

**Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Title V Delinquency Prevention Program Evaluation**

1999 -- 2002

Final Report

**Prepared for the Connecticut Office of Policy and
Management**

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Introduction

This report summarizes the third, and final year, results for the Title V: Delinquency Prevention Programs that began July 1, 1999 and ended June 30, 2002. The report is divided into three major sections.

The first section presents a summary of the evaluation plan that was implemented. The plan remained the same over the three-year evaluation period.

The second section summarizes the results for each of the six communities that were funded by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management over the three-year period. The individual reports for each community are further divided into four sections that present:

1. Process data that describes what actually occurred in each program.
2. Outcome data that looks at changes in youth who participated in programs in years 1, 2, or 3. Initially, we had planned to track youth participants over the three-year period. However, complete data was available on only a small number of youth over the entire period of time. Frequent turnover of youth into and out of the programs and missing data prevented such analyses from being completed.
3. A summary of the specific evaluation issues that occurred at each program.
4. A summary of the evaluation results for each program.

The third and final major section of the report presents some conclusions that can be drawn from the evaluation results.

I Evaluation Plan

The evaluation included systematic collection of both process and outcome data.

Qualitative Data

Process data were collected during site visits by members of the evaluation team, primarily by the project coordinator, Mrs. Judith O'Callaghan. These data addressed the question of whether or not programs had accomplished what they initially set out to accomplish and how they had done so. The process data allowed us to capture the specific accomplishments of each project while also taking into account the great variability in programming from one community to another.

Each program was visited a minimum of four times per year. When staff turnover occurred or when there was confusion about the evaluation requirements, additional site visits, telephone calls, or electronic mailings were conducted. The goal was to keep in regular contact with the responsible staff at each program to ensure consistent adherence to the evaluation plan.

The qualitative data reported here deals with year three of the evaluation. Years one and two were discussed in the earlier 2000 and 2001 annual reports.

Outcome Data

Outcome data included variables that all six programs had in common so that the overall effectiveness of the Title V program across sites could be considered. The variables selected for this purpose were arrived at in consultation with staff from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the staff of the community projects who attended the initial evaluation training session on June 8, 1999.

The outcome evaluation included two primary sources of data.

The first was a questionnaire that was to be completed by all **new** youth participants at the beginning of each program year. They were re-

administered the same questionnaire again at the end of each program year in May. Youth who had completed a post-test the previous year were exempted from completing a pre-test the next year. This was because the time between post-test and pre-test was brief and many programs did operate during the summer months. The questionnaire asked for basic descriptive information (age, sex., ethnicity, grade in school). It also included items from the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner, 1976). The instrument assessed the following psychological factors thought to be associated with delinquency:

1. Hostility and aggression
2. Negative self-esteem
3. Negative self-adequacy
4. Emotional unresponsiveness
5. Emotional instability
6. Negative world view
7. Total score

The total score gives an overall assessment of the individual's psychological adjustment (Rohner, 1999).

The PAQ is a highly reliable and valid instrument. Its psychometric properties have been established over a 30-year period and were based upon the results on numerous studies conducted nationally and internationally. The reliability coefficients for the subscales have ranged between .46 and .74 (Rohner, 1999). In the present evaluation, the reliability coefficients ranged between .53 and .79 with an average of .68. The coefficient for the total score was .91.

Only the total score was used in the analyses reported in this final report. This was because its reliability was superior to that of some of the subscales. Also, previous analyses of year one and two data showed that the performance of the subscales was inconsistent.

The analysis of the full three years of data required the creation of composite scores due to problems with missing or incomplete data. This issue will be discussed further below.

Finally, the questionnaire asked youth to respond to 15 items that asked about their positive and negative attitudes toward school (Anderson, 1999).

The items were derived from several previous studies that had examined school attitudes. Each item offered five response choices ranging from “totally agree” to “totally disagree.” The scale also included a single item that asked how much, in general, did they like school. Responses ranged on a 10-point scale from “not at all” to “very much.” In the present sample, the reliability coefficients for the scale ranged between .86 and .89 for both pre-test and post-test scores over multiple years.

It was expected that participation in the pro-social activities offered in the delinquency prevention programs would result in positive changes in youths’ *psychological adjustment* and *attitudes toward school*. Both have been shown to be effective protective factors in reducing delinquent behaviors (Borgensneider, 1996; Coie, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992).

The second source of outcome data was derived from a form specifically developed for this evaluation. It asked program staff to report on the activities of each youth involved in their programs during the year and to: (1) separately list each activity the youth had participated in, (2) give the percentage of the total sessions of the activity that the youth had attended, and (3) rate the youth’s level of commitment or investment in the activity.

The various activities were then coded for data analysis into five major categories. These included: (1) academic support, (2) community service, (3) leadership training, (4) peer outreach, and (5) recreation. A sixth category was added for Putnam to reflect youth’s participation in that program’s Juvenile Review Board activities.

These data were intended to provide some indication of the typical rates of youth participation in different program components. Furthermore, it was expected that more frequent attendance and a stronger commitment by youth to program activities (as opposed to irregular participation) would be associated with improved psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school.

Data Analysis

The following analyses were completed using all three years of available data.

1. Descriptive Information. Basic demographic data were analyzed and are presented for each town included in the evaluation.

2. Rates of Positive and Negative Change. A change score was computed for each youth participant. The score contrasted their first pre-test score on (1) attitudes toward school and (2) overall psychological adjustment with their last post-test score on these same indicators. These variables were intended to assess the degree of change in all participating youth regardless of when they entered their program or how long they remained.

An increase of three or more points on the measures, between the first and last measurement, was classified as “improvement.” A decline of three or more points between the first and last measurement was categorized as “declined.” A change of 2 points or less between the two testing periods was classified as “no change.”

These composite scores were deemed necessary because complete data for the entire three-year period was available for a very small number of youth participants. The majority of youth entered the programs and left at different times. Some remained in the programs for one year while others remained in the programs for two or, in a few cases, all three years. The other issue was that of incomplete data from participating youth. That is, some youth who continued in the program for a period of one, two, or three years did not complete the evaluation instruments at each required point in time. Table 1 reports the percentages of youth in each program who completed one, two, or three years of data.

3. Duration of Participation and Rate of Attendance. The overall rates of change described above provided rough estimates of how many youth changed as a result of participation in their programs. However, they did not take into account a most critical question. **Were youth who remained in their programs longer, or who attended program activities more frequently, the ones most likely to have changed?**

A better standard for judging the overall effectiveness of a program is not whether or not **all** youth changed, but whether the program was successful in helping those **most involved** in the program to change.

Additional composite variables were created to address this question. One variable assessed the length of time the youth participated in the program (one, two, or three 3 years).

A second variable was created to assess the average rate of attendance of each youth participant in program activities. This was computed by adding the rates of participation in each separate activity and dividing by the number of activities the youth participated in. The average provided an estimate of the rate of attendance that was independent of the length of time youth were involved in the program.

These two variables, along with other relevant interval scores (age, grade in school, length of time living in the community) were entered into a discriminant function analysis that contrasted two groups: (1) youth who had **improved** in their attitudes toward school and overall psychological adjustment following involvement in the programs and (2) youth who had **declined** in their attitudes toward school or overall psychological adjustment following involvement in the program.

The analysis was conducted separately for each of the two criterion variables (school attitudes, psychological adjustment). The results for each town were also analyzed separately.

4. Other Relevant Variables. Other variables such as youths' gender, racial/ethnic background, and family composition (parent's relationship status) were also analyzed in relation to positive or negative changes but none of these factors proved to be significant. Chi square analyses were used for this purpose due to the nominal nature of the variables.

