

BAY AREA COMMUNITY RESOURCES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY EVALUATION FINDINGS 2007-08 & 2008-09

PREPARED BY PUBLIC PROFIT LLC

ABSTRACT

The five projects of the Youth Development Industry provide high quality youth development services to at-risk youth in the San Francisco bay area. Available evidence suggests that member projects are meeting each of their four intended results: providing safe, productive and enjoyable activities; promoting positive peer and adult relationships; building participants' sense of self and the future; and encouraging participants' commitment to civic responsibility. YDI member projects can be strengthened further by expanding peer-to-peer learning opportunities for Project Directors and by leveraging additional resources through BACR to address unmet staff and youth needs. Ongoing evaluation activities can be improved by re-visiting Intended Results and Standards of Success and by refining participant surveys.

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About the Youth Development Industry

Bay Area Community Resources (BACR), founded in 1976, promotes the healthy development of individuals, families and communities through direct services, volunteerism and partnerships in the San Francisco Bay Area. BACR's diverse programs focus on:

- After School Programs
- Youth Development
- Alcohol and Drugs, Tobacco, and Mental Health
- National Service
- Community Health
- Fiscal Sponsorship

BACR's efforts are concentrated on three core components:

1. Providing direct services to promote healthy development.
2. Encouraging volunteers to provide service to their community, and
3. Building the capacity of youth and adults to effect change in their communities.

BACR organizes its programs into five "Industries" according to focus area. Industries are peer-to-peer learning groups that meet regularly to share best practices, to troubleshoot and pursue common professional development. Members of each Industry develop shared Intended Results, drawing from an agency-wide menu of outcomes, as part of a collaborative program monitoring process.

The Youth Development Industry (YDI) was formed in 2007, and includes five programs:

- Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids (CHALK), San Francisco
- Discovering the Realities of Our Community (DROC), Richmond
- The Marin Youth Center (The MYC), San Rafael
- New Perspectives, East Palo Alto
- Youth Support Program, Berkeley

The YDI programs share a common definition of youth development programming:

Reaching low-income youth living in high-risk neighborhoods, BACR youth development programs focus on increasing youth's ability to set and reach goals, improve relationships with family, adults, and peers, and learn to give back to their communities. Projects allow youth to receive additional academic support while being involved in activities that promote leadership and enrich their academic work. Programs provide a consistent message of high expectation for students to stay in school, graduate, and further their education or career. To ensure that services are accessible, programs and outreach activities are delivered in a range of school- and community-based settings. Youth development activities are youth-led, foster civic engagement, and promote community improvement.

Activities to promote youth development include:

- Recreation
- Training
- Life, job, technology and leadership skill building
- Employment
- Youth grant-making

- Mentorship
- Academic assistance
- Social awareness and change

Lead staff members from each of the five YDI projects meet quarterly to discuss issues of mutual interest. In the 2008-09 program year, quarterly meetings focused primarily on the implementation of the Industry-wide evaluation.

For the 2008-09 program year, the YDI adopted four common Intended Results and corresponding Standards of Success. These Results and Standards guide evaluation study.

Table One: Youth Development Industry Intended Results & Standards of Success

Intended Result	Standard of Success
1. Youth will participate in safe, enjoyable and productive activities	90% of youth will participate in safe enjoyable, productive activities
2. Youth will develop positive adult and peer relationships	75% improve peer and adult relationships
3. Youth will develop a positive sense of self and the future	70% of youth have positive sense of self and future
4. Youth will show a commitment to civic responsibility	70% of youth will feel a sense of commitment to civic responsibility

Overview of the Study

The Youth Development Industry released a Request for Proposals for an Industry-wide evaluation in spring 2008. Public Profit was selected by the review panel, and worked with YDI members from September 2008 through June 2009. Key evaluation team activities included:

- Comprehensive literature review regarding best practices in youth development programs.
- Review of project descriptions, surveys, and other data collection materials used by YDI projects.
- Mapping data collected in the 2007-08 program year to each of the four Intended Results.
- Conducting two rounds of site visits. The first round of visits was observationally-based, intended to provide the evaluators with a general sense of each program’s activities, youth population served, and environment. The second round of visits followed a more formal structure, and included activity observation and semi-structured interviews with project staff and youth participants. (See Appendix.)
- Developing common survey questions intended to allow each project to assess its progress toward Intended Results.
- Quarterly meetings with YDI projects.

The evaluation team explored a series of questions, which address the youth development-focused components of YDI individual programs and the effectiveness of the collaborative as a whole. At the request of the Industry, the questions were grouped by process (i.e. formative)

and outcome (i.e. summative) evaluation approach.

In order to address these questions, the evaluation team undertook the evaluation activities documented in Table Two.

Table Two: Evaluation Questions and Activities

Process Evaluation
<i>Evaluation question 1: How well do the stated activities and goals of each of the YDI projects address the four priority results?</i>
Map each program’s objectives and processes to the four priority results, based on existing documentation and stakeholder interviews, as well as through site observation and line staff focus groups.
<i>Evaluation question 2: To what extent do YDI programs’ existing evaluative activities allow measurement of program impact across the four priority results?</i>
Catalogue current data collection and reporting activities; provide written recommendations regarding streamlining and enhancement opportunities.
<i>Evaluation question 3: What progress has each YDI program made toward their process and output objectives?</i>
Document programs’ progress toward their process and service objectives based on existing documentation, site observation and line staff focus groups.
<i>Evaluation question 4: How does participation in the Youth Development Industry help member projects pursue the four priority results?</i>
Document the strengths and needs of the YDI collaborative and identify opportunities for peer-to-peer and cross-site mentoring and training based on attendance at YDI meetings, stakeholder interviews, and program evaluation.
<i>Evaluation question 5: What outcomes have YDI programs achieved in the last program year?</i>
Document participant outcomes based on YDI’s four priority results by leveraging existing data sources.
Based on participant outcomes findings, document YDI programs that have success in improving particular youth outcomes.
Outcome Evaluation
Through site visits and staff interviews, document the policies and practices at high-performing sites most closely aligned with improvements in priority results.

Project Profiles

YDI projects offer age-appropriate services that span the youth development spectrum, for youth in middle school (YSP) through young adulthood (CHALK). Though not all operating within the same geographic boundaries, YDI projects as a whole implement successful strategies to address current deficits in youth development assets. Together, YDI projects can and do exemplify the range of services and opportunities that youth across this age spectrum need to develop into successful and engaged students, employees and citizens.

The figure below presents summarized information about the mission and primary activities of each YDI project. Detailed descriptions of each of the five YDI projects are available in the Appendix.

