

Needs and Assets Assessment November 2000 – November 2001

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**Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives
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**Tracy A. Milligan, Research Associate
Katherine L. Stone, Coordinator, Research Programs and Services
Dr. Charles E. Owens, Professor of Criminal Justice
Dr. Jeffry A. Will, Director, CCI and Associate Professor of Sociology**

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INTRODUCTION

As a part of the overall evaluation of the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (APPP), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires each funded community to conduct a needs and assets assessment. According to the CDC cross-site indicators form on page, Chapter 2-36, “the needs and assets assessment is a multi-step process of gathering, analyzing, and presenting information to describe and understand various issues.” CDC suggests methods for obtaining such information as windshield surveys, focus groups, surveys and interviews, key informant leader surveys and interviews, community area profiles, and other activities. As the evaluation team for the Jacksonville APPP site, the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives (CCI) at the University of North Florida conducted a needs and assets assessment in several zip codes throughout the city. After meeting with the APPP staff, it was determined that the assessment should not only target zip codes in which the APPP works (32202, 32204, 32205, 32206, 32208, 32209, 32210, and 32254), but it should also include 32211 and 32277. The zip codes in which APPP works in were specifically selected because of their high rate of teen births. Using the Claritas population data to obtain female teen populations ages 12 to 18 within zip codes and the number of births per zip code from the Duval County Health Department, fertility rates per 1,000 females ages 12 to 18 from 1998 to 2000 were calculated for each zip code in which APPP operates. Table 1 provides this information. Population and/or birth data was not available for zip codes 32211 and 32277. Zip codes 32206 and 32209 were the two areas with the highest fertility rates all three years, with the exception of 1999 where 32204 was higher than 32206. The rates in a zip code area were as high as 87.8, meaning that almost 90 females out of 1,000 ranging in age from 12 to 18 gave birth in 1999.

Zip code	1998	1999	2000
32202	19.6	14.9	31.4
32204	54.8	78.4	44.2
32205	47.3	37.2	37.6
32206	85.5	69.4	84.7
32208	50.1	48.6	44.4
32209	82.3	87.8	79.8
32210	36.4	37.3	37.9
32254	58.6	42.1	41.9
*Data calculated from Claritas population data and Duval County Health Department birth data.			

As part of the assessment, CCI conducted focus groups, interviews, and surveys of teens and key informant leaders. These evaluation activities were conducted from November 2000 to November 2001. This report provides the information gathered from these processes.

ADULTS

Focus Groups

This part of the assessment proved to be the most challenging for the evaluation team. Finding people who could assist in organizing focus groups then actually getting the groups organized and conducted proved to be a difficult task. Consequently, the team held meetings in August 2001 with APPP to discuss contacts for further focus groups, interviews, and surveys. APPP staff members provided contact people who might help the evaluation team set up focus groups. However, even these contacts were unsuccessful. As will be discussed later in the report, many service providers claimed that parental involvement is a struggle for their agency. If it is difficult to get parents together for a “worthwhile” event, then this may explain our barriers as well. CCI plans to conduct more focus groups of parents in the future, pending of course cooperation and participation.

Interviews

Methodology

The evaluation team also conducted a number of face-to-face interviews with key informant leaders at their locations. These key informant leaders were located in many different zip codes. Key informant leaders are defined as “individuals representing an important influential group, e.g., state and local health department officials, leaders of businesses, civic organizations, religious bodies, service agencies, and elected officials, as well as informal neighborhood leaders, who are recognized by community residents” (CDC cross-site indicators form, Chapter 2-35). Between the months of May and October 2001 CCI interviewed 20 service providers spanning all of the targeted zip code areas. In addition interviews were conducted with two residents in 32205 and 32206 as well as and two school personnel in 32206 and 32210. All total, 24 interviews were conducted.

The evaluation team took a random sample of service providers by using the 2000 Directory of Human Services from First Call. This directory served as our sampling frame. Providers were identified from the book under subject/keywords “youth services” and “adolescents” in the index and who were in the desired zip codes. A total of 66 programs were identified. From this list of 66 programs, those that provided direct services using a youth developmental approach were chosen. Forty-two programs were identified from the original list. These 42 service providers were placed into an SPSS program and a random sample of approximately 50 percent was taken from each zip code by SPSS. If an APPP program was not included in the random sample, they were added. The final sample totaled 24 programs. The 24 programs were called to set up an interview with the director or caseworker. During the phone conversations, the providers were asked whether the program provided direct services to youth. The evaluation team came across a few obstacles when trying to contact the providers. For example, a number of programs no longer existed or the phone number was incorrect. Other times it was a matter of not being able to contact the director of the program. If CCI was unable to reach a program, it was deleted from the list and if

necessary, another program was randomly selected. As stated earlier, there were a total of 20 personal interviews with service providers. A list of participating service providers is located in Table 2.

Table 2: Service Providers Interviewed

Brentwood Teen Center	Paxon Full Service School
Boys/Girls Club – Lawrence Lee	Planned Parenthood
Boys/Girls Club – Ramona	Ribault Middle/Bridge Connection
Boys/Girls Club – Woodland Acres	Spanish Oaks Transitional Housing
daniel	St. Paul’s Empowerment
ENABL	TAG TEAM
JASMYM	Terry Parker Full Service School
Magnolia Project	YMCA
NBA Chance, Inc.	Youth Crime Prevention Program
Nia Terrace Transitional Housing	
Northwest Behavioral Health Services, Inc./Children’s Services Community and School Based Programs	

Although an agency or organization may be located in a particular zip code area, they may serve children and teens from other areas. Therefore, it is important to note that when a zip code is identified in this report it only signifies where the agency is physically located. The service provider may have been referring to teens or communities outside of their physical zip code when responding to questions. For example, the interviewee from the YMCA was physically located in 32225, but serves many youth from 32277. Additionally, Planned Parenthood is located in 32207, but serves youth from all over Jacksonville area.

Names of other key informant leaders (members of the clergy, residents, and school personnel) were obtained during the interviews with service providers. The evaluation team asked service providers to identify persons they considered to be community leaders. CCI condensed this list by including only those who were not affiliated with an organization whose job is to be active in the community. This resulted in a list of mostly residents and religious leaders. Given the previous barriers, the evaluation team decided to conduct two interviews each with religious leaders, school personnel, and residents. The evaluation team was unable to contact all but one of the suggested religious leaders after numerous phone calls and the one contacted declined to be interviewed. CCI chose to interview school guidance counselors because of their personal relationship with students concerning issues outside of the school environment. The school counselor and resident key informant leader interviews were selected based on the number of interviews performed in the different zip codes, ensuring a more even representation from the areas.

Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours. Key informant leaders were asked several questions concerning the targeted neighborhoods, activities available for teens after school, family issues in the community, perceptions of teen sex and marriage, school issues, teens’ self worth, and APPP and the Alliance. The interview questions are

in Appendix A. Many of these questions were designed to address the 40 developmental assets developed by the Search Institute (1997). “This framework identifies 40 critical factors for young people’s growth and development. The assets clearly show important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, youth organizations, and others in communities play in shaping young people's lives,” (Search Institute, 2001). These 40 developmental assets are available in Appendix B.

Results

Neighborhood Perceptions - The first section of questions key informant leaders were asked concerned the targeted communities and neighborhoods, in general. When asked what personal problems many teens face, service providers identified at least 17 problems. Many service providers named more than one personal problem. The most cited problem (6 service providers) was the lack of parental support, family involvement or parental guidance. One provider explained that as the children get older, parental involvement decreases. This issue was a key finding in these interviews and will be discussed again later in this section. Teen pregnancy or peer pressure related to sex was also brought up by a number of respondents. Four service providers mentioned single parent homes or the lack of males and low income as a problem for teens. Other personal problems faced by teens included different forms of abuse, family dynamics such as poor management skills, mobility rate, latchkey children, lack of education or drop out and truancy issues, communication problems with parents, teens being understood by adults, and drugs. Both of the guidance counselors stated that teens have problems with boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. The counselors also identified family situations, depression, and forms of abuse. The residents discussed other personal problems. The resident from Brentwood felt that the way parents raise their children becomes a problem. She stated, “If they’re not taught, how do you expect them to do it?” The Victory Point resident identified self-image as a problem for teens. She explained that their self-image “gets in the way of so many things.” The variety of personal problems recognized by the interviewees illustrates the multitude of difficulties surrounding teens on a daily basis.

Many of the service providers identified services their agency provides or other programs that address these personal problems. These programs and services included Boys and Girls Club, the Bridge, Youth Crisis Center, YMCA, Planned Parenthood, abstinence programs, enrichment programs, and out-of-school suspension program. Other solutions available included Neighborhood Partnership, church, community involvement, and the police. Two providers, one from 32209 and the other from 32211, claimed that there are not many agencies available for teens or parents or the problems are not being addressed. The school counselors explained that counseling services are available through the school for a variety of problems. If the problem warrants further help, the counselors send the teens to other programs in the community. The key informant leaders were also asked what would help the neighborhoods deal with these problems faced by teens. Two interviewees stated that the community needs to listen to teens for their needs and wants. Other possible solutions cited were after school programs, help teens with resumes and take job related field trips, use youth as the solution, and a city funded teen center.

Teen pregnancy was the next issue discussed in this series of questions. As previously mentioned, most of the targeted zip codes were chosen because of the high rate of teen births. Although teen pregnancy was cited as a personal problem by a number of service providers, when asked why the zip code had a high number of teen births, the most cited response (5 service providers) was that teen pregnancy is not high or not a problem *in their area*. At least three respondents related teen pregnancy to their program or immediate area rather than the entire zip code area. For example, a provider mentioned, "It's not a problem in the apartment complex, yes they are sexually active." Another interviewee claimed that teen pregnancy is not a problem at the high school where the agency was located, but is at the middle school. The providers that felt teen pregnancy is not a problem were from 32210, 32205, 32254 (2), and 32211. One resident also believed that teen pregnancy is not a problem in her apartment complex (32205). She stated, "It looks like teen pregnancy is dropping, some teens are saying they want an education." Referring back to Table 1, one can see that zip code 32210 had a fertility rate of 37.9 per 1,000 females ages 12-18 in 2000, 32205 had a rate of 37.6, and 32254's fertility rate was 41.9. There was no consensus on why the areas have a high number of teen births. The explanations included the search for love from boys because of a lack of love from family, low self-esteem, part of the African American culture to not use protection, lack of supportive role models, values, supervision, goals, parental involvement, and access to information.

The next question asked whether the community environment fosters adherence to positive values more than negative values. The responses were mostly split. Five service providers believed that the neighborhood did not foster positive values. Two of these respondents specifically mentioned that there are not any positive role models and one claimed that the area is riddled with drugs and crime. Four interviewees felt that the surrounding neighborhood did foster positive values, two of which stated that this was a recent trend, in that the neighborhood did not always foster positive values. Two respondents believed that there is a mixture of positive and negative values in the neighborhoods. The residents and counselors interviewed believed the neighborhood did foster positive values more than negative.

Interviewees were also questioned about the safety of the neighborhoods. A majority of service providers declared the surrounding communities are a safe place in which to live. Many of those statements included phrases such as "pretty safe," "for the most part," and "in general." Eight claimed this to be true while only two stated the neighborhoods are not safe. Two respondents stated that it is safe if you were "black" or "for those who were where they should be." One provider described the community as safer than it was, but did not know if they would personally live there. Similar responses came from the counselors and residents in that all but one felt it is safe, using terms such as "pretty safe" and "relatively safe." One resident claimed her neighborhood (32206) is not safe.

The last question regarding the neighborhood or community in general was how most adults feel about what teens do. This question produced a variety of responses, with no response being cited more than once. Some responses were negative; a general feeling that kids today are bad and adults believe kids do not want to do anything, they are lazy

and apathetic. One respondent claimed that a lot of adults believe there is hope for kids, while another cited that there are a lot of caring adults. Other responses included “adults do not exist until something negative happens;” “adults expect more, but do not put in the time to get more;” “adults do not really care;” and some adults are “scared” or “frustrated.”

Activities Outside of School - The next series of questions dealt with activities available outside of school. Ten service providers identified programs within the community, including About Face, ENABL, TAG Team, YMCA, programs through Youth Crime Prevention, Boy and Girl Scouts, Team Up, the Bridge of Northeast Florida, and Community Connections. Four providers mentioned an athletic league or sports such as football, cheerleading, track, golf, tennis, basketball, and softball. However, another five respondents (from 32211 (2), 32202, 32208, and 32206) stated that there is not much available, especially for teens. Both of the school counselors mentioned that the churches in their area are active. The residents named the Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., and Keystone Club. While some service providers felt that the activities are easily accessible, others proclaimed problems such as transportation and money. There were mixed responses to whether teens participate in the activities. Only a few interviewees answered this question and there was no consensus. One provider explained that teens do not get involved in after school activities because “parents want them home to care for younger siblings.” A counselor declared that the elementary and middle school children get involved more so than the high school students.

Key informant leaders were also asked if volunteer opportunities were available in the communities. A majority of providers (11) acknowledged that teens have opportunities to volunteer. Five of those respondents explained that the volunteer experiences are a part of their program. Some of the volunteer activities included Adopt a Road, tutoring and reading at elementary schools, visiting nursing homes, helping at the Special Olympics, and ‘Paint the Town’. Only three respondents felt that there are few volunteer opportunities in the surrounding community. These service providers were located in 32202, 32204, and 32211. School counselors agreed with the majority of service providers that there are a lot of opportunities for teens to volunteer. According to the counselors, many of the state scholarships require volunteer hours from the recipients. They also mentioned that the teens help out with the elementary school children, nursing homes, and food pantries.

During the interviews, key informant leaders were also given an opportunity to identify any activities they would like to see available for teens. These responses varied. Two claimed they would like to see a recreation or teen center available for teens in the community. Other activities identified were mentoring, more church activities, facilities for teenage mothers, more sports for teens outside of school, and basic activities; fishing, skating, and cultural enrichment. A service provider also stated, “a small organization formed by the teens so they can learn business skills with hands on activities, a forum where teens can express their views on a regular basis.” Another respondent acknowledged a need for “training adults in how to deal with teens.” The counselors and residents also listed a variety of activities. They mentioned more structured leisure time such as skating and movies and mentoring for the 9th graders.

One resident recommended, “activities that give more exposure, more opportunities for jobs and to do things without the stigma of public housing.”

In addition to asking about available activities and volunteer opportunities for teens, the evaluation team also asked about the availability of jobs and other related issues. Seven respondents believed that jobs are available to teens. A few of them explained that the jobs available are primarily for older teens. Other service providers (4) felt that there is a lack of jobs for teens. These service providers were located in 32205, 32211, 32206, and 32225. One respondent claimed that “Yes and no. Kids may want to work, but get frustrated with the low pay and low hours.” Counselors and residents claimed that jobs are available to teens. One counselor, however, had reservations about teens working and attending school. She believed that school should be the priority. The other counselor felt there could be more jobs in the community. The key informant leaders listed fast food and chain restaurants, UPS, grocery stores, Prudential, and the Courthouse. Some of these jobs are available through work programs at the schools.