Table 1

**Percentages of Youth in Each Program who Completed One,
Two, or Three Years of Data**

Percentages

<u>Town</u>	<u>Less the 1 Yr¹</u>	<u>1 Yr</u>	<u>2 Yr</u>	<u>3 Yr</u>	<u>Total N</u>
East Haven	8	65	23	4	74 ²
Griswold	47	29	16	9	102
Middletown	14	73	12	2	124
Norwalk	17	56	19	6	48
Putnam	5	84	11	0	97
Stamford	15	85	0	0	102

1. Indicates completion of one pre-test or one post-test only

2. Includes only the target group. Total number of youth included in East Haven was 280.

In the next section, the results for each program are presented. This is then followed by another section that presents conclusions from the evaluation.

East Haven

Qualitative Information

The Joseph Mellilo Middle School Enrichment Program is a comprehensive after school program designed to provide at-risk seventh and eight grade students with positive alternatives to delinquent behaviors. The program was designed to provide students with academic, cultural, recreational, and athletic activities in a fun and relaxed atmosphere.

- Three 8-10 week sessions of the Joseph Mellilo Middle School Enrichment Program were implemented. Sixty-four (64) students registered for Session 1; sixty-two (62) for Session II; and 52 (52) for Session 3. The program was offered Monday through Thursday, 2:15 to 4:15.
- Participants were from a population of 7th and 8th grade students in Joseph Mellilo Middle School. Over the past 3 years, increasing emphasis has been placed on targeting at-risk youth. Guidance counselors, administrative staff, and teachers have become proficient at recruiting appropriate candidates for the program. Therefore, it was decided that a full-scale brochure distribution was not necessary for year 3, although some brochures were available in the office.
- Due to the large number of students involved in the after-school program in year 1, it was determined that the program evaluation would be more accurate if the analysis focused on a subgroup of participants, defined as being particularly “high risk.” In years 2 and 3, therefore, a target population was identified, for data collection purposes, as being particularly “high risk.” All members of this group were referred to the after-school program by guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers. The criteria for referral to the after school program included factors such as academic risk, deficient social skills, family problems, and truancy. At the end of years 2 and 3, evaluation material from this target group of targeted students was submitted for analysis.
- Student participation in the academic portion was mandatory in order to be eligible for the recreation portion.

- The philosophy of the Life Skills curriculum was an important underpinning of the enrichment program.
- Staff included certified teachers of the middle school and East Haven Academy, the East Haven High School in-school suspension teacher, aides of the middle school, East Haven High School students, and the Town of East Haven Youth Services Coordinator.

Academic Support

- A 45-minute academic/tutoring period was held each program day. The students were grouped based on their individual academic needs, such as CMT or homework assistance. The guidance staff worked with the enrichment program in assigning students to study groups, which averaged 5-10 students. Students had the opportunity to interact with their peers while participating in special projects or educational board games.

Individual/Group Activities

- The second part of the day offered individual/group physical activities. These activities changed in order to adapt to seasonal conditions. Program development was based on the results of a student interest survey. Once the program was under way, any modifications were simply in response to the evolving needs and preferences of the participants. Typical activities included:

Art	Fall Baseball	Volleyball
Babysitting	Fitness Workout	Walking
Basketball	Flag Football	
Board Games	Indoor gym games	
Clay animation	Jewelry Making	
Cooking	Jogging	
Drama	Rocketry	
Film Making	Softball	

- Students, based on their attendance and behavior, had the opportunity to attend a New Haven Ravens baseball game as a Session 3 field trip.
- The final day of the program was the annual picnic. Students and family members attended. The picnic featured food, beverages, music, games, and prizes.

School and Community Involvement

- The enrichment program participated with the Student Council and National Honor Society in collecting canned food to donate to the food pantry in town. Participants also collected pennies to be donated to charity.

Outcome Data

Sample

Data were collected from a total of 280 youth over the three-year period. However, beginning in year two, a decision was made to track only those youth who were assessed to be at high risk for school failure or delinquent behavior. The target group followed over years two and three included a total of 74 youth.

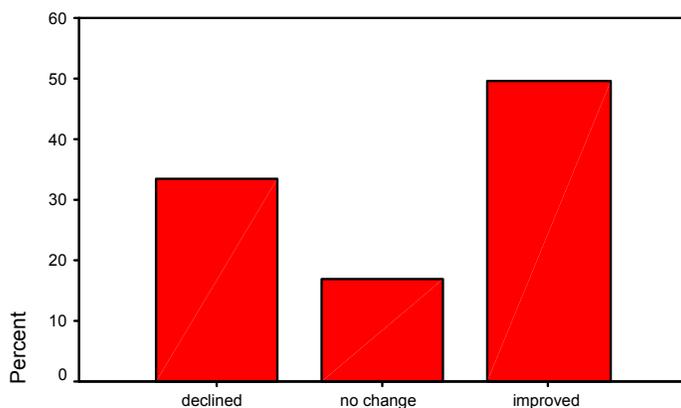
The group was comprised of more males (62%) than females (38%). Youth ranged in ages from 10 years to 16 years with an average age of 12 years. Racial/ethnic backgrounds included white (89%), Hispanic/Latin (4%), black (1%), and other (5%). Most youth were enrolled in grade 6 (36%), grade 7 (47%) or grade 8 (14%). The majority (66%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Another 19% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (50%), followed by “divorced” (26%), and “not married, not living together” (19%). Eighty-eight percent lived with their mothers and 62% lived with their fathers.

Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Overall, approximately 50% reported positive changes in psychological adjustment while the percentages of youth reporting changes in attitudes toward school were equally divided between positive (40%) and negative change (40%).

Changes in Psychological Adjustment

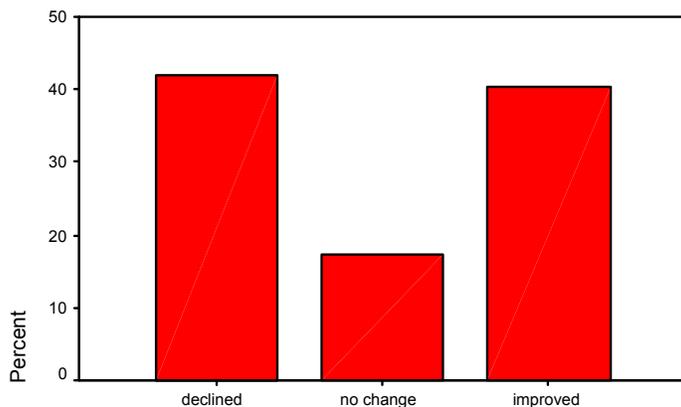
TOWN: 2.00 E. Haven



Changes in Psychological Adjustment

Changes in Attitudes Toward School

TOWN: 2.00 E. Haven



Changes in Attitudes Toward School

Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that the following factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
Grade	6.40	.05	Yrs Involved In Prog	8.48	.01
Yrs Involved In Prog	4.49	.05			
Canonical r= .52 (p<.05) Correctly Classified= 81%			Canonical r= .46 (p< .10) Correctly Classified= 72%		

The results suggested that students in younger grades and students who had been in the program longer were the ones most likely to benefit from participation in the program.

Evaluation Process

No problems were encountered in collecting the data from East Haven for inclusion in the Delinquency Prevention Evaluation. All personnel handled their evaluation responsibilities in a professional and timely manner.

Summary of Evaluation Results- East Haven

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

The program succeeded in setting up and maintaining a very effective after-school program for middle school youth. It consistently offered academic support and a rich variety of recreational activities every weekday during the school year.

Did the Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

Involvement in the program over time was significantly related to improvements in participants' psychological adjustment and positive attitudes toward school. An unanticipated outcome of the program was a significant effect on younger students' psychological adjustment.

The results suggest that the program may want to develop strategies for retaining more youth in the program for longer periods of time.

Griswold

Qualitative Information

Griswold Youth and Family Services proposed the establishment of a Youth Community Center to provide recreation, peer counseling, and tutoring services.

Objective #1: To increase the Center's membership and to maintain a consistent and high level of attendance among members.