Table Three: YDI Project Summaries

YDI Project	Mission	Activities That Support Intended Results			
		Safe, Enjoyable, Productive Activities	Positive Adult/Peer Relationships	Positive Sense of Self/Future	Commitment to Civic Responsibility
CHALK	To provide a range of youth services in San Francisco with a specific focus on transformative youth development and employment.	There are clear rules in place and ample training at CHALK, as well as diverse points of entry into the program. There are also a variety of jobs available for youth.	Youth and staff work in close proximity, which encourages relationship building; program staff have been promoted from within and have existing relationships with other youth and staff.	CHALK provides activities that promote ongoing skill development and career exploration opportunities, as well as a sense of achievement from work accomplished. CHALK also has in place TRAKS for goal setting.	Youth at CHALK are directly involved in shaping and operating the overall program. Job positions allow youth to engage in community service.
DROC	Youth activated, youth focused, and youth driven alcohol and other drugs prevention program that uses an Environmental Prevention model to focus on community organizing and social change activities surrounding the issue of drug and alcohol abuse.	DROC program has clear rules in place for youth and staff to abide by. The program also includes project-oriented, engaging activities.	Activities include ice breakers, activities to share, team-building activities, and multi-school field trips that promote positive adult and peer relationships.	Activities promote skill development such as public speaking and carrying out projects, goal setting, and sense of achievement through projects. Youth also participate in trips to colleges and job fairs.	Youth are encouraged to speak their mind and make choices about the program. DROC also has student job opportunities and implements school and community projects.

The MYC	To provide an inspiring space created by youth and adults, supporting the development of young people’s talents, potential, and leadership skills through the arts, technology, and community service.	The MYC provides clear rules, project-based learning, and a variety of engaging activities for youth.	Staff are intentional in modeling behavior that fosters youth getting to know one another and staff, such as introducing themselves to one another and built-in time for relationship building.	Youth participate in program activities that are project-based and that promote improved confidence, communication skills, and a sense of achievement.	Youth are involved in shaping the overall program. There are also youth staff positions and community projects that are open to youth.
New Perspectives	Advocacy, mentoring, life skills training, ATOD prevention education and enrichment activities for middle and high school aged youth through a combination of in-school, after-school, and summer programming. ¹	Safety is ensured throughout the entire program (including transportation to different activities to home) and the program offers a variety of activities for youth.	New Perspectives exhibits a clear mentorship relationship between youth and staff, and also participate in a set of common activities together.	Program activities promote youth exposure to college life and life outside of the local community. Activities also promote goal setting through different activities and projects, as well as promoting a sense of confidence and youth’s communication skills.	The program encourages youth to speak their mind about the program and activities.
YSP	To provide a nurturing environment where students thrive academically, socially, and behaviorally through enhanced mentoring and academic support.	At YSP, rules are in place for mentors, as well as parent permission needed.	The program focuses on relationships with adults, including devoted one-on-one time, two-way conversations, and individual and group activities.	Programs promote confidence, communication skills, exposure to college life, and improving grades.	Mentees express choice in monthly meetings and with mentor activities. Mentor and mentees also participate in projects to teach community service.

¹ Reflects revised program model developed in 2008-09.

Progress Toward Intended Results

In 2007-08, the YDI programs had not yet adopted common survey items, and results are therefore drawn from available participant and staff surveys. The evaluation team consolidated survey items by Intended Result based on current youth evaluation literature. That is, when a survey question that directly addressed an Intended Result was not available, similar measures were used as a proxy.

Results for the 2007-2008 year are presented in Table Four. For all but two indicators, programs were clearly meeting or exceeding the stated Standard of Success for the four Intended Results.

Table Four: 2007-08 Progress Toward Intended Results

Program	Applicable Survey Measure	Standard of Success Status
<i>90% of youth will participate in safe, enjoyable, productive activities</i>		
Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids	100% agreed that CHALK provided them with safe, enjoyable, and productive activities.	Met
	96% agreed that CHALK provides positive and meaningful experiences.	Met
Discovering the Reality of Our Community	100% agree that DROC provides an environment where there's not much risk of being physically hurt	Met
	57% to 100% of youth learned a variety of skills, and the highest share reporting that these were new skills were for developing an action plan, public speaking, assessing school/community, and carrying out a plan	Approaching/Met
	95% report that they have had the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning	Met
Marin Youth Center	91% of respondents agreed that the MYC provides safe, enjoyable, and productive activities.	Met
	100% of participants agreed that the MYC provided them with a positive and meaningful experience.	Met
New Perspectives	100% of participants were rated by staff as regularly contributing to group discussions or actively participating in activities.	Met
	100% of participants learned new thoughts or ideas, based on staff reports	Met
	100% of participants took initiative in activities, as rated by staff	Met
Youth Support Program	84% of youth mentees rate the program as "good"	Approaching

<i>75% of participating youth will (develop or) improve peer and adult relationships</i>		
Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids	92% of program participants agreed that CHALK provides them with positive adult and peer relationships	Met
Discovering the Reality of Our Community	96% reported that the program provides opportunities to build new friendships.	Met
	93% agreed that the program gives opportunities for young people to interact with adults in a meaningful way.	Met
Marin Youth Center	91% of MYC participants report that youth at the MYC care about them.	Met
	All respondents agreed that the adults at the MYC care about them.	Met
New Perspectives	Staff report that all participants have a connection with at least one other student in the group.	Met
	All participants show a connection with at least one adult in the program, according to staff.	Met
	All participants learned new ways to interact, especially minimizing conflict, according to staff reports.	Met
Youth Support Program	85% of mentors report that their relationship with their mentee grew over the course of the program year.	Met
<i>70% of participating youth have (or are developing) a positive sense of self and future</i>		
Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids	89% of participants report that they feel more positive about their future since attending CHALK.	Met
	88% report that CHALK has helped them to set and reach goals.	Met
	92% of participants report that they are enrolled or plan to enroll in college or another form of post-secondary education.	Met
Discovering the Reality of Our Community	96% of participants report that they learned skills for carrying out a plan.	Met
	92% report that they are more likely to pursue post-secondary education as a result of their involvement in DROC.	Met

Marin Youth Center	91% report feeling more positive about their future since coming to the MYC.	Met
	91% of respondents agreed that the MYC has helped them improve in my ability to set and reach goals.	Met
	All respondents report that they are enrolled or plan on enrolling in college or another form of higher education.	Met
New Perspectives	Staff report that all participants frame issues in a positive way, instead of in an "I can't do that" attitude.	Met
	Staff report that all participants set and achieve goals.	Met
Youth Support Program	96% of mentees reported improvements in their self-esteem over the course of the school year through pre/post surveys.	Met
	92% of mentees reported positive attitudes toward learning, teachers, and peers in pre/post surveys.	Met
<i>70% of youth will feel a sense of commitment to civic responsibility.</i>		
Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids	92% of participants agree that they have meaningful opportunities to lead at CHALK.	Met
	73% plan to continue 'community work' after working at CHALK.	Met
Discovering the Reality of Our Community	95% of participants report that they learn about ways that youth can take action in their community.	Met
	96% report that, as a result of DROC, they want to take action in their community.	Met
	92% agreed that DROC helped to create some kind of positive change in the community.	Met
Marin Youth Center	91% of respondents agree with the statement: "I am given 'meaningful opportunities to lead' at the MYC."	Met
	91% of MYC participants report that they have the skills and support to contribute to the community.	Met
	91% of respondents plan on continuing with community work after leaving the MYC.	Met

New Perspectives	100% of participants were rated by staff as “satisfactory” or “good” at taking on responsibilities in the group.	Met
	100% of participants were rated by staff as “satisfactory” or “good” at having learned some thing about how to make a contribution to the community.	Met
	100% of participants were rated by staff as “satisfactory” or “good” at being positively involved in the community.	Met
Youth Support Program	65% of mentees participated in community service activities.	Approaching

In spring 2009, the evaluation team drafted common survey items for each Intended Result to better allow the YDI programs to track their progress toward their shared Standards of Success. (See the Appendix.)

