health, the only health clinic in town by calling the clinic directly on the family’s behalf.

When I call for them, they, they realize it’s prioritized that this case needs to be seen soon, or this child won’t be in school soon enough. You know? And so when missing school is a big deal… [you] don’t want them missing any days that they don’t have to. Once they are in touch with Outer Cape Health, it puts them in touch with a whole world of health-related resources and information, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

66
There are limitations to these systems of course. One of them is the very database used to track students’ contact information and academic records. There is, for example, no way to enter a preferred name or two last names as is common for students with families coming from Latin American countries. The nurse explained these limitations, and the importance she places on tracking this kind of information.

It gets confusing to keep track [of the family names], but I just ask questions. I do try to be culturally sensitive, but I think the best way to be culturally sensitive is to acknowledge when you’re confused.

At the time of the interviews in the Spring of 2021, the school was scheduled to get a new student tracking system. This system would allow for inputting just this kind of information as a way to be sensitive to the naming traditions of different cultures and a way for staff to share amongst staff information about the family makeups of individual students.

4.1.3 The Challenge of Communicating with Families

One question I asked all staff members in the interview was how they communicated with families. On the whole, they take a very personal approach to communication. The Chef gives out his phone number to field questions about nutrition incentive programs like SNAP or food delivery.

I definitely like to give my phone number. I guess I'm happy about that. I get crazy and you know, put my phone number everywhere. I have an open door with my phone…. I try to make myself available I won't call them per se, but I just want to wave a flag and be like, Hey, I'm here. You know, do you need me?

The majority of teachers give out their personal phone numbers to students and staff and find that text messages are the easiest way to reach families. Email does not work with most of the families. The STEAM teacher reports “I think a lot of parents really don't use email at all. So that definitely slows down the community.” I also found this lack of email use in my efforts to
communicate with families in order to get consent forms signed so that interested students could participate in this research project. Other teachers express the need to be persistent in texting and calling parents, and knowing which families respond to which types of communication which families respond to. The nurse explains the prevalence of pay as you go short term phone plans that many of the families have, especially those lacking a permanent address or wishing to avoid a permanent contract because of issues with immigration documentation. The town is different from other, wealthier, whiter cape towns in that way. “Some of our population buys inexpensive phones, their phone numbers change too often” so she prefers to call directly to know which families she has reached.

It’s important to understand the communication situation at the school, because sometimes the school is the only way for information to reach families. “I think oftentimes the school ends up being a great resource because I think if we are talking about immigrant migrant families depending on what their situation is, sometimes that can be a really hard to access populations.” Leo from Outer Cape Health understands this dynamic and the role the school has in reaching families. Even if it is challenging for the school to reach these families, it is easier for them than for other families.

4.1.4 Communicating with Spanish Speaking Families

There are specific challenges associated with communicating with the Spanish speaking staff. The school employs translators now, which is a recent development in the school and has required some work on behalf of the staff. The ELL teacher explains,

We have a list of students … whose parents need translated materials. And it is the responsibility of the classroom teachers, whoever needs it, to make sure they have that list and that those families get what they need translated. Which means teacher has to predict in anticipation so that the translator has time to do all that.
Nurse Mary Beth, in particular is very proactive in communicating with all families (“this is how I develop a relationship with them”). In fact, her high level of communication and connection with the families was mentioned in interviews with several of her colleagues. However her Spanish knowledge is limited. She attended Spanish class with the fourth graders when schooling was remote to improve her Spanish, but she knows she is not able to communicate fully with these families. Mary Beth is very aware of these communication barriers and describes the steps she takes to share information with them. First of all, she requests official translations of any forms or information sheets that she shares with families. She also leverages the ELL teacher, who speaks Spanish fluently and is “completely connected with our Hispanic families” to help with outreach on her behalf, such as in the example of the flu shot clinic mentioned in a previous section. When she needs to call families directly, she types up what she needs to say in English and then uses google translate to translate. She then uses her limited Spanish to evaluate the accuracy. She says she knows enough to know when she’s going to “say something stupid,” so she reviews the google translation before getting on the phone. She reads her translated text in Spanish to the families “and then I explain, I don’t speak much Spanish. I say, ‘Yo entiendo un poquito.’ [I understand a little bit.]”

4.1.5 Special Events at School Before and After COVID

One thing Provincetown Schools has historically done very well, is get families in the door for special events during school hours or in the evening. They offer pizza during open house, have activities geared specifically towards adults at “Math Night,” encourage teachers to host class specific events and make sure families are informed and feel welcome at school events. This allows adults to come in to the school, make contact with school staff, but also, importantly, meet other parents in the community, which can aid in the integration process
(Martinez & Wizer-Vecchi, 2016). One particularly popular event that came up in multiple interviews was the Holiday Potluck. On the last day of school before the winter holidays in December families would be invited in for lunch with the students and staff. Judy describes the potluck, saying that even though it’s a lot of work, it’s worth it.

It's just nice when the whole school population’s invited, families, and they're invited to bring their own dish. And so we get a lot of different tastes going on there and they come and actually join with other families and their kids and teachers, and have a sit down meal in the cafeteria. it's a good showing too. A lot of people come.

Not only does it get families in the door, but it is a gesture towards the sharing of cultures as families bring food from their own culture in. It hasn’t happened for two years because of COVID, but there are hopes to resume it again.

Some of the more important events of the school year have continued to happen, virtually. One of the first large scale events to take place was the end of year celebration of learning called “World of Inquiry.” It took place online in the Spring of 2021, right around the time that I was interviewing teachers. It featured prerecorded and live presentations of work by students, focusing on the culminating fifth and eighth grade projects which will be discussed in chapter seven. Teachers I talked to reported that there were a few technological hiccups, but other than that it went well and students shared their work. However, they reported there was no interactions between families, students and staff, and you really couldn’t even tell who was in attendance.

The recent Student Led Conferences in the Spring of 2021 went particularly well because of changes put in place due to COVID. The Student Led Conferences are an opportunity for Students, Teachers and their Caregivers to sit down and discuss student progress and set learning goals. These were held virtually in the Spring of 2021, and a lot of the staff and one mother said
they went particularly well and hoped to keep the remote format, or at the least hybrid. They reported that the virtual format encouraged participation among family members by removing barriers that would prevent some adults from attending such as work schedules or an anxiety around the school. Rick noted the convenience of it all.

I think the turnout was probably better doing that than when it was in person, just because of the convenience of it. You know, you don't have to find someone to watch younger kids. You can just log in and then 20 minutes you're done.

Marcia describes a recent conference she attended and how pleasant and low stress it was for everyone involved.

There's something I think that's very nice about having parent conferences virtually…. I think you can get more family members to attend. There seems to be a more relaxed nature. Most of them are taking place on the couch with sort of kids snuggled in with their parents. So I think there's less anxiety for some parents who might feel [anxious] coming into the school building. There's a little less apprehension having it in their own home. I just had one where the dad was at work and the mother had the phone and he was, you know, she was holding that up to the Google meet and the parent and the student were at home, and I was in my home and the classroom teacher was in her home. The student presented a Google slide show, and everybody got to see it and she annotated as she went along. I think something that might've been missed if it were in a classroom setting. So yeah, those have been pretty good in all.

Marcia brings up the point that some parents, particularly immigrant parents may avoid the school because it is an institution of the state, and thus potentially threatening (Menjivar, 2006). This remote attendance can make it easier for them to attend the conferences without fearing exposure.

The parents also liked the format of the student led conference. Analia said that even when things return to “normal” they should continue to do conferences on google Meetups because it is easier and more comfortable for families.

They can maintain [online conferences] because it's more convenient for families. You can have, maybe you are in your job. Right? And in your car. And you'll have an
appointment. You don't need to suspend the conference. You can have the conference in your house dress like, okay, [wearing] flip flops.

It’s clear there should be a role for virtual programming like this. The interviews describe how it promotes equity and increases turnout. These conferences are an example of a positive change that developed out of the problem solving that has been done because of the pandemic. Hopefully, going forward the school can provide a mix of in person events to promote social cohesion and relationship building paired with remote instruction that makes the school and its events more accessible for all families.

4.2 Informal Support and Enduring Relationships

At six o’clock in the morning, I texted [my daughter’s teacher] and was like, [teacher], I don’t know what to do. I just found out that [my friend] and her family have COVID [so they can’t watch my kids] and I have to get to Boston for this [doctor’s appointment]. And she was like ‘Done. The girls are coming home with me today. Just leave the car seats [at school.] I’ll figure everything else out’. And. I was just, I was like, ‘I kinda can’t believe I’m saying yes to this, but I don’t have any other options.’ You know, I wish I had a better support network here of my own family, but I don’t. So I’m going to allow my like pride to not stand in the way here and let my kid’s pre-K teacher, um, totally go above and beyond. And she did. I’m just so grateful. I don’t think that would be the case in other places.

What really makes a difference in the lives of many families is the things school staff do beyond their official capacity as teachers, educators and school staff which has been shown to ease integration for immigrant youth (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). They take it upon themselves to help children and families in more personal ways, using their own free time and resources to provide rides home after a special event, Thanksgiving meals and help with immigration paperwork. They are available by phone or text message after hours and long after their professional academic relationships with these children and their families ends. The quote above is from Lisa, who’s family arrived in Provincetown from Myanmar and enrolled in schools during the pandemic. There was a day when she had a doctor’s appointment for a recent and
serious medical condition in Boston (a two hour drive away). Her husband was away in his home
country in Africa, and the friends who were supposed to care for her daughters contracted
COVID, leaving her with no childcare that day. In the absence of a support system to help care
for her children while she was having medical issues, Lisa reached out to one of her daughter’s
teachers, and she stepped up and took care of those children.

Teacher support of students has been studied and positively associated with academic
success and students finding a sense of belonging (see for example Gonzales, 2016). The
teachers in Provincetown go far beyond the typical support for students. They care deeply about
their students and their well-being, in and out of school. The coach describes how one of the
primary years teachers attends most of the soccer games to cheer, loudly, for the middle school
students whose parents aren’t able to make the game. “She comes to a lot of the away
games…So she’ll yell for the kids, and the kids, you know, they want to hear people yelling for
them. They definitely really appreciate that.” Taking time out of her afternoon to cheer for her
students is one of many small gestures that are commonplace for teachers at Provincetown
Schools.

The teachers do, of course, take great interest and pride in the academic progress and
achievements of these students, particularly the families that have been in Provincetown for
several years and have grown up and become a part of the community. Every interview had at
least one such story. There is the boy who arrived from Jamaica in fourth grade without any
foundational reading skills. He is now, as a ninth grader at a different school calling his former
teacher to discuss the novel “Of Mice and Men” and remaining in good academic standing to
stay in the soccer team. There is the girl who arrived from Honduras in second grade without
any English and is now a member of the National Junior Honor Society as a seventh grader.
Teachers tell story after story of students who have excelled academically, always mentioning that after all the support they were given in the years following their arrival they no longer require or receive support and are thriving still.

The informal support that school staff offer in Provincetown goes far beyond staying in touch and tracking academic achievements. This support is often based on very personal individual relationships. Marcia, the Special Education teacher, told me about a student who she worked with for several years after he arrived from Jamaica with limited reading skills and has moved on to high school.

I’ve been attending his soccer games, at the high school and, making sure he’s got cleats and rides, and sometimes I get a text, ‘Hey, Miss Marcia, you know, you think you can give me a ride home today?’

She hears from him several times a week and helps him with everything from socks and cleats for his soccer uniform to food aid. In his family with three kids “both parents, only one with documentation, [were] not working in the pandemic. [I helped them] either getting food from the kitchen or, you know, we had EBT cards.” This teacher has a primarily personal relationship with her former student, but, sensing the needs of his family, helped them to access the resources available to them through the institutional resources she has at her disposal as a teacher.

4.2.1 The Story of Iris

One student in particular, Iris, one of the student photographers, truly illustrates the nature of the relationships that form between immigrant families and the school, and the way the school helps families to access and leverage resources for the entire family. When I interviewed school staff, I asked each of them to give me an example of a family they have worked particularly closely with and to describe the nature of that relationship. Two different interviewees talked about Iris and her family. One was a teacher, Maude, who had her in class
and took her into her home and the other was Chef Andrew, who has been looking out for Iris and her mother through the immigration process. He is a native Spanish speaker and an immigrant himself. The story provided by these two caring adults, and Iris’s own photographs provide a glimpse into the ways the actions of individuals impact immigrant families.

Iris is from Honduras and came into the United States, and to Provincetown, undocumented. She is living here with her mother and is estranged from her father, who is also in the United States. Iris and her mother live in a hotel room in a neighboring town, according to Maude who lives nearby and has worked closely with the family. Much is done by the school to help this family with basic necessities. As a part of the school’s pandemic relief efforts someone from the school drops off a bag of food weekly. They have also helped Iris and her mother tap into some of the existing programs for things like new clothes for a growing girl.

We hooked them up with homeless prevention, not for homeless stuff necessarily because her mom wasn't into it at the time, but just to get Iris, some like spring clothes, she didn't have any spring and summer clothes and she was outgrowing them.

Chef Andrew has taken it upon himself to help the family as they move through the immigration process. He explains the need he was trying to fill.

There was no documents. They moved here from Central America, and I decided to get involved a little bit, because I saw that they needed a little bit of help. I actually, I went to court with them a couple months ago. Because I see that there's a void there. It's a mother and daughter and there's no man in the picture. And I know that she would benefit from somebody with them to give them a little bit of direction…so I check up on them every week just to make sure they're doing what they need to do in order to stay in the country.

Not only did he use his own relevant experiences and language abilities to help Iris and her mother, he took time and drove them to Boston for their immigration hearing. It’s hard to imagine this level of involvement with a family by the school chef in a larger school system.
During the pandemic, Iris was the only student at the school without access to Wi-Fi, a necessity in 2020 to participate in virtual schooling. Maude, who lived nearby, would pick her up in the morning, despite social distancing guidelines, wrapped in scarves (in the days before face masks), wearing kitchen gloves and armed with a bottle of Lysol and drive Iris to the Maude’s home to attend virtual school for the day. Maude would then lead her online classes upstairs while Iris stayed in the basement and moved through her own school work. Maude’s daughter would make them both a hot lunch. At the end of the day, they would wrap back up and drive Iris back to her home at the hotel. They repeated this day after day while the school was remote.

These are just two examples of the support these two staff members off Iris and her mother. They don’t have a credit card, so when they needed to buy flights online, Andrew allowed them to use his credit card for the online transaction. Maude had Iris and her mother over for Thanksgiving dinner. Maude’s daughter and Iris have become friends. They go to brunch together and order shoes online. When I struggled to get in touch with Iris to complete the photo elicitation interview, it was the teacher’s daughter who convinced her to text me and set up a time. These are extraordinary efforts well beyond the responsibilities of their roles as staff and educator at the school. These two caring adults used their own personal time and resources to help Iris, because they saw a family in need and couldn’t help but assist them.

4.3 Conclusion

The school does a great job reaching out to families who are struggling as well, and there's different organizations in town that help any way they can. So I feel like that makes them a feel a little more part of the community- Jill, ESP

Why does the school help families access resources and form connections with
resource rich institutions? Small (2009) theorizes that schools in general broker resources because of influence from parents, nonprofit organizations, professional norms and the surrounding areas. Data presented in this chapter seems to confirm much of what Small is theorizing. Parents and teachers describe using the school to broker or receive resources in this chapter. In the following chapters we will see that there are nonprofit community-based institutions that leverage the school for connection to provide services to families.

Small’s (2009) theory continues that by helping families access resources, the school gets access to more resources itself. An example of this will be described in the next chapter. The school chef, in order to save the school’s access to federally funded free lunch for all students, had to encourage families to sign up for SNAP benefits. By informing them about resources they are able to access he is able to access resources for the school that allow him to do his job as school chef better and more efficiently.

4.3.1 A Unique Place

There are of course roles, procedures and policies in place in Provincetown that can be found in any other school. Most of these are governed by state or federal guidelines and can be generalized to other schools, and immigrant families entering into any school in Massachusetts would fill out many of the same forms and take the same assessments. But, it is worth making a note of the unique nature of Provincetown Schools and their community as we proceed with an analysis of the other institutions that interact with the school while supporting and enriching the lives of all families in the community, including immigrant families. The teachers also make an extraordinary commitment to the lives of their students, which may not be possible in a larger school.

77
A final theme that emerged from the interviews with school staff and faculty is that Provincetown, both the school, and the community, are unique. Provincetown is, of course, a small town with an even smaller school population. This is significant for a few reasons, including that small schools have been shown to positively influence immigrant youth and facilitate the process of finding belonging (Gonzalez, 2016) As mentioned in a previous chapter describing the context, it is deceivingly diverse, and a very wealthy town for such a poor student body. Lisa, who is white, and knew the cape solely as a summer vacationer from her childhood, was surprised to find the racial make-up of her daughters classes when they enrolled in school.

I think the Cape also has a wrong reputation as being very white and not very diverse. My girls are in classes, which, (and my kids aren't white. They're biracial.) They're both in classes that are over 50% nonwhite, which we love. They were really pleasantly surprised by that and that's important to us.

But the uniqueness of Provincetown goes beyond all that. Teachers and staff talk about the unusual level of commitment to the school and collaboration between staff. They talk about how willing teachers are to learn new things and make changes in their teaching, for the good of the students with special needs and language learning needs. They talk about how diverse the student body is, how generous the seasonal community is with the school, how important it is to live and work within the wider community and how special the natural environment is. There are challenges that come with being unique, but there are also strengths, and by all accounts the school is making the most of its unique nature.

There are also concerns that the nature of the school community, and what makes it unique, might be changing. Maude explains the nature of the community as she knew it.

I came to Provincetown with sort of a private school mentality that, you know, this is the center of my academic life, my professional life, but also the center of my community life or my personal life. For 27 years or 28 years, I've I felt like what's happening there first and then build other things in my life around it. So I felt very committed, not in a 24/7
way, but you know, it was my community. That's what I felt. And so I mind, or I wanted to contribute. But you know, we have some great teachers, they're very fine teachers, they're commuting from Yarmouth [a 45 minute drive] and they have young families of their own, or they have spouses of their own who teach or work someplace up Cape or whatever. It's hard to make a commitment to a community when you’re not living even close to it. I get it. But it's different. Yeah. And I worry that the specialness of Provincetown will shift

More than one staff member mentioned how things aren’t what they used to be and the sense of community is diminished. Chef Andrew said some of this can be attributed to COVID and the necessary restrictions it has imposed on private and public life, but there are other factors at play.

It doesn't feel like it did before I'm saying that because I miss it. Um, we can sit here and blame it on COVID. I think that probably started the trend of the community and how it kind of started losing that touch. But I feel like we haven't gotten back to it. I still feel like there's a pretty big disconnect.

4.3.2 The Role of Educators as Community Members

We saw in this chapter that the staff and educators of Provincetown Schools help families in a variety of ways, far outside their roles as teachers. They are available to the students after hours, by text message, and long after the students graduate. The teachers get to know the kids, and their families and where they live. They know their struggles and their successes. They invest a lot of time and personal energy in this as well. In coming chapters we will see other ways the staff and faculty at Provincetown Schools go above and beyond expectations to make sure they have access to what they need and also make sure they have access to enrichment activities.

Iris and any of the students mentioned in this chapter are lucky to have formed such close bonds with their teachers. They benefit from the social connections that can lead to integration and a feeling of belonging, but even more they benefit from their relationship with teachers and school staff because of their roles as institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). The teachers,
share their personal resources, like rides to school and cleats for soccer. They also share their professional resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). By virtue of their connections in the school, they have access to resources, contacts and social capital that come with being a part of an institution like the school. They share these resources through their personal connections with their students.
Chapter 5: Basic Needs: Problems and Solutions

I think that the school has really been helpful, connecting families into services that could be identified upfront and relationships could be helped, could be facilitated through a trusted source, which ended up being the school many times, right? Within these other services, whether it's healthcare or whether it's housing or food or childcare or any of these other needs that families in our community often times are needing.