- At the end of year 3, the Griswold Youth Community Center had a roster of 160 youth. An average of 17-19 youth attended regularly over the last four months. The Center attracted more middle school children this year, with the membership in that group surpassing the older members.
- Hours of operation were Monday through Thursday, 2:30 – 7:00 PM; Friday, 2:30-8:00; Saturday, 1:00-5:00 PM. On Saturdays, the Center welcomed children 10 years of age, along with the regular ages of 11-17.
- Members produced a newsletter that was mailed to all registered members. This attracted members who had not attended in a while. The newspaper featured information and comments from the members, information about activities, Resident trooper news, and birthdays for the month.

Homework Help and Peer Tutoring

- Homework help and tutoring was offered every day after school from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Computers were heavily utilized during this time.

Activities

- Four lock-ins were offered. Members arrived at the Center Saturday night and stayed until Sunday morning, during which time they participated in computer games, board games, casual discussions, and some sleep.
- Halloween party
- Christmas party
- A pool tournament
- Magic tournament
- Trip to Boston's Museum of Science and Aquarium

Objective #2: To increase the Volunteer roster of the Griswold Youth Community Center to enhance mentoring experiences, especially for those that are inter-generational.

- A Bachus Hospital speaker presented on the topics of AIDS and hepatitis.
- A D.A.R.E. presentation was made by a local social worker
- There was regular participation by Resident State Troopers. They stopped in and related to the members. They contributed an article to the newsletter each month.
- Resident Troopers took 18 members by bus to High 5 Adventure in Brattleboro, Vermont for two days last summer. Members learned rope activities, such as climbing and balancing, in addition to participating in classes for improving self-esteem and confidence. A similar trip was planned for Summer 2002.
- The State Troopers organized seminars at the Youth Center about under-age drinking.
- Members working with SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions, received an award.

Objective #3: To increase the number of leadership opportunities available to youth through community-based projects and activities.

- During Summer 2001 members planted and maintained flowers in planters along Main Street. They repeated this activity in Summer 2002.
- Youth members contributed to a Ground Zero fund for the firemen and policemen in New York.
- A community project was planned in conjunction with the Life Skills class at Griswold High School and the Senior Center. Starting September 1, 2002, the Life Skills class will do laundry for the seniors, the disabled, and shut-ins as a free service with pick-up and delivery. Center members created advertising posters. In addition, the Center will be the conduit for the call-ins, and Center members were trained to answer the phone. The receptacle for the clothing will be behind the Center and under the Center's care.
- Youth Center members, working in collaboration with the Life Skills class, planned a fair for children, pre-school through grade two. This activity was put on hold because of budget constraints, but is scheduled to occur in Fall 2002.

Outcome Data

Sample

The group was comprised of more males (71%) than females (29%). Youth ranged in ages from 9 years to 17 years with an average age of 13 years. Racial/ethnic backgrounds included white (89%), Hispanic/Latin (3%), black (2%), and other (5%). Most youth were enrolled in grades 7 (26%), 8 (12%), 9 (15%), or 10 (19%). The majority (65%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Another 22% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (43%), followed by “divorced” (28%), and “not married, not living together” (16%). Ninety percent lived with their mothers and 53% lived with their fathers.

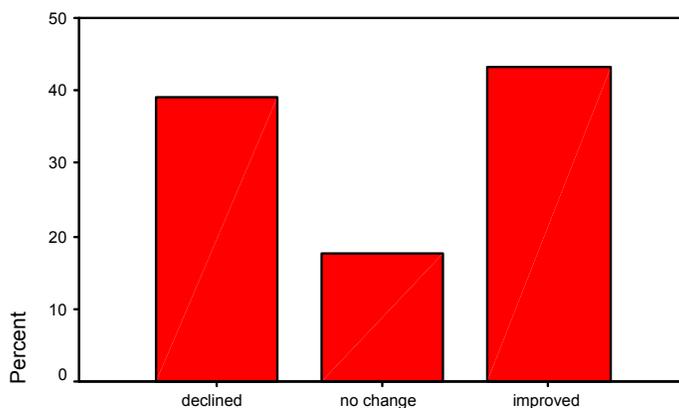
Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Overall, about 45% reported positive changes in psychological adjustment while just under 40% of youth reported declines in their psychological adjustment. About half of youth participants reported a decline in their attitudes toward school in contrast to 35% who reported an improvement.

It should be noted, however, that school success was a secondary goal of this program. Greater attention was focused on activities that were more likely to affect psychological adjustment.

Changes in Psychological Adjustment

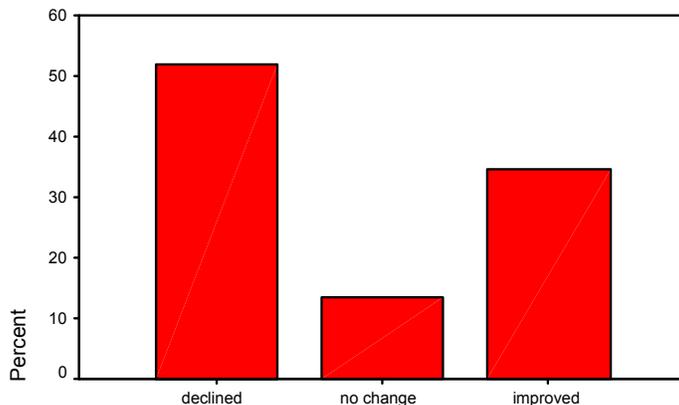
TOWN: 1.00 griswold



Changes in Psychological Adjustment

Changes in Attitudes Toward School

TOWN: 1.00 griswold



Changes in Attitudes Toward School

Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that the following factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
			Yrs lived in Town	6.84	.01
			Attendance	3.2	.10
Canonical r= .37 (p N/S) Correctly Classified= 76%			Canonical r= .59 (p< .05) Correctly Classified= 73%		

The results suggested that youth who had lived in town fewer years and those who had attended the program more frequently were most likely to improve their attitudes toward school. Neither length of involvement in the program nor regularity of attendance was associated with improvement in youths' psychological adjustment.

Evaluation Process

No problems were encountered in collecting the data from Griswold for inclusion in the Delinquency Prevention evaluation. Ms. Veloce handled her evaluation responsibility in a professional and timely manner.

Summary of Evaluation Results- Griswold

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

The Griswold Youth Community Center project clearly reached each of its three primary goals. It developed an active and vibrant teen center that showed steady enrollment and usage over the three-year period. The Center engaged a variety of adults in the community in its programs (Resident State Troopers, social workers, hospital personnel) and provided youth with a variety of community projects to enhance their sense of participation in the community.

Did the Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

About 45% of the youth who participated in the Center reported an increase in their overall psychological adjustment. Surprisingly neither length of involvement in the Center or regularity of attendance was associated with this improvement. In both groups, the average attendance was about 40% of the time. This would seem reasonable for a drop-in center. Similarly both groups had been involved in the Center for an average of one and three-quarter years.

Only about 35% of youth participants reported improvement in the attitudes toward school. The ones most likely to show improvement were those who had lived in town a short time and those who attended the Center regularly. An opportunity for newcomers to affiliate with peers and to develop a sense of involvement may also help them to develop a positive affiliation with school.

The program may want to consider ways of expanding youth's involvement in the Center's homework help and tutoring program. Available data indicated that only 3 individuals in year one, 13 individuals in year two, and no one in year 3 participated in the academic support part of the program.

Middletown

Qualitative Information

It was proposed that the Youth As Resources (YAR) program would target 500-600 at-risk youths between the ages of 9 and 17. The stated goal was to significantly expand the reach of four youth-led program models to include a younger age group: Youth Helping Youth, Middlesex Youth United, Teen Summit, and Jam Sessions.