Available evidence suggests that four of YDI programs are approaching or meeting each of the four Intended Results² – as described in Table Five. YDI project participants were particularly positive about their skill and knowledge growth, their relationships with adult staff, ability to exercise influence in the project, and interest in continuing community service.

Contextual factors may have influenced some lower-than-target ratings: YSP survey respondents are students at UC Berkeley, and so likely already have strong goal setting skills and vision for themselves in the future. CHALK is a youth employment program with a strong focus on professionalism, which may not be perceived as “fun and interesting” by youth. CHALK will incorporate additional social events into the project schedule in the future in response to youth staff requests.

² Survey results were not available for participants in New Perspectives, since funding and location challenges made it very difficult to sustain program activities in the 2008-09 program year.

Table Five: 2008-09 Progress Toward Intended Results

	% "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"			
	CHALK (n=32)	DROC (n=27)	MYC (n=24)	YSP* (n=36)
<i>90% of youth will participate in safe, enjoyable, productive activities</i>				
I feel comfortable in this program because people accept me for who I am.	94%	96%	95%	92%
This program offers activities that are fun and interesting.	84%	100%	100%	--
Through this program, I am learning new things and building new skills.	93%	100%	95%	97%
<i>75% of participating youth will (develop or) improve peer and adult relationships</i>				
There is an adult at this after-school program who really cares about me.	94%	100%	95%	--
Other students/young people in this program treat me with respect.	81%**	96%	100%	--
<i>70% of participating youth have (or are developing) a positive sense of self and future</i>				
I am better at setting goals and working to achieve them.	91%	100%	95%	75%
I feel more positive about the future.	88%	100%	90%	81%
I have new plans for what I want to do or achieve in the future (with school, work, etc.)	94%	94%	90%	53% (25% undecided)
<i>70% of youth will feel a sense of commitment to civic responsibility.</i>				
In this program, youth have the opportunity to lead activities or to give their opinions about how the program could be changed.	97%	100%	100%	--
I plan to keep helping out in my school/community in the future.	97%	100%	100%	94%

*Survey results are for mentors; mentee surveys were not conducted in 2008-09.

**Asked as "Youth at CHALK care about me."

Programmatic Supports for Intended Results

Though the five Youth Development Industry programs pursue a common set of Intended Results, each has a unique method, participant group, and community culture, as described in the program profiles.

This section explores the ways in which different YDI projects and staff pursue the four Intended Results, highlighting particularly successful program practices. Additional project-specific notes are available in the Appendix.

Safe, productive activities

Youth development theory emphasizes physical and emotional safety as a foundational element of quality, as young people are rarely able to participate fully if they feel physically unsafe or in danger of ostracism. Participating in productive, meaningful activities provides young people with the opportunity to better understand the world and their role in it, and to feel as if their time and effort is valued.

YDI projects promote safety through clearly stated, shared codes of conduct that establish an expectation of mutual respect and civility. Staff members regularly refer to these shared agreements during the course of programming, as do youth participants. Programs that serve younger students (YSP and The MYC) take care to assure that students are not left alone with an adult staff or mentor.

Practice Highlight

New Perspectives staff visit new participants' parents to establish an open relationship and address parents' safety concerns.

Productive activities take many forms within the Youth Development Industry, providing youth with age-appropriate opportunities to work as part of a team to produce "real-life" services and projects. Critically, project-based learning is a central part of the program design, rather than a sideline or add-on. For example, youth staff at CHALK are responsible for operating a youth-to-youth advice line and an affiliated public access television show, along with a community grant making program. Colleagues in the outreach team assist with publicity and youth recruitment activities.

DROC brings together young people to conduct health-related community assessment projects that culminate in a report of findings and accompanying recommendations. During the 2008-09 school year, DROC students presented their findings to their school principal (for a study of on-campus access to alcohol and drugs) and the City Council (for a study of liquor store advertisements), both of which are likely to result in policy changes.

Practice Highlight

Youth at the MYC released a CD titled, "Many Voices, One MYC" featuring youth performers and producers. Songs were recorded and produced at the MYC's on-site studio.

In interviews, participants reported that they felt cared for and physically safe in the project, and felt that the activities they participated in were valuable to them and valued by others.

Positive peer and adult relationships

Creating strong, pro-social connections with caring adults and peers helps young people build lifelong social skills that benefit them in their personal and professional lives. Forming non-familial connections with adults and getting to know a diverse set of peers strengthens adolescents' support networks.

In each of the YDI projects, staff members take care to interact with one another and with youth in a positive, respectful way in order to establish positive relationships with young people and to model this behavior for others. Providing a mix of structured and un-structured time supports development of authentic relationships; project staff members are encouraged to "chill" with youth participants to get to know one another better in addition to leading more structured activities. One youth participant described the staff of her YDI project:

Practice Highlight

DROC opens each session with a "high/low," in which youth and adult staff share one good thing and one bad thing about their day.

[The adult staff] aren't like normal people, they really understand us, they are never in a bad mood. Once you see them smile, it makes you smile.

Moreover, some YDI projects provide targeted instruction in interpersonal skills. For example, DROC provides training on public speaking, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Youth staff at CHALK's YouthLine learn active listening and relational skills to better serve peers who call for advice. Several YSP youth participants commented that the process of gradually opening up and increasingly discussing their thoughts and experiences with their mentors carried over to better communication with their parents, teachers and other adults, as well as with their peers.

YDI projects also incorporate intentional initiation rituals into their program design, such as an in-service training for CHALK staff, ongoing field trips at DROC and New Perspectives, and structured mentor/mentee outings at YSP. At The MYC, which incorporates both drop-in and ongoing programming, youth and adult staff intentionally introduce themselves to unfamiliar visitors and introduce them to other young people. Young people at New Perspectives receive a silly nickname shortly after joining the program, often drawn from an unintentionally funny thing they said or did. These initiation activities build group coherence and young people's interpersonal skills.