Difficulties identified in finding a job included employability, age, lack of readiness to work, and transportation. One service provider elaborated, “High school kids are at a disadvantage, no skills, not flexible. An 18 year old heading for more education with transportation is more desirable.” Another explained, “They normally work a job for about 3 months. They don’t have the supervision [at home that prepares them for a job]. Managers aren’t babysitters and aren’t going to tell them they need to do this and that. They’re not work ready. It’s just easy to get rid of them.” In addition to some of the struggles named by service providers, one resident also claimed that race and the stigma of living in public housing are deterring employers from hiring teens from the apartment complex. Four respondents cited possible solutions or solutions already available in helping teens obtain jobs. Possible solutions included training teens in employment skills and giving them an opportunity. In general, respondents stated that there are not any jobs available for younger teens (12, 13, 14 years old) and that even jobs such as babysitting and mowing lawns are difficult to find.

The key informant leaders interviews also addressed the issue of unsupervised time. Interviewees were asked if teens spend much time unsupervised outside of school. All the service providers that answered this question agreed that most teens spend much time unsupervised outside of school. As one provider explained, “They’re unsupervised from three until the parents get off about five or five thirty or six o’clock.” Not surprising, the counselors also felt that the teens spend a lot of time unsupervised.

Family Issues - In addition to asking about the communities in general and activities outside of school, CCI asked key informant leaders about family issues in the community. The first question asked whether most parents in the community are involved in their teens’ lives. Of the 19 responding service providers, 12 expressed that parents are **not** involved in their teens’ lives much at all. Three other respondents felt that only some or a small percentage of parents are involved. As mentioned earlier, this was a recurring theme throughout many of the interviews. Only three service providers felt that parents are involved and one of the three was referring to the parents of her group of teens that volunteer for leadership positions; thus not representative of the

teen population in these neighborhoods. One respondent explained that parental involvement depended upon the set up of their program, referring to parental involvement only within the program. Responses concerning parental involvement were mixed from the residents and counselors. Some felt that parents are not involved, while others claimed that it varies. A counselor explained that some parents start to pull away when the children get older.

The most cited explanation for the lack of parental support was that many parents were working, leaving less time for their children. One service provider explained, “If there are more pressing issues like paying your bills and working to pay your electricity so that it doesn’t get cut off a behavior problem at school is not top priority.” Once again the subject of parents becoming less involved with their children’s lives as they get older was mentioned. Two service providers believed this phenomenon is a reason why parents are not involved with their teens. Other reasons included mothers trying to please their boyfriends, parents not understanding the importance of their involvement, parents’ mental illness, parents’ immaturity, parents leading their own lives, and activities in the household such as drugs.

Key informant leaders were then asked what would help increase parental involvement. Three service providers cited parent training or skills. Two respondents believed that the parents have to want to be involved. “They have to want to because the availability is there. I mean I remember having a parent meeting one night and not a parent showed up.” Other possible solutions included sending newsletters to let parents know what the teens are doing, providing incentives, and increasing family support.

In addition to parental involvement, CCI asked key informant leaders whether parents give teens the help and support they need. Of ten service providers, more than half (6) cited that parents do not provide help and support to their teens. Two respondents explained that sometimes the teens do not express their problems, thus the parents are unaware of any needs. Consequently, if parents are not involved in the lives of their teens, then the parents are less likely to be aware of any problems their teens are facing. Only three providers believed teens receive help and support from their parents. However, one of those respondents claimed that they only receive support when the situation “gets to that point.” In other words, parents will assist their teen when it has become necessary. Ways in which parents show support to their children included helping with their homework and attending children’s functions. However, once again a correlation was identified between parental support and the age of the children. The respondent that cited “helping with their homework” noted that parents do this until the children reach their teenage years.

Another family issue addressed in the interviews was the boundaries parents place on their children and the discipline they receive if those boundaries are crossed. Half of the 18 responding service providers expressed that parents do not place appropriate boundaries on their teens. Three providers felt that parents do place appropriate boundaries, but fail at enforcing them. Other respondents suggested that there are two extremes, parents that have no boundaries and those that have extreme or rigid boundaries. Still others felt that parents do set appropriate boundaries for their teens,

while others felt only 20 or 50 percent of the parents do so. One service provider stated, "Some do, some don't. It seems as if parents are getting boundaries from kids." The counselors and residents all felt that parents do not set appropriate boundaries for their teens. One counselor said, "I think a lot of parents have lost control over the years and now can't get it back."

Despite the belief by many key informant leaders that parents do not set appropriate boundaries for their teens, the majority believed that teens are punished when they break their parents' rules. Ten respondents claimed that teens receive some sort of punishment, while only one declared they do not receive punishment. Some comments included, "There is punishment, but not enough discipline" and "Parents discipline their kids for bothering them, but not necessarily for other things like talking back to a teacher." Another provider explained, "Parents don't know how to discipline properly – one extent (extreme) or the other. They don't know the difference between positive and negative discipline." The counselors seemed to agree with the majority of service providers in that teens do get punished, but both of the residents acknowledged that teens do not face any consequences when they break a rule.

The type of punishment used by parents was split between the service providers, with five citing some sort of restriction and four claiming that teens receive corporal punishment. Restrictions included taking away privileges such as outside play, telephone, or TV. A service provider believed that corporal punishment is more prevalent in the black population than in the white population; however, some blacks have turned to "time-out" or other nonphysical methods as a means of discipline. One respondent mentioned that parents yell at the teens.

Perceptions of Teen Sex and Marriage - The following set of questions focused on perceptions of teen sex and marriage. The first question in this series asked why some teens are having premarital sex. Not surprising there was a variety of answers given, with many service providers identifying more than one reason. Three respondents cited the following reasons; everybody's doing it or to fit in, peer pressure, lack of supervision, and media (music, TV, MTV, BET, videogames). Two respondents claimed that teens have premarital sex from a lack of other things to do and curiosity. Low self-esteem, to get attention, to keep her boyfriend, lack of fear of consequences, missing love from their dad, not knowing the consequences, because it's cool, and lack of family intimacy were other reasons identified for teens choosing to have premarital sex. The residents and counselors also listed reasons such as media influences, to get affection, family situation, opportunity, and low self-image.

There was a consensus, however, on where kids learn about sex. Nine service providers claimed that friends or peers are the source of sexual information. Another seven respondents believed that teens learn about sex from the media (TV, Cinemax, movies, and internet). Other sources included dysfunctional homes, older males in the neighborhood, and a "smidgeon from school."

Key informant leaders were also asked what type of guidance is provided by parents. Two providers believed that parents are trying to teach abstinence or give guidance, but

they themselves became a teen parent, and are therefore sending a mixed signal. They explained, “I think they say it [abstinence, wait, save yourself], but how much value does it hold if you’re 34 years old and have a 17 year old daughter” and “I’m sure in some families they are [giving guidance about abstinence or protection], but in this neighborhood in particular you’re finding a lot of young parents. So you’ve got a parent who’s thirty years old and they’ve got a fifteen-year-old son or daughter. And it’s just kind of a generational thing. They have children young and then their kids have children young.” Still other respondents felt that parents are naïve or in denial, preach not to get pregnant but do not discuss sexually transmitted diseases, talk about sex after the fact, and believe that if the teen wants to act like an adult then the teen should expect to be treated like one. Residents and counselors agreed again with the majority of service providers by listing peers and media as a major source of information on sex. One resident also mentioned that teens learn about sex from home, by watching the single mom degrade herself.

In order to prevent interviewer assumptions the evaluation team asked key informant leaders if they believed it was the parents’ responsibility to talk to their kids about sex. Not surprising, all of the respondents claimed it is the parents’ responsibility. Residents and counselors also believed that it is the parents’ responsibility to teach their children about sex. Two providers felt it is not just the parents’ responsibility, but also the whole community. They explained, “I don’t think it solely relies on their parents. I think where the parents drop off, society must kick in” and “I think it’s the community as a whole’s responsibility to educate the kids. I think that it’s parents, school.”

Key informant leaders were also asked at what age parents should begin talking to their kids about sex. “Early” was the most cited response. Such responses included “as early as possible;” “early on;” and “I think it should start about the time from cradle all the way up in it’s right proportion.” A few service providers claimed that the time to start talking to children is about 5th or 6th grade. One respondent stated, “as soon as they start asking questions.” The residents and counselors made similar remarks. Some suggestions in helping parents talk to their children included videos, public service announcements, one on one support (minister, therapist, counselor), and mother/daughter programs. One of the residents mentioned the Let’s Talk Program. She went on to say, “but it’s real hard to get parents to come together and talk. The program has been successful in getting some parents (small group) together. The Afro-Americans don’t like to talk to kids about sex. The younger generations are the ones educated.” Two service providers were rather pessimistic explaining, “Basically you can’t. At this point it’s not going to work. Unless it was something mandatory like taking a class on parenting” and “A wake up call is going to get them involved.”

In addition to perceptions of teen sex, the evaluation team asked whether marriage was seen as an important institution to youth in the community. The service providers were somewhat split on this question. Eight providers claimed that marriage is not seen as an important institution. They explained, “I would definitely have to say no. They would like it to be, but the children really have no concept of what a good marriage is about or several clients’ dads are in prison or jail;” “I think marriage is struggling nationwide;” and “No. It’s not seen as a valued institution. It’s still sacred but it’s not valued.” Two

other respondents did not know if marriage is seen as important, but mentioned that children are getting the message that it is not. “Marriage isn’t shown as important, brothers and sisters are from different dads.” Six service providers expressed that marriage is seen as an important institution. Some stated, “Marriage is valued but it’s very, very slim happening as far as this area;” “It’s viewed as best case scenario, but it’s very distant and foreign;” and “Yes, it’s important.” One provider described, “Guys don’t want to get married. Most don’t even know their father. Girls talk about it – guys don’t trust girls.” Both residents felt that marriage is not viewed as an important institution.

School Issues - The next series of questions was centered on school issues. The first question asked whether school was preparing teens for college and/or work. The most cited response was that schools are not preparing children for college and/or work. Comments were made such as “Schools are doing a very poor job preparing kids for college/job;” “No. They’re teaching them to pass tests;” “Honestly, no. School prepares them to graduate, that’s it;” “No. They don’t teach major things like personal finance. Guidance Counselors should all be fired because they don’t teach kids about financial aid [for college]. So when the kids get out, they don’t believe that they can go and afford college;” and “Work? Not! Kids are coming out with low skills. Teachers are not qualified. Schools are not equipped to prepare kids for marketplace”. Only four respondents believed that teens are being prepared for college and/or work by school. One provider stated, “Yeah, they’re doing the best they can with what they have; kids aren’t getting anything at home.” And one claimed that all but Paxon Middle is preparing teens. Two service providers believed that the preparation for work or college depends upon the location of the school and race of the students or whether the school is private or public. The counselors and residents provided mixed responses to this question. One resident believed that the effort is there, but that communication is a barrier. She stated, “Teens’ culture is to speak “cool” – improper English.” One counselor said that the school tries to meet with seniors several times a year to discuss SAT tests and colleges.

Another school issue addressed was what teens are learning in school about sex. There was no real consensus regarding this and the responses were split quite evenly. Some service providers claimed that teens learn about the biology of sex or human development, but not the values. Others believed that sex is not being taught in the schools. “Zero, not even attacking the problem,” stated one provider. Another stated, “Schools are “closed” – the schools are in an old mindset, not keeping up with the times. Children are dying out of ignorance.” Some respondents also expressed that the school has a fear toward the subject of sex and protection. A provider described it as a “walking on egg shells” approach. Still others were not sure what the children were learning in regards to sex. Two respondents felt that the biology of sex should be taught in school while another expressed that more of the ethics and consequences of sex should be taught.

Once again the subject of parental involvement was addressed in the interviews with key informant leaders. This question dealt with parental involvement specifically in their teens’ education. Again, the majority of respondents claimed that parents are not

involved. Once more respondents explained how parental involvement decreases as the children get older, “Elementary school – yes; middle school – start drifting; high school – no; graduation – yes” and “The older they get, I think the least likely they are to be involved.” A resident said, “Parents start to drop involvement starting the 6th grade. The only time you get to see them [the parents] is when it comes down to the kids getting ready to graduate or whatever, now they’re concerned.” One provider felt that the parents are involved, while another explained, “Most parents try. It’s not working, but they’re interested.” A respondent added that parents are involved in sports, but not functions such as PTA meetings. Another expressed, “The parents could, but if they don’t know they can’t teach it.” A few service providers offered reasons why parents are not involved in their teens’ education. For example, transportation problems, long work days, and “there’s some that they can’t read. They don’t want to be put on the spot” were offered as explanations.

Other issues concerning school were addressed such as dropouts and truancy. More than half of the respondents claimed that dropout rates are high. This should not be surprising given the fact that Duval County has the highest drop out rate in the state of Florida. According to the Florida Department of Education (2001), Duval County had a drop out rate of 8.3 for the school year 2000-2001, while the state’s drop out rate was 3.8. Only a few service providers believed dropout rates are not a problem. Two other providers explained that it is not a problem until the teens reach the legal age of dropping out, 16 years old. As one explained, “Not this school, but I would say at the high school...there are fifteen year olds in sixth grade at that middle school across the street. When they hit sixteen then they’re gone.” All but one resident and counselor believed that dropouts are a problem.

A number of reasons were given for the dropout rates, but no real consensus was found. One provider suggested it was due to the lack of parental support or motivation, while another explained that “there was no parent at home to stress the importance of education because at home mom didn’t get past the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade anyway and we still have a house.” Meaning, even without an education their parent is able to provide for them. A school counselor felt that teens are not ready for the work and extra curricular activities at high school.

A variety of preventions were identified in keeping teens from dropping out of school, with no particular prevention emerging as a preference. Two respondents specified parental involvement or emphasis on education. The other preventions were only named once each. These included values, motivation, self-esteem, success, incentives beyond money, listening to teens, smaller and more structured classes, and consequences to parents of children out of school.

Truancy was also an issue discussed during the interviews. Not surprising with the high dropout rates, all but one provider also acknowledged truancy as a problem. One respondent added that suspensions are also high. Another provider explained, “yes. And we think it’s [truancy] even more now because they’ve taken our officer from us.” All of the residents and counselors agreed that truancy is a problem.

Self-worth - The final series of questions dealing with teens centered on the issue of self-worth. The first question asked whether it was important for most teens to be popular and well liked. The majority of service providers declared that it is important to teens. Some commented, "Yes, very important;" "Yes. It's a problem here;" "Yes. Peer pressure plays a big role;" and "Yes I do, parents even say that their children are so worried no one likes them." Two providers expressed that teens do not want to be popular so much as they want to be accepted. One stated, "Maybe not well liked and popular but accepted." Another service provider commented, "It's all a front. They are sad and they are hurting." Residents and counselors agreed that being popular is important. One counselor stated, "That's all they care about; how they are viewed by peers."