In this quote, Leo, the Director of Community-Based Care at Outer Cape Health, clearly and succinctly explains the role of the school in helping families access resources that meet their basic needs. Resources are available in the community, but families need to know what they are and who they can trust in accessing those resources (Gonzales, 2016). The school connects them to these resource-rich institutions (Small, 2009). The strains of trying to live year-round in a vacation community, pay rent and buy groceries are significant and families often need assistance. This chapter will discuss some of the struggles families face in and around Provincetown and some of the many resources available to them. Food and housing insecurity are significant problems in Cape Cod. With the limited access to affordable housing, limited options for buying affordable groceries and primarily seasonal work available, young families are often in need of assistance with food and housing. In addition, families who came as economic migrants are expected to send remittances back to family in Jamaica, further tightening their budget. On the other hand, some families have arrived without documentation, making them somewhat invisible to social services distrustful of institutions in general. Health care is another scarce resource in Provincetown that families may struggle to access, a need only heightened in the time of a pandemic, where public health has come to the front of mind.

This chapter will discuss the struggles of housing and food insecurity that are prevalent among the Provincetown Schools community and the scarcity of health care in the area. It will
examine some of the multiple institutions and organizations that form a comprehensive network to provide aid to families in need, immigrant or not. It will discuss the specific barriers immigrant families face in accessing these resources. Finally it will look at the role of the school and the other mechanisms in place to access those resources.

5.1 Housing Insecurity

Finding housing is I think the most difficult thing to do here…Just be very patient. A lot of people just have to be on a wait list for affordable housing because nowadays, if you find housing, it will be crazy expensive. If you find [something] most of it is just for weekly rentals or seasonal for summer. You can't really find it around, it's really hard….But really in Provincetown, it's I will say, impossible nowadays to find housing. [The town to the south] is getting there too. So for housing it’s really hard for new families. Only if they have people who they know that are already settle here that can help or that they go stay with…. if somebody that's coming from Mexico that I know, and they need to help, of course they go stay with us. But yeah, really you need to have a car and just look for houses outside of Provincetown. It's really impossible nowadays.

Maria is clear and unequivocal when she describes the state of the housing crisis in Provincetown and the neighboring towns, where many students who attend Provincetown Schools may also live. The housing stock is limited in Provincetown by a number of factors. First, the town is hemmed in by water on three sides and 73% of the land area of the town is protected environmental space as a part of the national seashore making expansion or creation of residential neighborhoods nearly impossible. The existing housing is densely packed together, and generally pretty old. The historical committee has very strict regulations governing renovations on housing, such that any work done on the exterior of a building requires their approval. When I was living there the project to replace the railing on the deck of my building was delayed several months waiting for approval. This makes it difficult or impossible to renovate existing structures to house more families.
This finite housing stock is further limited that many of the buildings are second homes to wealthy vacationers, and even more apartments are set aside for weekly vacation rentals during the tourist season. This means the availability of year-round housing is small and getting smaller. Institutions like Habitat for Humanity operate further up cape, but in Provincetown the aid to families must take other forms.

That's one of the reasons why a lot of people are just moving to other states, other places. So, people who used to live here for many years are now gone because [landlords] who have realized how much money they can make on weekly rentals have decided to not rent year-round anymore and do weekly rentals instead. So, people are left without a house, and they find that it's impossible to find one and they just decide to go somewhere else. That's why, you know, our school is not that huge … That's why the high school had to be removed. Yeah. People are leaving town, a lot of people because of housing. That's, unfortunately, yeah, it's really sad.

Maria, her parents and her brothers moved to Provincetown when they immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Her parents and some of her extended family still live there in town, but Maria, her partner and children, along with one of her brothers and his family found housing in Truro the town to the south of Provincetown. Her other brother lives even farther away, in Eastham, a town that is another twenty minutes away. Despite the distance the families stay connected to the community in Provincetown by sending their kids to attend school there. For example, David, one of the student photographers in this project who is the nephew of Maria and most recent arrival of the family, lives in Eastham. He still attends school and is an active member of the student community in Provincetown. If not for the housing crisis, Maria tells me, this extended family would live closer together, and closer to the school, up in Provincetown.

Analia also talked about the struggles of the housing market, and the need for new families to be aware of the situation. When asked what she would advise a newly arrived immigrant family she said,
Housing here is a big issue. It's hard to find a place and it's harder to find a place year-round. So many places are for six months. Yeah. That is okay if you are single or have a decent enough seasonal job. But you have three kids and a full-time job year-round, you need a place to say year-round.

Analia and her family were lucky enough to receive affordable housing, which they are grateful for, even if it is in Wellfleet, two towns south of Provincetown. I suspect they were successful in securing affordable housing because of Analia’s tenacity and her ability to understand and work within the local institutions, despite her imperfect English. Analia talked repeatedly about the limitations living in the affordable housing puts on her family, and in particular her and her ability to work. She can only work part time job even though she would like to work full time, because her full-time salary combined with her husband’s chef salary would put them over the income limit. She currently works in an early learning center part time. If they were to earn income above the cap stipulated by the affordable housing there would be no housing available in their price range, illustrating the gap that is present between affordable housing and the rest of the market. They have secured a house through Habitat for Humanity, in Harwich, even further from Provincetown. While she is eagerly anticipating the move and the ability to work full time, Analia remains committed to the Provincetown community, explaining that she will keep her youngest daughter at school there until she completes eighth grade, even if it means a lengthy commute to school each day.

Lisa and her family were able to leverage their extended family connections to live, rent free, in a house that was once her great aunt’s retirement home. She is so happy with the opportunities that has provided their family, and is aware of how lucky they are. She says she would recommend that anyone move to Provincetown and send their kids to the school which
she loves except “the issue is that like, people can't afford to live here. Right? So we're in a really strange and lucky situation with that [having housing].”

Not all families are as fortunate as these three interviewed for this project. It is common for families without housing to live in hotels, such as the one Iris and her mother live in. Maude, a middle school teacher, lives nearby describes their accommodations.

[Iris and her mother share] a room that's probably maybe 10’ by 10’. I mean, it's like big enough for a queen size bed and you can walk around one side of it, but not the other side of it. And there's a little teeny, tiny sink in there. Um, there's a shower, [there might be] an air conditioner…there's one window

Kara, another one of the student photographers who participated in this study, lived for years in that same hotel, sharing a room with her grandmother and uncle, but luckily they have now secured affordable housing on the outskirts of Provincetown.

Even this is no longer guaranteed. It is not clear how much longer families will live in this particular hotel. As of February 2022 there is an open lawsuit against the hotel owners, because the size of the rooms violate minimum square footage laws for habitation set out in the town sanitation codes. Currently a court ordered housing relocation plan is being evaluated along with plans to bring the hotel up to code (Blair, 2022).

Not all families even manage to secure year-round housing in the area. Some families live in hotels seasonally, using housing vouchers, during the fall and winter months when tourism is low. They are then forced to leave come May 1st and the start of the tourist season. Campgrounds are the typical housing through the summer and into the fall for families with seasonal housing. This may be idyllic in the summer months, but come October it is often too cold, and heavy autumn rains have led to flooded campgrounds.
In the last several years a former vacation complex has been purchased by the town and many immigrant families live there. It is the closest thing there is to public housing, with stipulations that it must be the primary residence for a family, not vacation housing. This is not, however, affordable housing.

We have several families that ended up at Harbor Hill and Harbor Hill is not affordable housing. It actually is market rate, can be a bit expensive, but we have several families that are Hispanic that ended up there and they have two- and three-bedroom houses now. I don't know how they make it because it's very expensive, but they are living in a very, it's essentially, it's owned by the town and they pay the town. So, they figured it out and they are there.

This was a long-delayed project from the time that I lived and worked in Provincetown. It was much anticipated, as anything that increases housing stock in the area is an improvement.

**5.2 Food Insecurity**

“Food insecurity is a big issue in the town that doesn't always get talked about.” Reverend Kate from the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House voices clearly the food situation in Provincetown. The ELL teacher, Helena, agrees, especially in the time of pandemic. “This whole year, it's been a big need in terms of making sure that there's enough food, sufficient food, you know, food insecurities, it's been huge.” Helena, who works closely with the Spanish speaking families said this when describing the information related to food insecurity and food resources that she shares with the families she works with. The scarcity of food came up less than the housing crisis in interviews with the families and children. Perhaps this is because there is an extensive multifaceted network of institutions that provide access to food resources in a variety of different ways.

There is only one grocery store in town, Stop and Shop, where families can buy staples. Groceries tend to be more expensive than what is available off cape or closer to mainland
Massachusetts because of the added expense of transporting food so far. The only additional source of relatively affordable food is the Cumberland Farms, just up the road from the Stop and Shop. In addition to snacks and drinks it has premade sandwiches, hotdogs, pizza and grab and go breakfasts. In the summer months it is not uncommon for people working multiple to jobs to eat two or three of their meals from this place. The rest of the markets in town cater towards tourists, selling gourmet crackers and imported cheeses at a premium, so they are not widely frequented by locals. There are two more grocery stores in Orleans, about a thirty-minute drive away. The options for buying food in Provincetown are limited, and more expensive than in other locations. Couple that with high rent and lack of steady year-round employment and it is easy to see why families may struggle accessing food.

5.3 The School’s Role in Accessing Resources for Basic Needs

There are multiple community-based institutions that work to address the issues families face. Teachers and staff talked in their interviews about referring staff to the Homeless Prevention Council, Helping Our Women, the soup kitchen and the community food bank. Students and their families are referred to the Crop Swap at the local library, farmers markets put on by Sustainable Cape and down to the informal food bank set up on the lawn of the Universalist Unitarian Meeting House on the main street. There are funds available to help families with everything from grocery gift cards to new glasses and car repair.

To be clear, the school generally does not provide the resources themselves, but provides a way for families to access those resource, either through information or through connection to another institutions.

It's more about connecting them to resources, making sure that if I say to [the School Adjustment Counselor] this family is looking for [something] what would be the person in town that they could contact? That type of thing.
One reason that the school needs to be involved in the distribution of resources is because they are a common institution for all families with children in the area with means of communicating with many people. This can be found in the case of schools in many places (Small, 2009). However, there are specific features of Provincetown that make mediation by the school necessary.

The resources, I think, within Provincetown can be unique. The municipality in general has been quite involved in helping to facilitate the various partners and how that works. As someone who is concerned with the way the community accesses resources as a part of his job at Outer Cape Health, Leo is attuned to the distribution mechanisms that exist in Provincetown specifically, which will be explained in this chapter. “Oftentimes the way that the financial support is situated within the communities on the outer Cape is access to the funds then typically comes through a referral agency.” A referral agency can be the school, a church or the health clinic. Newly arrived immigrant families need to find a way to tap into those referral agencies to access the available support and in this case, the school is often that referral agency.

There are specific resources, such as health care or WIC and SNAP benefits that the school nurse or the chef will provide information about directly to families, in relation to their roles at the school. Aside from specific job-related resources like this, most of the staff talk about using the official channels of the school, to help families. Teachers have their ear to the ground, working so closely with families that they become aware of their needs. The nurse talks about the trust put in teachers when referring families for support. “I’ve listened to the teachers. They know their children. And they know” when something is wrong. Teachers have the key components of prolonged and repetitive contact with their students (Stanton-Salazar, 2011) and a
close personal relationship (Gonzales, 2016) that have been shown to foster integration and belonging in immigrant students.

The school also knows how to leverage the many generous members of the wider town community in informal ways. Jill, the Education Support Professional (ESP) who has lived in town her whole life explains it very clearly.

We have a lot of people in town that, well, just donate. I know for years being at the school that whenever someone needs something, there’s different people who step up to the plate and, you know, we’ve been reaching out to them for a very long time. So I feel like they’re there for that and they have the resources to help. So I feel like, that’s always great. When we can help out a family, who’s having a hard time here or just trying to manage, maybe something happened in their life, you know, an illness or whatever, housing. There’s people willing to help in this community a lot.

One way that families get help directly from members of the community is by referral by the school to one of two funds, the Dexter Keezer Community Fund and the Fleet Fund, that provide money, without red tape, for things like a gas bill, car repair, groceries or a musical instrument to take part in after school activities. The two funds operate similarly, the difference being that the Dexter Keezer Community fund is to aid families who live in Truro and the Fleet fund is for families who live in Wellfleet. These towns neighbor Provincetown and children from Truro and Wellfleet can attend school in Provincetown because of school choice policies on Cape Cod. Wendy, the client liaison for these funds, who I interviewed, described how quickly and discreetly they are able to get assistance to families once the school social worker has referred them to the board of the fund. After referral from the school or another trusted community organization, such as a church, Helping our Women, or Outer Cape Health, the board approves and distributes money confidentially within a few days. Since the boards of these funds don’t accept or appraise family requests directly, the referral of the school is integral in getting this aid.
It’s clear there are a multitude of options and opportunities for families to get assistance, and a variety of channels that various families move through to access these resources. Jill explains that this is a recent development over the 28 years she’s been at the school.

We’ve got a lot of resources now at school, which we never really had before. We kind of counted on a few different organizations, but now there’s many. So, I think that’s helpful too.

With the variety of resources available, and the unique situation and needs of any particular family, there is no single set of resources and institutions that meets the needs of all families. Perhaps this is reflected best by a comment from Judy, the Administrative Assistant to the Principal. She describes her primary job responsibility as being a problem solver, for families, teachers and administration. She describes the way she might help a family problem solve when they come to her with a personal issue by listing off a variety of resources and institutions to me that she connects family members to, including financial resources, Jamaican Patois speaking immigration assistance and help with gifts for the kids around Christmas. During our interview Judy reflected on the verbal list she has just given me. “I should have like a whole list of people [that help families] so that I can really have it at hand, but it’s just so, individual, their needs.”

5.4 Resources to Address Housing Insecurity

Based on the descriptions by the three mothers at the beginning of this chapter, there are clearly huge issues related to housing in Provincetown and the surrounding areas that are significantly impacting the lives of all families, but especially those who have recently immigrated and lack access to a supportive network. The housing stock in town is constrained for many reasons, the primary being the large number of expensive second homes and the desirability of real estate in the town for vacationers with the means to pay high rent in the
summer. This high demand compounded by the limited supply in town because of the size of the town that is not protected environmental land and tight rules from the historical committee making altering existing structures. It is nearly impossible to have new construction, and affordable housing is rare and becoming rarer.

5.4.1 The School’s Role in Addressing the Housing Crisis

“No, we can't just find them a house or anything like that.” The school does what it can to help families struggling with housing insecurity. Helena describes how the school can help housed families in need of support, by putting them in touch with a fund that “sometimes pays for a month or two of rent….So that's a connection that the school can sort of do that [is] a little bit more direct. [Connection to] the resources.” For unhoused families it’s harder for the school to help because there are limited supplies of housing available. Helena stresses repeatedly throughout her interview that her role at the school isn’t to do things for families, but to make them aware of the resources out there. When talking about helping families find homes she explains it like this “sometimes people don't know that there are organizations in town that yeah, you can be on a waiting list for a place so that these are different places that.”

The role of the school in helping to address the housing crisis is best illustrated by looking at the trajectory of the Hernandez family, from Honduras, mentioned previously in Chapter 4. Upon arrival they enrolled their two sons, aged four and 12, in the school in Provincetown, with significant assistance from the ELL teacher. After helping the kids enroll in school and Rec, get medical appointments and adjust to the demands of public school in the United States,

Eventually they started talking about some assistance in terms of housing because there where they lived wasn't adequate. It wasn't good. And what would be the resources? We would as a school, also talking to the people that are here, the school adjustment,
counselor, all of these different types of resources, [ask] ‘Where else could they go?’ Trying to facilitate a little bit of that, but not doing things for them, but really putting them in contact with the people that might help. And that could also have someone who spoke Spanish.

By all accounts the Hernandez children learned, developed and fit in with their peers. Their daughter was born in Provincetown and the parents secured jobs, with the help of Analia and the Helena. However, their housing situation continued to be challenging and after many years in town they were forced to leave. The move from Provincetown was not without its challenges. Helena has kept in touch with the family and reports “unfortunately it's been a pandemic here and it's challenging for that [younger] student, but in terms of the living situation he’s not living with rats. And that's a good thing.” Despite the move, the Hernandez family continues to use their connections in Provincetown. The students still keep in touch with their former teachers, Analia still helps the family interact with their new school, helping them register the kids in school and fielding calls from the school office which she then relays to them in Spanish.

5.4.2 Other Forms of Housing Support

Additional housing support comes from the Homeless Prevention Council (HPC), the Dexter Keezer and Fleet Funds. Outer Cape Health can also provide housing assistance in specific circumstances. HPC is mostly a referral agency, working with families to connect them to resources on Cape (Provincetown Meeting Needs Group, 2021). The Dexter Keezer and Fleet funds offer checks for rent or utility bills that go directly to the landlord or utility. Outer Cape Health can also provide assistance with rent if medical issues are preventing someone from working.

We can help to supplement bills specifically rent so that we can pay for rent for, six to eight months while the patient is tending to their medical needs. This is a one-year pilot program that we are working with the local health care system, and a regional, housing corporation. In addition to that we also have partnerships and relationships with other
housing communities where, if they have programs that they are offering that maybe a patient doesn't know about, then we can refer to the community partner.

These institutions form a network to help families, but still there are many families with temporary or insecure housing moving further and further away from Provincetown to find housing.

The Provincetown Community Support Liaison (PCSL) is a town funded program with offices situated in the Methodist Church (which also houses the food pantry and soup kitchen) and in the town library. The librarian explains

It was started to be there for people who fall through the cracks, you know, who aren't already getting services or who are, who need services, but need help navigating where to go for what. You know for food or for housing or treatment.

The PCSL can assist people without a place to sleep with a ride and a bed in a shelter in Hyannis, the city on Cape Cod, that is about an hour away. This may not be a viable form of assistance for a family sending children to school in the morning, but in a place with few housing options it may be the best solution for some single adults.

5.4.3 Housing in the Pandemic

One unexpected effect of the Pandemic was the increased availability of housing aid because of federal funding through the CARES Act (Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act), to various community organizations. This was noted by Wendy, the client liaison for the Dexter Keezer Fund and the Fleet Fund. Those funds typically provide a significant amount of assistance with rent.

There's been fewer requests for help for rent because some of the other agencies have had this pandemic funding. Which surprised me, but there was like suddenly a bigger pot of money of people who could help with housing. So our requests for funds to pay [rent] went down during, COVID. I was like what's going on? Then I called a couple of the agencies and said, ‘what's going on?’ … and that was what was going on.
Wendy did observe an increase in requests for things like help with heating oil or boiler repair, which may be because of the increased amount of time people were spending at home.

5.4.4 Conclusion: Housing Insecurity and Resources

The housing crisis in Provincetown is significant and effects not just young families, but also professionals who may fill staffing shortages at Outer Cape Health or in town government. Provincetown has struggled to find, and retain, town managers over the years because a town manager with a family who moves to Provincetown simply cannot afford to live there. At a town meeting I was at while I still lived there several years ago they voted to change the town laws which stipulated that the police chief, fire chief and town manager must live in town. The town voted that the fire chief needed to live close so he must stay in town, but that hires for police chief or town manager can live in neighboring more affordable towns. These changes allowed them to fill vacant positions and ensure operations of town institutions. This anecdote reveals the depth and breadth of the housing struggles in Provincetown. While some institutions do what they can to provide unhoused people with rental assistance or information about affordable housing, these are simply band aids on a larger issue. Without systemic change the housing security crisis will continue to get worse.

5.5 Resources to Address Food Insecurity

There is a vast and coordinated network of institutions that provide food in town, so there are a variety of ways families can access food. Some of these institutions, such as the Food Pantry at the Methodist Church or the Soup Kitchen in Provincetown (SKIP) center their mission around providing food. Others are less obvious sources of food, such as the public library, but are equally important in the network of places that provides food. Some food is provided
directly by the school for students during school hours or to the family in the form of groceries or weekend snacks. There is the formal food pantry at the Methodist church in town, along with a soup kitchen. There is also an informal, anonymous, food pantry on the front lawn of the UU Meeting House. Sustainable Cape grows crops on site at the school in raised beds and also encourages families to attend local markets by providing them increased access to fresh produce with SNAP and WIC matching programs. These institutions form a rich organic network of food providers. They are aware of the work the others are doing, and where the gaps are in the system. They promote the other institutions and are aware of ways they can leverage their particular strengths to help the families. The above-mentioned food providing institutions will be discussed in further detail in this chapter. Other community-based organizations that distribute food but were not included in this study, but were mentioned by participants include, the Soup Kitchen in Provincetown (SKIP), Helping our Women (HOW) the Aids Support Group, Councils on Aging. The network can be visualized using Figures 20 and 21, which can be found in the section describing the network web in Chapter 8.