The following objectives were identified for year 3:

- Provide teen mentors and trainers for younger youth (ages 9-12), particularly those identified as “high risk.”
- Increase youth involvement in outreach, education, and support to peers and younger youth (ages 9-12).
- Involve youth not traditionally identified as leaders in alternative leadership development activities.
- Provide opportunities for youth to connect with and act as mentors.
- Strengthen connections between school and community-based positive youth development initiatives.
- Provide a forum for youth-led examination of local risk and protective factors.
- Provide opportunities for community service.
- Provide positive alternative activities for youth.

Two new staff members were added this year. Staff met with principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and student assistance counselors at the beginning of the school year in order to recruit members. Announcements were made and flyers prepared.

Specific Activities included:

Youth As Resources

Youth As Resources is a peer outreach, education & support program. Participants make presentations to community groups, become a resource for friends and classmates, and develop mentor relationships with younger children through regular, supervised contact. Program content focuses on promoting positive self-image, making healthy choices, and building self-esteem.

Program content was based on the Natural Helpers model. Group work focused on providing participants with appropriate information about substance abuse, family roles, peer pressure, racism, life skills, etc. Youth As Resources was comprised of two groups, US Kids and City Kids.

US Kids

- US Kids were twelve (12) 6th graders that met at Kegwin School twice a week from 2:45 to 4:00 PM.
- Members were trained to mentor twice monthly at Kids Korner, an after-school program for elementary school children. Members also learned about communication techniques, problem-solving, self-esteem issues, cultural diversity and leadership. Members worked after school with 35 students, grades K-5.
- US Kids participated in a special training course at CRT Head Start to prepare them for mentoring sessions at Head Start. Members worked with 50 Head Start children.
- Members participated in a two-part karate program that focused on anger management, conflict resolution, and problem-solving, in addition to karate techniques.
- Members made crafts for the annual Rushford Center fund-raising golf tournament.

City Kids

- City Kids were nine (9) 7th and 8th grade students who met weekly at Woodrow Wilson Middle School.
- Members participated in a group bonding team building workshop with adults from the Middletown community and the high school Youth Helping Youth group.
- Members participated in Hip Hop classes facilitated by the Oddfellows Playhouse dance team. Three volunteers were involved in this activity.
- Members participated in a presentation on prejudice and racism to 55 peers.
- Members prepared an informational packet for youth, teachers, and parents on depression and suicide prevention for adolescents.
- Members created a skit on making good choices in adolescence and performed it at the Middle-School Youth Summit.

Middletown Youth United

Middletown Youth United (MY) is an interactive theater program designed by adolescents to convey messages to other youth about youth-related issues.

- Ten (10) participants met on a weekly basis.
- This program is part of a statewide initiative to promote tobacco-free lifestyles in Connecticut. During year 3, youth worked in collaboration with the Connecticut Area Health Education Council (AHEC), CT Department of Public Health, local agencies, and communities to educate people about tobacco-related issues. Youth participated in educational workshops, including a training workshop at the UCONN Health Center in Farmington.
- Members participated in the Great American Smoke Out in November by putting together “Quit Kits” for the faculty and staff in their school.
- Members organized a picture laminating event at which they laminated photos for smokers to put on their cigarette pack to remind them that someone cares about their health.
- Two members represented the group at the annual Legislative Breakfast held at Wesleyan University. One of the youth spoke about the program and the goals for the coming year.
- Members participated in an essay contest about tobacco regulation in public places. The winner was eligible to read his/her essay at a Youth Rally at the State Capitol.
- Members actively recruited members for next year through flyers and advertising.
- Eight members attended a tobacco summit weekend.
- Three members were interviewed for the MCSAAC Middlesex Forum. The half-hour interview was televised on the Middletown Comcast television station.
- Participants created and performed a skit at the Middle-School Summit.

Community Service Group

The Middletown Youth Center Activity Group is a community service program. During year 3, six (6) students met weekly. They were involved in the following activities:

- Mentoring at Head Start two Mondays a month.
- Attendance at the local prevention council meeting once a month.
- Skill-building activities once a month.

Outcome Data

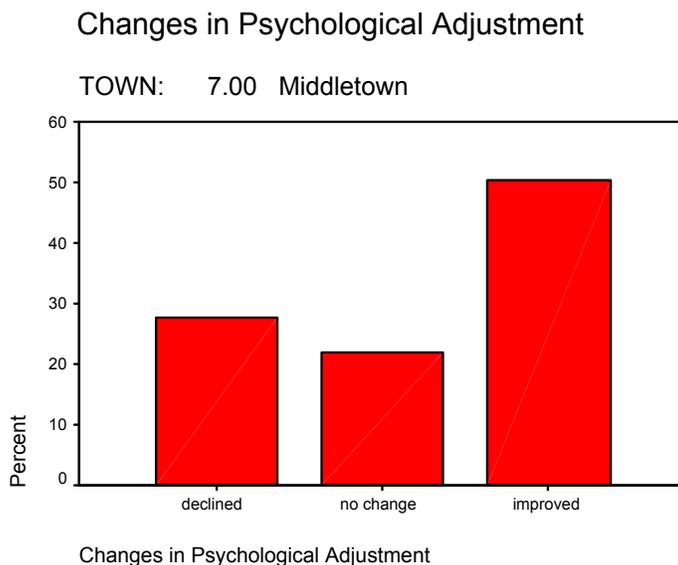
Sample

The group was comprised of more females (69%) than males (31%). Youth ranged in ages from 10 years to 18 years with an average age of 13 years. Racial/ethnic backgrounds included black (47%), white (34%), Hispanic/Latin (9%), Native American (2%), and other (9%). Most youth were enrolled in grades 6 (42%), 7 (25%) or 8 (15%). The majority (76%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Another 16% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (39%) and “not married, not living together” (39%). This was followed by “divorced” (20%). Eighty-one percent lived with their mothers and only 42% lived with their fathers.

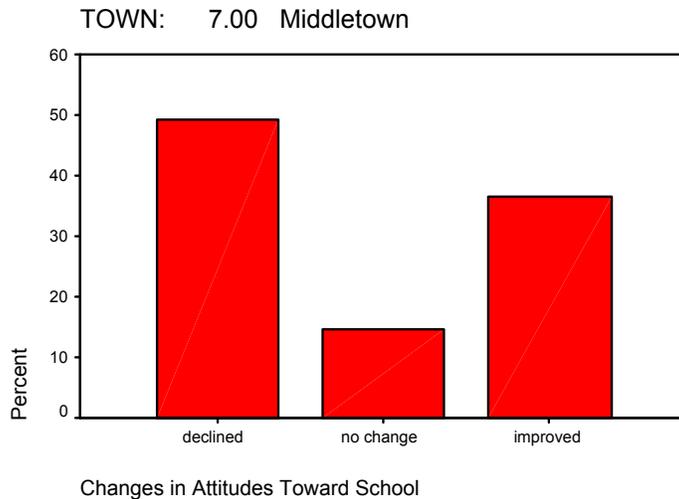
Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Over 50% reported positive changes in psychological adjustment. The percentage of youth reporting positive changes in attitudes toward school was about 35%.

However, as in the case of Griswold reported earlier, school success was a secondary goal of this program. Greater attention was focused on activities that were more likely to affect psychological adjustment



Changes in Attitudes Toward School



Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that the following factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
			Age	8.05	.01
			Grade	4.26	.05
			Yrs lived in Town	4.90	.05
Canonical r= .23 (p N/S) Correctly Classified= 53%			Canonical r= .44 (p< .05) Correctly Classified= 71%		

The results suggested that youth who were older, in higher grades, and lived in town fewer years were the ones most likely to improve their attitudes toward school.

The failure of attendance and length of involvement in the program to predict successful improvement on psychological adjustment or school attitudes may be due to the high rates of attendance in both the improved and declined groups. Both had an average rate of attendance over 80%. Similarly both groups showed an equal average length of stay in the program (just over one year).