Youth participants in YDI projects often described "a second family" and "a place where people really know me" when asked about how they felt about adults and peers in the project, emphasizing the strength of their interpersonal relationships. A longtime New Perspectives participant described his relationship with the staff and other youth:

[New Perspectives] staff really work to get to know you. ... [They] understand people's background and understand how they are the way they are. Don't force you to change, but try to help you out to see how you really are and how you could be.

When you have a conflict with someone, they put you in a room to just talk it out. Sooner or later you realize that it was dumb, and can admit that you are sorry. [This has helped me to] realize that to let things get to that point is dumb when it is someone that you care about.

A participant at The MYC reflected on her experience getting to know different youth:

My favorite thing about here – kids from all different walks of life come here and we're all unified and we have a place here to feel good about ourselves and do well in life, I really like that here.

Positive sense of self and future

YDI projects serve young people from traditionally underserved communities who often face multiple barriers to academic and professional success. Most of the young people who participate in YDI projects live in low-income families, attend poorly performing schools (or have dropped out), and live in communities regularly exposed to violence. As a result, many YDI participants struggle with poor self-esteem, have limited self-awareness, and make few plans for the future.

Practice Highlight

Youth staff at CHALK set goals at the beginning of their employment and monitor their progress with an adult ally each month.

Youth development practice suggests that the combination of skill-building experiences in “real world” activities, positive relationships with adult role models, and the opportunity to reflect on their skill development can help young people improve their self-concept and expectations of the future.

YDI projects promote youths’ positive sense of self and the future by providing multiple skill-building opportunities through project-based learning, promoting reflection about young people’s growth, and by opening them up to a world of possibilities through trips to local colleges and universities as well as to new communities and recreational activities never experienced before.

For example, YSP youth see their grades improve over a short time when working one-on-one with a mentor, which increased their self-confidence and belief that they could make it as a college student one day. Youth staff at CHALK are given a great deal of responsibility to run the various projects, and so they develop quickly to fill those roles and responsibilities. Some youth staff felt that if adult supervisors were always on hand telling them how to do things, this quick development of skills and responsibility might not occur. Lastly, all YDI projects, through the programs or activities they offer, open the youths’ eyes to a range of school and career possibilities they might otherwise never have been exposed to or contemplated.

Interviews with youth participants underscored the profound ways in which participation in YDI programs can affect their self-awareness and plans for the future. From a MYC participant and current student at a local community college:

When I started high school, I didn't care about anything. ... When I started coming here in junior year, I got more involved in community. ... [My experiences at The MYC] really changed me and helped me focus more on what my goals are as a student and an adult. I'm more concerned about helping youth and other aspects of the community. It's a big eye-opener.

A CHALK youth staff member:

When I applied for the job, I had just gotten sober and just gotten into the swing of life. All these people in orange sweaters [CHALK Youth Outreach team members] came to my school and were talking and talking, and I heard "\$10/hour." That got my attention. ... I cried when I got the job. This job has helped me to stay sober.

From a Youth Support Program Mentee:

[Talking with my mentor and visiting UC Berkeley has] helped me to think about classes I might want to take in the future, how to get around college campus and showed me that college is fun too, and not just work.

Commitment to civic responsibility

Youth development programs foster civic responsibility through helping young people develop as leaders and through direct service to the community.

YDI projects promote youth leadership development by intentionally incorporating youth voice into their program design, by creating structured opportunities for youth advancement in the project, and through more traditional community service activities.

Practice Highlight

In the Youth Support Program, middle school students and their mentors participate in community service projects each semester.

Soliciting authentic input from youth is a hallmark of good youth development practice, and YDI projects do so in multiple ways. As noted above, young people help to develop shared behavioral expectations with adult staff, and are encouraged to hold one another accountable for them. Youth participants in DROC and CHALK exercise substantial autonomy, working within a pre-set format (i.e. community health promotion, youth-to-youth grant-making) to develop and implement community-oriented projects. At The MYC, youth are free to select the activities they participate in, and are frequently consulted regarding their preferred program options. Similarly, young people in the Youth Support Program and New Perspectives are encouraged to suggest activities and outings of interest to them.

Three YDI projects – CHALK, DROC, and The MYC – employ youth as staff, creating a clear advancement path for young people as they build their skills and are able to assume greater programmatic responsibility. Moreover, both CHALK and DROC incorporate community service into the project design itself: CHALK through youth-to-youth grantmaking and advice line, and DROC through year-long community activism projects. This directly connects young

people with youth-led service and civic engagement throughout their time with the projects.

Two YDI projects – New Perspectives and YSP – incorporate complementary community service projects into their activities, offering youth an opportunity to give back to their neighborhoods in tangible, visible ways.

Interviews with youth participants highlighted the positive influence that leadership and community service had for them. Many young people reported a greater interest in the world around them and a stronger commitment to leadership and service.

A DROC member described his interest in the project:

[DROC is] a chance to involve myself in the community and really care about it and get involved fully. I was excited for the opportunity to make a change in my community.

A CHALK youth staff member described his hopes for his future involvement:

I really, really hope that when I'm older that I still do at least one thing to help out the community. Here, it's all about the CHALK family, and I want to carry that with me.

Common Challenges

YDI project staff and youth participants were asked to identify programmatic challenges; common challenges faced by YDI projects include³:

- Providing consistent, appropriate mental health supports for youth and staff.
- Recruiting and retaining diverse groups of youth participants.
- Sustaining project funding over multiple years.

In interviews conducted by the evaluation team, YDI project staff regularly described their love of youth development work, and lamented the emotional toll it can take. When asked about what additional resources her project could use, a YDI staff member focused on the need for mental health supports: One project staff member suggested:

[With more resources, I would like to have] opportunities for [staff] to see [a counselor], because the job is so stressful. Many of us have had the same upbringing as the kids we serve – we process this out as a result of being on staff, but a lot of us have never really seen anyone.

Similarly, YDI project staff expressed concern about the mental health of some of the youth they serve, and feel that existing resources are sometimes limited. Project staff are interested in improving their own skills in helping young people with mental health needs. One staff member described her interest:

I'd like to be able to handle what kids volunteer [regarding stress and trauma]. Instead of saying, "do you want to go talk to the counselor?" I would like to be able to respond on a more individual level.

Practice Highlight

Staff at the MYC meet with a counselor once a week to get advice about working with young people and to refer youth to one-on-one counseling sessions.

In addition, YDI project staff are interested in improving links to more intensive mental health services for youth participants. They noted that making referrals to outside counseling programs is not always effective, as youth may not follow up or the service provider does not have sufficient capacity, whereas bringing

a service provider in-house would really increase access to this kind of support (for both staff and youth participants).

Participant recruitment and retention is a common challenge for YDI projects, as well. While the projects generally have sufficient numbers of youth participants, project staff note that they aren't always as successful as they would like to be in involving and retaining hard-to-reach youth. Most projects seek to increase the number of young men who participate – particularly African American and Latino males -- though The MYC seeks to diversify by involving more girls and white youth.