5.5.1 School Level Food Programs

“They got fed at school totally free. And at that time they were getting subsidized grocery support….That was just such a godsend and has continued to be.” Laura describes enrolling in school in Provincetown in the middle of a pandemic like winning the lottery and a part of that is the food aid they received. The school takes on a leading role in providing families access to food through their school food programs. These take two forms, the free and reduced lunch that all students in the town are eligible for, and the pandemic era food distribution program.

5.5.1.1 Pandemic Era Food Aid. During the early days of the COVID 19 shut down, with the school shut down, there was no way to provide hot lunch to students. So chef Andrew
reformatted the way we were distributing food to a, kind of grocery, pantry pickup. I was trying to help out families… My job went from serving food to kids to, to packing red beans amongst other things and giving out grocery bags, grocery bags of food.

Families were encouraged to come, twice a week, and pick up bags of groceries from the school. The nurse described it by saying “when we closed, we kept feeding families. So every week they’d get some produce, some protein and a lot of dry goods. But it was pretty good choices.” Later they shifted to a delivery model, with bags of food being brought directly to families at their homes by Chef Andrew, Nurse Mary Beth and other staff, on their own time.

While providing groceries to the families biweekly, the school was also sensitive to the specific cultural needs of the immigrant families. Chef Andrew describes the great lengths he went to in order to get red beans, or peas as the Jamaicans call them, a staple in the Jamaican diet.

I was trying to help out families, like for instance, red beans, like the Jamaicans and their rice and peas, there wasn’t a red bean on Cape Cod for months it seemed like, so I was, I was holding red beans [and distributing them to the Jamaican families.]

Chef Andrew is already known for his efforts at serving the children culturally diverse meals (Ward, 2016), and now, in the middle of the pandemic, he was using his resources as food manager of the school to procure important staples for the families that they would not have been able to get on their own.

In addition to grocery delivery, the school was the site for distribution of the P-EBT (Pandemic era SNAP or Pandemic-EBT) cards that were given out by the state of Massachusetts to families of students when they were not attending school in person, in order to buy groceries. This program was monitored by Judy, who handled reporting of attendance to the state, and helping families enroll. Several staff members brought up these P-EBT cards and how they helped put families in touch with Judy to help them enroll if they didn’t know how, so they could
be enrolled in the program. This is another illustration of how the school serves as a broker and provides access to external resources.

5.5.1.2 Free Lunch for Everyone. The primary way that the school helps children access nutritious food on a daily basis is through the free breakfast and lunch program. Provincetown Schools has been classified as a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School for several years, meaning that all students receive free lunch, regardless of income. They received this status because more than 40% of the student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch. This program is funded at the federal level, by the USDA. Schools need to reapply for this program every three years (USDA, 2022). Chef Andrew must track and apply for reimbursement for every student meal that is served. He explained that while there is a small amount of funding at the state level, it is negligible. However, during the pandemic, all students in Massachusetts were given access to free lunch, regardless if they were a CEP school or not. This program has continued through the 2021-2022 school year (Department of Education, 2022).

Having free and reduced lunch for the whole school increases access to nutritious food, reduces stigma around receiving free or reduced lunch, and streamlines paperwork when the school is able to claim reimbursement for all school meals. The bulk of the work related to being a CEP school falls to the school chef (in his “do everything job,”) and the school was recently in jeopardy of losing that status, not because of lack of low-income families, but because of a lack of documents submitted by many of those families. This caused a lot of distress for Chef Andrew.

We have to be at 40% minimum [of students enrolled in free and reduced lunch to remain a CEP school]. Right now, we’re at 42[percent]. So, it looks like we’re okay. But it’s weird. It’s weird going through that process because you’re almost hoping to get the lower income families so that we can have the benefit for everybody. And there was a time here a few months ago, about three months ago where we were not at 40%.
something. I was sweating bullets and I was able to get the administration to help me out and get all these forms signed again this year we’ve had pretty much 90% return rate [of the forms]. And now we’re back up to 42 to 43% [of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch].

This quote illustrates two key issues: the efforts the school undertakes to care for their children, and the hesitancy of some immigrant families to submit documentation to a state institution. This hesitancy comes from either fear of detection if they lack immigration documentation, or if they have documents, they may fear of the impact applying for public benefits might have on their visa applications because of Public Charge, a Trump era issue which threatened to withhold green cards and citizenships from immigrants who had accessed public programs. In true Provincetown collaborative fashion, Nurse Mary Beth was also involved, and concerned about maintaining access to free lunch for all students. She brought it up in her interview as well. She talks about the lengths she went to inform families, particularly the immigrant families, that they could apply for food benefits, including the free lunch benefit, legally and without fear of stigma or repercussion.

5.5.2 SNAP and WIC

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women Infants and Children (WIC) food programs do not originate in Provincetown of course. They are government funded and nationally available. The school’s role in helping families access these resources they are entitled to, comes in the form of education. This falls primarily to the school chef and the school nurse.

Qualifying for SNAP automatically enrolls students in the free lunch program, which as was discussed in the previous section is an important factor in the school being able to offer free breakfast and lunch for all students. Because of the reenrollment in CEP this year the chef and
nurse did a lot of outreach around enrolling families in SNAP. This was not without its challenges.

It was tough just because you're encouraging someone to go and apply for food stamps, essentially without saying food stamps. I think that's our biggest thing. That's, that's my biggest, family outreach I'd say for like government assistance programs or anything in that category. [I provided them with] resources online, um, kind of giving examples as to what it is that they'll get. It's now it comes in a debit card, so it's essentially free money. It's really just selling it, selling the program. I definitely like to give my phone number ….I have parents calling me with questions about SNAP.

While Chef Andrew doesn’t do direct outreach, the school nurse, who prides herself on her proactive relationship with the families, does a lot of that to help families enroll in WIC and SNAP.

5.5.2.1 Stigma and Fear in Accessing SNAP. Both the chef and the nurse are aware of the stigma associated with the program and the hesitance of some families to enroll. So, a large part of their outreach is to rebrand and “sell” the program to families. “[We try to] make it not a program that's looked down upon. So food stamps, I don't, we don't use that word anymore,” the chef explains. The nurse agrees.

I try not to call it [food stamps] because that's a little demeaning. It was a demeaning approach back in the day where you had what looked like play money to pay for your groceries. But now with the debit debit cards, it's not so stigmatizing.

An additional issue for families accessing WIC and SNAP is the fact that it is a government program. They are federally and state funded programs, and receiving the aid requires families to submit forms and identifying documents. For immigrant families this creates issues (Gonzales, 2016). Undocumented immigrants are not entitled to access these programs. Legal immigrants may be wary of the public charge policy, a Trump era issue which threatened to withhold green cards and citizenships from immigrants who had accessed public programs and the effect accessing SNAP might have on their visa applications and immigration proceedings.
For families of mixed status, with one or more children born in the United States this becomes complicated, determining who can apply and who receives benefits, so many families choose not to apply for the public aid they are eligible for.

The school nurse brought up this issue of families being eligible to apply and described and how she helps to guide families in how they can apply for public food benefits.

There's a lot of people who are concerned that if they're not a documented citizen of the United States that they would not be eligible and not able to apply. But the truth is, if they're living in a home with a family, their family is married or not. If someone is a US citizen and sitting down to your dinner table every night, they can be the applicant. In fact, some, some families, it was, they had an adult child in the home who was born in the United States, that person can apply for the food stamps and lists the family as the other members of the household and SNAP doesn't really care to police who else is in the house.

It’s clear from their interviews that the chef and the nurse want to make sure that families access all the resources available to them. They want to eliminate barriers of stigma and fear that may be associated with them. This care has helped families receive food aid, both in and out of school for the entire family. This fear of stigma is real and is addressed by other institutions discussed in this chapter.

5.5.3 Sustainable CAPE

There are additional incentives for Cape Cod Families to join the SNAP and WIC programs. Sustainable CAPE is an organization that helps families maximize their benefits, all while educating kids and their families and promoting access to fresh, local produce. Sustainable CAPE provides instruction for students during school hours, manages raised beds on school property that end up in school lunches and hosts farmers markets which promotes local produce and provides matching of SNAP and WIC benefits.
This is a unique, grassroots organization, so it is worth taking time to understand what Sustainable CAPE is. Sustainable CAPE is a community-based institution whose mission is to celebrate local foods, while teaching about the health of our bodies, our community and our environment, and our goal is really to be the generation, the next generation, that's focused on the health of the world, as Francie, the founding director, member of the board and visual artist and educator for Sustainable CAPE explained in our interview. They work with several local schools in Provincetown and neighboring towns, but this paragraph will focus on the work they do with Provincetown Schools families. Even while working with kids at the micro level in the soil, they keep the global picture of community health in mind. “I think a healthy body, many healthy bodies make a healthy community and lots of healthy communities make a healthy world.”

Information in this section is gleaned from the interview with Francie, a deep reading of the organization website and Facebook page, suggestions of school staff members who work with the program and my own observations as a teacher of students who participated in the program. All quotes in this section, unless otherwise attributed, are from the interview with Francie, the founding director.

Sustainable CAPE begins their work within a community in the classrooms. They conduct “Farmer in the School” workshops which teach children about soil, water and plant life. The children plant vegetable seeds which they will grow into vegetables they will eventually get to eat, which is “how you get kids to really love vegetables. That's the secret.” At Provincetown Schools they have also used grant money to build several raised beds, grow vegetables and learn about agricultural practices. The most recent project, funded by a private grant received from Constellation Energy, in February of 2022, was for research related to biochar technology, which
improves soil quality and stores carbon, mitigating climate change, in the school beds (Sustainable CAPE- Center for Agricultural Preservation & Education, 2022).

In order to encourage students, who are already engaged with Sustainable CAPE to involve their families and attend a farmer’s markets, they offer $10 “awards” to be spent on produce at the markets for any student who completes the farmer in the school workshop. Here they show the deep thought they have given to respecting families. “We called them awards because we started out calling them coupons and we found that some parents were sort of not into the coupon concept. Everybody was into the award concept.” The children then come to the market with their families and caregivers.

That serves to bring the families back to the market, [and] on the backside of the award, it also says, Hey, … we have these programs[SNAP, WIC, HIP] available for food, and we’d really love you to come and use them because we want you to help us support farmers. So kind of gives a purpose to [the awards] and it seems to really work. Once families are at the farmers markets there are additional learning opportunities such as a scavenger hunt or an educational table about the business of agriculture.

5.5.3.1 Leveraging Federal and State Funding. Sustainable Cape truly works to leverage government funded nutrition incentive programs at the local level at their very busy and popular famers markets. These weekly markets attract locals and tourists alike. They accept SNAP and WIC, and respect families’ privacy in a creative way. Instead of having family swipe their SNAP debit cards directly at a farm stand, families use their SNAP debit card to buy tokens from a central booth at the fair. These tokens are a currency specific to the farmers markets used by anyone who chooses to buy them, with cash or benefits. The families then use these tokens to buy produce directly from farmers markets. At the farmers markets they double SNAP benefits, by giving families tokens of their own farmers market specific currency worth double the value.
of what is being deducted from their SNAP debit card. So, by spending $10 on the SNAP debit card at the central booth, the family will receive $20 worth of tokens to spend anywhere in the market. $10 is from federal funding and the matching $10 comes from money that the organization “just raise ourselves. We run around and do annual appeals and ask businesses and foundations to help us to pay for this program.”

Sustainable CAPE has also taken steps to get additional funds for families through the Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), a Massachusetts state program that adds money to SNAP cards whenever families use them at an authorized farmers market. HIP adds $40, $60 or $80 to the debit card, depending on family size, just for using the debit card at an authorized farmers market (Department of Transitional Assistance, 2022). “So I made sure that Provincetown and Truro (the next town to the south) became authorized. They're only select few [authorized farmers markets] in the state.”

5.5.3.2 Accessing Local Food During the Pandemic. Francie also described some of the ways Sustainable CAPE made sure to retain affordable access to local food during the pandemic. Cape Cod in general and Provincetown in particular were one of the locations where many wealthy families, fleeing cities, moved to their second homes to ride out the pandemic. With markets shut down, farmers were selling their produce through social media, and accepting payments on Venmo. This was great for people with means, like these newly arrived families, but SNAP debit cards cannot be used like credit cards online, so families were unable to use their SNAP benefits. “so I [could] see that this was a completely uneven playing field. And we were going to be in trouble if we didn't come up with some kind of alternate system.” So, they created a website and
we asked all the farmers to do a bunch of extra work and put up all their crops onto this software, which is called the local food marketplace. Then we enabled people to buy [produce from the website] with SNAP cards… So, that was a hugely heavy lift.

This move to equitable online sales of produce is just one action among many taken by Sustainable CAPE during the pandemic, such as offering virtual instruction and reorganizing the physical space of the farmers markets. These efforts in particular show the organizations commitment to reaching families who need assistance.

### 5.5.3.3 Specific Considerations for Immigrant Families.

Sustainable CAPE and their myriad programs are for all families in need on the cape, and many immigrant families fall into that category. “Our concept is to try to reach everybody where they are as much as possible.” They collaborate with other institutions for outreach to reach populations that don’t typically access the farmers markets.

What we have been doing is reaching out to families through the school, mainly reaching out through COAs [Councils on Aging], but there isn't a big Jamaican population in COAs right now…. We're just starting to get into delivery. Which we hope will open up our programs to more people [who aren’t free on the day of the market because of work].

There are special considerations that they give to the immigrant community, particularly the Jamaican community. They do realize that Jamaican families specifically are not accessing the market as much, and have put a lot of thought into why that might be.

I do not believe that the Jamaican population is utilizing the market as much as possibly they could, but also I'm not completely certain how many jobs, everybody has and, is it available? …No one’s free on a Saturday, on the outer Cape, right? Everybody is either cleaning a house or working at a restaurant or whatever, Especially in the summertime… I think that just Jamaican population is not, you know, as in the market as much.

They are actively considering how best to reach the Jamaican community, on a variety of fronts.

Francie is aware of the effect that having a Jamaican person working at the farmers market would have on the Jamaican population (Garcia and Schmalzbauer, 2017).
I'm actively looking to hire someone actually who, can help us with this, [who] is Jamaican, and [I] haven't found the person yet. But, they're out there somewhere. I know. …I've been trying to find a vendor or two, or more, who would be Jamaica, who would want to share Jamaican food and, or any other booths. Just have Jamaican vendors. So that I think would open it up. I think that the more that we can open things up, the more that people [would] be coming and feeling like this is my place. … I think we need an employee to that end would really help. And I think also having vendors. It would be great. Also if there were like, if somebody were into having a garden and growing some of the foods that Jamaica would really love to buy, like, ‘oh man, I can't even get that in the store, but someone's growing it now.’ Obviously, it would have to be a short season crop because it's just not hot for that long, but there are certain things that can be grown.

Francie is thinking about the pragmatics of Jamaican families having the time to visit farmers markets and providing food they may want to eat. She is also thinking about belonging, and ways that they, as an organization could facilitate that belonging, through Jamaican employees, vendors and crops.

**5.5.3.4 Agriculture and Belonging.** A recent local news article speaks directly to the issue of finding belonging through agriculture, and coincidentally involves the older brother of Erika, one of the student photographers, and son of Analia, the mother from Puerto Rico who was also interviewed for this dissertation. It was shared with me by Nancy, the educator, who I interviewed as a part of this dissertation. Julio, Erika’s brother, Analia’s son, attends high school in a nearby town and this article (Hay, 2022) features him and his classmates participating in a gardening project in their local school. In that school the English Language Learner teacher uses gardening to supplement in-class lessons with his students, all newly arrived students from Puerto Rico, Jamaica or the Philippines. He says it encourages more communication between the students of different nationalities. The students they enjoy growing plants that are native to their home land, especially sweet potatoes which are widely used in both Puerto Rican and Jamaican cuisine. Julio speaks at length in the article about foods his mother makes with sweet potatoes and other produce that can be grown in the school garden.
“Students who learn English in a garden connect more deeply and create a new sense of place faster than they do in a classroom” (Hay, 2022). This is evidenced in this article for Erika’s brother and his classmates, and is confirmation of Francie’s inclination to encourage students to get involved in gardening, and also to try and engage the Jamaican community through Jamaican farmers and growing crops native to Jamaica.

5.5.4 Crop Swap at the Provincetown Public Library

“The public library has Crop Swap and it's amazing that all winter long there's crops out at the front door [of the library], I mean fruits and vegetables. Just amazing!” One of the food resources that the school nurse directs families towards is Crop Swap at the Provincetown Public Library specifically designed to help individuals access fresh produce. Even though there have been many well-established food pantries in town, the Provincetown Health Department did a needs assessment and realized people were lacking access to fresh produce. So they decided to buy a fridge, and approached the library about housing the fridge at the library for a program called Crop Swap. Francie from Sustainable Cape describes the purpose of the fridge well.

Anybody in the community can access uncut fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator. And then anybody can go, who needs that and get the vegetables out. So it’s not a food pantry. It's just like a free fridge. So there's no signing up. There's no feeling badly about it. You just go and get the food if you need it.

Despite the less obvious connection between a library and a community fridge, it has worked out well in this case. Part of this is because of the central location of the library, and additionally they are a public space that is open seven days a week year-round. Amy also noted the neutral nature of the library.

We felt like there's not the stigma that some people experience when they go to food pantries…. cause you're just going to the library…. there's nobody there to monitor it, to make sure people don't take too much [or] to make sure people really need it. It's self
monitored. Right? All I know is that we get a lot of free produce and people are consuming it.

Another reason why placing Crop Swap in the library is a good idea can be attributed to the role librarians can have in public health. Leo explains that Outer Cape Health works with libraries for referrals for service. “I think library just in general sometimes just seems a little bit out of left field,” When thinking about public health, but “I think librarians, libraries in general who have a really good insight into what's going on with the community, with patrons that are visiting.” This is not without precedent. In researching the role of community-based institutions, Rodriguez (2019) found that “the library is a hub for resources, community and connection” (Rodriguez, 2019 p. 142) among immigrant youth in Connecticut.

The fridge was originally stocked with food from two major donors, the large chain grocery store in town and the local produce distributors, and organized by volunteers. Things changed during the pandemic with decreased supply and increased demand so they struck up new partnerships, such as with the Soup Kitchen in Provincetown (SKIP), and they are currently funded by donations from the newly opened marijuana dispensaries in town, which are required to donate one percent of their profits to the community. Sustainable CAPE also donates produce to the Crop Swap fridge. Even with these donations and funding, “We can't keep up with demand. I mean, right now the fridge and the shelves are packed. We got a delivery this afternoon and it'll be gone by tomorrow afternoon.” Crop Swap maintains an active Facebook page and posts pictures and a list of available produce whenever it is restocked.

While the produce that fills the fridge is seasonal, and subject to what is available locally through distributors, the library director does pay attention to the specific needs of the Jamaican community, to the extent that she can without the hard data associated with who uses the fridge
(but “I've seen some Jamaican people come in that I've never seen in the library before”) and what specifically they take.

Our custodian, who's Jamaican asked if he could take some sweet potatoes when we had sweet potatoes, he was like, ‘cause that's something that I want is sweet potatoes.’ It was like, ‘oh good to know. I'll make sure we always have sweet potatoes.’

Sweet potatoes come up again at the library as a key to belonging. This simple crop is demonstrating the role of culturally relevant plants as a way to help immigrants maintain connection to their host culture while integrating into their new community (Bloemraad et. al, 2008).

5.5.5 Unitarian Universality Meeting House

The Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, or “the UU,” is a religious and spiritual place situated on the main street of Provincetown, right in the middle of everything. “It makes it more almost like an urban environment, even though we're in a pretty rural place, we feel like more of a downtown church.” While some may call it a church, it is, more precisely, a house of worship. The Reverend Kate describes Unitarian Universalism and the Provincetown UU community like this:

It's a tradition that's open to the truth and all of the world's religious traditions, and we're just a community of seekers that feel like that's better done in community and that no one has the one truth, but that we can all help each other to live better lives, to be more spiritual people and to be more justice oriented. So, some people consider themselves Christians. Some don't. We have people of different religious backgrounds, um, Jewish, Buddhist, atheist, and everyone as welcome in the sort of big tent of Unitarian universalism.

Its central location makes it an integral part of the community. “We like to use our building as a resource because we feel like we have something really special here. We like to be a resource to the town.” The UU is interested in engaging with the wider Provincetown Community in a variety of ways. One of these ways, their work with Racial Justice Provincetown, and the school
will be described in chapter seven. In terms of food insecurity, they have two main initiatives, the food labyrinth and the informal food pantry on their lawn started during the COVID 19 pandemic.