Evaluation Process

No problems were encountered in collecting the data from Middletown for inclusion in the Delinquency Prevention Evaluation. All personnel involved handled their evaluation responsibilities in a professional and timely manner.

Summary of Evaluation Results- Middletown

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

This program succeeded in offering an impressive array of after-school and community-based activities to youth. Activities targeted a range of ages, including middle-school and high school youth. Opportunities for youth leadership, community service, mentoring, and positive recreational activities were offered.

Did the Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

Nearly twice as many youth in the program improved their overall psychological adjustment (50%) than declined (27%). Although the rate of improvement in participants' attitudes toward school was lower, it must be emphasized that improved school performance was not a specific goal of this program. Given this fact, it is noteworthy that a third of the participants reported improved attitudes toward school. This may have been due to the fact that a number of activities were offered in the local schools (Kegwin and Woodrow Wilson Middle School). The finding that older youth and youth new to the community were the ones most likely to improve their attitudes toward school may suggest that the program was able to reach youth who might otherwise have been disengaged. A sense of connection to peers and the community may have translated into a better sense of engagement in school.

Norwalk

Qualitative Information

Through the after-school program at the Washington Village Community Center, a targeted population of 40 children, grades 1-6, residing in Washington Village, the King-Kennedy complex, Meadow Gardens, Monterey Village, and 11 Fort Point Street actively participated in positive educational and enrichment activities after school.

The following planned activities were carried out:

- The after-school program was offered Monday through Friday, from 4:00 – 7:00 P.M. The typical program day included a 15-20 minute snack period, 1 to 1.5 hours of tutoring and/or homework help, and a period of free time for board games, computer games, and other activities. Enrollment was approximately 40 – 50 students, of which more than 30 attended on a regular basis. Students in grades 1 through 4 met for 2 hours, followed by students in grades 5 through 8 who met for 2 hours. There was some time overlap.
- A strong emphasis was placed on homework help, offered Monday through Thursday. Staff worked informally with small groups of students, teaching them study skills and assisting them in preparing homework assignments.
- A reading program was offered.
- Math skills were addressed by having children work with individual staff and by using age appropriate computer software.
- Six computer stations, equipped with software, were available. Students practiced keyboarding skills and completed school projects.
- A small group of children participated in an intergenerational program called “Senior Buddies.” Each month the students visited Ludlowe Commons, a local assisted-living facility to participate in art and cooking activities with their “senior buddies.”

- Karate was offered on a weekly basis. Emphasis was placed upon the development of increased concentration, self-control, and respect for self and others.
- “Sounds of Africa,” a weekly drumming and African dance program, combined technical instruction with lessons in African history and culture. Children were divided into two groups, first graders through third graders and fourth graders through sixth graders.
- In response to neighborhood feedback, a performing and visual arts program, called The Saturday Academy,” was offered on Saturday from 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM. During this time, students participated in Basic Acting for ages 6 to 8 and ages 9 – 11. Skills that were emphasized included listening, expressing feelings through language, assertion, expressing thoughts succinctly, and modulating emotional responses. In addition, children learned to appreciate dramatic performance. The goal of each class was to present either a short play or an improvisation.
- Two sections of Art for Children were offered for ages 6 through 8 and ages 9 through 11. Skills that were emphasized included visual skills and eye-hand coordination. Students were taught to appreciate many art forms.
- Family activities included a Halloween party, a trip to a corn maze, music lessons, language lessons, a trip to a pottery factory, and attendance at performances offered by the Westport Theater and the Alvin Ailey Dance troupe.
- Staff included a Lead Coordinator, three educational coordinators, four volunteers, a drumming and African dance instructor, a karate instructor, a visual arts instructor, and a drama coach.

The South Norwalk Active Learning Program continued, with a change in hours, through Summer 2002 and focused on math facts and reading. The program coordinated with the public schools to obtain assigned summer reading lists. Academic enrichment was incorporated into games and activities.

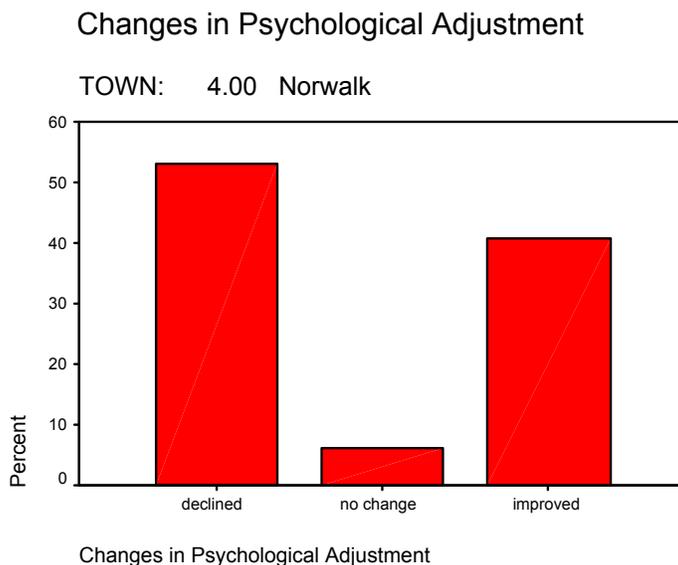
Outcome Data

Sample

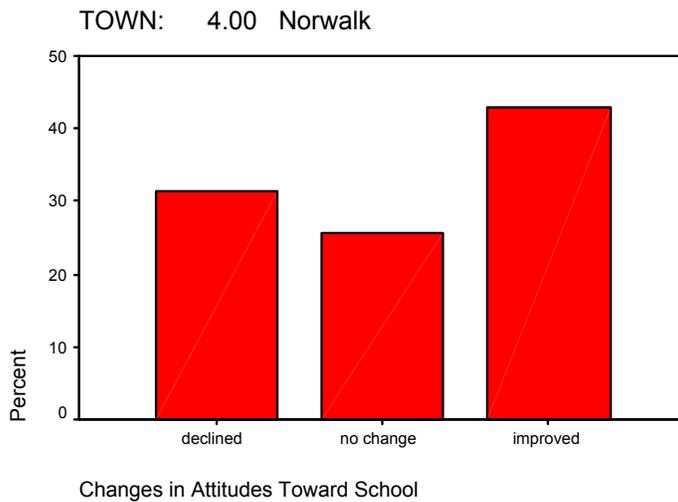
The group was comprised of more females (58%) than males (42%). Youth ranged in ages from 7 years (28%) to 13 years (11%) with an average age of 9 years. Racial/ethnic backgrounds included black (63%), Hispanic/Latin (23%), white (2%) and other (13%). Most youth were enrolled in grades 2 (20%), 3 (24%), 4 (17%), or 5 (13%). The majority (78%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Only 4% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (33%) or “not married, not living together” (33%). This was followed by “not married and living together (14%) and “divorced” (12%). Ninety percent lived with their mothers and only 35% lived with their fathers.

Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Just over 50% reported negative changes in psychological adjustment while 40% reported positive changes in their psychological adjustment. The percentage of youth reporting positive changes in their attitudes toward school (45%) was clearly greater than the percentage who reported a decline on this measure (30%). The latter finding is relevant since the program’s intended goals were most specifically targeted toward helping youth succeed in school.



Changes in Attitudes Toward School



Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that no factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
Canonical r= .36 (p N/S) Correctly Classified= 60%			Canonical r= .42 (p N/S) Correctly Classified= 67%		

The results suggested that those youth who improved or declined on their psychological adjustment or attitudes toward school could not be differentiated by the set of factors studied in this evaluation. Most notably, neither length of time in the program nor average rate of attendance in the program was a significant factor in predicting positive outcomes.

Evaluation Process

No problems were encountered in collecting the data from Norwalk for inclusion in the Delinquency Prevention evaluation. Mr. Hinson handled his evaluation responsibility in a professional and timely manner.