Key informant leaders were also asked if most teens felt good about themselves. The most cited response (7 providers) was that they do not feel good about themselves. One service provider added, "No. Emphatically. I think that's why the disguise comes out. Baggy pants, no clothes." Three respondents acknowledged that most teens felt good about themselves, while two more believed it depended on where they are. For example, a provider stated, "Some of them are positive when they are in the program, but at home there's nothing positive." There were mixed responses from the counselors and residents. Both counselors felt that most teens feel good about themselves, while one resident said they do not and the other believed that "some do and some don't."

Next, interviewees were asked if most teens were optimistic about their future. This question produced split responses. An equal number of respondents agreed and disagreed that teens are optimistic about their future. Some comments overall included, "For the most part, they are;" "Yes. They do have goals, but their behavior and goals don't match;" "No. They think everything is against them;" and "A lot of them are kind of empty. Don't know what is after high school." Other service providers expressed that teens do not think about their future, that they live in the moment. "They don't see a future. Today is their future," explained a provider. The residents and counselors were also split in their responses. One counselor felt that most are optimistic, while another believed they are not. One resident explained that many of the teens are optimistic about their future, but are not doing anything to reach their goals.

At the end of the interviews key informant leaders were asked if they would like to add anything. There were a great variety of responses. One commented, "Communities have been promised so much and lack trust. Programs leave. If we're going to have an impact on teen pregnancy we've got to have viable programs, adequate educated youth development from the top down." Others identified needs such as the need for teens to be exposed to diversity, to be empowered by parents and funding for parents. Still some made statements concerning their agency and the activities available to teens. A service provider expressed her thoughts that there have been improvements in the activities available to teens in Jacksonville. Another service provider stated,

Basically I think our county basically has really failed the kids. The major sponsors really have failed the youth agencies far as, especially the Boys and Girls Club. The funding is horrible here far as if I apply for my same position in Atlanta

or Ft. Lauderdale I would be making \$40,000 and here I'm making about \$20,000. So basically it's hard to keep people who are going to college. It's very hard to keep qualified people in these positions. ...So it's just hard keeping people here and the kids kind of notice that if the staff is very unstable. If every three, four or five months it's a different staff, it's kind of hard to bond with the program.

Summary

Key informant leaders identified a wide variety of personal problems teens face. Teen pregnancy, peer pressure to have sex, lack of parental support, single parent homes, and poverty were just some of the problems recognized by the interviewees. The quantity and variety of issues facing teens illustrates the great need for developmental assets in order to overcome these needs and barriers.

The most striking consensus found among the key informant leaders was the lack of parental involvement and support. This issue was mentioned throughout the interviews on several occasions. In addition to the lack of parental involvement, many interviewees made the negative correlation between the age of the child and the amount of parental involvement. As the child gets older, parents become less involved in their education as well as in their lives in general. This trend is somewhat of a universal phenomenon partly due to the fact that peers become a more integral part of a child's life as he or she ages. However, it appears that these particular children begin with a deficit of parental involvement and by the time they reach their teen years the involvement is nonexistent. A variety of reasons were provided as to why parents are not active in their children's lives including work and being caught up in their own lives.

In addition to the lack of parental involvement, many of the key informant leaders expressed that parents do not provide appropriate boundaries for their teens. Others reported that some parents have not found a middle ground and have one of two extremes; no rules at all or too many rules. Although parents may not provide appropriate boundaries, the majority of respondents believed that parents punish teens with either restriction or corporal punishment.

Despite the fact that teen pregnancy was one of the most cited personal problems facing teens, some of the key informant leaders declared that it is not a problem, particularly in their agency or immediate area. This may be a reflection of the programs or type of teens attending the programs. Statistically the zip code areas have high teen birth rates, but the teens involved with these agencies may be at less risk of becoming pregnant. There were a multitude of reasons given as to why teens have sex and the high teen birth rates. These included peers, media, curiosity, low self-esteem, lack of supervision, constructive activities, and supportive role models, which is consistent with research findings. While many reasons were given to explain why teens have sex, many of the key informant leaders agreed that they learn about sex from peers and the media, but that it should be the parent's responsibility to teach their children.

Although the key informant leaders listed a number of services or agencies available after school, all believed that many teens spend a great deal of time unsupervised once school is out. This may be indicative that either the activities are not known to the teens

or that they deliberately choose not to participate. Additionally, some key informant leaders explained that there is not much available for teens, in particular.

Key informant leaders agreed that the schools in their areas are not properly preparing teens for work or college. They also expressed that truancy and dropout rates are high among teens. Again, lack of parental involvement or motivation was mentioned and provided as one of the reasons for these high rates.

Although the information was not solicited, one key informant leader volunteered information about communication difficulties that restrict youth's ability to procure employment. A resident, who lives in the apartment complex and is very involved with residents and local community, explained at length that many youth in the area do not have the language skills to compete in the work force. She explained that these youth have a terminology and style of talking among themselves and do not alter the speaking style when not in peer circles, thus hindering their ability to communicate with those outside peer circles.

The data collected concerning teens' self-worth was mostly mixed. Although the majority of key informant leaders believed that it is important to teens to be popular and well liked, the most cited response among service providers for whether teens feel good about themselves was they do not. Both of the counselors agreed most teens feel good about themselves. There was no real consensus among the key informant leaders concerning whether teens are optimistic about their future.

TEENS

Focus Groups

Methodology

Members of the CCI evaluation team conducted six focus groups, three with female respondents and three with male respondents, each lasting roughly an hour. Five of the six sessions were recorded and note takers were present at three of the sessions. Both notes and transcriptions were used for the following summary.

Finding teens proved to be very difficult, especially since we could not enter the school systems (this being because 'sex' is a topic in the focus group questionnaire). As mentioned earlier, finding teens and parents proved particularly difficult, but once the focus groups were arranged actually getting teens to participate (rather than pre-teens) was yet another issue.

The teen focus group questionnaire was constructed almost identically to the service provider questionnaire, with some adaptations to target a teenage population. There are eight sections covering a range of topics designed to provide a better idea of the assets and needs of teens and the neighborhoods in which they live. The focus group questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

West Jacksonville Clinic - The boys and girls had attended an educational session on STD's just prior to the focus group and were waiting to eat pizza. Some of the girls complained of hunger when they first arrived, which may have been a distraction. We believe the groups were too large and that respondents would have spoken more freely if divided into smaller age related groups.

The boys focus group consisted of 12 respondents ages 12 to 17 from the Hollybrook Housing Complex (NBA, Chance). Only about 4 of the 12 boys actively participated in the focus group. Distracting chatter among some of the boys was also an obstacle that could have been remedied by a smaller group. In addition, there was a man (age 24) with the group whose frequent responses may have hindered participation of some of the younger boys. Once he spoke no one else responded. Furthermore, the boys seemed to play 'follow the leader'. One respondent would reply and the rest would agree, yielding a lack of variety within the answers.

The girls focus group consisted of 10 respondents ages 13 to 18 from the Hollybrook Housing Complex (NBA, Chance). Only about 4 of the 10 girls actively participated in the focus group. Despite the challenges (group size, age mix) the majority of responses appeared to be honest and sincere, although there were times when little or no response was given.

Girls, Inc. - Although the arrangements were made through Girls, Inc., the Brentwood and Eastside facilities serve as youth development centers for both girls and boys. The focus groups were held as the youth gathered at these centers after school. Despite assurances from service providers who aided in scheduling the teen focus groups that teens would be present, we found that as many pre-teens participated as teenagers. There was no intent to mislead the evaluation team, this is simply a function of the low and unpredictable teen attendance and participation in these programs.

Brentwood - There were 12 participants in the boys focus group, ranging in age from 11 to 15. Despite being a large group and a certain amount of chatter, the interviewer was able to prompt the individual respondents for answers.

The Brentwood girls group started with seven respondents ranging in age from 12 to 17. Another 17 year old joined shortly after starting, but was not a participant simply because she never spoke a word. A 14 year old joined as the interview was nearing the end. The younger participants were very talkative but the older ones would answer when prompted and encouraged (except for the one silent 17 year old).

Eastside - The original scheduling arrangements for these focus group sessions had been with a person at the Girls, Inc. central office who then spoke with the coordinators at each site. The request was made for at least six girls and six boys in each focus group. However, when we arrived at the Eastside location, arrangements had been made for three boys and three girls for the focus groups, with the idea that we wanted a total of six kids. The request was also made for teen participants, but only one participant, a male, was actually a teen. The boys group consisted of two 10 year old participants, and one 17 year old. The girls group started with three 11 year old participants and a 12 year old joined later.

Results

The results of the focus groups must be read with the understanding that many of the participants were not teens but were pre-teens, therefore the comments may not truly reflect the opinions or experiences of actual teenagers. The questions all involve subjects concerning teens and their experiences, consequently the answers provided by these pre-teens are generally a mixture of the kids speaking for themselves and/or attempting to answer as it applies to teens.

Personal Problems - The first section addresses personal problems in the community, asking whom the respondents do or do not relate to about these problems. Originally, this was designed to be a question that would break the ice and encourage respondents to open up to the interviews. However, this has also provided interesting and useful data.

The most frequent answers to *what kinds of personal problems do teens face in your community* were peer pressure and drugs/alcohol use. Other issues mentioned were pregnancy, sex, self-esteem, fitting in/status, boys (in a girls focus group), shooting and gangs.

When asked who teens usually talk or relate to about these problems, “mom” was the most frequent answer followed by another family member such as dad, uncle, aunt, sibling or grandparent. They also indicated that they talked to friends, guardian, mentor, anyone who would listen and the Lord. In the West JAX clinic girls focus group, the teens indicated they would not talk to their mother about sex or drugs, compared to the younger participants in the other two groups who indicated they would.

The next two questions asked what topics teens would feel most comfortable and uncomfortable talking about with their parents. Unfortunately, there are answers from only one male focus group to these questions, whose answers seemed to be more in jest than serious. When prompted, the boys did respond positively that they would talk to their parents about school and problems with friends. Topics that girls mentioned were school, grades, feelings, sex, clothes, and “probably drugs.” One teen girl stated “not about your boyfriend, that’s for sure,” while others nodded in agreement. Sex was stated by the one boys group and at all three girl focus groups as a subject that several felt uncomfortable talking about with parents. One boy expressed what seemed to be the reigning sentiment between the older boy and girl participants, after stating he would not talk to his mother about smoking marijuana he then said “she would think that I’m doing it.”

Neighborhood Perceptions - Questions in this section asked respondents’ perceptions of teen pregnancy, STD’s/AIDS, values and safety in their neighborhoods. In general, the responses tended to be about the experiences within their social realms such as school and their apartment complexes, not necessarily applied to a neighborhood.

Answers from both boys and girls indicate that teenage pregnancy is perceived to be a problem in the neighborhood, reflecting the responses given in the first question regarding personal problems facing teens. In answer to why, for the girls only the older participants responded with “won’t talk to parents about it,” and that girls “look for love and affection and boys don’t understand that girls are looking for this, boys think girls

are looking for sex.” Responses from boys included “don’t use protection,” “mainly peer pressure,” and that “curiosity about sex comes from all the talk” (that kids hear about sex).

The question about whether STD’s and HIV/AIDS is a problem in the neighborhood did not get much response from the girls, whose answers included “don’t know,” “a little,” and “no.” The boys had similar responses, although one stated that AIDS is a problem because “couples do not use protection and communicate,” and that “girls are picking up boys in the street and girls should be given check-ups.”

The next question asks *what sort of values does your community/neighborhood environment promote in teens?* This question seemed to confuse the younger participants in the first focus group conducted, consequently the girls responded with “don’t know” or shrugs. The two following focus groups were asked *does your community/ neighborhood promote positive values?* The answers were a mixture of yes and no. The question was phrased to the first boys group as *do you think you live in the type of community that discourages you from getting in trouble, joining gangs, stealing?* The boys responded “yes” and “yea, a lot.”

When asked if they thought the neighborhood was safe, responses from the West JAX Clinic female group were positive, while the girls from the other two focus groups responded negatively. Answers to *why* were “shooting” and “teens are the main ones who get raped.” The boys responses were more negative, stating “not really, because of drugs,” and citing excessive violence and disorderly conduct.

Activities Outside of School - The five questions in this section addressed teens’ activities outside of school, such as social and leisure time, working and volunteering. These questions were designed to explore how teens are spending time outside the supervised hours of school, given the notion that teens without adequate or appropriate supervision are more likely to be influenced into negative or deviant activities.

Respondents were asked if teens spend much time unsupervised outside school. Girls responded, in general, with ‘some do/some don’t’ answers. One girl from the Brentwood group stated that there is “a lot of wandering at night,” another from the same group stated that she sees hookers, hippies and drag queens there at night. The boys from Brentwood stated there was too much fighting after school and too many after school bullies, making after school activities difficult.

The groups were asked *what kinds of after-school activities are available in your neighborhood?* The responses all involved programs and sports available in their area. One boy commented that the Chance Center keeps “you occupied instead of being on the streets.” The only negative response came from the Eastside boys group, stating there is no after school activity, and that they did not participate because they are not old enough. Two Eastside girls commented that they could not get in the Girls, Inc., in their apartment complex “because it is too packed.” When asked if teens participate in these activities or programs, responses were a mixture of yes and no. The girls tended to say yes, but that more “should” participate, or to emphasize that “not many *teens*” participate. Responses from the boys regarding participation were mixed, with boys

from one group indicating yes and those from another answering negatively. When asked why there is no participation, one boy expressed “it’s boring.”

The youth were then asked *what kinds of activities would you (teens) like to see made available*. Many responses centered on sports or outdoor activities including suggestions such as football, baseball, basketball, and a pool. “Field trips” and/or “events” were mentioned in two girls groups and one boys group. Another suggestion from a girls group was for a “teen lounge,” a place where teens can hang out together away from smaller children.

The girls were fairly optimistic about employment opportunities in their area. When asked *are there jobs in your community available for teens* most girls responded yes and mentioned Radio Shack, the malls, after-school programs and a grocery store as employment options. The boys responded “not really” and “a little,” and mentioned cutting grass for the neighbors.

The follow up question to employment opportunities addressed difficulties facing teens when they look for a job. Difficulties listed by female respondents were “age, school and the hours,” competition with other teens, getting fired, stealing, and drug testing. The boys mentioned age and transportation as difficulties faced in finding jobs. Respondents in three of the groups were asked if there are jobs available for young teens, responses from two groups were negative but responses from one female group were positive, followed by references to Gateway Flea Market and Gateway Mall as places that hire young teens.

Family Environment - Four questions in this section addressed parental involvement and support, rules imposed on teens by parents, and sanctions if rules are broken.

The first question asked *Do you think most parents in your neighborhood/community are involved in their teens’ lives?* Answers from female respondents varied, with the variation occurring along age differences. Responses from the group with more teen participants (West JAX Clinic) were negative. However, answers from the younger participants in the Brentwood group were positive, with all of the younger girls saying yes while the older one shrugged and stated “don’t know.” The young participants of the Eastside group indicated “sometimes,” with one respondent saying “no, not teens.” Responses from the male respondents were positive with several indicating that parents help their children with homework.