5.5.5.1 Food Labyrinth. For several years, pre-pandemic, the UU hosted a food labyrinth on the front lawn of the meeting house. What started as a meditative process for the church developed into a collaboration with two other institutions and a way to address food insecurity issues in town.

Our congregation just loved labyrinths of any kind. It's a really meditative process. So, we did the food labyrinth for ourselves. We decided that we wanted to create a labyrinth [that] people could walk. Then we decided to make it a collection for the food pantry over at the Methodist church so that you could walk it and also leave some food. And then we thought it was an idea that would be really good to do intergenerationally.

Once they had formed the labyrinth on their front lawn and opened it to the wider community for food donations, they approached a primary years teacher at the school and asked his class to partner with them. First, one of the members of the church went into the classroom and educated the children on labyrinths in general as a calming tool and then invited them to walk down to the labyrinth on the front lawn of the church. The class made posters and helped the church to advertise the labyrinth as a site for food donations to the community. Many classes from the school, my second grade class included, went down and walked the labyrinth and left donations that first year. When the event was over the original partner class packaged up the food and did the delivery to the food pantry on behalf of the UU. This food labyrinth is yet another example of collaboration amongst multiple institutions in town, and another way that an institution like the UU can address food insecurity as part of their operations and mission.

5.5.5.2 Food Bank. Like for all institutions, COVID was very disruptive for the UU. They halted in person services and events and grew their online community. As of February
2022, they are still exclusively offering their services via YouTube with hopes of becoming hybrid soon. However, “social justice is a big part of our faith tradition and we want to be part of whatever's happening in the town” and so the pandemic did give them another way to grow their community involvement and leverage their centrally located space in service to the community by setting up an informal food pantry on the lawn of the meeting house. By being located on the main street in town this is a highly traffic area which many families may pass by.

Other agencies address [food insecurity], but in ways that you have to sign up or do paperwork or have face-to-face interaction or go certain hours. And we knew that that was a barrier. So, we've started a pantry that you can access at any time without being a client.

This food pantry was opened with some startup money from the Provincetown COVID 19 Task Force, which is discussed in Chapter 8. After an initial press release and some donations that got it started the pantry is primarily stocked by individual contributions from members of the congregation. It is restocked by volunteers three days a week to keep up with demand.

The church community, as a part of their mission of social justice, is sensitive to the specific needs of the populations that access the pantry.

We do try to keep a lot of international foods in there, especially Jamaican foods. We also have an eye to the homeless folks who access to the pantry. So, we try to have things that are on like pull tops, instead of things you'd need can opener for, and things like that. A lot of families actually definitely access that. So, we try to keep a lot of kids' snack foods and things like that in.

Because it is an informal pantry, and by design, anonymous, they do not know exactly who is using the space. However, they are aware of gaps in the existing system of food pantries, such as international food, or kids snacks. By tailoring their donations to the specific population that they know may need to use their space they are signaling to these people that this is for them and they have considered their needs.
5.5.6 Conclusion: Food Insecurity and Resources

Food insecurity is a real problem faced by many in Provincetown and the surrounding areas, especially in the winter months. For families with children in school, the school itself can be a primary way of accessing food. The children are fed during the day, and during the pandemic this also afforded them access to groceries. The pandemic created more economic hardship as people were out of work but also created opportunities for additional food aid for families and funding for institutions.

Beyond the school there is an expansive net of institutions that provide food aid to families and fill different niches, access to fresh produce at the Crop Swap, ways to use and expand their public benefits through Sustainable CAPE, informal off hours access to Jamaican food and children’s snacks at the UU Meeting House and so much more. While there are some efforts at coordination between these institutions, this network has mostly formed organically, with particular organizations identifying a need in the community, and a gap in the available resources and using their skills and creativity to meet that need.

5.6 Healthcare

Accessing health care is another challenge families who have moved to Provincetown face. Because of the geographic realities of Cape Cod, with Provincetown situated at the very end of the cape, the nearest hospital is an hour long drive away, without summer traffic. There is one health clinic in town, Outer Cape Health, which services most of the local families. Outer Cape Health consists of three clinics that serve 18,000 patients. One of the clinics is in Provincetown, one is two towns away, and one is a bit farther up cape. For this study I
interviewed Leo, the Director of Community-Based Care. All quotes in this section, unless otherwise noted are attributed to Leo. He is the first to admit there are challenges in providing health care in a small, remote town. “Provincetown [is] considered a rural communit[y]. And so, I think what comes along with that is just a unique level of complexity providing adequate health care services.” However, Outer Cape Health uses creativity to try and address these issues.

5.6.1 Access to Health Care

I think from a healthcare standpoint, you know, there is a lot of work to be done to build trust within [immigrant] populations… Public Charge was something that was really prohibitive of the immigrant migrant communities accessing things like SNAP benefits or Medicaid, or, services that, that typically are provided to low income populations because they were having a really, because the families where we're accessing some of these public services, it would go against them on their visa applications. There has been a little bit of an effort to say, some of those policies have shifted a little bit. I think then it's really the responsibility of whatever entity in the past that had to abide by those policies to really step up and say a lot of services are not confined by them anymore. That was a big concern from the healthcare system was that people that were in need of services would not seek services because fear of retribution or fear of consequences, should they be found out.

Leo is voicing here concerns and barriers that immigrant families face in accessing many of the resource-rich institutions available to them in Provincetown. This lack of trust he speaks about must be bridged somehow, and the school is integral in that role (Small, 2009). One way the school does this is by putting families directly in touch with Outer Cape Health, the local health clinic so that the children can get physicals to enroll in school. In addition to enrolling kids in school more quickly, this benefits the family because they are now patients at the only health clinic in town, which provides them access to health care and additional programs which will be discussed. The nurse feels they have an effective working relationship, “I feel like they've included me as a member of their team and, I'm grateful for that.” But this wasn’t always the case.
When Maria was asked what she would help a newly arrived family with upon arrival in Provincetown she said she would “help them with any doctor's appointments. Cause that was a huge thing when we came… maybe going with them, get them enrolled in the medical system here.” Leo from Outer Cape Health also acknowledged that the wait to be seen by a doctor can be long. It can take three to six months for adults to receive their first appointment, and he thought it would take three to six weeks for kids to get an appointment. When I explained what the nurse had told me about the quick turnaround, he was pleasantly surprised because he is aware that delayed appointments cause children to miss school. “It's not always been that way. You know, I think that that has been a conscious effort over these past probably two or three years to, to make that more coherent.”

The ELL teacher also talked about helping Spanish speaking families access health care at Outer Cape Health, “to get that the medical part. and the coverage for them.” While she is aware of programs designed to help families, she says that the need more translators there to help the Spanish speaking families. Among the staff at Outer Cape Health there are some Spanish speakers, but not many. When the practitioner doesn’t speak the language of the patient, remote translation services are used, typically for Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole. Even there, there are gaps. “We have a significant Jamaican population, but you know, we don't really have translators for Patois.”

Leo also brought up staffing of the clinics and the effects that might have on immigrant families accessing care.

If I were just to be candid and upfront is, you know, sometimes our provider makeup does not maybe fully reflect the population that is seeking services. A successful model for… healthcare…is to have staffing demographics that is reflective of the demographics of the community. But, you know, I think within Provincetown that just become, it can
become quite difficult in that it can often be a transitory population and then I think there can be some limitations as far as, retaining staff.

Place-based assimilation theory confirms what Leo is saying, that the presence of staff representative of the immigrant populations within the institution increase contact with immigrant families and integration. After being asked about the more established Jamaican community as a potential source of staffing, he again discusses challenges. “So we do have some staff within the health center that are of Jamaican descent. But do we have providers that are, uh, Jamaican descent? [No].” He says there is an interest within the leadership to make the staffing more diverse, but they are struggling with how to make that happen. Some of their struggles are related to being a rural health care provider, who can’t pay as much as an urban health center, but others are specific to the area. Leo also mentioned the housing issues discussed earlier in this chapter as a barrier for hiring new staff. New hired staff are hesitant to come because they can’t find housing that is not “priced outrageously.” They have a variety of strategies and programs to recruit and retain staff more reflective of the community, but in the meantime immigrant families will use translation services and “just kind of working your way through.”

5.6.2 Community-Based Health Care

Although there are many challenges associated with rural health care and providing equitable access to services, there are also opportunities for health care that works with the strengths of the community. In his role as Director of Community-Based Care, Leo thinks a lot about that.

I think that there is still work to be done as far as how [health care] happens [in Provincetown]. But also, I think that there is a little space for some, creativity and what that looks like and how those services can be offered…. There are some pilot programs then that we can engage and hear about what other healthcare systems are doing … to see if they make sense within the communities that we serve.
Some of those unique programs in Provincetown include a community resource navigator based at the clinic who assesses the needs of patients and “plugs them in” to existing programs in the community that they may benefit. Additionally, there are prescriptions for fruits and vegetables at the farmers markets hosted and organized by Sustainable CAPE.

Some of those possibilities might be getting a food prescription instead of getting a prescription for medication. So that then maybe the doctor, instead of filling out a prescription for medication is filling out a prescription for fruits and vegetables from the local farmer’s market. Where then, the patient is able to go use a prescription to then get money, to get fruits and vegetables, as opposed to going to the pharmacy and getting pharmaceuticals.

He goes on to explain how they will support patients in using the produce they get while improving their overall nutrition.

Sometimes not knowing what to do with those fruits and vegetables, can put that food to waste. So, there'll be some nutritionists that are involved, that will give not only the suggestions and ideas and our recipes on how to cook, but we'll have five sessions throughout a 13-week period on nutrition, just in general, and ideas around how to prepare some of the produce that might not always be commonly known.

Another facet of the community-based health approach, the Community Resource Navigator program, which serves to connect families to other community institutions, is primarily grant funded. This is particularly significant to immigrant families because it is not bound by insurance restrictions or other federal and state reporting that come with state or insurance company funding. Undocumented families may seek to avoid such reporting, which decreases their access to care. The Community Resource Navigators work with the Dexter Keezer and Fleet Funds mentioned in this chapter, along with other organizations to go beyond health care and get food and housing assistance, approaching the issues families may be facing from a health perspective. For example, is the hypertension that an adult may be experiencing primarily medical, or is it a result of the stress related to securing housing? If the Navigators can
help a family secure affordable housing or, more likely, rental assistance, it may alleviate some of the stress resulting in better health outcomes.

5.6.3 COVID on Cape Cod

Any discussion of health care in the era of COVID would be incomplete if we did not discuss the effects that COVID had on the operations of the clinic, and the public health measures they took on in response to the crisis. Leo described the difficulties early on in the pandemic in trying to scale up operations with the existing staff to handle testing patients, then the processing of testing and later vaccinations, while still maintaining their regular case load. This was similar to the struggles faced in the U.S. in general, with the additional struggles that rural health care provides. He says they “stumbled along” for a time, but eventually developed systems and were able to effectively test and vaccinate.

One issue they did run into once vaccines were widely available was vaccine hesitancy among certain populations. Unsurprisingly, considering the interconnected nature of institutions in the area, they partnered with various institutions, especially churches to educate the community about the importance, efficacy and safety of the vaccine.

[We have been] working with the resources that we have within the health center collaborations, but also within the state department of public health resources to really put information out there as best we can in whatever language serves our community. Putting out languages, working with [a] congregation specifically to either do clinics or to provide information directly to the congregations in Jamaican Patois or in Spanish or in Brazilian Portuguese or in Haitian Creole or in whatever language then is needed within the populations that we serve. I mean, that's still a work in progress, but so far the church congregations have been really helpful in facilitating some of those relationships.

Official statistics for Barnstable County are not available on the public dashboards that house such information for other counties in Massachusetts, but anecdotally, and through conversations with Nurse Mary Beth and Leo, I have come to understand that overall, vaccination uptake has
been very high in Provincetown, but less high in the county in general. Outer Cape health continues to test and vaccinate through their clinic and in collaboration with institutions or private businesses, for example, going on site and providing vaccines all of the new summer staff at a restaurant if the owner requests it, regardless of their immigration status.

One positive development in the operations of Outer Cape Health in response to COVID has been the emergence of telehealth as a widely used tool. Leo says it pushed the adoption of telehealth forward a couple of years. “If it wasn't for COVID we probably, we would probably be two or three years out from doing any kind of telehealth stuff.” Now all behavioral health appointments are held remotely, and telehealth is an option for other types of appointments. It is generally beneficial to the community to have the option for telehealth appointments because it addresses several of the barriers to accessing care in Cape Cod. In an area where people live spread out, there is limited access to public transportation, and massive amounts of traffic on the single lane roads in the summer, telehealth has become a more convenient way for patients and doctors to meet.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter makes clear that there are real and significant challenges associated with living in Provincetown. The housing shortage, the cost of food, and the lack of year-round employment due to the tourist nature of the town make it difficult for all families, but especially immigrant families. One reason that immigrant families in particular struggle is because of their lack of knowledge about the myriad of institutions and resources available to help them. The aid that is available is primarily sourced through referral from a trusted organization like the school or a church, which then can put them in touch with these resource-rich institutions (Small, 2009). Since we have established that the school is the first, and maybe only, institutional contact many
newly arrived immigrant families make, the school’s role in helping immigrant families access resources is even more important.

This chapter has also demonstrated that there is a rich network of institutions providing resources to meet the basic needs of families. Because of the collaboration and communication between these institutions that address the similar needs from different angles or fill specific niches. There are a few reasons why aid in Provincetown is so comprehensive, things that make Provincetown unique. One is the available funding as a result of the wealthy vacationers and second homeowners who pay taxes and donate to the town, the other is the scale of the town makes things more manageable. Another theme that has emerged through these interviews is a deep respect for the dignity of the families that they serve.

5.7.1 The Wealth of the Community

Provincetown benefits from the fact that it is the a special place in the hearts of many wealthy vacationers and second home owners. The amount of expensive second homes in the area has worsened the housing crisis, but it also brings in large amounts of property tax that fund the school and other town entities. The towns also benefit from the generosity of it’s well off visitors in the form of donations. The Dexter Keezer and Fleet Funds are entirely funded by private donations. I asked Wendy if she thought that the nature of the towns as popular tourism destinations was important in their funding efforts.

We get a lot of second home owners who, donate. We've had checks come in from different foundations that we really don't know who the person is behind it or why we're getting that money but obviously it must be somebody connected to the town [through tourism].
Lisa also observed this phenomenon first hand noting that with many second home owners wintering in Provincetown there was more awareness among them about the needs of families on the cape, and more wealth to go towards community efforts at support.

They were doing some kind of like Toys for Tots drive at Stop and Shop. It was like overflowing. And I saw our neighbor from across the street, who's like a middle aged, a gay man who, I don't know what they did for business in Boston, but they are very well off. And [he] like just dropped like $2,000 into the Toys for Tots drive. And I was like, wow, that's gotta be different for the town… People are contributing to the community who would otherwise be checked out in their lives somewhere else.

5.7.2 Small Town Accountability

In a town where it seems that everybody knows everybody and your run into the same people every time you go to the supermarket the needs of specific families may be easier to address. The town librarian talks about how it is easier to track the impact one person or one institution can have.

Because there's really not that many people here, most of the time you can actually help people and fix it. 'Cause the pool is small, so you can see right away that what you're doing. You know, it's not a big city. So if you're helping just 20, well you're one person and you're helping 20 people, you know, you can keep track and know. I don't know. It's just, it's really very touching.

With this comes a more human approach to caring for our neighbors. While what many of these organizations do may not be scalable, in Provincetown it does seem to help some families. This sense of personal responsibility is one of the factors that makes Provincetown unique.

In *Unanticipated Gains*, Mario Small (2009) theorizes on the way that schools provide families with access to information and resources based on his research conducted in the context of childcare centers in New York City by connecting them to other resource-rich institutions. He theorized that being “embedded” in the correct institutions has socioeconomic and social-personal benefits for families, and that schools are one of these institutions. This chapter has
demonstrated that the school in Provincetown is a “correct” institution to provide access to information and resources to its families, and that in the case of immigrant families that role as a connecting or referring agent is even more important. In Provincetown there are myriad of resources available from many different types of institutions, discussed here and in the coming chapters, but in part because of the structure and size of the community, the school is integral in helping families to learn about and access those institutions and resources. Resources from the resource-rich institutions such as Outer Cape Health, the Fleet and Dexter Keezer Community Funds are accessed through referrals from the school.

5.7.3 Respecting Families

One thing that came up again and throughout this research is that the many institutions that provide aid to families are trying to do it in a way that respects families. Previously in this chapter I discussed the steps taken to reduce stigma from applying for SNAP, WIC or free lunch through the school. This sense of stigma or fear is not uncommon for immigrant families (Gonzales, 2016). Through this research I found that other organizations that provide access to food, especially the library and the church have specifically designed their services to be discreet and help families avoid the stigma of visiting a food pantry. At the Crop Swap fridge,

We don't actually know who is taking the produce. You know, there's nobody there to monitor it, to make sure people don't take too much to make sure people really need it. It's self monitored. Right? All I know is that we get a lot of free produce and people are consuming it.

The things that make these programs so great for families, like discretion, makes them hard to track as well. Since by design taking from these food banks is an anonymous process, it is difficult to track who specifically is accessing these resources. Because families come and go as they please to take food from Crop Swap fridge or the lawn of the UU Meeting House.
Reverend Kate said they don’t know who exactly uses the fridge but they think it is families based on the food taken and the interactions they have casually as they pass through the front lawn.

We only can track it as far as we run into people when we're coming and going, but we really don't have a way to, I mean, the whole point is that you wouldn't have to interact to access it. They have to restock it at least the three times a week. So, we know it's being heavily used and we've run into enough people to know kind of who's in general using it.

The trust and respect of the community, the people who need the food are the ones who are getting it shows the way these institutions really value the families they serve.
Chapter 6: Visual Research: Children and Place

This chapter and the following chapter will shift to discuss the experiences of children and the institutions they interact with while integrating in Provincetown. By understanding the places of significance for these children we are able to see where and how the natural and built environment impacts their integration experiences. These pictures also represent time spent with family and friends and activities and events supported by institutions which will be discussed in chapter seven. The visual data collected shows how children spend their time outside of school hours, both at leisure and involved in the town’s economy. “We can view community membership, then, as a feeling that one has invested part of themselves to become a member, earning the right to belong.” (Gonzalez, et al., 2020, p. 64) By showing how they participate in the community’s economy and social life they are showing their own investment in the community, which earns them the right to belong.

During the course of the photo elicitation interviews, the children spoke of places where they spend time with family and friends, on tennis courts, in parks, on the pier and at work, how to put a rubber band on a lobster claw and even how to avoid getting spit on by an alpaca. Within the wide variety of images and stories three major themes emerge from the compositional interpretation and the photo elicitation interviews. The first was the overwhelming presence and significance of the natural world in the photos and stories presented by the students. The second was the significance of the various shops and restaurants around town, particularly ones where family members were employed. Finally, the children expressed the significance of recreation and public recreational spaces, both in organized groups and informally, as a way to find belonging. This chapter will discuss each of those themes followed by a brief discussion of
general issues that arose during data analysis. These include the presence of the pandemic, the contrast between analyzing the visual content of the photographs and the interpretations that emerge from the photo elicitation interviews and also the limitations and possibilities of the photos not taken.

The photographs tell the story of where and how these children spend their time, outside of school. Place-based assimilation theories (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017) tell us that interaction with the natural and built environment are a significant component in the assimilation of immigrants in a new community. The photographs submitted by the children show what they consider important places. By understanding where and how these children interact with their environment we can begin to examine the how children find belonging in town. An analysis of the photographs and interviews has led two three emerging themes. The children spend their time out in nature, as participants in the tourist economy, or enjoying recreational opportunities.

6.1 The Natural World

Previous research with immigrant communities has shown that the rural environment can be a factor in integration and that many migrants feel connection to natural spaces (García, 2019; García & Schmalzbauer, 2017; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017). So, perhaps it is no surprise that nature in general, and the ocean specifically, played such a large role in the photo elicitation interviews, and thus in the lives of the students themselves. Half of all the photos submitted were focused on nature in some way, including trees, plants, animals, or water. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019) Provincetown is 45% water area, and of the land area, 73 percent is a part of the National Seashore. That means that a large majority of the space surrounding these young people is water or protected natural habitats. This combination of water and protected park land results in an urban-like density to the residential and commercial area, surrounded by
dunes, beaches, forests and bodies of water. The photos the children took in nature generally fell into two categories, photographs of natural places where time is spent with family and friends, or pictures taken to demonstrate the aesthetic beauty of town.