Summary of Evaluation Results- Norwalk

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

The program succeeded in recruiting a group of 40 to 50 youth in grades 1 through 6 who resided in the targeted neighborhoods. The majority attended on a regular basis. They were offered a rich array of after-school, educational opportunities (homework help, study skills, math and computer skills) and enrichment activities (art, dance, drama, cooking classes, and self defense).

Did the Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

Approximately 40% of participants reported improvements in their psychological adjustment and about 44% reported improvements in their attitudes toward school. The changes in psychological adjustment were noteworthy because the program's stated goals were chiefly in the area of school performance. It is unclear what factors differentiated those who improved from those who did not as none of the variables examined in this evaluation proved to be statistically significant for this program. Those who improved and those who declined on this measure both attended, on average, approximately three-quarters of the sessions and were involved just over one-and-a-quarter years.

Putnam

Qualitative Information

It was proposed that the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Program would service the following youth during the 2001-2002 program year:

- 25 youth who have been arrested on petty offenses such as trespassing, fights, vandalism, thefts, and shoplifting
- 25 youth who are considered at risk and have been identified as “Family With Service Needs (FWSN)” youth. Such youth may have behaviors relating to truancy, runaway attempts, incorrigibility, defiance of school rules, and beyond control of their parent.
- Youth in the community who have been identified by the school department, the police, health officials, and human service providers as having at-risk behavior. It was expected that 200 youth would be targeted for, and involved in, one or more alternative activities offered throughout the year.

Objective #1: To continue the implementation of a Juvenile Review Board system in the town of Putnam that will provide early intervention and diversion from the Juvenile Justice System for 25 youth annually, who are first-time offenders.

- Fourteen (14) Board members met monthly and worked with youth referred by the schools, the Putnam Police Department and the Connecticut State Police.
- The population originally targeted was 25 first-time offenders. In year 3, 27 youth were referred to the program. Twelve (12) participants completed the program successfully, four (4) were referred to Juvenile Court for non-compliance, and eight (8) were still involved with the program at the time of the 6/05/02 site visit. In addition, three participants completed the JRB program in year 2, but did not complete post-tests.
- The Putnam Police Department reported a change in both police and youth attitudes as a result of their work together through the Juvenile Review Board. Police made more referrals to the Board, and youth developed more positive relationships with the adults in the community.

The Police Department reported that there had been no recidivism among the youth who went through the program.

- The Board exhibited a good rate of retention since the inception of the program, resulting in a consistency in decisions. Additional representatives from the State Police and the community were added in year 3.

Objective #2: To provide 6 to 10 Putnam youth with the opportunity to be part of a Youth Development Advisory Board. The Youth Advisory Board was to develop alternative activities for themselves, their families, school and/or community, and was to provide advice to the Putnam Prevention Policy Board.

This Board was comprised of 9 members, representing 4 schools, Putnam Elementary School, Putnam Middle School, Putnam High School, and St. Mary's. A target group of 200 at-risk youth were offered alternative activities. The completed activities included the following:

- A dance for 150 middle school students.
- A motivational speaker who presented to 175 students at St. Mary's School in grades 4 through 7.
- A performance by the New York Theater for 500 students at Putnam Elementary School.
- A trip to Block Island for 35 high school students.
- Twice monthly roller skating for approximately 20 elementary and middle school students when the schools dismissed early for staff training.
- The Teen Outreach Program (TOPS) focused on life skills, community service, and group activities. All participants were trained at the beginning of the year in preparation for the community service component. The Teen Outreach Program involved 12 members who met weekly and were involved in volunteering at a local nursing home, after school mentoring with younger children, and fund-raising through Relay for Life.
- Activities were offered for 30 at-risk youth through the Putnam Youth Club. These activities focused on positive youth development and included an intergenerational garden project with senior citizens, homework help and tutoring, and community service. The program was

expanded from two days to three days a week and included grades 3 through 8.

- The skateboard park officially opened in June 2002.

Objective #3: To maintain a bank of community service activities for youth who have been identified as at-risk for delinquency, or who are first-time offenders.

Eight (8) resources were available as community service opportunities and possible mentoring options. The resources included:

- Putnam Parks and Recreation Department
- Putnam Police Department
- Putnam Library
- Putnam Middle School
- United Services
- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Summer Camps
- Putnam Supermarket
- Jim's Upholstery

A forum was held in July 2002 to inform local citizens about the community service bank and to solicit feedback from the community.

Objective #4: To continue to evaluate demographic information for those youth that are at-risk for delinquency through the JRB database. The Putnam Prevention Policy Board will review the demographics information, intervention strategies, and outcome of interventions, to determine what common denominators may be present in 25-30 youth who are first-time or repeat offenders.

- Personnel from the Putnam Police Department entered data for every juvenile referral, whether or not the referral was involved with the Juvenile Review Board, in an effort to create a demographic profile. The database was updated every quarter and discussed at prevention board meetings.

Prevention Policy Board

The Prevention Policy Board was expanded and was renamed Putnam Community Planning and Prevention Council to reflect its expanded focus and membership. It was comprised of 30 members, representing community

members, schools, local service agencies, police and Juvenile Court. The town of Putnam has officially recognized the Board as a resource for town government regarding positive youth development and family services. The Council worked extensively in year 3 to update its prevention plan.

Outcome Data

Sample

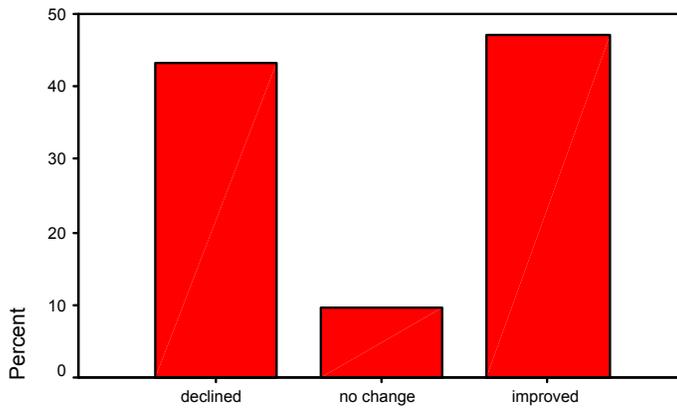
The group was comprised of more males (58%) than females (42%). Youth ranged in ages from 8 years to 16 years with an average age of 13 years. Racial/ethnic backgrounds included white (87%), Hispanic/Latin (6%), black (1%), and other (2%). Most youth were enrolled in grades 7 (12%), 8 (35%), 9 (11%), and 10 (16%). The majority (70%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Another 19% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (48%), followed by “divorced” (36%). Ninety-two percent lived with their mothers and 55% lived with their fathers.

Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Just under 50% reported positive changes in their overall psychological adjustment while just over 40% reported a decline on this measure. A considerably greater percentage of youth reported a decline in their attitudes toward school in contrast to those who reported improvement.

Changes in Psychological Adjustment

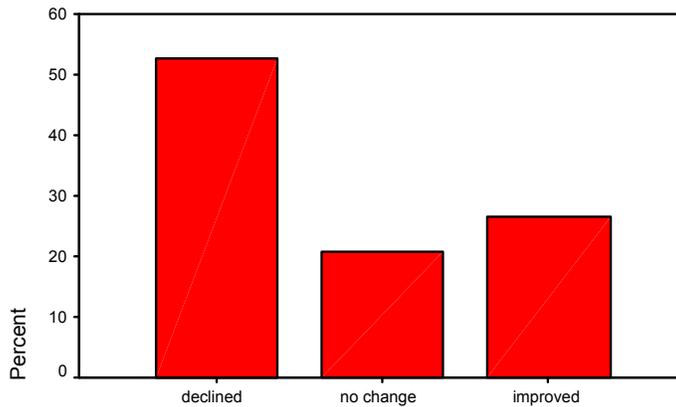
TOWN: 5.00 Putnam



Changes in Psychological Adjustment

Changes in Attitudes Toward School

TOWN: 5.00 Putnam



Changes in Attitudes Toward School

Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that the following factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
			Age	14.30	.001
			Grade	7.80	.01
			Attendance	3.27	.10
			Yrs Involved in Program	12.38	.001
Canonical r= .32 (p N/S) Correctly Classified= 62%			Canonical r= .55 (p< .001) Correctly Classified= 78%		

The results suggested that older youth, in higher grades, who attended regularly, and who had been in the program longer were the ones most likely to benefit from participation in the program—especially with regard to their attitudes toward school.