Four groups (two of the girl and two of the boy groups) were asked the follow up question *do most teens think/feel that parents give them help and support?* This question appeared to be difficult for the younger participants and uncomfortable for many. Most tended to look at others in the group for peer support rather than providing a spontaneous answer. Answers were generally positive from both girls and boys. When asked in what ways parents do this, answers included “talk,” “take them to class,” “help with schoolwork,” and “attend activities.”

The next question elicited stronger responses than the previous one, although much of the responses were conversational and not necessarily answers to the question. It asks

do parents in your neighborhood have too many rules for teens? Responses from one female group were negative, indicating they feel there are not too many rules, while responses from the other two groups were positive, indicating they feel there are too many rules. The two latter groups were those with young participants. The answers from the boys were not clear for two of the groups, mostly conversation that indicated there was some strictness in the rules. The conversation from one group in particular indicated there were rules, but that the boys did not necessarily follow them.

The next question allowed the interviewers to follow up on notions of following or breaking rules by asking if teens are usually punished if they break the rules. Participants from all the groups indicated that yes, they are punished, however, male respondents from two groups responded “no,” “not really,” and “it depends on what you did.” Punishments included doing chores, no outside time, being sent to one’s room, being grounded, yelling, talking, “cuss me out a few times, yell at, and talk to me a few times,” and “beat me.” One boy commented that he broke the rules in his home and had to cut grass for the entire neighborhood. The question *does the punishment stop the teen from breaking the rules again* was asked of three of the groups. Generally, the answers were no or not really, one youth stated “it depends on what you’re doing.”

Perceptions of Teen Sex and Marriage - The first question went straight to the point, and so did most of the respondents as they broke into conversation. *Do you think it is OK for young people to have sex* solicited mostly no’s from the female participants. But some of the boys were more explanatory, one saying “not under 18,” and another saying “it depends if you’re married.”

Follow up questions then asked at what age respondents thought it *OK for young people to start having sex*. There was no noticeable distinction between genders as to the acceptable age at which males and females begin having sex, answers ranged from 13 (from a couple males) to 21 (also from the a male). However, the girls attached more value and responsibility to the initiation of sex rather than a particular age, making comments such as “whatever age you get married,” “whenever you are responsible,” and “whenever you can get a job and support the girlfriend and baby,” (the assumption being that sexual activity inherently leads to pregnancy).

We then asked *why do some teens have sex?* As expected, answers generated from the girls groups differed from answers given in the boys groups. Answers are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Answers to <i>Why do some teens have sex?</i> Difference Between Girls and Boys Responses	
Girls Responses	Boys Responses
Because they want love	Hormones
Not get dumped	TV
[girls] like talking about love and affection and boys want sex	And they think they ain't going to get pregnant
To fit in	Cause they think it's cool
Peer pressure	Pressure
It's fun	Just having fun
To say they did it	Curiosity
To have a child	Because their friends do

The overlapping answers were 'fun' and 'pressure', otherwise these particular boys and girls expressed very different reasons for having sex.

The next question asked *do you think it is OK for young people to get, or get someone, pregnant?* The first answer for most participants was "no," followed by qualifying comments from the girls such as "if they're responsible," "if they're going to do it they know what they're getting into." One teen female commented that teen pregnancy affects the baby because the "parent doesn't know about taking care of a baby, they're still kids themselves." Another girl commented that the "father leaves." Boys from two groups made the comment "if they're married." Other boys had less conservative views saying "it's alright," "if you want to have a baby," "if you're financially ready," and "if you've got a job."

The following questions and follow up questions asked participants about their source of information regarding sex. The participants in the girls focus groups were much more responsive to this line of questioning. First, respondents were asked if parents or family members talk to kids about sex. Most respondents of both genders responded positively, with only one boy stating "no." We then asked what sort of message the parents are sending about sex. Again, answers from girls differed from those of the boys, with some overlap. The responses are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Answers to <i>What is the message that parents are sending about sex?</i> Difference Between Girls and Boys Responses	
Girls Responses	Boys Responses
I've heard it all	You gotta know the girl for a long time
Wait, or be smart about it	Wait
Be careful and don't do what they did	If you do it, use protection
Don't make same mistakes as they did	If you do it...make her put on a condom or something like that
Not to do it	Don't do it
Save yourself	If you get a girl pregnant, you take care of it
Get education and better life	

Respondents in five groups were then asked if they believe *it is the parents' responsibility to talk to/educate their kids about sex?* Responses were all positive. Three groups were asked the follow up question addressing the age at which parents should do this or start doing this. All respondents agreed that the conversations should start early, specific answers were: "right about 12," "about 6th grade when you get in middle school. You're faced with a lot of that." Others stated specific ages as early as 5, with most saying 8 or 9.

The last question in this section asks *do teens place a high value on marriage in general?* Most of the responses were negative, expressed as "no," "not really," and "not no more," and "don't really think about it." One girl stated "girls do, boys don't."

School Issues - Six questions in this section address a variety of school related subjects, such as sex education, parental involvement and truancy/drop-outs.

The first issue addressed in this section was that of sex education, asking *what do teens learn in school about sex?* The answers covered a wide range of topics including:

- not to do it
- STD's
- We learn just about everything
- life management class, health, family dynamics, child development
- health
- values
- diseases and how to protect yourself
- HIV/AIDS

Switching tracks somewhat, the respondents were then asked *do you feel that school is preparing them for college and/or work?* This question was posed to four groups, two of the girls groups and two of the boys groups. The answers were very mixed, even within groups, with the division between positive and negative answers evenly divided and a smaller number who were unsure or said "some." One boy commented "you gotta do that on your own."

Another issue addressed in this section is parental involvement. This question was not asked directly of all the groups because participants had already talked about parental involvement earlier in the survey, therefore information regarding parental involvement in education could be pulled from the earlier discussion. Responses were mixed with some negative and positive answers. The groups expressing enthusiastic positive answers were those dominated by younger female participants. From the female group with older participants the answers were "no," "I know some that do," and "not enough, they got football games." The male participants indicated that parents, or mothers, help with homework or check on them in school.

Out of the five groups asked if dropouts are a problem in the schools, there was unanimous agreement that this is a problem. One girl stated no, not in her school, then said that she attends a private Catholic school. The participants also said yes when

asked if truancy was a problem. “It’s a big problem” stated one of the girls, this being the prevailing sentiment from group to group. Another girl expressed that she skips frequently, but still earns A’s and B’s in the classes. One boy said that his brother only goes to school for lunch.

Self Worth - The four questions in this section attempted to elicit answers about teens perspectives on more personal topics. By this time the youth were somewhat restless and ready to go, so these questions tended to be rushed or skipped.

The first questions asked about the importance of being popular and well-liked. Of those responding, all but one said no, it is not important to be popular. Several then said that being liked and fitting in is important, and that having friends is important. They were then asked *do most teens feel good about themselves?* This question produced quite a mixed bag of answers with at least three youth saying yes, the same number saying no, one person said “some,” another said “pretty good,” and yet another saying “unsure.” The yes and no answers were evenly divided between boys and girls. One girl commented that “looks are everything...teens are judgmental, they talk.”

The next question also produced mixed answers. The respondents were asked *are most teens optimistic about their future?* The answers were mostly positive among the females, two of the older respondents from the West JAX Clinic group provided qualifying statements: “If you know what direction you’re heading in, of course you know about your future” and “if focused, they are optimistic.” There were negative answers from males in two different groups, but then several others made comments about attending college or joining the military.

The last question in this section asked *do you think most parents have had an impact on how a child feels about him/herself?* There were no answers from the males either because they were not asked the question or because the responses were vague and not applicable. The girls all answered yes. One girl pointed out that parents can have a negative affect, saying “... you think you’re going to be the greatest and you are going to accomplish [something] and then you go home and [your parents say] ‘you ain’t never going to be nothing. I mean, that can bring you down.’”

Summary

Like those for the service providers and key informant leaders, the Teen Focus Group questionnaire was designed to provide information on the environment in which teens live, their neighborhoods, schools and homes. In addition to this, we also hoped to gain insights specifically into teen perspectives on the issues facing them in their daily lives.

Some of the results from the teen focus groups are typical of teens in any given area, others are enlightening as to the type of world in which these kids exist. Given the low number of actual teenagers in the focus groups, we cannot claim these results are necessarily representative of teens in the zip codes composing the study area. Nonetheless, the results are worthy of mention and do shed some light on the lives of youth, both teens and pre-teens.

While the respondents did mention teen pregnancy as a personal problem facing teens, it later became apparent that this is an accepted, or normal, characteristic of the social environment. However, STD's and AIDS were not perceived as a problem. We do not know if there is simply a lack of knowledge, or if there is knowledge and these problems are simply accepted as part of the teen culture. Despite this, teens do claim that they are receiving adequate sex education in school.

Without more teenage participants, instead of the pre-teens that were part of the groups, we could not ascertain if teen sex is also considered a norm of the teen culture. Questions concerning sexual activity resulted in a variety of responses, often differing along gender lines. In general, girls either do not think sex among teens is acceptable or they were curiously silent on the topic. Also, they attached more meaning to the initiation of sex than boys did. Boys were more accepting of the notion of teen sexual activity.

Even though some negative sentiments were expressed, overall, teens were fairly positive about their family and neighborhood environments. Most teens seemed reluctant to express any negative information concerning their families. Contrary to information provided by service providers, youth respondents did not provide any convincing or strong arguments for a lack of parental involvement.

However, there were indications that youth and teens do spend a significant amount of time unsupervised during the after school and evening hours. Assuming that youth become increasingly involved with peers as they enter and progress through the teen years, it is logical that attendance in after school and summer programs declines. This would explain our inability to find teens for focus groups; they were simply not reachable outside of school hours. In complete agreement with adult responses, the youth respondents also recognize truancy and dropouts as a problem.

The combination of lagging school attendance, lack of involvement in programs, and 'hanging out' with peers, (all of this unsupervised by adults) leaves open the interpretation that teens in these areas are a population open to influences outside the family and school.

Surveys

Methodology

As previously mentioned, part of the needs and assets assessment consisted of surveying teens living in the targeted zip codes. The surveys focused on who teens go to talk about certain issues, how they spend their time, their future, self-image, family, and neighborhood. Like the interviews and focus groups, the surveys were designed to address many of the 40 developmental assets. The surveys are in Appendix C.

Once again, the evaluation team discovered some obstacles in this process. One difficulty CCI encountered was actually finding teens to survey. Another related dilemma was that at times there was a small group of teens, therefore a focus group was conducted instead. One obvious resource for teens would be middle and high schools.

This was not possible, however, due to the content of some of the questions in the survey. Duval County public schools would not permit the terms “sex” or “birth control” to be used in the surveys. Despite this difficulty, there were a couple of instances when the evaluation team was permitted to survey school children: at the Teen Issues Conference and an Andrew Jackson Medical Magnet classroom. In both cases, the questions that posed a problem for the schools were omitted. In the end only a small proportion of those surveyed were permitted to complete the version of survey that mentioned sex or birth control. For this reason, those variables were omitted from the data.

Teens were also surveyed at a Center for Excellence Program event and a Community Connections after school program. In addition, surveys from the Teen Summit and Peer Educator Night were included, because the surveys contained some similar questions to the needs and assets survey. The survey conducted after the Teen Summit will be referred to as the needs and assets survey. Although the evaluation team was able to prevent some teens from completing the survey more than once, it is still possible that teens attended more than one event and subsequently filled out more than one survey.

While teens were surveyed at six different locations and times, only a total of 187 teens (139 from Teen Summit and Peer Educator and 48 from needs and assets survey) resided in the targeted zip code areas, thus illustrating another obstacle CCI encountered. Although a group of teens were gathered, only a proportion lived in the desired zip codes, decreasing the potential sample size. It was noticed that a few of the completed surveys appeared to be suspicious, particularly the questions on pages six and seven. For instance, on some of the surveys all of the responses for these two pages were identical. While this is remotely possible, it was not consistent with the rest of the survey. Therefore, the answers to these questions were omitted from the data for five surveys.

The evaluation team also compared results from the 2000-2001 needs and assets survey to the Teen Behavior and Opinion Survey produced by Dr. Ronald J. Pollard for APPP and conducted in 1997 where appropriate. Not all of the codes were labeled in the data set, preventing CCI from comparing all of the relevant questions between the two surveys.

Results

About You - The first section of questions dealt with a variety of demographics. The ages of the survey respondents ranged from 11 to 19. More than one third (36.8 percent) of the teens were 11 to 13, 52.9 percent were 14 to 16, and 10.2 percent were 17 to 19 years old. The grades of the respondents ranged accordingly from 4th grade to out of high school. Of the survey respondents, just over half (53.3 percent) were female. A great majority (83.3 percent) of those surveyed were African American. Less than ten percent (7.5 percent) claimed to be multiracial or checked more than one description. Other races such as Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and others made up 4.8 percent of the teens and only 4.3 percent were white. Almost one third (31.0 percent) of the surveyed teens claimed to reside in zip code 32209. The next most cited zip code was 32208 (17.6 percent). Slightly more than 15 percent of the teens lived in 32206, 9.6

percent in 32210, 7.0 percent in 32205, 6.4 percent in 32204, 5.9 percent in 32277, 3.7 percent in 32254, 2.1 percent in 32211, and 1.1 percent in 32202.

In addition to asking where the teens lived, the survey asked with whom they lived. This was not asked in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator surveys. Of the 48 teens, over one fourth (27.1 percent) resided with both their mother and father. More than half (56.3 percent) lived with their mother, while only 4.2 percent lived with their father. Slightly more than half (52.1 percent) of the respondents claimed to live with a brother, sister, or both. No one claimed to live with his or her children, spouse, in-laws, friends, or alone. However, one teen claimed to live with his or her boyfriend or girlfriend. Nine respondents lived with someone else not listed. Some of these people included aunts, cousins, mother's boyfriend, grandparents, and stepfathers. Of these nine respondents, five did not live with either parent.

The next question asked about the respondents' religious preference. Once again, this was only in the needs and assets survey. Protestant was the most frequently cited religious preference. Almost three fourths (73.9 percent) of the teens claimed to be Protestant, while only one each was Catholic and Muslim. More than one quarter (21.7 percent) of the respondents chose "other." These included "Christian," "Adventist," "Jehovah Witness," and "Wicca."