Most prevalent within these nature photos, is photos taken of the beach, or ocean such as can be seen in Figure 4 and Figure 5. Eighteen different photos depicted the beach, bay or open ocean. Perhaps this is because of the sheer volume of the waterfront. The town boasts 21.3 miles of coastline, both bay and open ocean, and the surrounding towns are filled with ponds, swamps and other natural areas. Nearly all of the children included photos of the beach and ocean in their collection. The two who did not, Kara and Erica, both included the ocean in their list when asked what they wished they could take a picture of, and both explained that they live a little too far to get there by themselves. When they talk about the beach and the ocean, they talk about time spent with family and friends, and also spotting whales, boating and commercial fishing.

![Figure 4: Water by David](image1)

![Figure 5: Beach by Lila](image2)

The children participate in extensive programming in school designed to get them outdoors and in touch with nature. Teachers use their own experiences to take the children cranberry picking and shell fishing. Local experts share their wisdom through school visits and field trips. For some, especially newly arrived families, this is their main introduction to the
natural environment of Provincetown, which is often very different from the landscapes they left behind in their home counties such as Mexico or Jamaica. To understand the relationship between this programming and the sense of belonging children feel in the natural environment, I interviewed the educational directors of the two most prominent institutions related to the environment, the Center for Coastal Studies and the National Seashore. Information from those interviews will be shared in Chapter 7.

6.1.1 Families in Nature

![Figure 6: Family Hike by Erica](image)

When they talk about time in nature, at the beach, near the pond, or on a hiking trail, the children talk about time spent with family. Erica’s pictures detail walks with her family on wooded trails, such as can be seen in Figure 6, through alpaca farms and down to a local pond. She describes the route there, the weather, and tadpoles that may get stuck to your feet when you are swimming. All of this she does with her family. They are the invisible context to each photo that she shows me. The one photo in the whole collection from all students that includes family members is Figure 6, taken of Erica and her brother, from behind, on a hike.
Similarly, Ellen photographs a series of places such as Figure 7 where she spends time with her mom, aunt and brother, near the water for whale watching, kayaking, swimming, hiking or eating breakfast.

Me and my family would go to this beach in the summer every day… me and my mom would get breakfast after dropping off my little brother at school and then eat and watch the ocean and the birds fly…It would be the winter, the spring, the summer. [In the] summer we go to the beach every day, but during the spring and winter, we just like sit in our car by the ocean.

It’s not just the kids who find family time in nature important. Erica’s mother, who was also interviewed for this project explains that when the family has free time they try to get outdoors. They especially appreciate time at the pond and the beach. They are learning to embrace the change of seasons as a part of the natural landscape too. “We appreciate, um, the change of seasons is something new for us. And I think it's beautiful Cape Cod has places we never see before in Puerto Rico.” She then details a list of places she tries to take the kids on days off: ponds, marshes, the ocean.

For Lisa, another mother, who moved to Cape Cod at the beginning of the pandemic from Southeast Asia, the easy access to nature was important for her and her young children (who
were too young to participate in the visual research component of this dissertation.) When they first arrived, they too found solace in nature.

I mean, thankfully this is such a great outdoor place. I mean, we could take [our kids] to the beach. We could take them to the Breakwater. We could take them to the dunes, [we] did a lot of like walking around.

She reports that they continue to spend time outdoors, visiting both the playgrounds in town, among other spaces, although they can now visit other indoor spaces like the library as COVID restrictions loosen.

6.1.2 The Economics of the Natural World: Tourism

While it is clear the children enjoy the nature for its own sake, swimming and hiking and playing with friends, they also realize that it is significant to the economic wellbeing of the community in general and their families in particular. David, from Mexico, the most recent arrival to Provincetown of the student photographers, took pictures almost exclusively in nature. They featured a particular park near the water where he admires a windmill, the water and boats, the shape of the trees and the open spaces. He also included pictures of a sunset and animal life found around his home such as these photos of a Rabbit, close up in Figure 8 and from a distance in Figure 9.

![Figure 8: Rabbit by David](image1)

![Figure 9: Habitat by David](image2)
When asked about the predominance of nature in his images he explained his goals for taking photos.

I plan[ned] to do a flora and fauna then as kind of my main theme. I want to show kindof the Provincetown places and the beautiful landscapes that it has and the views that you can get.

He goes on to explain it is important to him, and the community, “because thankfully it connects also the tourism, because that's what Provincetown is kind of known for too, because of their flora and fauna and their tourism that it has.” David’s mother works in the service industry. His extended family members, who have lived in town for many years and facilitated his entry, work as managers of one of the few year-round restaurants in town. Their livelihood depends on the tourists who come and spend money at these restaurants and hotels. The natural beauty of Provincetown is one of the factors that make it such a popular destination. David is aware of this relationship and chose to represent it in his photography.

6.2 Shops and Places of Employment: Belonging through Family Connections

As a tourist center, Provincetown’s main street, Commercial Street, is filled with numerous shops and restaurants catering to the wealthy vacationers from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. These shops do not typically carry the day-to-day necessities that the year-round families need. Instead, they sell t-shirts, chocolate genitalia, artwork and fancy throw pillows. Despite the fact that the content of these stores has little use for them, the children took many pictures of shops and restaurants around town. These shops constitute the built environment these photographers spend their time in, but upon analysis of the photo elicitation interviews it becomes clear why children are taking pictures of these shops. They are staffed by their family members. This is unsurprising given that most of the immigrant families come to Provincetown to work in the service industry in Provincetown. This involves work in shops, restaurants and
hotels. They are often recruited as the mother of Erika explains: “The owner of [a local chain of restaurants]… he goes to Puerto Rico for help and hire my husband. He is a chef.. he recruit him for a year round job from the beginning. Thank god.” This is typical of how the economic migrant families arrive in Provincetown. So, in this way, before these families ever set foot in Provincetown a part of their identity and their role in town is tied to the work they will perform and the service economy.

Figure 9: The Governor Bradford by Hanna  

Hanna’s photos are almost exclusively of shops and restaurants around town. She was born here to parents who were recruited to come to Provincetown from Jamaica. Her extended family network lives and works in the town. She had one picture of the beach, and another of the famous town monument, but the rest of her photo roll was comprised of images of shops and restaurants around town. The first picture she shows me is of the outside of a restaurant, shown in Figure 9. When asked to explain the significance of the photo she responds,

I chose it because, well, that's my home. And also it's a big part of my life, obviously, and most, almost all of my family work here…. some are waitresses, some are cooks. Um, one is a manager.
Figure 10 shows another one of her pictures is of a brightly painted store that sells clothing and gifts. “It's where my aunt works, so I go there a lot” Hanna explains “Sometimes I'll, um, help clean and I'll work like behind the register and I call people. Yeah. And I'll get paid a little bit.”

Twelve-year-old girls who live in town are not the target audience of either of these establishments, yet this is where Hanna finds belonging. Because her family members work here, she is granted access and status that she would not otherwise enjoy. In this way the work that adults do helps the entire family find a place in the town where they feel at home.

![Figure 10: Store by Hanna](image)

Ellen also highlights several places her mother has worked when she is sharing her photographs. Like Hanna she speaks with pride about her insider status at local establishments. In referring to Image 11 she says

> We go here pretty often. Cause my mom used to work there and my mom would like make me a drink that was I think it was called the Shirley temple. And like she used to have it when she worked there…and it's a really good restaurant.

As can be seen in this photo the restaurant is “closed for the season,” a common sign in the windows of Provincetown businesses from November to April when the tourists are largely missing. As the interview progressed, I learned it had actually been closed for the previous summer as well because of COVID and yet still this restaurant, which Ellen had not visited since
the summer before the pandemic, was significant enough to be included in the twelve photos she took.

Another one of Ellen’s photographs depicts a building that has “a lot of different stores,” that was included in photographs by three different students. For her this tourist trap with its fudge shop and souvenir stores was important because it represented another place her mother used to work. Ellen spent time there, and like Hanna with her aunt, helped her mother out.

When asked how she spent her time while her mother worked, she said,

sometimes she would let me like help, like get the change, to learn how to do change… Oh, I would have to help her close up and like, ‘cause you have to put everything that's outside back in.

It’s clear that many of the students spend time with family members at their places of employment. There are many explanations for this, and one is simply the need for child care. If all the adults are at work, the kids need to be too. Although the participants are now of an age where they may stay home unattended, and even taking care of younger siblings, it was not too long ago that they could not be left alone without an adult. Given the demands of the tourist season and the need to make all of the money to support a family year-round in just a few short months, all available family members typically work multiple jobs. Both Hanna and Ellen are the oldest children in their family and so, without older siblings to care for them it is unsurprising they have spent significant time in the retail environments of their families.

When asked if she intended to work in a similar job as her mother when she gets older, Ellen said “Yeah I hope so.” Perhaps with all these experiences helping out their family members while they work, it is not surprising that the interviews often included the employment prospects of the students, some of whom are planning to join the workforce very soon.
6.2.1 Employment of Their Own - A New Status

The children too seem eager to take their place in the commercial fabric of Provincetown. Although at the time of the interviews they were not old enough to legally work, several of them talked about getting a job in the coming summer. They displayed great pride in explaining their job prospects. When discussing his plans for the coming summer, Antonio tells me he will forgo his typical summer recreation plans at the West End Racing Club to join the tourism economy. “I have a job, many jobs, many.” He plans to do “Dog stuff. Dog sitting, dog walking.”. This is big business in town. Provincetown is known as a particularly dog friendly town, with many vacationers bringing their pets making this a lucrative and important hustle for this young man.

Although she shared with me her experiences assisting her aunt at work, Hanna will not be working with her family this summer. Instead, she is leveraging her personal connections to work for a local business woman with strong ties to the Jamaican community, even if she is not quite old enough. When asked if she would continue to help her Aunt out at her retail job she explains her alternate plans.

This summer I'll be working with [local business woman] Since I'm not 14, I won't be working on payroll. I'll just work there for a couple hours and then she'll pay me at the end of the day. I don’t know yet [what kind of work] I’ll be doing [at the food market]. Yeah I'm excited.

Lila also has a summer job, helping her father with his lobster fishing work. Figure 12 and Figure 13 show her work. “[They are]my dad's traps for like lobstering and I work with him during the summer. So those were like semi, like kind of, like my traps too.” Her job is to put the rubber bands around the claws of the lobsters her father catches. Even though sometimes it can be “really, really gruesome” the pride and sense of ownership she takes in her task, and her role in the family business is clear from her explanation.
Antonio, Hanna and Lila have all found ways to join the summer workforce in Provincetown. In this way they can contribute to the wellbeing of their families, earn some money and independence and assert themselves in their status as resident employees of Provincetown and active participants in the community through their function in the tourist economy. From a young age, residents of this town are aware of the tourist economy and the role their family plays in it. Gonzales (2016) writes about how when immigrant children can replace their master status of immigrant (Hughes, 1945) and take on the new status of “student,” in their new community which aids them in finding belonging as this new status supersedes their master status as immigrant. It follows, based on this data and this theoretical argument, that the young people described here are looking to take on a new status of “employee” in the tourist economy of the town, which they are very aware is the driving economic force. By joining the economy as an employee of a local shop or marketplace they are gaining the additional status of “employee” which can also aid in the process of finding belonging. For many of these families who were recruited to come work in Provincetown, their reason for living in Provincetown is
directly tied to the tourism economy. None of the children spoke about wanting to join the workforce to contribute financially to their family. They did not discuss money at all. Instead they discussed their future roll in the workforce as an identity they would take on, and a way they would fit into the workings of the town.

6.3 Recreation and Enrichment: Finding Belonging in Public Spaces

Outside of school, family responsibilities and potential economic roles, the student photographers did take time to participate in structured recreation offered by the school or various outside community-based institutions.

6.3.1 Recreational Programming

For younger children in Provincetown the recreation department, better known as “Rec,” provides after school-care, organized sports and community events such as the popular “trunk or treat” event on Halloween, when “all the big businesses in town sort of set up trick or treating” as described by one mother. Rec picks children up from school at the end of the day and walks with them up to the Rec building. Children have snacks, do their homework and play games, indoors and out. While Rec was not photographed the place and its programming were mentioned in several interviews.

The programming and events offered by Rec clearly structures the free time of younger kids in town, but the participants in this project have aged out of the program (“most of my friends don't go there anymore… now I’m too old”- Hanna) and they now have some options on how they will spend their time.

One option is afterschool clubs at the school. “We have incredible afterschool programs with the school. I did a walking club for [elementary school students],” offered the school nurse as an example. There are also art clubs, school sports, movie clubs, and school sports to name a
In addition to what is offered by the school, some institutions around town, such as the Provincetown Arts Association and Museum (PAAM), or the West End Racing Club, offer programming that the children take advantage of. The school also offers after school activities.

Nearly everyone I interviewed talks about the recreational programming they participate in during the school year or over the summer. Lillian speaks extensively about programming she has participated in at PAAM. Kara describes playing Rec soccer (and an injury she sustained there). Hanna talks about time playing on the school’s girls basketball team, and Antonio, a member of the school soccer team, was given the honor of coaching his peers during the Students vs. Teachers soccer game. Although they only arrived in Provincetown during the pandemic, the mother recently arrived from southeast Asia reports that her young children, ages four and six, have already participated in soccer and basketball with the Rec department. They have participated in art programming at PAAM and also an art club at the school.

In the summer, children have more time to spare, and childcare is needed while busy parents work. According to our participants, when they are not at work with their family members, the children divide their time between “Summer Rec,” (the summer program put on by the recreation department) and the West End Racing Club, “which is just kind of like the West
End Rec Club,” according to a community member I interviewed who also has children who participate in the recreational opportunities of Provincetown. It is notable that both Rec and the West End Racing Club are low to no cost for local kids, making it an affordable option for childcare and entertainment, and thus widely utilized. The West End Racing Club, a popular summer recreation opportunity for older children in town, allows the children to spend time in nature, commune with their local friends and meet other children visiting from out of town. Summer Rec takes the kids on local field trips and provides free lunch every day.

6.3.2 Recreation Spaces

In addition to taking advantage of the programming available to them in their leisure time, these children exert their independence and take advantage of the built environment and the many recreational spaces available in town. The built recreational environment of town includes two playgrounds, a skatepark, and most important of all, Motta Field. This is evidenced in their photographs by the several pictures of Motta Field.

Motta field holds a special place in these kids’ hearts. It has a soccer field, baseball diamond and has a tennis court. It also has benches and picnic tables. It is situated just up the
road from the school, adjacent to the cemetery and the nursing home. For Hanna it was the first picture she took. She talks about the daily use of the field.

Here we play sports. We hang out because … in recess this is the only place where we actually get to like, hang out with each other. And afterschool we'll come here. We'll play some soccer just hang out.

As the pandemic has pushed all activity outdoors, Motta field has become even more important. Antonio’s first photo was also from Motta field, focusing on the tennis court.

At the beginning of the pandemic, um, we would go there almost every weekend and we'd go play tennis. We would teach yourselves, I guess, sorta. It's at Motta field, one of my favorite places.

Antonio and his family used the built environment in town to cope with the lockdown of COVID-19. This became a favorite place of his, illustrating how the built environment can impact assimilation.

Its central location may play a role in its importance. Both Hanna and Antonio can walk there, alone, from their houses, because it is so close. However, even kids who don’t have regular access to the field think it is important. Kara did not photograph the field, because she could not get there on her own, but she listed it as an important place she would photograph if she could, even after recounting the story of spraining her knee during soccer practice there.

The soccer coach has also noticed how much time the kids spend on the field. He notes several kids pass through the field every day after school on their way home, even if they live in the opposite direction.

I think they know that they've gotten older, they explore it more too. That's where all their games were. That's where trunk or treat is... they do a lot of fun things there.

The coach also describes what would happen after school soccer practices, which are held on Motta Field, when the kids would want to spend extra time there.
Probably about seven or eight kids that would stay after practices a lot… I try to trust them. I would show them how to lock the gate now. Or the shed where you put all the soccer balls and at least talk about it, keep playing because they want it to.

Some of the photographers spend their free time in other spaces created and maintained by the recreation department as well. Antonio shared a picture of the skate park with me, shown in Figure 18. He says he visits often, but it is underutilized and often empty. David spends time in a park near his house afterschool, with his younger cousins or “sometimes I go reading over there, like outside. Sometimes I like to go outside and read so I can breathe fresh air.” There are two playgrounds, one at each end of town, which are popular destinations for students as well. In a densely populated town, where all available real estate is leveraged for the tourism industry and second homes for wealthy vacationers, it is unsurprising that local children find belonging in these protected, public, year-round spaces.

Members from many of the recreational community institutions mentioned here were interviewed for this project. The next chapter will discuss those institutions and the relationships they have with these families.
6.4 COVID: An Invisible Force

The pandemic loomed large in the narratives they created with their photo. “At the beginning of the pandemic” is a phrase that came up in multiple interviews as children described the ways that they passed time when the entire world was disrupted, maybe at the tennis court or biking down to the beach. There was also a nostalgia for things before the pandemic. Antonio misses sleepovers with friends from summer camps held in town. Erica recalls enjoying breakfast at a favorite café after church with her family. Using photographs, they were able to share the significant places in their lives and the way this has changed throughout the pandemic. This may explain why more than three-quarters of the pictures submitted as part of the project were taken outdoors. For everyone life has moved outdoors and Provincetown has much to offer these kids in outdoor spaces. The children in this project find belonging outdoors, perhaps because it is one of the only freely accessible spaces.

6.5 Looking Beyond the Obvious

As I clicked through the images with the students during their photo elicitation interviews, I was continually surprised by the significance of the images the children were presenting to me. Often the importance of the photo for the kids was not the most obvious object
that presents itself when analyzing the photographs for visual content. This can be demonstrated with an examination of Figure 19 above. Here, upon first examination Kara’s front door fills the entire frame. Upon first viewing this photo I assumed this picture of the door that leads to her home was taken as a representation of her home. However, when asked to explain the significance of the picture, Kara focused her explanation on the reflection that can be seen in the windows. “It's the door to the apartment building that I live in. And I took it because the reflection in the mirror looked pretty with the trees and the sunlight.” This photograph is a good reminder to look beyond the site of the image and look at the sites of production and audiencing (Rose, 2016) when analyzing visual data.

6.6 The Photos Not Taken

Sometimes the most fruitful question in the interview was “what picture would you take if you could go anywhere?” For Kara, who lives relatively far from the center of town, this was particularly true. She doesn't have a bicycle that works, although she owns two that she never rides “because the tires are flat. Well, not really flat but the chains like it makes noises when I ride it.” She and her grandmother, her primary care taker, are mostly dependent on the bus when her uncle is unavailable to drive them. All 144 of her pictures were taken entirely in her apartment complex. However, some of her longest, most descriptive responses during the interview came when I asked her what pictures she would take, if she could go anywhere. The list was long.

I would go to the school, the top of the monument to see the big view of the ocean, the beach about, and other buildings…. Um, there's like food places in town. I'd go to the docks, the wharf, the soccer field… There's also this place called Lobster Express and that's also near to the beach.
She was able to speak vividly about specific experiences that happened and tell stories of experiences with family and friends at Lobster Express, the wharf and many places in town. With this question I was attempting to address the limitations of mobility some kids faced. The answers to these questions closely aligned with other images and stories presented by their peers.

6.7 Conclusion

These photographs document the ways that children in Provincetown spend their free time. They spend time in the natural world, the economic landscape, and recreational institutions. These are all spaces the children can freely and comfortably access., examples of ways in which they interact with the natural and built environment of Provincetown (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017) With this access comes belonging in the larger community. The following chapter will discuss the institutions mentioned here, among others and the mechanisms that are in place to facilitate the connection between these kids, their families and the resources around them.
Chapter 7: Institutions that Enrich the Lives of Immigrant Students

I really appreciate how much the Provincetown teachers get their kids out into the community in general, to learn about the natural and social stuff, but also to do projects, you know, like not just learning, but making a difference too- Aleutia

I interviewed Aleutia about her role as an Education Supervisor with the Cape Cod National Seashore. However, she is also a mother to students who attend Provincetown schools, which she chose, in part because they are an International Baccalaureate school. She couldn’t help but interject how, as a parent, she appreciates the relationship her children have with the community, through school. In the previous chapter the children photographers showed us where they feel belonging through photographs and their stories. This chapter will further examine two of those themes, the natural world and enrichment activities, through the eyes of the institutions, and discuss the role the school has played in the children connecting with these institutions and the wider community. Often the school serves as a conduit for these kids, introducing them to the natural wonders around them through learning experiences or the possibility of an art club or sports team through during school or after school educational opportunities. The school also provides information about events and opportunities going on in the community directly to families.