Evaluation Process

All staff involved cooperated with the evaluation process.

Summary of Evaluation Results- Putnam

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

The Putnam program was successful in achieving all of its initial goals. The program established a fully functioning Juvenile Review Board. Despite serving a limited number of youth during years one and two of its operation, the JRB was able to process more youth cases in its third year (27) than originally projected (25). This appeared to be due, in large measure, to the positive response of local Police to the program. To date, the recidivism rate for those who completed the program is zero. The proposed Youth Advisory Board successfully planned and completed a host of community activities (dances, trips, performances, community service, and construction of a skate board park). A bank of eight community service resources was developed to support community service projects as planned. Finally, a database was created and maintained by the Police Department in order to follow all JRB referrals.

Did The Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

Almost 50% of the youth who participated in program activities reported positive improvements in their overall psychological adjustment. It is unclear from the data what factors differentiated those who improved from those who declined on this measure.

Twenty-five percent reported positive changes in their attitudes toward school. However, it should be noted that the Putnam program, like several others, did not specifically target school performance as a primary outcome for youth participants. The youth most likely to report positive changes in their attitudes toward school were older, in higher grades at school, and attended the program regularly over a longer period of time. This latter trend was found in the Middletown program as well. As noted earlier, there appears to be a relationship between a sense of connection to peers and the community through structured activities and an enhanced sense of engagement in school for older youth.

Stamford

Qualitative Information

Youth as Resources (YAR) actively engages young people in identifying and acting on ways to improve their communities. YAR is a nationally recognized model, with over 65 programs across the United States and three foreign countries. The Stamford YAR program is a partnership between Communities in Action and the Mayor's Youth Initiative. The program content is based on the Youth as Resources curriculum.

It was proposed that through YAR, groups of youth could apply for funding to design and perform community service activities in their schools, communities and neighborhoods. Mini-grants of up to \$1000 were available to groups of young people who wanted to make a positive difference in Stamford.

Goal 1: Expand the Youth As Resources Board, providing members with more meaningful opportunities to serve.

- In year 3, the Board consisted of 8 youth and 5 adults who met quarterly.
- A training/planning meeting and a 3-day training meeting were held in March 2002. One of the goals of the latter meeting was to create a strategic plan for the continued operation of YAR.

Goal 2: Develop a strategic plan for sustaining the YAR Project in Stamford.

- Worked with a consultant to develop a 3-year strategic plan to address issues of program expansion, sustainability and replication in other communities.
- It was proposed that YAR develop a partnership with Stamford public schools to incorporate YAR as a school-based activity within the district. After several meetings, however, the Board decided against being school-based in favor of maintaining the integrity of the YAR mission by pursuing outside funding.

Goal 3: Provide funding for a diverse cross-section of youth-run Projects.

The following projects were funded for the second and third quarters, May 2000 through December 2001:

1. The Latino Foundation

- The goal of this group was to involve youth in a partnership/mentoring opportunity with adults in a radio and television project.
- Fifteen youth and 5 adults were involved. No evaluation data were available from this project.
- The project facilitator reported that the project was in operation from March to June. She provided the Community in Action office with a few post-tests, but was unable to give them any further information.

2. Amor Latino

- The goal of this group was to promote diversity at West Hill High School by identifying all successful Latinos in Stamford as role models.
- Seven youth and 2 adults were involved. Pre- and post-tests were completed by 5 youth.
- The project was successfully completed.

3. Kids Who Care

- The goal of this project was to help others improve the community by visiting Kindergarten children three times during the school year for the purpose of establishing relationships. Participants purchased books, read to the children, and then presented the children with the books to keep.
- Eleven youth and 3 adults were involved. Pre- and post-tests were completed by 11 youth.
- The project was successfully completed.

4. School Readiness Program

- The goal of this project was to work with pre-schoolers to create sculptures to beautify their school and place the sculptures on display in the school.
- Three hundred youth and 50 adults were involved. No evaluation data were available.
- The project was completed successfully.

5. Downtown Oasis After School and Summer Program

- The goal of this project was to beautify the community by making window boxes for the Urban League's office.
- Twenty-five youth and 3 adults were involved. Pre-tests and post-tests were completed by 6 youth.
- The project was completed successfully.

6. Teen Awareness Group, Jewish Family Service

- The goal of this project was to conduct community outreach to keep teens in different neighborhoods informed about activities and other things of interest through flyers and newsletters.
- Ten youth and 2 adults were involved.
- A YAR Board member visited this project and reported that it was in operation during the school year.
- The evaluation instruments were not completed correctly, and it was impossible to match the pre- and post-tests. Communities in Action contacted the facilitator numerous times, but were not successful in getting the issue resolved.

7. Oak Street Center After School and Summer Enrichment Project

- The goal of this project was to create a monthly Center newsletter based on activities taking place. A newsletter and brochure were successfully completed.
- Five youth and 2 adults were involved. Data collected was not usable since the post-tests were completed by a different group of participants than those who completed the pre-tests. Communities in Action attributed the problem to a large turnover in staff and students over the past few months.

Five new projects were funded during the 3rd and 4th quarters, January 2002 through June 2002:

1. Passion Drill Team

- The goal of this project was to give young ladies an opportunity to be a part of a positive, competitive team project that would provide skills training in physical fitness, hygiene, step, and dance and would promote self esteem and team spirit.
- Five youth and one adult were involved. All youth completed the evaluation materials.

- The project was successfully completed.

2. **Yerwood Scholars**

- The goal of this project was to give youth in an after-school program the opportunity to produce a banner and “t” shirts that would identify their program as they marched in the Memorial Day parade.
- Twenty-five youth and 2 adults were involved. Fifteen participants completed evaluation data.
- The project was successfully completed.

3. **Poetic Clothing Gear**

- The goal of this project was to come up with positive rhymes to decorate youth clothing as an alternative to sporting designer logos.
- Four youth and 1 adult were involved. Two participants completed evaluation data.
- The project was successfully completed.

4. **Digital Documentary**

- The goal of this project was to produce a video documentary depicting the history of the school and introducing key faculty members to incoming freshmen.
- Nineteen youth and 1 adult were involved. Seventeen participants completed evaluation data.
- The project was successfully completed.

5. **Scalzi Park Garden**

- The goal of this project was to allow Trailblazers Academy youth to beautify the park surrounding their school campus. Due to drought conditions, the project was re-scheduled to start in early June 2002 and continue throughout the 2002-2003 academic year.
- Forty youth and 3 adults are to be involved.

Goal 4: Provide on-going training opportunities for YAR grantees

- An internet-based correspondence between the YAR Board of Stamford and the YAR Board of Pinellas County, Florida resulted in a visit by a representative group in early July 2002. The Stamford Board will visit Pinellas County later this summer. The purpose of these exchange visits

was to familiarize youth with how different YAR Boards are run, to get ideas for future grant projects, and to share YAR experiences.

Outcome Data

Sample

This group of youth was comprised of 48% males and 52% females. Youth ranged in ages from 5 years to 18 years with an average age of 13 years. The targeting of younger youth appears to be a most recent change in program strategy. In the first annual report (July 2000), youth ranged between 12 and 18 years of age. Since no data were available for this project in year 2, the presence of younger-aged youth in the sample appears specific to year 3 of the program. Eleven percent of the youth were age 7 or under, and another 25% were between the ages of 8 and 11.