About Being a Teenager - This included questions about who they talk to, would like to talk to, and who is helpful. These were not asked in the Teen Summit or Peer Educator survey. The first question consisted of a table the teens were to fill out. This proved to be a problem for some, mostly younger respondents. Although the instructions asked for only one person to be identified in each cell, many respondents included more than one response. In addition, some teens placed checkmarks or other indicators in the cell. The multiple responses in particular made coding the data difficult. Despite these obstacles, information was gleaned from the data and is presented in Table 5. Because there were multiple responses, the following percentages will not total 100 percent. Mother was the most frequently cited response to almost every issue presented in the survey. However, the percentage of teens selecting mother as the person they speak to about each topic varied. Between 46.2 percent and 51.4 percent of the teens claimed that they usually talk to their mother about their physical development, pregnancy and child birth, HIV, schoolwork, and plans for the future, while 10.5 percent or less spoke with their father about these same issues. In fact, no more than 10.5 percent of the teens selected their father as a person they usually speak to about any of the topics presented in the survey. This is most likely a reflection of the fact that more than half of the teens lived with their mother and less than 5 percent lived with their father. "No one" and peers (male and female friends and boy/girl friends) were the next most cited responses for each of these questions, except for schoolwork and HIV, for which teachers were included in the top three responses.

It is interesting to note that when teens replied to whom they would **like** to talk to about their physical development, only 32.4 percent of teens claimed their mother and 20.6 percent chose their father. A similar trend occurred with the issues of HIV. However, a slightly different trend developed with topics concerning pregnancy and childbirth, schoolwork, and plans for the future. Although the percentage of those wanting to talk

to their mother decreased, “no one” was increased considerably more rather than the father. Another pattern observed in all of these questions was that the percentage of teens choosing peers decreased when asked who would they **like** to talk to. This indicates that although teens are talking to their friends about these issues, they would prefer to speak with someone else. Table 5 provides the top three most cited responses to all of the topics provided in the survey.

Table 5: Top Three Responses to *I usually talk to...* and *I would like to talk to...*

When I have a question about:	I usually talk to...	I would like to talk to...
my physical development	mother	mother
	no one	no one
	peers	father
love and relationships	peers	mother
	mother	peers
	no one	no one
sexually transmitted diseases	mother	mother
	no one	no one
	peers	peers
HIV/AIDS	mother	mother
	no one and peers	no one
	teacher	peers and father
alcohol and drugs	mother	mother
	peers	no one
	no one	peers
pregnancy and child birth	mother	mother
	no one	no one
	peers	father
my personal problems	no one	mother and no one
	mother	sibling
	peers	peers
spirituality and/or God	mother	no one
	no one	mother
	minister	sibling
who I am as a person	mother	mother
	peers	no one
	no one	peers
my school work	mother	mother
	teacher	no one
	no one	teacher
my plans for the future	mother	mother
	peers	no one
	no one	father and sibling

Such a high percentage of teens citing mother as the person they usually talk to was not present for all of the issues in this section. Although mother was the most frequently cited response for almost every topic, the percentages decreased for some issues. For example, between 36.8 percent and 43.6 percent of respondents claimed to speak with their mother about sexually transmitted diseases, spirituality and/or God, alcohol and drugs, and “who I am as a person.” The next most cited answer for issues concerning “who I am as a person” and alcohol and drugs was peers and “no one” was the third most frequently cited response. For both of these questions peers became the third most frequently cited response and “no one” became the second for who they would like to talk to. Mother, “no one,” and peers were selected most often in that order for talking about sexually transmitted diseases. Counselor and father tied for the fourth most frequent response. The answers were similar for who teens would like to talk to about sexually transmitted diseases except that doctor replaced counselor. Once again mother and “no one” were spoken to the most about spirituality and God, however, minister was the next most mentioned person. Unlike other issues, the people teens would like to talk to about this was “no one,” mother, and sibling in that order.

There were still other issues in which teens seem to talk to their mothers less about. Forty-five percent of teens talk with their peers about love and relationships, while only 22.5 percent claimed to speak with their mother. Again, “no one” was in the top three most cited answers. Mother increased to the most frequently chosen response for who teens would like to talk to, while peers fell to second. There was also a noticeable increase of teens who would like to talk to their fathers about love and relationships. Almost one third (31.6 percent) of the respondents claimed to talk to “no one” about personal problems and mother was cited by 28.9 percent of the teens. Peers were the third most chosen response. Like the topic of spirituality and God, teens claimed to want to talk to siblings about personal problems. This was the second most cited reply after a tie for first between mother and “no one.”

The following question in the *About Being a Teenager* section in the needs and assets survey related to the helpfulness of individuals to teens if they needed someone to talk to about personal problems. These individuals included family members, minister, teacher, counselor, friend, doctor, and coach. The respondents were asked to rate how helpful (very helpful, helpful, somewhat helpful, or no help at all) each person would be if they were to talk to them about a personal problem. Coinciding with the previous section, it is not surprising that mother and friend were rated most frequently as very helpful. Half of the teens believed their mother would be very helpful and only 6.8 percent claimed she would be no help at all. The ratings for friend were very similar, with 46.7 percent claiming a friend would be very helpful and only 8.9 percent feeling they would be no help at all. A counselor was also thought to be quite helpful. Slightly more than 80 percent rated counselor as somewhat helpful to very helpful, with 39.5 percent selecting very helpful. Somewhat helpful was the most frequently cited response in ranking a teacher. A total of 72.7 percent felt a teacher would be at least somewhat helpful for talking to about personal problems.

There was no real consensus in regards to the helpfulness of a family member or doctor. Although 79.1 percent felt a family member would be at least somewhat helpful, these

percentages were evenly spread between these rankings and the percentage of teens choosing no help at all was close to the other ratings. Similarly, 29.5 percent of the respondents felt that a doctor would be no help at all. However, 27.3 and 25.0 percent believed a doctor would be very helpful or somewhat helpful. Minister also received mixed ratings. More than one third (34.9 percent) of the teens claimed that a minister wouldn't be helpful, but 30.2 percent felt one would be helpful. Father and sibling had similar results in that about one third of the teens felt that they would be no help at all and another third believed they would be somewhat helpful. Again reflecting what was found in the previous section, only 7.1 percent of the respondents rated their father as very helpful. Coach was the lowest rating individual in the survey. More than half (56.8 percent) of the respondents felt that a coach would be no help at all in regards to talking about personal problems.

A similar question was addressed in the last needs and assets survey in 1997. Rather than how helpful *would* these people be, it asked how helpful *have* these people been and the respondents were given a category of "did not talk to" as an additional choice. Similarities as well as differences were found between the two results. For example, close to half of the respondents rated their mother as very helpful and about 70 percent rated their teacher as at least somewhat helpful. In both surveys less than 10 percent believed their friend has been or would be no help at all. Teens rated their father and siblings differently between the two surveys. While one third believed they would be no help at all in the 2000-2001 survey, less than 12 percent felt they had been no help at all in the 1997 survey. However, the differences may be a result of the "did not talk to them" option. More than one fourth of the teens claimed they had not spoken to their father about a personal problem and more than 15 percent had not spoken to a sibling.

About Your Activities - The needs and assets survey also addressed the activities of teens and how many hours (0 to 7) per week they spent in each. As the evaluation team entered the data, it was realized that a "more than 7 hours" category should have been included in the survey. Only two respondents actually filled in a number higher than seven. Others may have wanted or needed to, but did not. Again, this question was not asked of teens at the Teen Summit or Peer Educator Night. However, those teens were questioned about their extracurricular activities, which will also be discussed.

Many of the teens seem to spend a lot of their time hanging out with friends and watching TV and movies. More than half of the teens claimed to spend five to seven hours taking part in these activities. Slightly more than 38 percent spend one to four hours per week in each of these activities. Similar results were found in the 1997 survey where slightly more than half of the teens spent five hours or more hanging out with friends. The largest percentage (47.5 to 59.1 percent) of respondents spend one to four hours per week involved in playing sports or exercising, reading for pleasure, doing homework, church activities, and thinking about the future. This was also true for the 1997 teens for playing sports or exercising and church activities. However, in 1997 only 20.3 percent of the teens spent one to four hours thinking about their future. Rather the majority (70.0 percent) spent five to seven hours. Slightly more than one fifth of the 2000-2001 teens do not spend any time reading for pleasure and 17.9 percent do not attend church activities.

Only one respondent from the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey that participated in community activities claimed to be involved with church activities. Only 11.9 percent of the respondents selected zero as the number of hours spent on homework or thinking about the future per week. Although almost 60 percent claimed to play sports or exercise one to four hours per week, another 27.3 percent participate five or more hours per week. Sports were the most frequently cited school and community activities by the peer educators and the teens at the Teen Summit. The number of hours spent practicing music, theater, or other arts varied considerably. More than 28 percent do not spend any time in such activities, while slightly more than 35 percent each spend one to four and five or more hours per week involved in practicing some form of the arts. Band, chorus, or art was cited by more than a quarter of Teen Summit and Peer Educator teens that were active in school or community events.

From the results it appears that many of the respondents do not spend much of their time playing video games, working at a job, or volunteering. Between 42 and 55 percent of the teens claimed they spend zero hours per week participating in these activities. Less than one quarter of the respondents spend 5 or more hours per week at a job and only 17.0 percent spend the same amount of time playing video games. Almost 60 percent of the teens spend one hour or more doing volunteer work. This result is different from the Teen Summit and Peer Educator Night teens where only 8.6 percent of them that participated in a community activity claimed to volunteer. One significant difference found between the 1997 and 2000-2001 needs and assets surveys was the amount of time teens worked at a job. In 2000-2001 almost 55 percent of the teens claimed they did not work any hours during the week, while in 1997 only 27.8 percent did not work. In addition, over half of the 1997 respondents worked five to seven hours per week and less than one quarter of the 2000-2001 respondents worked the same amount of hours.

About Your Thoughts and Future - In the needs and assets survey the respondents were asked to circle whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with given statements. Some of the questions were identical in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey. These statements included: *I know I can reach my personal goals; I will be successful in my chosen career; Being a teen parent makes it hard to prepare for a career; I feel I can change what will happen in the future by what I do today; I look up to my parents or another adult for guidance; I will have successful personal relationships; and I do whatever I feel like doing.* An overwhelming majority (more than 88 percent) of the teens agreed or strongly agreed they can reach their personal goals, change their future, have successful personal relationships, and be successful in their chosen career. A great majority (91.5 percent) of the respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that they look up to a parent or adult for guidance. When asked whether they agreed that being a teen parent makes it difficult to prepare for a career, slightly more than 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Teens were relatively split in their agreement to *I do whatever I feel like doing.* Fifty-four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

A portion of the statements was only asked in the needs and assets survey. These statements included: *I am comfortable around people of different cultural or racial*

background; I feel that my life has a purpose; I can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations; and I feel safe at my school. Of the respondents, all but one agreed or strongly agreed that their life has a purpose. More than 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are comfortable around people of different cultural or racial backgrounds. Thirty-nine percent of the teens disagreed or strongly disagreed that they feel safe at their school. A great majority, however, agreed or strongly agreed that they can resist negative peer pressures or dangerous situations.

Statements included only in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey were *I feel that I am very good at my schoolwork; I find it hard to make friends; I usually do the right thing; I feel that I am as smart as other kids my age; and I don't like the way I am leading my life.* Rather than rate whether they agree or disagree with the statements teens were asked how true the statements were (definitely true, really true, sort of true, or not at all true). Slightly less than two thirds of the teens believed the statement concerning their schoolwork was really or definitely true. However, more than three quarters of the respondents felt it was really or definitely true that they are as smart as other kids their age. Only 58.3 percent believed it was really or definitely true that they usually do the right thing, but almost 70 percent felt it was not true at all that they don't like the way they are leading their lives. When asked about the difficulty of making friends, more than three fourths (77.8 percent) claimed that making friends is hard is not at all true.

As previously mentioned, some of the questions between the surveys were very similar to one another. Some statements were identically worded, however the responses provided to the teens were different. For the needs and assets survey the teens were asked to rate the level of agreement with each statement, while the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey asked teens to rate the level of truthfulness for most of the comparable statements. Table 6 provides an illustration of how these questions were asked and their results. Comparable questions between the surveys included *I am often unhappy with myself; I don't have very many friends; and I wish my physical appearance was different.* In addition, there were two statements presented in the surveys that were reversed. These were *I have had many successes in my life* and *I have had many failures in my life.* In this case the questions were measured in the same way.

Similar results appeared from both groups of teens when asked to rate the statements, *I am often unhappy with myself* and *I don't have very many friends.* Slightly more than 63 percent of the needs and assets survey respondents claimed that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are often unhappy with themselves, while 66.7 percent of the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey respondents felt that the same statement was not at all true. More than 80 percent of the teens from both sets of surveys disagreed or strongly disagreed that they do not have very many friends or rated the statement as not at all true. Differing results were produced from the rating of *I wish my physical appearance was different.* While more than half of the Teen Summit and Peer Educator respondents believed this statement was not at all true, only 40 percent of the teens taking the needs and assets survey claimed they disagreed or strongly disagreed. Almost all of the teens completing the needs and assets survey strongly

agreed or agreed that they have had many successes in their life, while only 50.7 percent of the Teen Summit and Peer Educator teens disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have had many failures in their life. These seemingly contradicting results may not be so surprising since having many successes in one's life does not necessarily mean one does not also have many failures. Still, it is interesting to note the differences between the two questions.

Table 6: Comparable Questions Between the Surveys, Percentages of Responses

Survey	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
NA	I am often unhappy with myself	26.8	9.8	29.3	34.1
NA	I don't have very many friends	11.9	7.1	26.2	54.8
NA	I wish my physical appearance was different	42.5	17.5	17.5	22.5
NA	I have had many successes in my life	64.3	31.0	2.4	2.4
TS/E	I have had many failures in my life	11.9	37.3	34.3	16.4
		Definitely True	Really True	Sort of True	Not at all True
TS/PE	I am often unhappy with myself	4.4	5.2	23.7	66.7
TS/PE	I don't have very many friends	6.8	3.8	13.5	75.9
TS/PE	I wish my physical appearance was different	8.1	6.7	27.4	57.8

NA - Needs and assets survey TS/PE - Teen Summit and peer educator survey
 Note: Questions were asked in two separate surveys, the needs and assets survey and Teen Summit/Peer Educator survey. The questions in this table are those that were comparable between the two surveys. However, some responses provided were different, level of agreement versus level of truth.

Respondents of the needs and assets survey were next asked to rate the importance of a series of items (very important, important, somewhat important, or not important at all). Partly due to the omitted data from the suspicious surveys, approximately 40 teens completed these questions. Many of the teens rated the items presented in the survey as important or very important. Of the respondents, all claimed that finishing school is very important. All of the teens also felt that attending college and obtaining a job is important or very important. A vast majority of the teens rated the positive value statements as important or very important. At least 90.0 percent felt that being honest even when it is not easy, helping people in need, and treating everyone equally are important or very important. Waiting until marriage to have a baby was believed to be important or very important by almost 85 percent of the respondents. A great majority (82.5 percent) of respondents rated having a safe place to hang out after school as important or very important, while only 10.0 percent claimed it is not important at all. Spending time with parents was seen as important or very important by more than 80 percent of the teens. Less than three fourths (72.5 percent) of the teens felt that it is important or very important to be a part of their school.

There was a higher rate of unimportance in regards to relationships between boys and girls. For example, more than 66 percent believed it is important or very important to be attractive to boys or girls, almost 18 percent claimed it is not important at all. Similarly, only slightly more than half of the teens rated having a boyfriend or girlfriend as important or very important and more than one fourth (27.5 percent) felt it is not important.