The connection between families and the enrichment institutions in town does not always go smoothly as there are many barriers that prevent children from taking advantage of these opportunities that help them find belonging. The home situations of the children get in the way of their participation outside of school hours. The institutions also report difficulties in building and maintaining relationships with the children and their families. This chapter will discuss the institutions that work with the school to introduce the children to the natural environment, sports
and the arts and the types of programming they have available for kids to participate in during and after school. It will also discuss some of the barriers that came up during the interviews and potential solutions to some of these barriers.

Adolescence, the age of these student photographers, is a key time to consider the institutions they come in contact with in the community, because it is a time in their lives when they are beginning to engage with the wider community outside their immediate family and peer group (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). As they learn to interact with the wider world they are undergoing a socialization that can lead to integration within the community. This socialization and integration has been shown to increase the ability of young people to access resources within their community (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). While their parents would typically lead the interactions with institutions that meet basic needs that were discussed in chapter 5, we will see that young people are taking the lead within their family and interacting with what I am calling institutions that enrich, those that provide access to the types of resources and activities that go beyond basic needs but provide for participation in society that leads to belonging (Gonzales et al., 2020).

There are many institutions that work with the school to educate and enrich the lives of kids. They work during school hours by partnering with teachers and hosting field trips, provide clubs after school, and offer weekend, afterschool and summer programming. It is no accident that the children generally make first contact with these institutions through the school. The school is intentionally cultivating these relationships by hosting these institutions during school or putting families in touch with organizations that might benefit the kids. In the previous chapters we saw how many of the teachers at the school are actively involved in putting their students in touch with resources that fulfill basic needs. Rick prefers to operate in his role as an
educator and refer them to enrichment opportunities, and in the wake of COVID, educational remote opportunities.

It's usually more like academic programs or enrichment programs. If I see a kid showing a particular interest in something, I would try to connect them to maybe it's a technology program or, this year there've been so many different sort of zoom calls and information things to connect them to.

Most of the institutions children work with during the school day are local. Nancy explains “I just feel really strongly that the kids develop relationships with individuals and also institutions out in the community and events out in the community.” This practice is part of a long standing tradition of collaboration and mentorship between the school and the community.

7.1 A History of School and Community Connection

I have this long-time commitment to making use of all these people in these incredible institutions in our community and having our kids and in turn their families, become aware of these institutions.

Nancy, currently the fifth-grade teacher, has had roles teaching students from high school seniors down to pre-k, and with each grade she works with she draws on community institutions to support and extend student learning. There is a long and rich history of involvement between Provincetown Schools and its students and the local community. Various programs at the school over the years have put the students directly in touch with individuals and institutions around town as a part of culminating projects and what the students referred to as their “CoPro” (community project) class. These relationships provide connection between the school community and the wider community.

Starting in the 1990s, when there was still a high school, the school began a program in which high school seniors would be paired with a mentor in the community as a part of their senior project. The mentorship program came up in interviews of several of the longer-term staff
when discussing the ways that the community supports the school community. The high school has closed and now eighth graders and fifth graders participate in a similar culminating project completed while paired with a mentor.

Nancy in particular goes to great lengths to connect her students, and those in other grades, to community-based institutions that provide enrichment during school hours in conjunction with the taught curriculum, and often after school too. Often these partnerships with, for example, the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC), which will be discussed in this chapter, culminate in a showcase event in which families and the public are invited to the FAWC to view a display or presentation of student work. These events are important in regards to families finding belonging.

It’s really a way of getting families into these places, but also seeing their children be held up by this community. People are saying, ‘wow, these kids are doing great work. They’re doing some really interesting things.’

Some of the more enduring and recent partnerships with community-based institutions are unsurprising considering the visual responses of the students. The Center for Coastal Studies and the rangers of the National Seashore do a variety of programs with the school intended to get children out into their natural environment. Art institutions as well, such as PAAM and the Fine Arts Work Center provide during and after school enrichment for students. The sports programs provided by the recreation department and the after school are yet another outlet for kids that reach a wide range of audiences. The Universalist Unitarian Meeting House has brought racial justice work to an increasingly diverse student body in a primarily white town.

One particular recent event that came up in multiple interviews typifies the kinds of relationships that come from these projects. Three young fifth graders, of Jamaican and Chinese dissent, decided to focus their exhibition project, which is the culminating experience of the
Primary Years Program, chose to focus on issues of women of color. They were partnered by their teacher with mentors in the community to discuss issues of civil rights and activism and wanted to get directly involved in activism by leading a march for the rights of women of color. Although they were not allowed to host their own march in town (the police chief declined their request because of a lack of staff to cover a march on an already busy tourism weekend.) They joined in the inaugural Juneteeth event put on by several of the community groups, including the Provincetown Monument Museum, the Racial Justice League of the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, and the local theater company. They read excerpts from Amanda Gorman’s poem, “The Hill We Climb,” which was read at the inauguration of President Biden.

And they were the hits at this Juneteenth event up at the monument museum. You know, there were drag Queens up there from Fire Island who are big activists in their community. There was the gentleman [name concealed] who's part of the theater company in Provincetown who also does a lot with people of color, So it's a lot with people and people of color in the community, [Name Concealed] from the UU church was there too… [The girls] were treated like royalty at this event. …[they said] we're going to be down in front of town hall. And if you want to be part of our conversation, come on down and we'll hand the mic over to you. So, two guys from this event show up with a copy of the Amanda Gorman book for each of them. You know, they were just so impressed with these young girls that they had done this and they had this voice. Then people took the mic for a while and we took a lot of pictures and it turned out beautifully.

This story, told by Nancy, demonstrates several key points when considering the way institutions can help children find belonging in town. These young girls were empowered to be an active part of the community as a part of their education at the school and the relationships they formed through that. They partnered with multiple organizations to be a part of a community event, and the reception they received was warm and supportive.

7.2 The Natural Environment: Institutional Exposure

The Cape is one of the most abundant Marine ecosystems in the entire world. I'd say it's probably in the top ten, fifteen places in the world, what we have around us right now. And now we have, great whites now. Like that's only increasing how amazing it is out
there. You know, this is a place where we have one of the rarest animals on earth [Right Whales]. Like literally one of the rarest animal species on our planet and we get more, we get 65 to 70% of them come to our waters and you can see them. I've seen them 20 yards from shore, you know? … There's 300 [right whales] left [in the world] and, you can see a hundred on a day. Like literally you can go out on a beach and see a hundred….. I tell these kids is, 'you know, any day of the year, you have the possibility of going down to a beach and seeing a whale, a shark, numerous types of seabirds, like every day of the year.’

Jesse, the Marine Education Director at the Center for Coastal Studies is very enthusiastic about the global importance of the marine environment that surrounds Provincetown and how lucky he and the students are to live near it. The land environment of the National Seashore in Provincetown is no less important for these students according to Aleutia, the Supervisor of Interpretation and Education at the Cape Cod National Sea Shore.

That is one of the things that parks excel at is that they have the authentic goods. You know, they have this totally extent ecosystem with all the ecological processes still happening. That you can see and talk about and explore. They have the actual whaling captains house that you can see through the look out where you'd see them spotting whale, you know, like we have these amazing resources that kids can see in person and explore in person.

While it is the job of Jesse and Aleutia to be enthusiastic about the natural environment in Provincetown, and the opportunities that they provide for the kids, it is clear from the previous chapter that the children of Provincetown also value the natural environment. For kids from local families, engaging with nature, going out in a boat or picking beach plumbs and wild cranberries, is second nature. But for children who come from other countries, the nature in Provincetown is unfamiliar and can seem unfriendly. For these students their first and primary exposure to nature in Provincetown comes from their experiences with the Cape Cod National Sea Shore and the Center for Coastal Studies during school hours as a part of their studies.
7.2.1 The Cape Cod National Seashore

Because of the strong interest in the marine and natural environment of Provincetown expressed by the students I reached out to the Cape Cod National Seashore (CCNS) for an interview. I was put in touch with Aleutia, the Supervisor of Interpretation and Education in the region for the CCNS, which is part of the National Park Service. She is responsible for things like the Visitors Centers and education programming for the public within the park, but she also oversees the education work the rangers do with Provincetown Schools. This typically comes in two forms, in class visits and field trips, with field trips being much more common recently because of COVID restrictions at the school and staffing limitations within the park. They primarily host science and nature-based field trips but can also teach the children about the cultural history of the area, such as the history of whaling. The children go out to one of the many national park sites with their class for a guided experience in nature. Kindergarteners count horseshoe crabs, second graders sample fresh water looking for insects and other small living things. These field trips get the kids out in nature, usually only a mile or two from the school.

CCNS works with other institutions besides the school as well. During the summer they partner with local libraries to host a story walk, where a story is broken down by pages which are mounted on signs and put along a trail for families to follow. “So, you're reading a book, but you're doing it as you're hiking.” They also partner with different organizations to schedule programming in the summer. This includes immigrant organizations through churches and the community college further up cape, but they struggle to reach the immigrant community in Cape Cod.
One of the park rangers on for CCNS has a long history of working closely with the schools and mentoring individual students as they work on culminating projects as was discussed in the previous section. One of his most recent mentorships was with a student from Honduras, coincidentally the oldest son in the family which was discussed previously in the context of the housing crisis.

[The ranger] worked with [the Hernandez boy] more recently in an eighth-grade project because [the Hernandez boy] was expressing interest in the natural environment and just thought it was beautiful. And [the ranger] paints a lot of the environment and he and [the Hernandez boy] teamed up and made this beautiful billboard, like version of a salt marsh. Mentorships such as this allow students to explore their interests in the natural world in a way they probably wouldn’t with their families, in part because their families don’t have the local knowledge of the environment, in part because they have just recently arrived. This park ranger was working on his own time but he was able to use his skills and resources as part of the CCNS to enrich the life of this young man.

7.2.2 Center for Coastal Studies

The Center for Coastal Studies, another institution in the community that gets children out in nature, is located just across the parking lot from Provincetown Schools. The Center’s core mission consists of research, conservation and education related to the marine environment. Jesse, the Marine Education Director’s primary contact with the school and students is through a water quality testing program that he does with fifth graders in Provincetown and other area elementary schools. Although he works mostly with the fifth graders, he has worked with every grade at Provincetown Schools throughout his 12 years with the center but through various special projects. In addition, they run a summer camp that is widely attended by “local kids,” but most of them are from Truro, the neighboring town, not Provincetown.
The purpose of the water quality testing program that he does with fifth graders across the Outer Cape is to get kids outside and exposed to the marine environment in their backyard, while teaching some science.

It was a program designed specifically to get them out on the water, to the islands. And so I thought, ‘oh, this is a good hook.’ Well, let's look at water quality because it's something that the center does. It's to get the kids to do a little, to get out there, to get outside. One, to do some, to take scientific, to learn about, you know, the scientific process and monitoring and things like that. But really what's behind it is I want kids to, and I try to stress this point, I really was one behind is the, for the kids to realize like how much is actually around where they live. The getting them outside is one thing, just getting out of the classroom, you know, doing some science. But for me, the real important part is getting them thinking about how much is actually out there and, and what kind of place they actually live in.

The water testing program happens twice a year for students in several neighboring towns, but Jesse meets with the students in Provincetown monthly, enabling more exposure to the waterfront and connection with these kids.

During initial COVID lockdown, Jesse could no longer work with schools so he took his teaching online, onto Facebook live. His videos about nature on Cape Cod would typically receive 200-300 views, but one of his virtual whale watches was viewed thousands of times. At the end of his 11 weeks of virtual Facebook live education he had a total of 30,000 views. The most popular video was actually the only video made in Spanish. It was made by a member of the Center who was from Mexico. She translated Ibis, a children’s book put out by the Center that tells the true story of a whale who was entangled in fishing lines multiple times. The Center worked closely with this whale and her skeleton is a part of the permanent exhibition on display in Provincetown.
7.2.3 Dune Shack Field Trips and the Peaked Hill Trust

One unique experience that kids in the Outer Cape get to experience is spending the night in a dune shack. The dune shacks are primitive shacks with no electricity or running water, within the protected land of CCNS and the Peaked Hill Preservation trust. They are historic shacks, protected by the trust, and nothing else can be built there. Accessible only by foot, or with a ride from a specially permitted vehicle that can drive in the soft sand of the dunes, these remote shacks provide highly sought after residencies for artists. Each fall the local schools are gifted a week of time to spend in the shacks. Provincetown Schools has historically divided this up into overnight stays for interested middle schoolers. These kids hike out after school, spend the afternoon and evening exploring the dunes and preparing their supper with a propane stove by kerosene light, spend the night, wake up, clean up the house, pump water from the well to replace what they drank and hike back out in time for school in the morning. I was fortunate enough to chaperone several field trips, including the first trip for the Hernandez boy who did the partnership with the park ranger described a few pages ago, the trip where he fell in love with the landscape out there. For these kids it is an incredible experience to get out into the space and the quiet. They can pick some beach plumbs, watch the seals and spend time with their friends out in the dunes. Nancy typically facilitates those trips and makes sure that the students use the experience to develop connections with both people and place while they are out there.

What I love about when I was doing it in the eighth grade is that the eighth graders, would actually get involved in really in-depth day-long service projects with Peaked Hill trust, with the Dune Shack folks or other entities. But that's one, that's one of my favorite examples, you know, it was so the kids would get exposed to who are the stewards of this place, where we live.
7.2.4 Repeated Exposure to the Natural Environment

The natural environment, as beautiful as it is, is foreign to families who arrive from Jamaica or Honduras or Mexico. Some have come from a city, or the mountains, and so the new and very water centric natural environment can be intimidating to children and adults alike. Even though Jamaica is an island nation, many students who move to Provincetown don’t know how to swim when they arrive. They attend the Rec field trips to the beach wearing life jackets on the sand. Jesse from coastal studies noticed that some students are terrified to go down on the docks to do the water purity testing. “It's always Jamaican kids who are the ones who are, and it's usually the girls who are the ones that scared to go down [the gang plank onto the docks.]”

The unfamiliarity with the environment leads to fear. A constant exposure, in a safe and structured way, to the environment can help these students to overcome those fears and find connection to nature. Kara, one of the student photographers was uncomfortable in nature and unsure how to act on field trips to the CCNS when I had her as a second grader, and she was newly arrived in Provincetown from Jamaica. Several years later as a seventh grader she has focused her photography on plant life. “So I like nature and stuff. That's why I'm making a documentary and taking photos of trees and plants.”

Jill, the ESP at the school has noticed that newly arrived students are uncomfortable in nature or near the water. She also feels strongly that part of the role of the school is to expose the children to various aspects of the Provincetown environment so that they can become comfortable.

I feel like the longer they're here, the better it gets for them. Like they were more comfortable here and they may be like, actually go out and pick up a clam rake and take some clams for dinner or go take a walk on the national seashore, meet some, park rangers or things like that. I feel like the more time they spend here, is truly like making
them adapt better to living here in this comfortable place..... So I think the more we expose them to different things, the more comfortable they feel.

One particular Jamaican student comes to mind when she thinks of a student who has emerged into the environment. I had this student as a second grader, and Jill was the ESP who worked most closely with him. Whenever she asked him what he did after school or on the weekends he would talk about video games and YouTube videos and she would encourage him to go outside. That young man is now a ninth grader. By the time he was in eighth grade he took advantage of what the school had to offer.

His last year here, he just took advantage of things. Like he would always rather go home and just stay inside. I feel like the more we exposed him to the world where he was pushed a little bit to adapt, I guess that's the best word I can come up with. But I feel like he sticks out in my mind as far as opening up and feeling comfortable here...Like for a long time, he wouldn't go to the dune shacks with us and is more worried about that being safe and you know, it's that culture I think they came from. And finally, he just came and really enjoyed it and [his mother] was really happy that he actually wanted to go and [his mother] felt comfortable sending him.

Jill continues on to explain how being able to fit in with the natural environment is a part of being in town. After a while they fit in. “There've been a lot of families who have been here for a long time now. And they seem like the part of the community now.”

7.3 In School Enrichment and After School Programming

“There is a lot of opportunity for young people, but it's not necessarily highly accessible.”

Tessa, the curator of youth enrichment at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) describes the current landscape of youth enrichment programming, and the key issue related here, accessibility. The most accessible programming happens during or immediately after school. This section will discuss some of the key institutions that work with kids during and immediately after school. The following section will address the barriers that arise between families and enrichment institutions.
7.3.1 Recreation

The recreation department, or “Rec” is housed in the same building as the Early Learning Center (the public day care, preschool and kindergarten) in a building neighboring the main school building. They pick students up at the main school building every day at dismissal time to be brought next door for after school care. When students go to “Rec” after school they get a snack, homework help and time to play with their friends. They have organized sports teams for younger children, like soccer and basketball. In the summer they run a full day camp, which is the primary form of child care for most families. They also put on special programming, like the “Trunk or Treat” Halloween event. Lisa brought it up in her interview as an event she and her daughters particularly enjoyed. “They did a thing at Halloween, where they [had] all the big businesses in town sort of set up trick or treating in the, in Motta field, across from the school.”

Maria used to send her daughter to Rec, but she has outgrown the program. She plans to send her son, who is 5, next summer. She says it’s perfect for kids younger than 10. “They take them out on field trips. They go ice skating, They climb the monument, they do a lot of fun challenges. They do water games outside. It's really fun.”

For newly arrived families, Rec is one of the first places the school sends the families. Judy, the administrative assistant to the principal, gives every single new family a rec application “so that the kids can go to rec and get to know their peers before they even enter the school, if possible, so that they feel comfortable.” Helena, the ELL teacher also hooks up most families to Rec. Just that day before school she had been translating at a parent teacher conference for a Spanish speaking family.

One of the things that came about was that they have a need for summer rec. Well, where do you get the forms? How do you go about doing that? So I made sure that I wrote an email to the rec person so that they know that they can contact this, the mom of this child
and make sure that they have the paperwork that they need in order to apply for rec, to make sure that they sign up their child for afterschool [and] for Friday soccer.

The importance of Rec cannot be overestimated because it fills two important roles in the lives of immigrant families. They provide inexpensive childcare while parents are working (that even includes lunch in the summer). They also allow the children to establish relationships with their peers, explore the local area and participate in enrichment activities, and thus find belonging. Despite repeated requests I was unable to secure an interview with anyone in the Recreation Department, however, Rec came up in nearly every interview, with students, parents and school personnel, and works so closely with the school that I felt it was important to include Rec in this discussion.

7.3.2 Racial Justice Provincetown at the Universalist Unitarian Meeting House

In chapter five we heard about the food labyrinth and the informal food pantry on the front lawn of the UU. They also play host to Racial Justice Provincetown, an active organization in town that participates in many projects, including the Juneteenth event described earlier in this chapter. Racial Justice Provincetown has been involved with the school in a variety of capacities, including direct mentorship of students in their culminating projects. Their most significant involvement with the school was a special project they did by partnering with one class, beginning when they were in third grade and following them through middle school. Each year the class would learn about civil rights issues and the intersectionality with particular issues each year, such as food insecurity. This class created poetry that became banners and a book that was for sale, worked with the soup kitchen and made a quilt. This enduring relationship has been significant for the students. One student at the school referred me to talk to one of the leaders of Racial Justice Provincetown for this dissertation. He even put me in touch by email.
Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to connect to anyone specifically from Racial Justice Provincetown for an interview. Reverend Kate, from the UU, which hosts Racial Justice Provincetown was able to speak about the work they do.

7.3.3 Art Institutions

Provincetown is a town of artists. The main street is filled with galleries, the dune shacks are full of artists on residencies creating all summer long and the natural light and non-traditional character of the town draw artists of all proficiency levels to the cape. Two art institutions in particular partner with the school, the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC) and the Provincetown Arts Association and Museum (PAAM). By participating in art programs, during and after school, the children of Provincetown are taking part in a significant part of the cultural life of the town (Patterson, 2001). Art has also been shown to have positive effects for immigrant youth, providing them a way to express their own agency and contribute culturally to their school and community (Menjívar, 2006).