Limited funding is a fact of life for nearly every youth development program, and modest

³ See the Appendix for project-specific challenges identified by staff and youth.

budgets are the norm. Two YDI projects, New Perspectives and Youth Support Program, noted funding as a particular challenge. In both cases, they described substantial changes in funding availability between program years took staff time away from direct service in order to pursue additional resources.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation team's review of the YDI projects' data collection instruments, program design and on input from staff and youth participants, we forward four recommendations.

To further improve the quality of YDI projects:

Expand peer-to-peer learning opportunities for Project Directors – Each of the YDI projects provides high quality youth development opportunities to young people in the Bay area, and Project Directors stand to benefit from sharing their expertise with one another. The projects serve youth ranging in age from 12-20, and implement a variety of innovative activities that support positive youth development. Increasing Project Directors' awareness of how different programs serve youth at different ages can help to improve their practice and understanding of how their individual program fits into a larger youth development spectrum.

Currently, YDI Directors report limited familiarity with their affiliated projects, and do not regularly call upon one another for advice and counsel. Isolation is a common challenge faced by youth workers, and the Industry is in an excellent position to counter this dynamic. The Industry should consider expanding its peer-to-peer learning to include site visits to one another's programs, conducting case conference-style discussions of a common challenge, and other structured means of collaboration. Doing so would leverage the collective wisdom and skill of the group to continue to improve the quality of YDI member projects.

Leverage resources available through BACR - Youth Development Industry projects are all part of a larger, multi-service agency that may be able to provide strategic supports to YDI projects. For example, staff members expressed an interest in improving their ability to support young people's mental health needs and in receiving mental health support themselves, and BACR manages a large counseling program. Exploring opportunities to expand staff and participant access to mental health services may prove fruitful. Similar collaborative opportunities may exist with the agency's After-School and National Service Industries.

To enhance the ongoing assessment of the Youth Development Industry:

Modify the Language of YDI's Intended Results and Standards of Success—We suggest that the fourth Intended Result, increasing participants' commitment to civic responsibility, be revised to reflect the diversity of activities available in the Industry. As noted earlier, some YDI projects incorporate community service into their activities, while others encourage youth leadership through within-project activities. Rather than targeting civic responsibility specifically, we suggest re-framing the Intended Result to incorporate leadership development more broadly. Alternately, if the Industry chooses to focus on civic responsibility as a shared Result, each project should intentionally incorporate civic engagement activities into their

structure.

Further, we encourage the YDI projects to re-visit their common Standards of Success, with an eye toward measurability. Currently, the Standards are double- and triple-barreled (i.e. “activities are safe, productive, and enjoyable), grouping several related concepts into one outcome measure. Dis-aggregating the Standards into their component parts would better allow projects to measure their progress.

Revisit and revise surveys used by YDI projects – As noted earlier in this report, the evaluation team developed common youth survey questions to be implemented by each YDI program in 2008-2009 program year in order to collect more comparable information about progress toward the Intended Results. In future years, we suggest that YDI projects continue to collect such common indicators linked to the shared Intended Results.

In addition, we strongly suggest that YDI projects need to conduct a thorough review and edit of existing survey materials. Currently YDI projects distribute multiple participant surveys – often at the behest of different funders – potentially resulting in “survey fatigue” among young people, potentially limiting response rates and data quality. In site-based interviews, Project Directors highlighted the multiplicity of data collection instruments as an ongoing challenge.

Further, many of the survey questions utilize indicators that are not likely to be impacted by a programs services and activities, or at least a measurable impact is not likely given the time that elapses from a pre-test to the post-test. In our experience, this happens over time as new surveys and survey questions are incorporated into a project’s yearly data collection without a corresponding reduction in older surveys and survey questions.

This can result in survey findings that make a program’s performance look problematic, when in fact it is doing an excellent job on the indicators that are most closely aligned with program intention and design. We suggest that each YDI project revisit and revise their surveys with an eye toward limiting repetitive questions or those that do not closely related to the program’s goals and activities, and asking only the survey items which are truly meaningful to the program and can help them improve its services.

One way to organize both of these evaluation-related tasks is to convene the Youth Development Industry in a series of working sessions to update the Industry-wide Logic Model based on current practice and research in the field and to develop complementary project-level Models. These updated Logic Models could serve as the framework for updated Intended Results and Standards of Success and guide survey revisions, as well.

Communities in Harmony Advocating for Learning and Kids - CHALK

Mission

CHALK is a San Francisco-based project providing a range of youth services with a specific focus on transformative youth development and employment. CHALK places youth on the front lines as service providers to their peers and provides them with over 100 hours of paid job and life skills training. Our jobs transform the youth we employ because we entrust them with high levels of responsibility and provide a foundation of professional and emotional support.

Core Values

- We utilize our life experiences to positively affect the community.
- We are dedicated; working for the community is a lifestyle, not a job.
- We ensure youth voice, youth influence and youth leadership is integrated in all of the work we do.

Approach: Youth Employment Combined with Academic Support

CHALK is a true for-youth-by-youth organization. CHALK employs 50 part-time youth throughout the year and 5 full-time adult staff. When employing youth, CHALK gives priority to youth who demonstrate high-risk characteristics.

Young people are employed at CHALK for 18 months on average. While youth are hired even when considered extremely high risk, they leave CHALK transformed into prepared, skilled individuals.

Since its inception in 1996, CHALK has hired over 400 part-time youth, provided over 50,000 hours of training and paid out over \$1 million in youth wages.

Twenty five percent of our youth are also Americorps members, each earning about \$1,250 in an education award to use toward post-secondary pursuits.

Services: YouthLine and Youth Funding Youth Ideas

YouthLine programs provide information, support and resources to youth and their allies through a confidential peer-to-peer phone line, bi-monthly television show, and web site.

Youth Funding Youth Ideas provides young San Franciscans with the opportunity to expand on their leadership goals by funding their project ideas. Y.F.Y.I. gives up to \$10,000 in grant money to youth in San Francisco to start their own youth-led project.

CHALK Outreach

On average, CHALK conducts 90 hours of outreach a week throughout San Francisco through youth-led public speaking, school and street outreach, and various community projects.

CHALK Centers are conducted in public schools, in partnership with school staff and/or service providers. Services include training and resource referral for students and are conducted once a week for two hours. CHALK youth write articles, share stories, poems and art as part of a quarterly released 'zine called "Street Elements."

Discovering the Reality of Our Community - DROC

Mission

Discovering the Reality of Our Community (DROC) is a youth activated, youth focused, and youth driven alcohol and other drugs prevention program located in El Cerrito, De Anza, and Kennedy High Schools. Using an Environmental Prevention model, DROC focuses on community organizing and social change activities surrounding the issue of drug and alcohol abuse.