Similar results were found in the 1997 survey. This survey provided the same options for respondents except for the fact that it was on a scale of one to five with one being not important and five being very important and two, three, and four had no labels. Similar to the 2000-2001 survey, the vast majority of teens felt that finishing school and getting a good job are very important or rated a four. Slightly fewer teens rated going to college as very important or a four compared to the 2000-2001 teens. Eighty-six percent rated going to college a four or five. Spending time with parents and having a safe place to hang out after school were also similar to the most recent survey, with the majority of teens rating these as a four or very important. Like the 2000-2001 results, being attractive to boys or girls and having a boyfriend or girlfriend were also not as important in the 1997 survey. Slightly more than half of the teens rated having a boyfriend or girlfriend as very important or a four and slightly less than 60 percent claimed that being attractive to boys or girls is very important or a four.

About your family - The next set of questions asked in the needs and assets survey concerned the teens' family life. Once again the teens were given a series of statements and asked to rank them as strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed. Again, approximately 40 respondents answered these questions. Only two teens disagreed or strongly disagreed that their parents encourage them to do well. A great majority (81.5 percent) also agreed or strongly agreed that their parents know where they are when they are not with their parents. Less than three quarters of the respondents strongly agree or agree that their parents set rules that are very clear and they are usually punished when they break a rule. Although teens were given a "neutral" option in the 1997 survey, results regarding clear rules and punishment were very similar. Strongly agree or agree was cited by about two thirds (67.5 percent) of the 2000-2001 teens when asked if their parents help them with their schoolwork. Less than half of the teens from 1997 strongly agreed or agreed that their parents helped them with their schoolwork. Responses to whether their parents spend enough time with them were split. Roughly half (55.0 percent) of the teens strongly agreed or agreed their parents spend enough time with them. Only slightly more than one fourth of the 1997 teens strongly agreed or agreed with this same statement.

About Your Neighborhood - Next, teens taking the needs and assets survey were asked about their neighborhood. Once more teens ranked their agreement level to a series of statements regarding their neighborhood. The majority (75 and 80 percent) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed their neighborhood is a safe place to live and that most people like each other in the neighborhood. Teens from the 1997 survey did not agree with these statements as much. Again, the 1997 respondents were given the option of "neutral." Only 47.6 percent of those teens strongly agreed or agreed that their neighborhood is a safe place to live and only slightly more than 45 percent strongly

agreed or agreed that most people like each other in their neighborhood. Sixty percent of the 2000-2001 teens believed that adults watch out for other people's kids in their neighborhood. These were very similar to the 1997 survey. However, less than half (47.5 percent) of the respondents felt that there are positive role models. More than half (57.5 percent) strongly agreed or agreed teens are seen as important members of their community. Slightly more than 64 percent strongly agreed or agreed there are not enough after school activities and they wish to move out of the neighborhood. These findings differed from that of the 1997 survey in that only roughly 40 percent of those teens strongly agreed or agreed with those statements.

Other questions in this section asked about teen sex and pregnancy in the neighborhood. Only one third of the respondents believed that teen pregnancy is a problem in their neighborhood. Those in zip code 32206 had the highest percentage of strongly agree and agree responses. A similar question was asked in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey. It asked teens how serious of a problem is it that young girls are getting pregnant. More than 40 percent (42.4 percent) rated it as a serious or very serious problem. This time the majority of zip codes had at least half of the respondents rating teen pregnancy as serious or very serious. These zip codes included 32202, 32205, 32206, 32211, and 32254. It is interesting to note that just slightly more than half of the Teen Summit and Peer Educator teens strongly agreed or agreed that people in their neighborhood are strongly against teens having sex and 62.0 percent also strongly agreed or agreed that people in their neighborhood are strongly against teen pregnancy. The majority of teens in 32204, 32209, and 32210 strongly disagreed or disagreed that people are strongly against teens having sex and the majority of those in only 32209 disagreed people are strongly against teen pregnancy.

The last set of questions asked in the needs and assets survey pertained to the services available in the teens' communities. A list of services were provided and teens were to choose "yes," "no," or "don't know" revealing the availability of the service. The same type of question was presented in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey. Half of the services listed in the needs and assets survey were also in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey. The Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey did not provide a "don't know" category for the respondents. However, "no" and "don't know" were collapsed because the percentage of yes responses was of importance. Additionally, if a teen does not know about the existence of a service it may as well not be available. Table 7 provides the percentages of those answering "yes," "no," or "don't know" for the services and a breakdown of which services were asked in which survey(s). Tutoring for school, mentoring, anger management, violence/gang prevention, counseling, family planning, job training, family therapy and tobacco use prevention were the services asked in both surveys. Almost three quarters (72.3 percent) of the teens claimed that tutoring for school is available in their community. From there the percentages decreased. Only 52.1 and 56.6 percent of the respondents claimed that mentoring and job training are available. Between 43 and 50 percent of the teens stated that counseling, family planning, family therapy, and tobacco use prevention are services provided in their communities. Anger management and violence/gang prevention were cited by only 34.2 and 38.5 percent of the respondents as being available.

A few services were included only in the Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey; teen pregnancy prevention, health services, alcohol prevention, and drug prevention. About half (48.3 to 58.7 percent) of the respondents believed that all, but teen pregnancy prevention services were available. Teen pregnancy prevention was cited by slightly more than 40 percent of the respondents as being offered.

Table 7: Services Offered in Community, Percentage of “yes”, “no”, and “don’t know”			
Service	n	Yes	No or Don’t know
Asked in both surveys:			
Tutoring for school	166	72.3	27.7
Mentoring (adult role models)	166	56.6	43.3
Anger management	161	34.2	65.9
Violence/gang prevention	161	38.5	61.5
Counseling	161	49.7	50.3
Family planning	161	47.8	52.2
Job training	163	52.1	47.8
Family therapy	158	43.7	56.3
Tobacco use prevention	162	47.5	52.5
Asked in Teen Summit and Peer Educator survey only:			
Teen pregnancy prevention	122	41.8	58.2
Health services	121	58.7	41.3
Alcohol prevention	120	48.3	51.7
Drug prevention	121	52.9	47.1
Asked in Needs and Assets survey only:			
Abstinence education	41	43.9	56.1
HIV/AIDS education	38	44.7	55.2
Life options and future planning	38	47.4	52.7
Male roles and responsibilities	38	47.4	52.6
Alcohol and drug education	39	35.9	64.1
Organized sports (basketball/baseball)	39	64.1	35.8
Relationships and dating	40	50.0	50.0
Parenting and child development	40	62.5	37.5
Sex education	43	32.6	67.5

As explained, about half of the services provided in the needs and assets list were only asked in that survey. They included abstinence education, HIV/AIDS education, life options and future planning, male roles and responsibilities, alcohol and drug education, organized sports, relationships and dating, parenting and child development, and sex education. More than 60 percent of the teens stated that organized sports and parenting and child development services are offered in their community. Exactly half of the respondents claimed that services providing relationship and dating information are provided. Between 43.9 and 47.4 percent of teens affirmed that abstinence education, HIV/AIDS education, life options and future planning, and male roles and

responsibilities are in their neighborhoods. Two programs that received lower percentages (35.9 and 32.6 percent) of yes's were alcohol and drug education and sex education.

In addition to asking teens what is and is not available, the needs and assets survey provided the respondents an opportunity to express what three services from the list they would most like to see in their community. The responses were collapsed, therefore, the percentages will not calculate to 100 percent. Of the 30 respondents, more than one third (36.7 percent) of the teens listed sex education as one of the top three services they would like to see offered. Another 13.3 percent specifically identified abstinence education as a wanted service. A total of half of the respondents listed either sex education or abstinence education as one of their top three choices. The next most cited service was life options and future planning. More than one fourth (26.7 percent) named this as one of their top three wanted services. Slightly less than one fourth of respondents identified job training and relationships and dating. Tutoring for school was the fourth most cited service with 16.7 percent of teens selecting it.

Summary

From the survey results it appears that most of the teens talk to their mother, peers, or "no one" about many issues. This doesn't change much for who they would *like* to talk to. These three persons remain the top three most cited responses, with the exception of father and sibling being included periodically. The majority of teens also believed their mother and friends would be very helpful if they were to go to them about a personal problem. Father was not rated quite so well by most of the teens. Very few felt their father would be very helpful. These trends most likely reflect the fact that more than half of the teens live with their mother and only slightly more than one fourth reside with both of their parents. Almost all of the respondents affirmed that they look up to a parent or other adult for guidance.

Many of the teens spend a lot of time hanging out with friends and watching TV and movies. It appears that the majority of them spend less time playing video games, working at a job, or volunteering.

Responses regarding teens' families were somewhat mixed. A great majority of the teen respondents felt that their parents encourage them to do well and their parents know where they are when they are not with them. However, fewer agreed that their parents provide appropriate boundaries and they are punished when they break a rule.

An overwhelming majority of the teens have encouraging and optimistic views of their future, with almost all of them agreeing that they could reach their personal goals, change their future, have successful personal relationships, and be successful in their chosen career. Such striking results were not found in some opinions concerning the present. For example, although most of respondents felt that they are very good at their schoolwork and they usually do the right thing, it was not a great majority. Similarly, most of the teens disagreed or felt it was untrue that they were often unhappy with themselves, but it was only about two thirds. It is also interesting to note that although

many of the teens have optimistic views of their future, only slightly more than 70 percent agreed that being a teen parent makes it difficult to prepare for a career.

Many of the subjects presented in the survey were believed to be important to the teens. Most, if not all, of the respondents rated finishing school, attending college, and obtaining a job as important. A vast majority also felt that the positive value statements were important. Other matters were also seen with some importance: waiting until marriage to have a baby, having a safe place to hang out after school, and spending time with parents. Issues such as being a part of their school, being attractive to boys or girls, and having a boyfriend or girlfriend were not seen as important to many of the teens as the other issues presented.

There were mixed results in regards to the teens' neighborhoods. While most of the teens agreed their neighborhood is a safe place to live and that most people like each other in the neighborhood, less than half felt that there are positive role models. And slightly more than 64 percent agreed there are not enough after school activities and they wish to move out of the neighborhood.

Despite the high teen birth rates in the zip codes, only one third of the respondents claimed that teen pregnancy is a problem in their neighborhood. Zip code 32206 had the highest percentage of teens that agreed it is a problem. Teens did not appear to have a sense of teen sex being unacceptable from their neighborhoods. Only slightly more than half of teen respondents agreed that people in their neighborhood are strongly against teens having sex and less than two thirds agreed that people in their neighborhood are strongly against teen pregnancy. The majority of teens residing in 32204, 32209, and 32210 felt that individuals are strongly against teen sex and the majority of respondents in 32209 only disagreed citizens in their neighborhood are against teen pregnancy.

The majority of the teen respondents acknowledged that tutoring for school, organized sports, and parenting and child development services are available in their neighborhoods, while much less claimed that sex education, alcohol and drug education, anger management, and violence and gang prevention services are. Sex or abstinence education was the most cited top three services they would *like* to see offered in their neighborhoods. Many of the teens also prefer to have life options and future planning programs offered.

Although results from the 1997 and 2000-2001 surveys were similar with some questions, others varied. For example, teens rated finishing school, attending college, spending time with parents, and having a boyfriend or girlfriend somewhat equally on both surveys. However, when comparing whether teens felt their neighborhoods were safe, results were quite different between the two sets respondents. This variation may be due to a change in the attitudes or beliefs of the teens or it may also be a result of differing measures. Not all of the measures were equal and thus not exactly comparable.

ALLIANCE SUSTAINABILITY

Key Informant Leader Interviews and Teen Focus Groups

Methodology

One great concern regarding the Jacksonville Alliance for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy is the issue of sustainability. The APPP staff currently provides a multitude of services for the Alliance. Once the CDC funding is gone, there needs to be a way of continuing the support the Alliance has been receiving. In order to address this issue CCI included in the key informant leader interviews (mostly service providers) and teen focus group questions regarding APPP and the Alliance. Questions included whether the respondent knew of APPP, its programs, and any thoughts about the programs. The evaluation team also asked similar questions regarding the Alliance. There were some inconsistencies in which questions were asked of respondents in this section. However, the most striking result of these questions was that many, if not all, of the key informant leaders did not know the distinction between APPP and the Alliance. These factors made the data analysis tedious, if not difficult.

Results

Despite the difficulty, however, information was gleaned from the questions. The majority of key informant leaders had not heard of APPP, but a few respondents did claim to have heard of APPP. However, almost all of them were actually referring to the Alliance. For example, one respondent answered, “Yea. We call it the Jacksonville Alliance.” Others declared later in the interview they thought that we had been discussing the Alliance. Despite the confusion, all that responded were aware of APPP programs such as ENABL, St. Paul’s Community Empowerment Center, Planned Parenthood Teen Clinic, and the Bridge/Northwest/Ribault Connection. Similar responses came from the teen focus groups. All respondents indicated that they had not heard of APPP, but all had heard of at least one or more APPP programs.

The majority of key informant leaders agreed that these programs are planned with the community in mind. However, one respondent stated, “Not really sure. Not as effective as could be – abstinence not always effective.” Similarly, all but one service provider felt that the communities had a chance to give any input in the planning of the programs. The respondents identified a variety of components that they liked best about the APPP programs. Their comments included, “work together and so much needs to be done – only thing question is if APPP could provide additional funding;” “The abstinence programs. Of course, the programs that have the assertive techniques built into them. I like the youth development approach that most the programs try to take. They try to let the kids plan things with minimum adults;” “the most is that they’re concerned;” and “the individuality. Where you can cater it to meet the needs of the community even though there’s a model that’s laid.” Although respondents were given the opportunity, no one identified anything they liked least about the programs. Of those that were asked, all wished to see the programs continue and felt they are beneficial to the communities. Three agencies claimed to have had worked with APPP in the past. These relationships included grant proposal writing and assistance, training and workshops,

loaning computers, and advertising. One interviewee added, “[APPP] has given us information crucial to training youth.”

In addition to inquiring about APPP, the evaluation team asked key informant leaders similar questions about the Alliance. The majority of respondents had heard of the Alliance. Furthermore, all that were asked had heard of an event sponsored by the Alliance. A few claimed they had attended or worked with the Alliance on such an event. Once again, all of those that responded felt that the activities are planned with the community in mind. One service provider believed the community did not have any input in planning the activities. As with the APPP programs, key informant leaders were given the opportunity to identify things they liked least and best about the Alliance activities. Only one respondent shared what they had liked least was that the day the Teen Summit was held was St. Patrick’s Day. All respondents that were asked expressed that the activities should continue and have been beneficial to the communities. Teen focus group participants were also asked if they had heard of the Alliance. At least four girls indicated they had, as well as indicating they had heard of events sponsored by the Alliance. No boys indicated they had heard of the Alliance.