7.3.3.1 The Fine Arts Work Center. The FAWC is an artist residency program located in Provincetown. They see themselves and the education and experience their artists have as a resource for the town. The program is multifaceted with in person and virtual events for adults year-round, but of interest for this study is the artist residency fellowship and the work they do with the school community. Each winter FAWC hosts 10 visual artists and 10 writers for a residency fellowship in the heart of Provincetown. As a part of this program fellows can elect to get involved in the community and work with the school on a special project (for a small stipend). The executive director Sharon explains it well.

The fellows come in and they bring their body of work, as well as introduced the students to, to others, it really is very artist driven and artists led depending on their practice and their expertise to enhance curriculum, but I think maybe not in as traditional of a way as
some other institutions where there's a set curriculum that is taught regardless of who the facilitator is, this is really about centering the practice of the poet, the writer, or the visual artist, and having the students learn from them.

They partner with the art teacher, the language arts teacher or anyone else in the school who has a connection. My second-grade class once participated in a project with the FAWC in collaboration with the art teacher, in which the children created fantasy environments in connection with our science unit about habitats. This culminated in the Spring Showcase, an exhibition on a spring evening at the FAWC which displayed visual artwork from my class and another class of middle schoolers. Additionally other middle school students read poems they wrote in class under the guidance of a fellow. There were snacks and the weather was pleasant and the community of children, teachers, families and artists lingered in the gallery space and courtyard for several hours.

In addition to collaboration with the school, the FAWC is part of a rich collaboration of artistic institutions. They partner with PAAM consistently, and other small places in town such as a local bookstore or the cinema for special projects. They do not communicate directly with families but they seek to maintain community by informing faculty at the school of their exhibitions.

7.3.3.2 Provincetown Art Association and Museum. PAAM is an institution with a long history in Provincetown that stretches out over a hundred years. It is primarily a museum that only works with artists with an association to Cape Cod. The artists they exhibit don’t need to be from Cape Cod, but need to have some connection to the Cape. Figure 15 is a picture of the PAAM building in the previous chapter, taken by Lila. They work directly with the school and have a wide variety of programming for the youth of Cape Cod.
PAAM’s main collaboration with the schools, in Provincetown and the nearby towns, is the “Curator in the Schools” program. In that program, which partners with a different local school each year, a class visits the museum to learn about a specific artist, or artists and analyzes the work. The students then create their own artwork, in the style of the artist. This artwork is then displayed on the walls of the museum alongside that of the professional artists. This collaboration between the school and the museum typically lasts several weeks and the students visit the museum twice, during school hours, with their teachers and class. One of my second grade classes was lucky enough to participate in the program, and the evening exhibition, prepared with all the seriousness of a formal gallery opening, complete with programs and snacks, had near perfect attendance from families. The event was even covered by the local newspaper (Ward, 2015).

PAAM’s Curator of Youth Education, Tessa, who will be quoted throughout this section, partners with the art teacher at the school to host art clubs at the school, as a part of the after school program. They began with a smaller club before COVID that worked with the middle school students. This club recently started again, this time for the primary students because Tessa noticed a lack of programming for them. They have 27 primary years students, along with some mentors from the middle school. This is a large group for such a small school. Tessa has a strong focus on culturally responsive programming, including in this after school club.

One of the things that was super awesome that came out of that program was some of the middle school students who go back and forth between Jamaica and Provincetown quite frequently, they wanted to pitch making a market day, which is like a holiday celebration in Jamaica. We started drafting like all these great plans to have a market day, then that was when COVID came. Two of them are now off to high school, but just last week I started talking to some of the now middle school three kiddos who were in that group about seeing if we can somehow get that off the ground between now and the end of the school year.
Tessa is also hosting a dance club at the school. Twenty students, mostly Jamaican have expressed interest in participating. At the time of our interview the start of the club had been delayed by an uptick in COVID cases, but it was scheduled to start in the following weeks.

I've been really trying to get a dance program going here because a tremendous amount of our students from Jamaica ask repeatedly if they can have dance class. [I’m] making sure that what is being offered is interesting and is really truly like open to everybody, and culturally responsive as well to what, what other people are interested in doing. So we're gonna have a dance program and the kids are gonna lead it. It will probably be really fun and make a lot of work.

In addition to their programming at the school, PAAM hosts enrichment programming for students outside of school. Their flagship program, Art Reach, is a six-month long Saturday school program that is

less about technique and less about coming to class, just for the sheer sake of making art as it was creating community, building opportunities. It's a youth development program truly.

The programming is free to make it as accessible as possible and youth from all over Cape Cod participate, including student photographer Lila. Some students in this program are referred by Outer Cape Health because they might be in need of programming like that for mental health reasons.

Tessa, who has young children, also noticed that there was a lack of programming for young children on the cape, so she started the Little Artists program during the COVID pandemic. This is entirely outdoor art programming on the weekend for young children. Lisa’s daughters participate and it has brought a lot of value to the family.

So that's how we first actually got to meet some other families. There was just no in-person events at all happening at the school…but once we met up with [Tessa’s] family and the kids were doing that Art program we started to meet a few more families.
In addition to filling a niche and providing enrichment for the kids, this weekend programming for young children is fostering community among families.

Tessa is very aware of the inequality on cape, and the tendency of an after-school art enrichment program to attract a certain type of student.

We try to make our programs as diverse as possible, and I don't just mean racially. I mean, in all ways, you know, at least try to make them feel like a welcome and space, safe space to anyone who has an interest in participating, we work tremendously with the schools on the outer Cape.

Tessa also thinks about what happens to the artists as they age out of the programs and need to start working and earning money for their family. PAAM has created employment opportunities for young people who can work as mentors for Art Reach.

[We have] one of the few youth employment opportunities on this side of the rotary [this far out on Cape Cod], in fact, we have students here who are … paid employees at the museum. They work with the Art Reach program. So they're typically late high school, early college age students. They get paid to be a part of this community to serve as mentors, be peer leaders. … And I expanded that into the summer. That has actually greatly increased students who are interested in participating in our youth employment program. I've gotten in fact, several inquiries lately from recent immigrant families to the Cape who are looking for work for their young people is different than some of the more typical work you can find on the Cape.

This employment opportunity is yet another example of the way after school enrichment programming can lead to opportunities for youth to find belonging as students find not only belonging with their peers but an employment opportunity and the advantages that come with adding museum employee to a resume.

7.3.3.3 Community Exhibitions. A quick glance at the Provincetown Schools website (Provincetown IB Schools, 2022) shows just how prevalent these connections between the school and art intuitions are. At the time of writing this chapter in February of 2022 there is currently work by Provincetown Students being exhibited in two public locations. Middle years students,
including one by project participant and photographer David, have self-portraits currently displayed alongside self-portraits by artists such as Robert Beauchamp, David Bethuel Jamieson and Jackson Lambert on display as part of an exhibition entitled “Creative Chaos” at PAAM, which is open to the public, four days a week. Additionally, another exhibition space in town is currently displaying an exhibition, “All the Good Stuff,” “inspired by social emotional ideas of empathy, love, self care, kindness” (Provincetown IB Schools, 2022) curated and created by students from multiple grades. Both of these exhibitions had opening receptions for families and the public and display student work for extended periods of time and these are not the only such opportunities this year for students at the school.

These collaboration with local arts institutions and the related events get families in the door of these institutions are significant for two reasons in the context of this dissertation. The fifth-grade teacher at the school explains it best,

It's really a way of getting families into these places, but also seeing their children be held up by this community. People are saying, wow, these kids are doing great work. They're doing some really interesting things.

By displaying children’s artwork on the walls in these spaces alongside the work of established artists, families are told they belong, and their work is important. Additionally, as evidenced in this chapter and others, members of the wider Provincetown community are eager to form connections with the students. By increasing the encounters between institutions and the students and their families, there are more opportunities for relationships to form.

7.3.4 School Sports

There are two sports programs children can participate in in Provincetown. For younger kids they can play soccer and basketball through the Recreation Program through fifth grade. Participation in recreation sports is part of the after-school care provided by Rec, discussed
earlier in this chapter. There is a small registration fee, and an orange t-shirt to wear while playing is included. The kids play games amongst themselves. When they enter middle school, they can play on the middle school teams which play against other middle schools in the area. There is a co-ed soccer team, two basketball teams, divided by gender and most recently, a cheerleading squad for the basketball games, which is coed.

Most middle school students participate in a sports team. Of the student photographers, Kara, Hanna, Iris, David, Antonio, Anna and Erika participated in at least one of the teams. Only Lila and Ellen did not. One reason for the popularity of the sports may be the low barrier to entry. For example, in soccer, there are no try outs, anyone who wants to can play. The coed nature of the team has even made it inviting for non-binary students. Additionally, uniforms are provided, including a jersey and shorts, which were purchased a few seasons ago with a donation from the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars), a local charitable organization. This too has its limits though. The coach had 26 players last year and 25 uniforms. He said he may have to cap the number of players next year just to keep them in their uniforms.

Twenty-six players would be a small number in many schools, but it is more than half of the middle school students there. I asked the coach why he thought so many kids were on the soccer team. Many of them have never played the sport and will regularly attend games and practices but don’t have a strong interest in playing the game.

It's definitely a social club. You know, it's an opportunity for them to socialize with kids that they're friends with. They do love the, the away game early dismissal…. And then it's the bus rides…. The kids will choose to ride on the bus on the way home and have their parents pick them up at…the drop-off spots… they love to be on the bus, we have a blast. They listen to music, we jump around, …And I think that's more what it becomes. It becomes a little bit of a social club. [Also] it's our only status. It's the only thing that people [in town] are talking about. So it's soccer and basketball, the two things everybody tries to do.
Whatever the motivation for joining the team, whether it is a desire to play soccer, wanting to spend time with friends, or wanting the status and attention that comes with public attendance of sporting events, all of these are helping children find community and belonging by being a part of the team and participating in a “community of practice” (Reed-Danahay, 2008).

### 7.4 Barriers Children and Families Face

At the local high school, I guess it almost never happens where a freshman is given an opportunity in the chorus to have a solo. And she was the only child of color in the whole chorus, which I guess is pretty hard [to get in the chorus]. There's a tryout and so on to get into that chorus. [At] the first concert in the fall, she had a little solo. [On the day of the concert] she was calling for a ride because, you know, the family didn't have a car and didn't have transportation. And the bus wasn't working at that time of year…. And I think while other families were all there and, [were] focused on the outfits and the dress, [more than] who was coming. She almost, wasn't able to attend and really didn't express that. So, we didn't know, you know, but she wound up somehow finding some parent of another student to get a ride so that she could go to that event. And I think that, that says something about the struggles, um, even with the success and even with the hard work. And it was just fortunate. It turned out she was able to go and perform. But up until minutes before she needed to leave her house, she wasn't sure if she was going to get there.

In this quote Marcia illustrates one of the barriers to involvement in enrichment activities some students face. The student in this story is a Jamaican high school student who moved from Jamaica to Provincetown when she was very young and attended Provincetown Schools all the way through until eighth grade. She has siblings who attend Provincetown Schools, including the young man mentioned earlier in this chapter who was finally brave enough to go to the Dune Shack in his eighth-grade year. She has maintained a close relationship with the teachers she worked with, even after she left. Upon graduation she moved on to the high school, which is located in Eastham and is a thirty-minute drive away. Because there is no high school in town, after eighth grade the students are bussed to and from Provincetown before and after school. There is the option for a second bus in the afternoon, after the conclusion of after school
activities, but for an evening event like a concert, there are no transportation options. For this young woman, the opportunity to perform in her first concert, with the honor of singing a solo as a freshman was almost lost because of transportation barriers.

This story illustrates one of the barriers that was identified by many adults interviewed for this project, transportation. This is intertwined with the other two primary barriers children face when participating in enrichment programming, lack of parental support, and the necessity to care for younger siblings while adults work. Tessa from PAAM has been grappling with transportation issues at Art Reach. Even though their programming is free, if students can’t get there, the free programming doesn’t matter.

The Provincetown School is quite diverse at the moment, for example, but one of the things that I've been kind of grappling with for the past three years is that that diversity doesn't translate to most youth programs [the students who participate are economically diverse but] they're predominantly white. When I'm at the school I get a lot of inquiry from students from a wide variety of backgrounds, but it starts to come into, um, there's transportation questions. … So it was a accessibility point out here. A lot of our families, particularly a lot of our immigrant families or a lot of our families who come primarily to work in the summer season. Many of them don't have transportation. And so [they were] running into a lot of roadblocks. If the program is free, it's open, it's accessible, but if you can't get here, then that's not accessible at all.

Wendy the client liaison for the funds also brought up transportation when talking about the challenges families face. They can (and do) help financially with registration fees and instrument rentals to participate in after school activities, but there are things they cannot buy. “Transportation and an adult in the family that can take the time to go, go to all these, you know, getting the kids to practice getting you know, the travel teams and all that.” Participation in afterschool activities requires a level of time commitment from an adult that some adults just can’t provide.
The soccer coach also commented on the lack of adult support that some of his students feel. I asked him if he felt that the immigrant communities were proportionally represented on his soccer team.

I do, in terms of being on the teams. I don't in terms of like family support because a lot of their families are working during those times, so they don't get to come to the games. And I do hear it a lot that they're disappointed that they don't get to come, but I don't know how to face that, that problem.

As I described in Chapter 4, several school staff members attend games and cheer, loudly, for their students who don't have parents in the stands. This doesn't replace parent attendance, but students do like to hear someone cheering their names.

Finally, a responsibility that often falls to immigrant youth is the necessity to care for younger siblings. With parents at work after school these middle schoolers become the primary care takers for their little brothers and sisters. They bring them home from school and manage their schedule. Both Coach Eric and Tessa from PAAM have observed this.

[One Jamaican young man] sometimes can't come to games because there's nobody to watch [his little brother.] But there were at least three games he had to miss because there was no one for [the brother and we didn't have enough space [to take the little brother on the bus] It was kinda tough.

Coach Eric was able to have his soccer player attend games at least some of the time, but Tessa was unable to run her program given the circumstances.

I tried to create a program that had a lot of interested high school students who were Jamaican, who would had a lot of attendance issues, 'cause they were taking care of younger siblings or picking up younger siblings after school.

Luckily for the youth of Provincetown, both Coach Eric and Tessa were creative in the ways they problem-solved for these youth to participate. Their solutions will be discussed in a following section.
7.5 Barriers Institutions Face Reaching Families

Getting in touch with families and parents is always a little bit harder [than reaching the children]. Unless I really see them a pickup or dismissal or whatever it's often feels like that is one of the hardest parts. Some of it has to do with accessibility to the internet, to phones, cell phones, things of that in the nature. But it's always interesting to me, it's not necessarily the case at school, but if it starts to come from an outside organization, it's like, there's less communication. (Tessa, PAAM)

There are also barriers that institutions face in trying to reach the immigrant youth of the area. Many of the external organizations interviewed discussed issues reaching and sustaining contact with the immigrant populations in town. These barriers center around identifying how to identify and communicate with immigrant families. Aleutia from CCNS has partnered with immigrant groups related to churches or the community college but she has had trouble making the same relationships in Provincetown. This is primarily because an organized community group doesn’t exist.

As I mentioned in a previous section, the families come into these institutions for school related events. And while there are some benefits to this, and sometimes relationships are formed, it doesn’t always translate to meaningful interactions between the family and community. In the case of PAAM it means the families don’t visit the museum except during student exhibitions.

[We know how to] get families in the door for school related events, but how to keep them coming back- unless we went out of our way to explicitly attempt to engage with a Jamaican artist, for example, or do something really drastic from the exhibition and gallery side.

There are clear and significant barriers on both sides of the family institution relationship. Luckily, in Provincetown there is no shortage of creativity and people willing to go above and beyond their expectations to solve the problems.
7.6 Possible Solutions for Families and Institutions

Some of the barriers to participation in enrichment activities, like registration or instrument rental fees can be addressed in a straightforward manner. The Dexter Keezer and Fleet Funds offer to pay those types of fees. PAAM and the School Sports teams are free for the students to participate. A visit to the national seashore doesn’t cost anything. But for some of the other barriers and meeting the needs of the immigrant students and allowing them to participate in these organizations requires some flexibility, creativity and willingness to bend the norms.

7.6.1 Transportation

At first, [the policy from the school] was “drop kids off in certain places.” You know, a couple of designated spots. If parents are there, [great], if not, the kids can walk. And at first, I thought that was a great idea. ‘Cause they're middle school kids. So, they're older. Until you get [to the drop off spot] and … and you see that it's late at night, it's dark, they’re in the middle of nowhere. So it turned out that I drove kids. I mean, I was a door-to-door service person, which put more on my end, but I didn't mind it because A, number one, I always made sure the kids went home safely and B, number two, I got to a lot of times to get parents and tell them what a great game they played and how much fun we had. And you started to build those connections with the families, which I think really helped me a lot because I built a lot of great connections with families because of soccer…. [But] we're not doing the individual drop-offs anymore. We really kind of asked the parents to help me out a little bit more. So they do meet me places, but I can't go say drop a kid off without a parent there. You know what I mean at night?

Even with Coach Eric’s sometimes door-to-door shuttle bus service home from away games there are still transportation gaps for students who participate in after school sports. Practice takes place immediately after school and ends in time for the late bus, one hour after dismissal. There is the above-mentioned bus to and from away games, but the school does not provide transportation home after home games, which end after the late bus has left for the day. They sometimes deal with this issue in the unorthodox way of having teachers give students a ride home in their personal vehicles.
We…live in a community where so many people will just offer to do that. I can't tell you many times Nancy's driven a kid home. So we do get very lucky. Transportation is, it could be an issue for us. Turns out not to be because so many people are just like willing to [drive kids home.]

PAAM also found that transportation was creating a barrier to participation to students who were interested. For students who wanted to participate in Art Reach, the six-month long Saturday school art program, they doubled their enrollment by renting a bus to pick up and drop off students.

One of the things that happened through the course of Art Reach was that we started renting a bus, a school bus from the Provincetown Schools, in fact. That has dramatically altered the way this program functions. ‘Cause we run a bus up and down the Cape on Saturdays. … So once the bus came into play, it, it almost doubled the amount of students. And right now our participant rosters stretches from Provincetown all the way up this year to Hyannis.

That bus increased accessibility for students outside of Provincetown, including a number of Spanish speaking immigrant youth. However, it did not have an effect on attendance of youth from inside Provincetown.

7.6.2 Caring for Siblings

Coach Eric and Tessa also found creative solutions for their would-be participants who needed to take care of younger siblings. They both, in their own way, found a way to include these young caretakers in their programming. Coach Eric invited the younger brother to join them at practice.

So we also came up with a deal that he would bring him to every practice. So [little brother] came to every single soccer practice and would just sit on the bench, run around, cause havoc. But it was the only way [big brother] was able to come. And it was really cool cause we had such a big team. We had a lot of kids that didn't really care about playing. It was more of a social thing. So they almost took over that like, ‘oh, I'll watch [little brother] I'll take care of [little brother].’ And it helped everybody out. And it allowed [big brother] to play which was great.
Tessa tried a different approach and created an entire program for the younger siblings so that their older siblings could participate.

So I tried to make a program that was essentially like a class for siblings so that these older students could come. It worked for a while. If COVID had not hit and everything had sort of like completely stopped operating that year, I think that was on the way to being like another avenue to allow kids who have to take care of their brothers and sisters after school to participate in after school programming.

This solution deserves another shot once the shutdowns of programming because of COVID subsides. Both of these solutions worked to allow the students who were involved to participate in the after-school activities. However, these solutions depend on the creativity of Coach Eric and Tessa, and the flexibility of things in Provincetown. More work would need to be done to create a more permanent and widespread solution to the problem created for kids who have to take care of their younger siblings.

7.6.3 Reaching Families through School

Contacting families through the school and bringing programming to the school whenever possible has been reported as most effective way to reach immigrant families. This was reported by students, parents, teachers and the organizations who have given it a try. After school clubs at the school have much better enrollment and attendance than programming out of school. “They are certainly more accessible in the sense that they're literally at school and they're literally right after school, so you don't go anywhere and you still have that late bus to take.”

The school is definitely the best way to communicate with families. There are already pre-established means of communication between the school and families, and the school serves as a trusted source of information. As mentioned in earlier chapters, school staff like Helena and Rick take it upon themselves to directly inform families in their care when a program might be interesting or useful to a student. The school also has its own translating services which they use
to translate documents from organizations like PAAM who only prepare their communications in English.