Core Values

By helping young people understand their own potential to affect change not just in their lives, but in their communities, DROC is facilitating the development of self-activated young adults who will make healthy choices about their futures.

Approach: Youth-Led Activism to Promote Healthy Behaviors

Through DROC, participants learn how to lead, design and implement community assessments or “community mapping” activities. Based on the findings of these assessments, students design a project to address the identified needs of their communities. Past student community projects included a *West County Times* letter to the editor that addressed local liquor store violations, advocacy for a social host ordinance in the city of El Cerrito as a strategy to reduce youth access to alcohol within the home, and a letter to local and state politicians stating that strict protocol (e.g. black lights to check for fake identifications) should be implemented within liquor store outlets in order to reduce youth access to alcohol.

DROC corps members must maintain at least a C average or else attend weekly tutoring. As part of their commitment to students’ success, DROC also provides college tours and assistance with applications and financial aid.

In the 2008-09 school year, approximately 50 youth participated in DROC in three local high schools: DeAnza High School, El Cerrito High School, and Kennedy High School.

Services: Youth Leadership and Academic Support

DROC corps members participate in concurrent curricula throughout the school year. The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) curriculum trains students in the environmental prevention approach to drug and alcohol use, leads corps members through a community needs assessment and related activism project.

The Academic Support curriculum includes academic tutoring and college exploration and preparation activities, such as campus visits, financial aid information, and application assistance.

The Marin Youth Center - The MYC

Mission

To provide an inspiring space created by youth and adults, supporting the development of young people's talents, potential, and leadership skills through the arts, technology, and community service.

Core Values

We seek to validate the individual identity of each youth in order to sustain their investment and commitment to The MYC. We are not just about creating programs but creating opportunities for breakthroughs with young people.

Approach: A Diverse Array of Engaging, Youth-Centered Activities

The MYC seeks to provide youth with the voice and skills necessary to engage in and develop programs that will help them discover their passions and prepare them to be the next generation of Marin adults. We do this by providing a variety of ways in which youth can enter the MYC and become involved.

Our facility is centrally located in downtown San Rafael. The space includes: a computer clubhouse with recording and sound studios, a commercial kitchen and café, an activity hall with modular stage and lighting, meeting and lounge spaces, an art studio, and a counseling room.

Services: Arts, Technology, Health, Leadership

Programs include culinary arts, dance, theatre, singing and music lessons, writing workshops, and visual arts.

The Intel Digital Clubhouse provides youth with access to a variety of computer-based activities including website development, podcasting, animation, gaming, and sound engineering.

Health programming includes weekly confidential peer-to-peer support groups and weekly Alateen meetings.

Leadership development opportunities include groups for Young Men and Young Women, a peer-based Youth Court, and College Prep Class that provides information about college applications and financial aid.

MYC Membership

Membership is available for all Marin youth aged 11-20 years. Membership provides youth with free access to The MYC facilities and reduced rates for paid programming, events, and the café. Membership is on an annual basis and requires a completed application and a \$10 fee, or participation in at least three sessions of a program, or through MYC employment, volunteer work or internship. Currently, about 400 young people belong to The MYC.

New Perspectives – East Palo Alto

Mission

Since 1990, New Perspectives-East Palo Alto has provided a system of intense prevention and intervention to middle and high school students in East Palo Alto. New Perspectives assists students with the productive management of their lives. Students involved in the program are presented with the necessary tools for affecting and maintaining positive academic, social and family environments.

Core Values

New Perspectives is dedicated to creating positive change in our students and their community. We build lasting partnerships with community services, school faculty and students.

Approach:

New Perspectives provides quality youth development services to the youth in the East Palo Alto community. New Perspectives provides students with a strong adult and peer network.

Services: Mentoring, Life Skills Training, ATOD Education, and School & Career Readiness⁴

School Based

Based at Menlo Atherton and Carlemont High Schools, New Perspectives' school-based program serves 125 youth, ages 13-18, with life skills training, ATOD prevention education, academic advocacy, and mentoring support.

Evening

Evening activities serve up to 20 youth also involved in the school-based program in a mix of enrichment activities (two days/week) and leadership development, academic support, and job training (two days/week).

Summer

New Perspectives' summer program serves 150 incoming freshmen at Menlo Atherton High School prior to the start of the school year. Teams of 75 students participate in life skills and high school readiness for two days per week for five weeks.

⁴ Based on the program design created in 2008-09.

Willard Youth Support Program - YSP

Mission

To provide a nurturing environment where students thrive academically, socially, and behaviorally through enhanced mentoring and academic support.

Mentoring participants are matched one-on-one with UC Berkeley students for a year-long mentoring relationship. Through safe and fun activities students develop cultural sensitivity, improve their leadership skills and self-esteem, and learn civic responsibility. YSP's academic support program places trained volunteer tutors with small groups of Willard Middle School students who need targeted support in either English Language Arts or Math.

Core Values

YSP believes stable and consistent adult involvement can help guide a youth in the right direction.

Approach: Enhanced Mentoring

YSP mentors spend time each week with their mentees to develop the skills necessary to succeed in and out of the classroom. They help develop and implement behavior plans, Individual Educational Plans (IEP), and Student Success Team (SST) Plans. They maintain ongoing consistent communication with teachers, counselors, parents/guardians, and other parties who have a vested interest in the well-being of their mentees.

Mentors are recruited from the University of California at Berkeley and must complete an application and interview process prior to being matched with a Willard student. Qualified mentors are identified based on skills, strengths, and interests. Once a mentor/mentee match is made, both parties commit to seeing each other consistently for a minimum of one year. Mentees are selected from among Willard's student population and are identified as "at-risk" by school and program staff. Mentors enroll in a practicum through the School of Education and meet weekly for lectures on topics including youth development, education, and mentoring skills. Mentors use these sessions to share their successes and to seek troubleshooting assistance.

On average, one hundred student/mentor pairs participate in the Youth Support Program and 40-50 students participate in academic support programs. YSP also organizes schoolwide activities, including career days, African American History Month celebrations, and other community events. YSP reaches 400 Willard students per year through the three activities.

Services: Mentoring, Enrichment, Academic Support

- Mentors commit to a minimum of three hours per week to provide academic, social, and behavioral support.
- YSP engages in community service, parent resource support, and community development.
- YSP partners with Community Access Ticket Services (CATS) to provide mentors and mentees with tickets to cultural and sporting events.
- YSP offers after school, evening and weekend mentor/mentee activities such as a kick-off barbeque, movie night, Halloween activity, holiday parties, and an end of the year banquet.
- YSP offers enrichment classes, tutoring, parent workshops, and academic support classes for the English and Math departments.
- YSP staff collaborate with school-day teachers to develop and implement positive behavior management policies for Willard Middle School, and lead professional development sessions for staff on working with at-risk youth.