The evaluation team further discussed the sustainability of the Alliance by asking service providers how the Alliance could sustain itself, the possibility of a membership fee, and what the individual agencies needed. As mentioned earlier, there was some inconsistency in the questions asked of respondents. Only two providers were asked and responded to what can be done for the Alliance to sustain and support itself. One mentioned that the Alliance could get refunded by bringing in a corporate sponsor. The other provider did not have any suggestions, but expressed that “If anyone came up with any ideas, they would be willing to participate.”

Six of nine respondents agreed that their organization would be interested in Alliance membership even if a fee were required. Some comments included, “very beneficial, yes worth a fee;” “being the director of this program, I would. No doubt;” and “as long as [they] continue to assist us.” Only one provider believed the agency he or she worked for would not pay a membership fee because the agency is non-profit. A respondent felt the organization should still become a member, while another would not speak for the agency. Only one provider identified a fair membership fee, which was \$100 per year. In return for a membership fee service providers would expect “continue programs and events;” “come out and talk with the kids, t-shirts, and field trips;” “assistance, grant writing assistance, put organizations together and promote organizations, operate as a hub for us all to meet, training;” “same kind of technical kind of support;” and “that cohesive attitude.”

In addition to asking what would be expected for a membership fee, service providers were asked what the individual agency was in need of to serve teens. The most cited response was assistance with grant writing or in locating RFP’s. Additionally, two other respondents cited money as a need. Two providers also mentioned materials. One respondent identified a need for someone with a statistical background to obtain information and data, for example, geographical and STD data, for grant applications.

Summary

From past conversations with APPP, it is not surprising to have found that the majority of key respondent leaders had not heard of APPP or thought that APPP and the Alliance were one in the same. This is somewhat of a result from an APPP strategy to make sure the Alliance is well known in the community since it is to be the sustained organization. However, the ignorance of APPP and its relationship to the Alliance has led to some confusion for the service providers, in particular, in regards to the dismantling of APPP.

Although many respondents were unaware of APPP, they did know of its programs. Most of the questioned key informant leaders felt the programs were planned with the community in mind and the communities had an opportunity to provide input in the planning process. The interviewees like the abstinence programs, assertive techniques, youth development approach, individuality, concern, that the teens are given an active role, and that the programs work together. All of those interviewed expressed that the programs are beneficial to the communities and wish to see the programs continue.

The Alliance and its activities were well known among the interviewed respondents and some of the girls in the focus groups. Like the APPP programs many believed that the activities are planned with the community in mind and only one felt that the community does not have any input in the planning of activities. The only comment expressed by the interviewees concerning things they liked least about the activities was the date chosen for the last Teen Summit. Again, all that were asked felt that the activities are beneficial to the communities and should continue.

There was not much data collected on what the Alliance can do to sustain itself. The one suggestion was that a corporate sponsor could help to refund the organization. Most of the providers would still be interested in membership even with a fee. The one suggested membership fee was \$100. In return for a membership fee service providers would expect to receive activities and events, grant writing and other technical assistance, training, and a hub for providers to collaborate. Like the Alliance, it appears that funding may be a concern for some of the service providers. Most identified the need for money or grant writing assistance for their individual agency.

Alliance Member Survey

Methodology

While obtaining information regarding Alliance sustainability from key informant leaders and teens was useful, it is even more important to question members of the Alliance. The evaluation team chose to survey members at committee meetings held the months of October and November 2001. The brief survey questioned members whether the Alliance was worth and capable of being sustained, how it could be sustained, the possibility of a membership fee, and what their agencies were in need of. A total of 15 members were surveyed. The survey is in Appendix C.

Results

The sustainability survey began with some opening questions in order to prevent any assumptions made by the evaluation team. For example, the first question asked

Alliance members whether at its current level of activity the Alliance was *worth* sustaining. All but one respondent felt that the Alliance was worth continuing. Many of the reasons why members felt it was worth saving included the activities and information provided by the Alliance. Table 8 provides the different responses offered as to why the Alliance is worth sustaining. The one member that did not agree stated, “Except for the Teen Summit, the Alliance does not seem to be interested in involvement in any other ventures.”

Table 8: Why the Alliance is <i>Worth</i> Sustaining:
“We need an organization to continue to coordinate the many activities and programs offered.”
“The Alliance continues to reach a good portion of the population requiring services. It is a viable and effective as long as there are youths who are at risk of becoming pregnant.”
“Activities involving teens that promote healthy life styles and decision making seem to more effective than a lecture in a classroom.”
“Because of the information that goes out to the community.”
“Information gained at sponsored activities is very informative and helpful with clients.”
“The alliance provides multiple activities.”
“Because there are many organizations in our community that has benefited from the coordination of activities.”
“From what I’ve seen the program is very sufficient for needy and at-risk teens.”
“It allows kids to get involved with thought provoking issues.”
“It has caused groups to become aware and interactive.”
“The pregnancy issue should be given more attention.”
“[The Alliance] brings agencies together.”
“The Alliance could potentially bring together businesses, youth agencies, individuals and organizations targeting sexuality issues together for collaborations, projects, etc.”
“Activities are always needed to enhance youth knowledge. Ex. conflict resolution, teen pregnancy, etc.”

Another question addressed was whether the Alliance *could* be sustained once CDC funding dissipates. Thirteen members expressed the belief that it is possible, while two were “not sure.” Once again, respondents were asked to elaborate on their responses. There were a variety of reasons provided. These responses can be found in Table 9. One respondent that claimed he or she was not sure continued by stating, “It is hard for volunteers to spend the time it takes to recuse money and organize activities on “duty time” and many have plates that are full already.”

Once members had the opportunity to think about whether the Alliance *should* and *could* be sustained, the survey addressed *how* to continue the Alliance. Not surprising, many of the respondents identified funding as a solution. Eight members listed funding sources, fundraisers, federal grants, various grants, HSC, and local monies. Another member felt that the Alliance was in need of a grant writer and lobbyist. More media and community exposure were also mentioned. One member expressed the necessity of a mission and vision statement. The need for corporate sponsors, such as the Navy was

expressed. One respondent stated, “Connect itself w/JCC dollars, Tobacco dollars, Anheuser-Busch dollars for a minimum 3 year deal if building organization capacity and programming and technical assistance for mini grants – but they attach their names to our logo.”

Table 9: Why the Alliance <i>Can</i> Be Sustained:
“I think it can be sustained, but I also realize the funding sources are running out.”
“It has been solvent to this point. As a social service agency, it continues to provide a vital function.”
“Because of the number of volunteer agencies involved.”
“But it needs to reorganize, change mission and goals.”
“When funding sources are in place.”
“After board and funding issues are resolved.”
“I think the alliance can be sustained because of strength of the organizations and the organizations that are supportive.”
“Working for teens always worth time and money.”
“With proper funding.”
“I hope so. What is there to take the place of the Alliance?”
“If a niche is carved out and then supported by volunteer members. I believe there are opportunities waiting to be taken over/developed competently.”
“This Alliance targets a lot of issues teens face. If the Alliance continues to work as a group they can remain sustained.”

One solution that has been identified by the APPP staff is the possibility of a membership fee. The survey addressed this idea in order to see whether the individuals or the organizations they represent would accept this idea and still be interested in keeping their membership. Of the 15 respondents, only six stated, “yes.” One of these respondents added, “if very affordable.” One member claimed he or she would join as an individual, but felt the agency they represented would not join. Two members were not sure whether their organization would remain a member of the Alliance once a fee was required. Six members replied, “no.” However, one of these respondents added, “I would pay a nominal fee.” Other comments included: “I don’t know if the School Board would pay a membership fee;” “My program is trying to stay above water itself;” and “Our agency is non-profit, a fee would be a problem.” Those that would pay a membership fee were asked to identify an appropriate annual fee. The responses ranged from \$15 to \$100. Three members claimed \$25 or less would be an appropriate fee. Fifty dollars or less was cited by two respondents. One respondent listed \$50 to \$75, while another stated \$50 to \$100.

The next question in the sustainability survey asked members what they would expect in return for a membership fee. There were a variety of responses provided. These included; “coordination of activities and a point of contact,” “tax deduction,” “an improvement in the level of services,” “teamwork and dedication,” “cooperation and support from the Alliance,” “participation in networking with Alliance members,” and “participant list.” One Alliance member elaborated by stating, “technical assistance, networking opportunities, email marketing venue for my organization’s activities, a

percentage of events with a focus of youth development – not just for pregnant and parenting teens, opportunities to connect with faith groups and hard to access groups.”

The last question on the survey addressed the needs of the individual organizations and agencies to serve teens. Once again the issue of funding arose. Four respondents mentioned the need for money or funding. One of these members explained that the agency needed money for teaching materials, while another needed money for “assistance with informational seminars and workshops.” Also in regards to funding, four members identified grant writing assistance as a need. Four respondents also cited the necessity of materials. Other needs listed by respondents included accurate information, networking, email for organization’s recruitment needs, administrative support, youth source to recruit from, and “drug elimination program, youth sports program with character building skills in public housing.”

Summary

It is encouraging to have found that all but one Alliance member surveyed believed that the Alliance is worth saving. Many expressed that the activities coordinated and the information provided by the Alliance make the organization worth sustaining. Additionally, almost all of the respondents also claimed that it could be sustained.

Again, the issue of funding was mentioned as a solution in sustaining the Alliance. Many members suggested trying to obtain funding from federal and various grants, HSC, fundraisers, and local monies. Other opinions included the need for a grant writer and lobbyist, more media and community exposure, corporate sponsors, and a mission and vision.

Unlike the response from service providers, less than half of the Alliance members claimed that they or their agency would be interested in membership if a fee were required. Suggestions for an appropriate fee ranged anywhere from \$15 to \$100. Like the service providers that were interviewed, members would expect activities, technical assistance, and networking opportunities if a fee is required. Other expectations included a tax deduction, cooperation and support, “email marketing venue,” point of contact, and an “improvement in the level of services.” Also similar to interviewed service providers, funding and grant writing assistance were identified as needs for Alliance members’ individual agencies. Members also claimed that materials, information, networking, administrative support, and various programs were needed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A great deal of information has been generated throughout the Assessment project. The needs and assets that we have uncovered can be discussed in terms of the 40 Developmental Assets used by APPP in their philosophical approach to adolescent pregnancy prevention. These are divided into two broad categories, External Assets, the people and institutions in their lives, and Internal Assets, the qualities that guide choices and dispositions (Search Institute, 2001).

External Assets

These types of assets focus on those positive influences in their neighborhoods, mainly the people and institutions to which they are exposed. The four categories include: 1) support, care and love from individuals and institutions; 2) empowerment; 3) boundaries and expectations; and 4) constructive use of time.

Support

The recurring theme heard in key informant leader interviews was one of a reverse relationship, as teens age parental involvement declines. Reasons suggested were that parents are busy with work or simply not interested. Although this trend may be normal among families in general, key informant leaders indicated the lack of parental involvement was extreme. On the other hand, *teens* (as opposed to the younger respondents) stated that they did not want their parent(s) interfering with their lives. In line with this reasoning, the younger respondents in the teen focus groups tended to indicate their parents are involved in their lives.

In contrast, most youth indicated on the surveys that parents do encourage them to do well and that mom *would be* helpful on most subjects provided on the survey. Also, two thirds of youth surveyed agreed that parents help with schoolwork. But the percentage of youth indicating this declines on the topics of love and relationship and personal problems. Furthermore, another support asset is having three or more adults other than parents providing support. However, it does not seem that many of the surveyed teens have this. Most youth indicated that counselors and teachers are regarded as helpful to them, but the other adults listed in the survey were not thought to be as helpful. Despite this, a great majority of the teens agreed they look up to parents or another adult for guidance.

Again there were some contradicting results between the key informant leaders and some teens. Most key informant leaders and teens at focus groups did agree that there are a number of programs and agencies to help teens with a number of issues in many neighborhoods, including those that address issues surrounding teen sex and pregnancy. However, almost two thirds of the surveyed teens strongly agreed or agreed that there are not enough after school activities in their neighborhood, a lack of which likely leaves many teens, especially those with busy parents, unsupervised and to their own devices during the afternoon and evening hours.

Empowerment

One way the evaluation team addressed the issue of empowerment was by asking the teens whether they were seen as important members of their community. Slightly over half the youth surveyed agreed that they are seen as important, leaving roughly half who do **not** perceive themselves as important. These could conceivably be those youth who are not engaged in community and creative activities. There was no clear message about adults' impressions of teens, indicating that adults have mixed perceptions of teens and teen activities.

Another way teens may feel empowered is by service to others and their community, or volunteer work. Several youth respondents in focus groups commented that volunteer work involves activities at the programs and agencies in which they participate. Slightly more than half of those surveyed spend one hour or more per week volunteering. However, once again this leaves a large percentage of the youth not involved in such activities. Involvement in constructive activities is likely to promote positive values as well as keep youth occupied and away from negative influences.

Although there may be some debate on whether teens should have a job while attending school, employment may add to one's sense of empowerment. Many key informant leaders indicated that jobs are available in their communities for teens, but some explained the jobs are for older teens. Grocery stores and fast food establishments were identified as potential employers. Just over half of the surveyed teens are not employed, which, in and of itself, is not necessarily a problem. However, employment may become problematic (therefore a need) when impediments to obtaining or sustaining a job exist. Adults and youth alike mentioned barriers including employability, age, lack of readiness to work and transportation. A resident mentioned the stigma of living in public housing as a barrier to work.

Safety is a crucial element to feelings of empowerment. Safety was an issue, with adults and youth indicating that crime is a problem in many neighborhoods, but that most neighborhoods are generally safe if people know where they should be at certain times. Again, the survey provides a contrast to the focus group answers with 75 percent of youth agreeing that their neighborhood is a safe place to live and 61 percent agreeing they feel safe at school.

Boundaries and Expectations

Along with the tapering off of parental involvement as teens age, another theme among key informant leaders was that boundaries were not always enforced very well with teens, potentially a dangerous combination. Many key informant leaders expressed a negative sentiment on the issue of boundaries and punishment; the concern is that teens are getting a mixed message since boundaries and punishment are not applied in such a way that one reinforces the other. As one might expect, surveyed teens seemed to have a different perspective on this issue. Seventy percent of the teens agreed that their parents set clear rules and almost three fourths agreed they get punished if they break a rule. Another boundary these teens feel is being met concerns parents monitoring teens' whereabouts, with a majority of teens agreeing that their parents know where they are when they are not together. A small majority felt that adults look out for other people's children, implying that the activities of some youth do not go unnoticed and are kept in check within many of the communities.

The existence of positive role models and parental encouragement are also considered to be external assets and vital to positive youth development, thus reducing likelihood of risky behavior. The surveyed teens had mixed responses to statements addressing these assets. A vast majority of the teens agreed that their parents encourage them to do well, but less than half agreed there are positive role models present in their neighborhoods.

This finding is similar to that mentioned earlier that surveyed youth do not find many adults to be helpful with personal problems.