I've always felt better about [using the school’s translators] ‘cause the school's gonna do a tremendously better job translating something than we would, you know, attempting to do that in house.

For organizations struggling to reach the families, the best recommendation is to try and leverage the school and their communication network to get word out to families about what is available.

### 7.6.4 Families as a Resource

It should not be forgotten that the families themselves can be a resource that could help provide access to programming. Tessa is starting an after school dance club at the school. She has a background in dance and wants the kids to have the opportunity to dance. There has been a high level of interest from students. But, as this club is made up almost exclusively of Jamaican middle schoolers, boys and girls, she feels like it would be best to have help leading it.

I asked the girls last week, ‘do one of you have a sister, an auntie, like I, someone out in this town [that] can teach you dance?’ You know, I can facilitate a space for you to, and I can lead you through like X, Y, and Z. But I was like, ‘one of y'all has an older sister or a cousin or an older brother, … if you really want this dance program here and you wanna focus on this, a dance, then I'm not your best resource for that. You know, I can help us get there. it's almost like I just, I was like, you go ask, go ask your cousin’ … because I'm not, I'm not the one, you know, who should be leading west Indian dance class after school. So the kids should do it. They know it better than me. That's for sure. And I'm hoping, I'm hoping, that somebody wants to come as well. So that it's not just me being in charge of it, but we'll see.

### 7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed some of the many institutions that enrich the learning experiences of students at Provincetown Schools. The visual data presented in the previous chapter has shown that this type of after school enrichment and engagement with the natural environment help immigrant youth to feel at home in Provincetown, and as they learn to interact
with these institutions and the community in general they are integrating into the local community in a way that provides for belonging and helps them learn how they may access community-based resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Interviews with key actors in the institutions that provide enrichment to kids has shown that these institutions take their mission of enriching the lives of youth very seriously. However, there are complications and miscommunications that make it difficult for the families and institutions to connect.

It is important to understand the nature and challenges of the enrichment opportunities available to immigrant youth in Provincetown because it paints a fuller picture of their experience in Provincetown and has been identified as important by the children themselves. In examining the barriers that prevent children from participating in enrichment opportunities that are available to them and the potential solutions that have been tried in the community we again see a commitment of educators in the community to exceed expectations and help children with a ride home from school, offer creative forms of childcare, and support accessing institutions that bring them joy.

Many of the factors that make Provincetown unique and favorable to helping families that have been discussed in previous chapters apply here as well. The institutions are well funded because of the wealth of the community. This allows them to do things like hire buses for transportation of students or offer special programming. The teachers and educators in these enrichment institutions go above and beyond expectations. Similar levels of commitment can be found by educators in many settings, but actions like giving kids a ride to their door after a soccer game are not feasible in a large program. The small size of Provincetown makes it possible for institutions to look for solutions at the individual level and accommodate the needs
of children and their families in a way that might not be possible in an urban program. The small size of the community allows for a nimbleness in responding to problems.

Issues still exist, particularly around reaching and communicating with families about the opportunities in the community. The school has played a role and the institutions that communicate best with families, such as PAAM, work more closely with the school. Others, such as CCNS admit that communication is a challenge and may benefit from using the school to help promote, communicate and connect to their resources.
Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

The data presented in this dissertation paint a picture of a specific place and time in order to apply place-based assimilation theories to the lives and experiences of immigrant families in Provincetown, MA by examining the institutions that they interact with in order to access resources and integrate into the community. I first explained the context of reception for immigrant families specific to Provincetown schools, including the key people in place within the school and ways they try to support newcomer families. Next I identified some of the key struggles families face in Provincetown: food and housing insecurity and difficulty accessing healthcare. There are many institutions in town that assist families in supporting families and several of them were identified and described here. In the second part of the findings, I used photographic data from student photographers to identify important places in town that encourage their integration into the community. This led to an investigation into the institutions that provide enrichment to students and introduce them to the natural environment, an important and previously unexpected site of belonging.

8.1 A Network of Institutions

One key finding of this dissertation is the network formed by the institutions in Provincetown. When looking specifically at the context of reception for assimilation in Provincetown this is an important feature. The network of institutions is organically occurring and self-aware. It is not governed by a single town entity, but instead institutions in the town collaborate to leverage each other’s resources. They are also aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the other institutions in the community and are able to identify gaps in service that their particular institution may be able to address.
Figure 20: Institutional Network. Connections between institutions interviewed for this dissertation.

Figure 20 illustrates the relationships between all of the institutions interviewed for this dissertation. The school is positioned at the center of this figure because it collaborates, or connects families to, each of these resource-rich institutions in a way that benefits families, and the school community.
Figure 21: Expanded Institutional Network: This figure builds on Figure 20 to include any institutions mentioned in at least three interviews.

Figure 21 expands the network depicted in Figure 20 to include other institutions in the community that came up frequently in interviews throughout the data collection, but were not interviewed. The institutions included here were mentioned by at least three other interviews with families, students or institutional actors and are represented by diamonds. I tried to contact many of these institutions for interview, but was unable to reach them. This second, expanded network is visually dense and points to the multiple connections each institution in town forms with other institutions.
8.1.1 An Institutional Network Response to COVID 19

The town’s initial response to COVID is an excellent example of this multinetwork collaboration that leveraged the strengths of multiple institutions. Amy, the director at the public library participated in a meeting at the beginning of the lockdown facilitated by the health department that included many of the institutions included here.

The former health director set up this group meeting, with the nonprofit groups and the churches and the library to talk about what the needs were during the pandemic. It was really great ‘cause it got all of us in the rooms together and made a lot more connections. HOW [Helping Our Women] was there, Aids Support Group, all the churches, the COVID response team that the town or that some group started, the rec department, the COA [Council on Aging], you know, ‘ca there's some overlap. So it was good to know who was doing … that was cool.

While this particular collaboration was organized by a town office in response to the COVID crisis, it is another illustration of the multifaceted network in Provincetown.

8.2 Different Immigrant Populations

It is interesting to consider the dynamics of the specific immigrant groups. The Jamaican community in Provincetown is large and relatively settled with families staying for years at a time and children attending the school from start to finish. It is not unusual to see a restaurant kitchen staffed entirely by Jamaican men, and the same men, year after year. Families only began arriving from Honduras in the last seven or eight years and have struggled to find appropriate housing and anchor themselves in the community in the same way as the Jamaicans. While these families work together they do not have the same well established network to help them access social capital as the Jamaican families do. Families that arrive from other countries such as Mexico or Bulgaria are even more disadvantaged because they lack a rich network as well.
Because the Jamaican community is more established the institutions in town are more likely to tailor programming and services to them. PAAM has a few after school programs based on the interests of Jamaican students and has even talked about trying to increase attendance by bringing in a Jamaican artist to exhibit at the museum. The librarian and the Reverend from the UU both discussed keeping food on hand specifically for their Jamaican community, but not for other groups. At Sustainable CAPE they are actively pursuing Jamaican farmers, vendors, and ways to grow Jamaican crops. These institutions are doing their best to aid integration of Jamaican families, but this leaves other immigrant groups out.

None of the institutions interviewed regularly prepare communications in any language besides English. Outer Cape Health employs their own translators and PAAM uses the school’s translation service to reach Spanish speaking families, but other than that there is a lack of information available in languages other than English. The school’s website has translation functionality to display things in Spanish, but this is the only multi-lingual example I found in all of the digital ethnography I conducted of websites and social media posts. One of the community-institution leaders that I interviewed confessed that she does not even know which country the Spanish speaking families are from. Her children attend Provincetown schools and she asked me where her children’s peers were from. If you don’t know if or where these families come from it is hard to meet their needs.

The Jamaican population is more permanent, more visible, and more entrenched in Provincetown community culture. For this reason, the institutions are more aware of and more sensitive to their needs. When considering assimilation to the local mainstream (Alba & Nee, 2003) the Jamaican families have an advantage because they are a part of the local mainstream, even while remaining an underrepresented minority in the institutions in town.
8.3 Place-Based Assimilation

I know from experience it's scary at first it's difficult. But it goes quick. We learn to move along this place. People are very friendly. People here are very close to each other.-Maria

Life is not easy for families on the outer cape. Particularly those with limited resources and those afraid of persecution. However, as discussed here and previously, there are institutions and resources available to help them meet their basic needs. The data from the children has showed us that they still find belonging in this place, despite the challenges their families might face, and there are institutions to help students meet those needs.

The examination of the network of institutions and the efforts of the school has shown what community care for families can look like. However, there are several factors that are specific to this town that would make such a model difficult to scale and nearly impossible to replicate in an urban setting. As discussed in previous chapters the town has a unique structure due to its strong tourist economy. This provides economic benefit to the town, but also squeezes out affordable housing. It is politically liberal, and it’s history as a destination for LGBTQ families lends its social atmosphere towards acceptance. One point related to the placed based assimilation in Provincetown that has not been previously discussed is the effects of being such a small town has on the school community and operations, discussed below in terms of the teachers and the flexibility allowed by being small and remote.

8.3.1 Teachers

This study has shown the key role of teachers in the lives of immigrant students of Provincetown. The teachers described here are giving of their personal time and resources and making themselves available to students at all hours of the day. This can lead to wonderful,
meaningful relationships but it can also be taxing for teachers. The teachers I interviewed for this study have been there either for more than 20 years, or less than five. This is not a coincidence. Teachers either make it their life’s work there, as Maude described earlier saying “For 27 years or 28 years, I've felt like what's happening there first and then build other things in my life around it. So I felt very committed, not in a 24/7 way, but you know, it was my community,” or they burn out from the intense and very personal demands on their time and energies and move on.

8.3.2 Flexibility and Creativity

The geographic remoteness and small size of Provincetown lend themselves to creativity and flexibility that may not be found in other places, especially in places as tightly regulated as a U.S. public school. Some things that make the school a more personable and pleasant place for families, such as the chef being able to integrate international cuisine into the school lunches, are a result of the singularity of the school district in Provincetown. There are very specific state and federal guidelines that govern most of what goes on inside public schools. It is quite prescriptive leaving little room for professional discretion. However, in Provincetown, I have found, in my own personal experiences, observations, and interviews for this study there is a lack of oversight that may not force a strict adherence to the rules, but allows for more responsive teacher, cooking, or nursing.

Because there is only one cafeteria, or one second grade class, there is more freedom for the school personnel to make decisions based on the culture and context of the student body in front of them. When I was a second-grade teacher in Provincetown I was bound by the same curriculum set out by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in Massachusetts. My students were expected to meet the same benchmarks, and in future years
take the same standardized tests. However, I found a freedom in teaching in Provincetown that I would not have found in a larger district. For example, the Massachusetts second-grade curriculum calls for teaching an economic unit about producers and consumers. Because of the interests of my students I was able to go more deeply into food production and consumption with field trips to a cranberry bog to harvest local cranberries or a local pizza parlor to learn how to make pizza. Then, because the history of the arrival of the Pilgrims in Provincetown (who stopped off in Provincetown before their storied landing at Plymouth Rock) we were able to look historically into foods from the first Thanksgiving. Such flexibility and departure from the curriculum would not be tolerated in a district with multiple schools and with multiple second grade teachers in each school.

The chef talks about how he follows the federal nutritional guidelines. In larger school district this often leads to the use of prepackaged meals that are less delicious than what Chef Andrew provides.

you have standard nutrition guidelines, whole wheat amounts, sugar content, salt contents. I try to stick to them as much as possible with the tools that I am given but I only have a certain amount of suppliers...I do it with also with being creative. I think that's a big part of it. This sort of flexibility of the job, as much as it, as it entails. I do have creative flexibility and that just really makes it worth it.

While there are struggles with vendors, he also has the flexibility to be creative and serve his favorite Peruvian dish on his mother’s birthday every year or to serve Jamaican meat pies occasionally to the delight of the Jamaican students.

Nancy, the educator who currently works with the fifth graders, has deep connections to the community as described in the previous chapter. One organization she works with, Peaked Hill Trust, allows schools a week of time in one of the dune shacks in the National Seashore. Nancy had previously done projects with eighth graders out there, but now that she is working
with fifth grade, she took the special resources she had, and the curricular frameworks of fifth grade and made it work in a way that respected local culture.

I said, this is a fine way for us to begin working together, getting to know each other. It's a fine way of immersing ourselves, where we are in place in time in terms of our local history, our physical environment, our natural environment. Along the way, I was inviting sea shore rangers out to work with us and talk about why the dunes were important to them. And I would invite historians out to talk about why the dunes were important to them and artists [also].

These are just two examples of the kind of flexibility that enriches the lives of students and the school community and allows for the kind of responsive pedagogy that is more welcoming to immigrant children (Bartlett, 2005).

8.4 Tensions

All of this is not to say that Provincetown is completely open and supportive towards its immigrant families. There are plenty of members of the community, even year rounders or property owners, who don’t even know that the school exists. They incorrectly assume that when the High School closed a decade ago the entire school closed. They don’t know that there are more than 100 young people being educated in the old stone building in the middle of town. Plenty of white community members, visitors and permanent, have no idea of the size of the Jamaican population in town. My first second grade class when I was a teacher in Provincetown was 100% Jamaican. This fact never fails to amaze people when I share this, even those who know that the kitchens in town are largely staffed by Jamaican adults.

Provincetown’s remoteness attracts distinct communities who do not always collaborate in the ways described in this study, Tessa from PAAM, a town resident, mother of school children, and a scholar of cultural responsive pedagogy has been reflecting on this.

One of the things that Provincetown needs to do better on, (and is sort of working on in a slow way and for sure on doing better on) is owning its own microaggressions and
owning the splits between the various communities that do live here and represent our broader community.

8.5 Contribution to the Literature

This study contributes to the existing literature in a number of ways. First, it is a study of the immigrant experience in a rural setting. As discussed in the theoretical framework (García & Schmalzbauer, 2017), local context matters when studying immigration experiences and much of the research on immigrant communities is conducted in and around major cities, where large populations of immigrants live (see for example García, 2019; Gonzales, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999). By contrast, this research was conducted in a very small town with a year-round population of less than 3000 people with a significant immigrant population among school-aged children and their families. There are urban attributes to the town, such as it’s density, but it is in essence a rural town, far removed from the nearest hospital, major airport or governmental building. Studying the immigrant experience in this context is advantageous because in such a small town there is less variety in the institutions and resources available to all families.

Provincetown, in addition to being rural, is dominated by its physical, natural landscape. The children who participated in this dissertation have demonstrated that that is a significant factor in their lives and finding belonging. Neighborhood Effects, a branch of Sociology that examines the effects of the place on children is focused on the urban setting and the impact a neighborhood and a city have on the outcomes of youth (Sampson, 2012; Duneier, 2016; Sharkey & Faber, 2014; Deluca et al., 2016). This study extends that literature to look at the effects of place in a rural town with significant natural resources.

For a town with such a small population, Provincetown has a large budget, driven by the tourism economy that dominates the town throughout the summer and shoulder seasons and the
property taxes paid by second-home owners who own most of the (expensive) property in town. Thus, the community-based institutions are well funded allowing them to offer goods and services on a larger scale than may be available in more cash-strapped areas. In short, there are more resources to go around. Additionally, there is an extensive network of institutions in the town that exist to support struggling families, immigrants included. The community in Provincetown is a compassionate one, with the resources and nimbleness of a small town to make a change when they see a problem. Or, as the town Library Director puts it,

This is what's so cool about Provincetown, right? Is that something happens and the community gets upset and says we have to fix it and then they create a program to fix it. This availability of institutional capacity and willingness to help within the community allows for the study of the way immigrant families access resources when there are ample sources of aid. The struggle in this case for families to know about and be connected to these institutions and this depends on a referring agency like the school.

Additionally, because this study was formulated, researched and written in the wake of the arrival of COVID-19, the natural experiment created by the corona virus pandemic adds an additional layer of context, for families and institutions which will add to existing literature. There is great interest in understanding the effects of the changes, both temporary and enduring, of the disruptions caused in the wake of the pandemic, and this study identifies some of the changes that occurred in Provincetown, some of which were beneficial to families there.

8.5 Areas for Continuing and Future Research

There are still plenty of questions to be asked and answered in Provincetown. One part of the initial study proposal that I was not able to achieve due to limitations imposed by the remote nature of the research is to include the voices of more adult family members in this
narrative. I was unable to interview any Jamaican adult family members for this dissertation. As they are the largest immigrant group in town their absence is significant in this dissertation. In the future I will return to Provincetown and further this research by including family members.

It would also be an interesting contribution to the literature on place-based assimilation theories to repeat a similar study in another rural town, possibly on Cape Cod, to further theorize on the role of place and the natural environment in the assimilation process of other immigrant families.
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Farmer Helen & Farmer Donna from our Farmer-in-the-School program have some exciting news to share! We are feeling extra grateful as [image attached] [status update]. Facebook.


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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Families

The following semi-structured interview protocol was drafted based on Spradley’s (1979) guidance about ethnographic interviews. It is designed to be semi-structured with room for variation on the part of the interviewer and interviewee.

Tell me about your family. Who is in it?

When did your family come to Provincetown? Why did you come here?

What was your arrival in Provincetown like?

What is Provincetown like? What is it like to live there? (follow up: in the winter vs. in the summer)

Tell me about a typical day for your family. What do you do and where do you go? What are weekdays like? What are weekends like?

How has your daily life changed since the pandemic?

What has changed in the town since the start of the pandemic?

Describe your neighborhood for me (or the area around your house). What are some important or interesting things nearby?

Can you give me an example of a time you felt happy in Provincetown? What was happening, where were you?

Can you give an example of a place you would bring someone who was new to Provincetown? Why do they need to go there?

Describe your first visit to Provincetown Schools and the first day of classes.

Tell me about a recent event you attended at the school. What was the event and who attended?

Who are the people at the school that you are in contact with? How do you communicate with them?
Who are some of the important members of the community in your experience? Tell me about your experiences with them.

Could you tell me about some of your experiences with other families in Provincetown?

Do you visit [name the institutions selected for study]? What do you do there?

Where do you get information about things like child-care and housing?

What is the difference between the community in Provincetown and in other places you have lived?

Do you ever travel to [home country]? What is it like to visit and what is it like to return? Tell me about your last trip.
Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Community-Based Institutions

The following semi-structured interview protocol was drafted based on Spradley’s (1979) guidance about ethnographic interviews. These are general questions to be asked of all community-based institutions. Institution-Specific questions will be added for each interview.

Describe [name of community-based institution]

What is the mission of [name of community-based institution]?

Who is the target audience for your institutions?

Who are the community members who typically access [name of community-based institution]?

What is your role at [name of community-based institution]? What do you contribute/how do you take part in this institution?

What are your day-to-day responsibilities? How do those responsibilities serve families in the community?

Does your institution receive any federal or state funding for your mission? How do you use that funding?

Can you give me an example of a recent typical day at [name of community-based institution]?

Now can you give me about a recent unusual day at [name of community-based institution]?

How has your role and the mission of the institution changed since the beginning of the pandemic compared to life before COVID?

What do you do to make families feel welcome or “at home” at [name of community-based institution]?

What changes are in effect at your institutions since the pandemic started?

How do you stay in touch with families? Do you use social media, phone, advertising, something else?

What are your interactions with families like? Can you describe a few?
What language(s) do you use to interact with the families?

Do you keep track of who visits your institution? How and why do you do that?

I’m interested in the different types of families that access [Name of Community-based institution]. Can you tell me about some of the families that come to visit

Additional specific questions about each institution based on previous internet/social media/media research- talk about specific programs or events that have happened recently
Appendix C: Interview Protocol for School Personnel

The following semi-structured interview protocol was drafted based on Spradley’s (1979) guidance about ethnographic interviews.

How long have you worked at Provincetown Schools? Why did you apply to work here?

Can you describe your role for me at the school? What are your key responsibilities?

Has your role changed at all since the beginning of the pandemic?

Tell me about a typical day at school for you.

Describe the school community to me. What are the school staff like? What are the families like?

What responsibilities do you have related to state (or federal) guidelines? Are you required to do any sort of reporting?

What is your relationship with the classroom teachers? How do you work with and communicate with them?

Have you worked at any other schools? How does your role here compare to previous jobs?

What are your interactions like with the families? How often do they happen and in what capacity?

Can you describe what happens when a new family enters the school or enters your services? What steps do you take?

What community-based resources do you connect families with? How do you provide them with information or connections?

Tell me about a family you have worked closely with. You don’t need to identify the family, but tell me about why and how you worked with them.

What is an example of a school event that families have been present at recently? Can you describe it to me?