Appendix 2: Suggested Common Survey Items

Stated YDI Indicator/Goal #1:

90% of participating youth will find the program activities to be safe, enjoyable, and productive.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.A. I feel comfortable in this program because people accept me for who I am.				
1B. This program offers activities that are fun and interesting.				
1C. Through this program, I am learning new things and building new skills.				

Stated YDI Indicator/Goal #2:

75% of participating youth will (develop or) improve peer and adult relationships

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2A. There is an adult at this after-school program who really cares about me.				
2B. Other students/young people in this program treat me with respect.				

* For Willard, modify to following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2A. My mentor really cares about me.				
2B. Other students in this program treat me with respect.				

Stated YDI Indicator/Goal #3:

70% of participating youth have (or are developing) a positive sense of self and future

How do you feel you have changed since you started participating in this program?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3A. I am better at setting goals and working to achieve them.				
3B. I feel more positive about the future.				
3C. I have new plans for what I want to do or achieve in the future (with school, work, etc.)				

Stated YDI Indicator/Goal #4:

70% of youth will feel a sense of commitment to civic responsibility

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4A. In this program, youth have the opportunity to lead activities or to give their opinions about how the program could be changed.				
4B. I plan to keep helping out in my school/community in the future.				

*4a may need to be adjusted or YSP.

Appendix 3: Youth and Staff Interview Questions

Youth Focus Group/Interview

Opening

[Brief introduction of the team and what we're doing. Comments are confidential. This isn't a test; say what's true for you.]

1. Why did you first come to this program?
2. Why do you come here now?
3. In your opinion, what's the most unique thing about this program?
4. What ideas do you have for what might be changed/improved?
6. Do you feel like this program has helped, guided or benefited you in some way? If so, tell us how.

Indicator One - safe, meaningful, enjoyable activities

[Interested in learning more about what happens on a day-to-day basis in this program.]

1. What kinds of things to do you do here?
 - a. Are they interesting to you?
 - b. Are you learning or doing things that you want to?
2. Do people respect one another here? How do they show it?
3. How comfortable do you feel here and what things about this program/ building make you feel comfortable?
4. How safe do you feel here and what things about this program/ building make you feel safe?

Indicator Two - positive relationships with peers and adults

[Now we'd like to explore how this project has helped you get to know adults and other youth.]

1. What sorts of things does the adult staff do to get to know you and how you are doing? Can you trust and talk with them about important things?
2. Has coming here helped you get along better with other kids? How?
 - a. DROC, CHALK: What are some of the specific communication skills you've learned here? (i.e. active listening, teamwork, conflict resolution)
 - b. CHALK, MYC: Do you work together with other youth to get things done in this program and/or have you had the chance to work with other students different from you/students you wouldn't otherwise have gotten to know?

Indicator Three - positive sense of self and future

[Now we'd like to talk a little about how this program has helped you be more prepared for life after high school/in high school.]

1. Have you learned new skills/knowledge in this program, or expanded existing skills/knowledge (group facilitation, project planning, communication, etc.)?
2. How do you think you will be able to use what you have learned here in the future? (tease out if they understand what they have learned and how they can apply those skills in other contexts)
3. Has this program helped you to think more about (and maybe plan) for what you will do in the future - in high school or after?
4. Do you feel different now than when you first started this program (more confident, better abilities, belief that you can change things, new goals for the future, etc.)?

Indicator Four - commitment to civic responsibility

[These last questions ask about the ways in which you've been able to lead others within the program and in your school, neighborhood, and community more generally.]

1. Do you feel like your voice is heard/ opinions are taken into account in this program?
2. Have you had the opportunity to lead here? (i.e. as a team leader, teaching a class, through community engagement project)
3. Could you tell me more about the community service/engagement projects that you do here? (Customize language for each project)
4. Do you think that you'll keep doing similar or different school or community work in the future?

Staff Focus Group/Interview

Opening

[Brief introduction of the team and what we're doing. Comments are confidential. This isn't a test; say what's true for you.]

1. In your opinion, what's the most unique thing about this program?
2. What ideas do you have for what might be changed/improved?
3. How would you describe the young people who come here? Are there other kids who you wish would come here but don't?

Indicator One - safe, meaningful, enjoyable activities

[Interested in learning more about what happens on a day-to-day basis in this program.]

1. How does this program help make youth feel safe? And comfortable?
2. Are there enough staff and other kinds of resources to provide adequate staff coverage in this program?

Indicator Two - positive relationships with peers and adults

[Now we'd like to explore how this project has helped youth get to know adults and other youth.]

1. In what ways does this program help kids build positive relationships with one another and with you? (i.e. informal interaction time, mentor/mentee, group norms, conflict resolution instruction)
2. What kinds of training and support have you received that helps you teach and model positive relationships?
3. What support/training might help you be even more successful in helping youth develop positive relationships with adults and their peers?

Indicator Three - positive sense of self and future

[Now we'd like to talk a little about how this program has helped youth be more prepared for life after high school/in high school.]

1. In what ways does this program help young people build goal setting skills?
2. How does this program promote self-exploration among young people?

3. Can you think of some examples of youth whose sense of the future changed while they were in this program? What seemed to be the key to this change?

Indicator Four - commitment to civic responsibility

[These last questions ask about the ways in which youth have been able to lead others within the program and in your school, neighborhood, and community more generally.]

1. How does the program promote leadership development among young people?
2. In what ways does the program build young people's awareness of school/community issues and foster school/community involvement?
3. For program volunteers: Has your work with this program strengthened your commitment to serving the community? Do you think you will continue community service work after you are no longer working/volunteering with this program?

Appendix 4: Site Visit Field Notes

The evaluation team conducted two rounds of site visits in the spring 2009. The first round of visits was observationally-based, intended to provide the evaluators with a general sense of each program's activities, youth population served, and environment. Informal interviews with project leaders were conducted during the first round of visits, as needed. The second round of visits followed a more formal structure, and included activity observation and semi-structured interviews with project staff and youth participants.

The sections below include edited field notes and summaries of evaluators' conversations about each project's strengths/best practices and challenges identified by project staff and participants. We stress that these are not formal site visit write-ups, but instead notes about each project drawn from project observations and interviews.

CHALK

Highlights/Best Practices

Absolutely a youth-focused (peer-to-peer) environment – being surrounded by younger people makes it more comfortable and more family-like to participating youth, can relate better to colleagues, even though diverse and different from you, and don't feel you are always being watched by an adult supervisor – more self-motivated and progress.

Strict rules to ensure respect and physical safety of all involved – nobody is willing to lose their job by breaking them.

Skills being developed and tested (evaluated), through trainings and work, will provide stepping stones to the next CHALK position or job outside of CHALK, but also getting real pay now, which they need and want. Though it is youth-focused, these are real jobs with real responsibilities so youth have to step up to get things done.

Community service/engagement is more of an ongoing, integral part of what CHALK does – starts within the program by empowering youth to design and carry out work, provide feedback on program design/operation, and carries over to their ability to give back to others in the community through their work. Get paid to do it, but the real reward is helping other youth and realizing how meaningful their work really is.