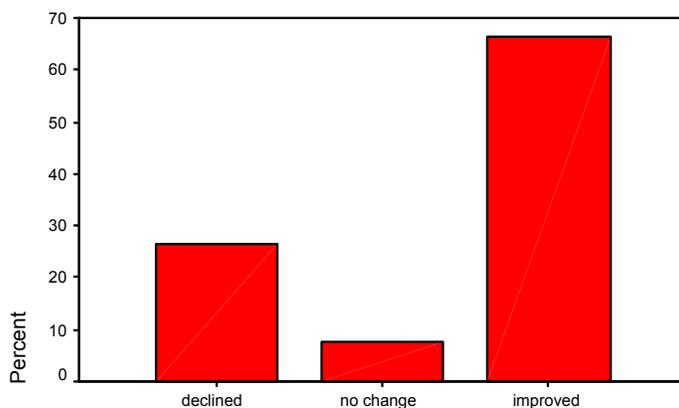
The Racial/ethnic backgrounds included white (39%), black, (35%), Hispanic/Latin (18%), and other (7%). Grades in school ranged between 1 and 12. Most youth were enrolled in grade 6 (15%), followed by grades 9 (12%), 10 (11%), 11 (20%), and 12 (11%). Another 18% were in grade 5 or less. The large majority (85%) had lived in town 5 or more years. Only 6% had lived in town two years or less. The most frequently described parental relationship was “married, living together” (57%), followed by “not married, not living together” (20%). Another 14% reported that their parents were divorced. Ninety-one percent lived with their mothers and 59% lived with their fathers.

Rates of Positive and Negative Change

The percentages of youth who reported positive, negative, or no change on overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school are depicted below. Overall, almost 70% reported positive changes in psychological adjustment. The percentage reporting improved attitudes toward school (46%) outnumber the percentage reporting a decline on this measure (36%).

Changes in Psychological Adjustment

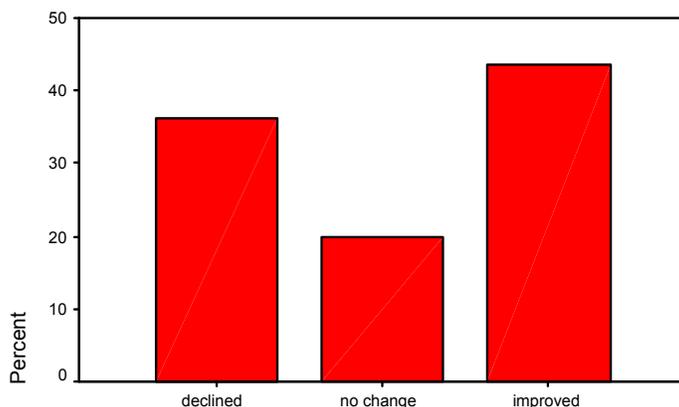
TOWN: 3.00 Stamford



Changes in Psychological Adjustment

Changes in Attitudes Toward School

TOWN: 3.00 Stamford



Changes in Attitudes Toward School

Duration of Participation, Rate of Attendance, and Other Factors

The results for the discriminant function analysis revealed that the following factors successfully discriminated between youth who reported improvement in their overall psychological adjustment and attitudes toward school and those who reported declines.

Psychological Adjustment			Attitudes toward School		
Factor	F	Sig	Factor	F	Sig
Age	5.85	.05	Attendance	13.08	.001
Grade	5.08	.05			
Attendance	7.34	.01			
Canonical r= .53 (p<.001) Correctly Classified= 79%			Canonical r= .55 (p< .001) Correctly Classified= 71%		

The results suggested that older youth, in higher grades (grade 8-9 versus grade 6), and who attended regularly were the ones most likely to improve their overall psychological adjustment. The results suggest that the program’s strategy of targeting younger youth may not prove as successful as their earlier efforts to engage older youth. Those program participants who were most likely to improve their attitudes toward school were the ones who attended the program regularly. It should also be noted that it was not possible to assess the significance of the length of time youth were involved in this program because all youth participated for one year or less. This was undoubtedly the result of the program’s focus on engaging youth in specific time-limited projects.

Evaluation Process

While the Stamford Youth as Resources staff encountered some difficulty getting a few of the adult grant facilitators to administer the test materials, the staff cooperated with the evaluation process to the best of their ability.

Summary of Evaluation Results- Stamford

Did the Program Do What it Set Out to Do?

As proposed, the Stamford program increased the number of youth serving on the Youth as Resources (YAR) Advisory Board, developed a strategic plan for sustaining the program beyond the present three-year funding period, and supported a host of new YAR community projects. A total of

22 different youth-initiated, community projects were supported by the program over the three-year period.

Did the Program Achieve Positive Outcomes?

An impressive 68% of the youth who participated in the YAR program reported positive changes in their psychological adjustment. As in the case of other programs that emphasized peer interactions through a variety of structured, community activities (i.e., Middletown, Putnam), the age of the youth was an important factor. The youth most likely to change on this measure were older and attended the program regularly.

Approximately 44% reported positive changes in their attitudes toward school. This percentage is quite impressive given the fact that the YAR program did not specifically target school performance as a primary outcome for youth participants. Here again, regular attendance in the program differentiated those who improved versus those who declined on this measure.

Conclusions

The first important point to emphasize is that all six programs were highly successful in carrying out what they initially planned. The programs offered a broad array of youth-centered programs and activities tailored to the specific needs of their community as identified in their Local Delinquency Prevention Plans.

Furthermore, it is clear that all programs had success in producing positive outcomes for some of the youth who participated in their programs. If we look at the percentage of youth in each town who completed at least one pre-test and one post-test, and improved on at least one of the two major outcome indicators (overall psychological adjustment, attitudes toward school), the results are as follows:

East Haven	96%
Griswold	54%
Middletown	61%
Norwalk	55%
Putnam	53%
Stamford	68%

All programs produced positive changes in over one-half of the youth who participated in the program (and participated in the data collection). Given the number of risk factors that youth in these programs are exposed to in the course of their daily lives, these results must be considered very favorable. It is not reasonable to expect youth programs to reach every youth, especially in light of the various factors such as negative peer influences, unstable family environments, exposure to drugs and alcohol, neighborhood crime, and in some cases, long-standing difficulties in learning or relating successfully to adults. Overall, it is clear that these youth programs made a positive difference for the majority of youth involved.

It is equally clear that programs tend to be more successful with youth who attend regularly and who remain in the programs over a longer period of time. In four of the six programs, attendance or the length of time youth were involved significantly differentiated between youth who had improved and youth who had not improved. The message here is clear. Programs can

increase their overall effectiveness with youth by developing strategies that engage youth in the program and keep them engaged.

Several other conclusions of a more speculative nature are also offered here. One involves programs that emphasized a wide array of community activities (e.g., Griswold, Middletown, Putnam, Stamford). Although it was not a major goal of these programs, each appeared to have a positive influence on a subgroup of youths' attitudes toward school. The result was most notable with older youth who were actively involved (attendance, length of involvement) in the programs. There was also some indication that youth new to the community were also more likely to experience this positive change. One explanation is that the context created by these programs allowed these youth to establish relationships with peers and other adults that carried over into the school setting. Older youth may be more likely to disengage from family or other adults. Youth new to the community may not have had time to establish a peer support network. These programs may provide an important bridge between youth who are disengaged (or disengaging) and the school setting.

Another interesting finding was that some programs that focused primarily on improving youths' school performance also influenced some participants' psychological adjustment (e.g., East Haven, Norwalk). In the case of East Haven, the subgroup most likely to change on this measure attended the program regularly and were in younger grades. The Norwalk group also worked with a considerably younger population of youth (the average age was 9 yrs.). It may be that the relationships some of these younger youth developed with staff had psychological benefits as well as academic ones.

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