Challenges

Recruiting more African American and Latino males and retaining some of the harder to serve youth – Could try to do more follow up with them but management time is so limited that you often choose to let them go because if you spend too much time working with one hard youth, you may lose other youth. Also, youth really have to want to be a part of CHALK, to learn,

change and get work done and you can't force them to get to that point.

Limited program-facilitated, social activities for youth to engage with one another outside of work. Working on this could help address lower scores in emotional safety – the feeling that others at CHALK really know and care about you.

Definite need for mental health supports for youth/staff because they are dealing with a lot of issues at home/in life and will turn to older staff for help, but not always qualified to handle such serious issues. But if refer to outside provider, might not make it there – so having in-house support would be ideal.

DROC

Highlights/Best Practices

Program environment is built to ensure safety, comfort, engagement of youth – personable staff, fun and ice-breaking activities, clear rules, and food.

Staff are clear draw for youth – youth trust them, feel they really listen and understand, have a positive influence on them.

Diverse youth involved – get to know students you wouldn't otherwise hangout with and team building activities help them to understand one another better. Also social activities that involve students from other schools.

Program purpose (team projects) is really unique from other programs on campus – an opportunity to really make a change (and not the usual focus on “don't do drugs”) in a youth focused way. They have seen examples of successful youth projects, are taught skills/knowledge to do project work, and know staff will support them in their efforts.

Clear opportunity for youth voice and initiative – youth encouraged but not pushed to speak their mind, make choices and take initiative in program and projects. Student staff positions take this to the next level and they receive training to further build skills.

Community projects show youth they can impact change in their school/community – and some want to continue this in future, but also teach general skills (public speaking, project implementation, etc.) that will help them achieve other goals in the future.

Challenges

Create more incentive for youth to participate – financial incentive was suggested but perhaps teachers can get involved and offer class credit instead.

Could recruit more youth (African American and Latino males in short supply) and have meetings off campus to bring youth from different schools together more. Or have more multi-school activities so these different student populations can become more familiar/tolerant of

one another (and share project ideas).

More resources and connections to opportunities post high school.

Increased staffing would allow more and smaller groups, which would mean youth more actively engaged in the process.

Allowing youth to see the follow-up results of their efforts – sometimes happens in summer after youth are gone. With school-based projects, it is easier to build on achievements from one year to next.

Staff feel well trained/equipped to handle youth in the program – but one area they could use more support is in developing stronger counseling skills for youth who are going through difficult situations and want to talk to them rather than school counselor.

New Perspectives

Highlights/Best Practices

The program has created a trusting, safe environment for students - feel like they are among family.

Program leadership provides mentorship to youth in a way that students are engaged with activities and invested in the program, as well as the program coordinator with students. Really feel like the adults know and care about them.

The program provides new and different opportunities for students in the East Palo Alto area to experience different environments (Mall of America, summer road trips, boxing, etc) that they would otherwise not be exposed to. Emerging from these experiences more open-minded, with improved communication and people skills.

Program-Parent relationship is key - coordinator talks with parents one on one to get buy in from family.

Challenges

Currently, they have no physical space to meet, and are in desperate need to get a centralized space for students to meet and participate in programs

More resources and connections with the BACR network would help support New Perspectives with immediate and long-term needs

Recruit more youth - having stable meeting place will help with this.

Unclear program structure-- need technical assistance to look at goals, vision to structure the program appropriately and to pursue additional funding.

Highlights/Best Practices

Strong emphasis on relationship-building for both youth and adults, including informally (like staff playing pool with the kids) or formally (the Director taking an hour at the front desk to meet and greet students), students and staff alike make it a point to introduce each other to new students in the program.

Ownership of program by youth-- students are very invested in the classes they are in (cooking, metal work, the Clubhouse, etc) and feel a sense of pride when speaking about the classes they enjoy. Also have opportunity to guide program development.

Youth development model readily apparent: students expressed increased self-confidence, feelings of belongingness, and being more goal-oriented. The environment fostered at The MYC is safe, productive and for some students and staff, a second family.

The program has a variety of resources offered for student use that are not typical in school/home settings, like the ClubHouse with editing software, the recording studio, the full kitchen, etc. This allows for different outlets to express one's self and open up youth to new possibilities.

Challenges

More staff to carry out the vision planned for MYC (tech, events, culinary, and middle school) and recruit more youth, currently have 2/3 less staff than in past.

Recruitment of more students, reflective of the community that The MYC is in. Also to fully utilize the center - bring in other orgs to offer additional services/programs for youth - will attract additional youth.

Some younger MYC members mentioned that they were not treated respectfully by older participants, but that staff intervened when the issue came to their attention. Stronger norms around older/younger member interactions may also help with this dynamic.

Staff talked about the want for a stronger counseling component-- they currently have someone come in, but they felt that if they would have training or more staff with counseling skills, the students would greatly benefit. But their Friday counselor position could be a best practice for other YDI programs to follow - have someone come in at least once a week to meet with participants but meet monthly with staff to train and provide support.

Youth Support Program

Highlights/Best Practices

Program structure provides practices (only Willard meetings first month, parent permission to go outside of Willard, public first meeting, matching on interests, etc.) that facilitate the natural development of trust-based relationships between mentors and mentees over time.

The flexible nature of the program (from mentors perspective) allows them to spend so much more time with their mentees, which helps relationships to develop more.

The one-on-one nature of the mentor/mentee relationship facilitates a caring/trusting relationship between them, improving the impact of role modeling, exposure to new activities, etc.

Tutoring leads to better schools and self-confidence but constant communication with mentors improves abilities to express themselves and dialogue with adults, and the activities undertaken with mentors open up eyes to college and other opportunities post high school.

Primary mechanism through which mentees provide feedback on programs is the monthly mentee meeting and also their exercising of choice in activities done with mentors.

Challenges

Group activities in which participants get to meet other mentor/mentee teams – not only are these activities very popular, but more frequent activities will foster better development of peer relations with one another. Really liked the idea of overnight/camping activity.

Mentors and mentees participate in occasional community service project – but some thought it might be good to engage in the same project repeatedly over time, especially since this is another opportunity to develop relationships between Willard students (peer relations).

Additional staff could help improve program in several ways: 1) could help recruit more African American and Latino male mentors and train mentors to better understand and deal with youth of backgrounds different than their own; 2) help prepare more for mentor trainings; 3) could interact more with mentees to trouble shoot relationship and other issues; and 4) could further develop relationships with Willard teachers and administrators so they are all on the same page with what the program is trying to achieve and integrate the efforts of Willard and YSP.

Work on goal-setting and achieving used to be done more formally with parents, but now mentors have to do this individually with youth – maybe okay since their needs vary so much, but perhaps also not teaching process of goal-setting as well as when it was more formalized?