Constructive Use of Time

Both key informant leaders and youth indicated in interviews and focus groups that activities after school involve programs at local centers and agencies and sports activities. Although all on-site coordinators were not specifically asked about teen participation, there were indications that pre-teens, rather than teens, composed the bulk of those involved in after-school programs. With few teens involved in the focus groups, a clear idea of teen use of time out of school could not be established, but those who did attend the focus groups indicated that teen activities usually included hanging out with friends. Volunteer opportunities do exist with the local centers and agencies, but whether teens are involved was not clear.

According to the developmental assets, youth should spend three or more hours per week in creative activities such as music and art and three or more hours per week in youth programs such as sports and clubs in school or the community. More than half of the surveyed teens claimed to spend this amount of time in both the arts and in sports. The question in the survey regarding sports did not mention clubs or organizations; the percentage of teens participating most likely would have increased had these been included. Nonetheless, this leaves a significant number of teens who are not involved in creative activities, and who are likely not maintaining ties to school and/or positive influences. Those not involved in creative activities and not employed are also likely to be those who are hanging out with friends. Another asset under constructive use of time is to spend one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. A large majority of the surveyed teens appear to have this asset by participating in church activities one or more hours per week.

Despite involvement in sports, arts, church, volunteer work and other activities outside of school hours, it appears that the teens spend a lot of time hanging out with friends. Almost 60 percent of surveyed youth claimed to hang out with friends five to seven hours per week. Although 'hanging out' could be done at any type of location (arcade, fast food places), many focus group respondents mentioned hanging out at friend's houses as common.

Internal Assets

These types of assets develop from the external influences experienced by youth in their neighborhoods. The four categories include: 1) commitment to learning; 2) positive values; 3) social competencies and; 4) positive identity.

Commitment to Learning

A commitment to learning inherently begins with external influences that set the standard for the youth. As we have already noted, most youth indicate that parents do seem to provide the verbal encouragement to their kids to do well, however actual participation in teens lives and education tends to decline as the kids enter high school. Presumably, with a lack of participation comes a lack of positive influence from parents

for youth to remain committed to school. There was also consensus between most of the key informant leaders that school is not preparing youth for college and/or work. Also, key informant leaders and youth replied, without hesitation or fail, that truancy and dropouts are a problem.

Teens may not be making the grade in regards to their commitment to learning when doing homework. Half of the youth surveyed indicated they spend one to four hours per week working on homework, and 38% indicated they spend five to seven hours per week working on homework. However, we do not know if the lack of time devoted to homework is due to teen neglect or simply that homework is not being assigned by teachers. Additionally, less than half of the survey respondents read for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

Key informant leaders impressions of neighborhood values varied, with some indicating their area does promote positive values and others indicating their area does not. Notably, positive values are revered by a great majority of the surveyed teens. At least 90 percent of the teens claimed that being honest even when it is not easy, helping people in need, and treating everyone equally is important or very important.

Social Competencies

Many of the surveyed teens appear to possess positive social competencies. For example, more than three fourths of the teens claimed that making friends was not hard to do. Additionally, more than 80 percent are comfortable around people of different cultural or racial backgrounds. And the majority felt they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. These social skills are important, given that half of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that teens are pressured by their peers to have sex, thus the ability to resist influences is important.

Positive Identity

The teens also fared well on questions relating to their identity. An overwhelming majority of teens agreed that they can change what will happen in the future by what they do today and that their life has a purpose. In addition, a vast majority agreed they can reach their personal goals, be successful in their chosen career and personal relationships.

Again, results from interviews and focus groups painted a different picture. Key informant leaders were split on their answers regarding whether teens are optimistic about their future, as were teens on their answers. In general, both youth and adult respondents expressed that those teens who have something to look forward to are optimistic, but that many teens do not have much to anticipate.

Questions regarding self-esteem produced some varied results. While more than three fourths of the teens disagreed that they do not have very many friends and even more agreed they had many successes in their life, other results were not as positive. About 60 percent of the teens wished their physical appearance was different and almost two thirds disagreed that they are often unhappy with themselves. Additionally, slightly

more than half agreed they had many failures in their life. Self-esteem was mentioned in many interviews and focus groups in varying contexts as being a problem among youth. These findings may well be similar to those for a more general population, but can be detrimental if compounded by other negative influences.

Relating the developmental approach to the issue of adolescent pregnancy prevention in the study area implies that those youth who experience the positive aspects of the 40 Developmental Assets are less likely to be engaged in sexual activities or to become pregnant or involved in a pregnancy. According to research performed by the Search Institute (2001), who developed the 40 Developmental Assets, the average number of assets youth reported experiencing was less than half of the total 40 developmental assets. While we found at least this many references to developmental assets in the survey and focus group results, that is not a claim that all youth experience all of those assets. Our findings indicate there are areas that are lacking, or rather, needs that can be addressed, as well as assets present that can be used to empower youth in the endeavor of preventing adolescent pregnancy.

Implications

Succinctly stated by Sawhill (2001),

There are only two solutions to the problem of childbearing outside of marriage. One is to encourage early marriage. The other is to encourage delayed childbearing until marriage. Although commonplace as recently as the 1950's, early marriage is no longer a sensible strategy in a society where decent jobs increasingly require a high level of education and where half of teen marriages end in divorce. If we want to ensure that more children grow up in stable two-parent families, we must first ensure that more women reach adulthood before they have children. (p. 1775).

Supporting Sawhill's premise concerning marriage, our findings indicate that sexual activity is not necessarily associated with commitment or marriage by teens, providing support to the ideology of delaying early childbearing. While no small task, this is the on-going focus of the Alliance. The information generated through this Assessment project covers a wide range of topics, but can be pulled together to assess the potential applicability to Alliance programs.

In addition to exploring specific needs and assets of teens and their communities or neighborhood, the CCI team specifically wanted to explore teens' and adults perceptions of sex and teen pregnancy. There was a great deal of overlap on explanations as to why teens are having sex. One difference that stood out was the claim from both male and female youth respondents that teens are having sex because it is fun, while none of the adults made this claim. An additional response made by a young male respondent was hormones; again, no adults gave this answer. Reasons given solely by adult respondents included lack of supervision, low self-esteem, and to get attention. Consistent with the literature addressing emotional needs (Corcoran, Franklin, & Bell, 1997), adults and youth provided overlapping responses such as "because they want love" (from female

teens), keep her boyfriend, missing love from their dad, and lack of family intimacy (from service providers).

It is clear that adult and teen perceptions are similar in some areas and vary in others, such as differing responses concerning perceptions of parental involvement and sex education provided in the schools, and agreement on the issue of school dropouts and truancy. Both the similarities and differences reveal information about the lives of teens and the environment in which they experience daily life. As expected key informant leaders see the bigger picture while youth and teens are very focused on their immediate world.

Not all key informant leaders (all those adults interviewed, including service providers, school counselors, and residents) define teen pregnancy as a problem, however their scope of reality tended to be their immediate environment such as the center or agency in which they work or the immediate neighborhood in which they reside. On the other hand, many service providers did mention teen pregnancy as a problem facing teens, and as a problem that teens' parents did not always acknowledge or address. Teens and youth focus group participants seem to accept teen pregnancy as part of the social climate in their scope of reality.

Corcoran, Franklin, and Bell (1997) cited teens as describing how socioeconomic disadvantage works in combination with this culture of sexual activity. The parent(s) may be working, contributing to unsupervised situations and lack of parental attention, teens engage in sexual activity to fill this void of emotional need. Thus, these dynamics "may create norms of early sexual activity and child-bearing among low socio-economic groups" (Corcoran et al., 1997, p. 376). This cultural aspect needs to be given attention when considering adolescent pregnancy prevention approaches. As Monahan (2001) noted, "the most challenging area to change in educational interventions for adolescents is behavior" (p. 133), manifesting the need for education and positive messages that begin early in life so as to prevent the creation of this norm among future generations.

Given that teen pregnancy is not always perceived as a major problem within agencies or programs, but that teen pregnancy is indeed a reality in the targeted zip codes, this discrepancy likely speaks to the number of teens that are not involved in programs and activities. These would be those teens not involved in nor affected by outreach and education offered by the number of non-profit agencies, sports activities, educational programs, etc., and that are likely to become involved in sexual (or any deviant) behaviors and that are more likely to become involved with teen pregnancy.

Unsupervised Time - There were indications that many teens do 'hang out' with friends unsupervised or without proper supervision. According to the literature on examining after-school time, parental monitoring, and problem behavior, this is an aspect of teen lives that make them vulnerable to negative influences (Flannery, Williams & Vazsonyi, 1999). While teens did provide commendable answers to questions concerning values and social skills, these positive characteristics may be tough to maintain given a combination of negative influences or lack of positive assets. These may include peer pressure, crime, lack of role models, mentors, and low levels of parental involvement

and/or negative influences from parents. Given the high-risk nature of the study area (high poverty rates, high rate of single parenthood, high crime rates), unsupervised time can be particularly detrimental in that it allows opportunities to become involved in inappropriate activities, including sexual activity. The effects of the various forms of entertainment media are another concern, especially for those unsupervised youth. Similar to our findings, Sawhill (2001) reported that “only 10% of teens report they have participated in a [community-based] program,” (p. 7) but do spend a significant amount of time per week exposed to different types of media.

Another issue contributing to unsupervised time and the likelihood of becoming involved in deviant behaviors is the high rate of students who are truant or who drop out of school. Duval County has the highest dropout rate in the state of Florida, and has shown a decrease in graduation rates for several years (Florida Department of Education, 2001). Efforts are being made to address these issues. One example is the Accelerated Learning Centers at Andrew Jackson and Forrest High Schools, which target those students at risk of dropping out. This is certainly an area warranting further research to explore the reasons teens are not attending or finishing high school.

A potential resource for keeping youth occupied during non-school hours is employment. Slightly less than half of surveyed teens indicated they were employed, a decline from the 1997 Assessment. As noted earlier, the number or percentage of youth employed is not necessarily problematic, however, actual needs develop when barriers to employment prevent youth from obtaining or sustaining employment. Those needs may be related to the youth themselves, such as language abilities or work ethic, or to the nature of the employment such as availability, transportation, and age/skill requirements. Through our interviews we discovered a program called About Face, which teaches employment skills to teens.

Youth expressed interest in more recreation and sports activities, another potential resource for keeping youth occupied during non-school hours are. In particular, a need exists for activities specifically for older teens. Not only is this a valuable tool for keeping them occupied, but also opportunities for providing positive messages. The Boys and Girls Clubs are examples of programs that combine recreation and sports activities with educational messages. Nia Terrace and Spanish Oaks both provide after school activities for adolescents, and the YMCA has a variety of after school activities available to youth and teens.

Role Models - In any of these types of activities, positive adult role models and mentors are important to the development of youth, and an area that appears lacking for many. However, more outreach measures may be necessary to reach more youth, particularly those not involved in after-school activities or employment. There were indications from both adults and youth respondents that a lack of positive adult role models or mentors exist for youth and teens. In addition, survey results indicated that youth do not appear to have many adults to rely on for comfort or to be helpful on personal topics. Also, a significant proportion of youth survey respondents indicated a desire to be able to rely on their fathers for help on some personal topics. A well known group that has been active in this kind of outreach and mentoring is 100 Black Men.

Outreach requires funding, which was a concern expressed by a number of service providers. While some service providers that are familiar with APPP and/or the Alliance were grateful for the services offered through this office, others would likely benefit from these services as well. Thus, the continuation of grant writing assistance and aid in finding RFP's are vital to outreach and programmatic endeavors.

Sex Education - Although not mentioned specifically in the developmental assets, consistent and accurate messages concerning sex education are important. Our findings were not clear as to what sex education teens are getting at school. While teen focus group respondents indicate they are receiving information on a variety of topics concerning sex education in their school curriculum, service providers provided mixed responses on their impressions of the types of sex education taught in schools. However, the most frequently cited survey answer when asked what type of program youth respondents would like to have available in their neighborhood was sex education programs, an interesting answer given the focus group responses. While programs such as ENABL and the Bridge do attempt to educate youth, this effort can be hampered by school restrictions concerning topics surrounding sex. If schools are overly conservative in their approach to sex education then the messages that youth are receiving from influential people (teachers, counselors, parents, pastors) and institutions (school, church, service programs) may not be consistent.

That service providers and youth are making differing statements about the sex education provided in the school system is troubling. The issue of the quality of the source remains. Where and/or from whom are youth learning about the different dimensions of sex? From what we can tell, differing, maybe even conflicting, messages are filtering in to youth from their environment – media, peers, family, school, etc. Schools are a strong potential resource for communicating positive, mature messages about both the psychological and biological aspects of sexual involvement.

Research indicates that sex education does not encourage teens to initiate or increase sexual activity (Kirby, 2001), evidence which should serve to reassure institutions with this concern and to support efforts to offer a well-rounded sex education curriculum that could empower teens to process the conflicting messages in their environment. In a nationally representative sample, the majority of both adults and teens indicated that schools should be doing more in their efforts to prevent teen pregnancy, (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2001b). After assessing data from teen focus groups, Corcoran, Franklin and Bell (1997) suggested that sex education information be supplied “in sex education classes and clinics at school, particularly since teens seem to rely so heavily on the school for such services” (p. 379). Examples of programs working with schools in other regions are CHAMPS and Girls, Inc. Locally, The Bridge of Northeast Florida has a variety of outreach educational and empowerment programs for teens and does work with the schools.

Parental Involvement - Parental involvement is a crucial component to a well-rounded or holistic approach to adolescent pregnancy prevention. However, there was disagreement between adults and youth as well as between youth focus groups and youth surveys on actual facts concerning parent's involvement in their teens' lives. Key

informant leaders tended to see lack of parental involvement as an issue, particularly as youth enter and progress through the teen years, a time when guidance is strongly needed. Youth did not perceive this to be a problem. However, the difference in opinion concerning parental involvement may be indicative of the difference between adults and teens in their perceptions of *appropriate* parental involvement.

While the facts are muddied, there is no argument that positive parental attention and guidance are strong influences on teen behavior. Research has shown that parents are the most influential force in teen's decisions about sexual activity (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2001b), and that parent communication and monitoring is likely to delay the initiation of sexual activity and increase the likelihood of using contraception, (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2001a; Romer et al, 1999). Corcoran, Franklin, and Bell (1997) found that a major theme of risk (for teen pregnancy) was unfulfilled emotional needs related to lack of parental attention, making teens vulnerable to male attention. In this data, teens identified lack of support at home as a probable contributing factor to early childbearing. Consequently, providing parents with the tools necessary to communicate properly and to communicate proper information is, logically, an important step. The Bridge addresses this through the Healthy Families Jacksonville Program.

Romer et al. (1999) suggested that interventions targeting *both* parents and adolescents have the potential for better long-term effects than those targeting just adolescents. Thus, involving parents in programmatic activities *with* teens that provide educational messages to both is recommended. There are agencies conducting programs to this end: Goals for Success conducts a parents education group and Healthy Families provides incentives to encourage parental participation. However, our findings indicate that getting parents to *want to* learn more about and participate in their teens' lives is the most important, and challenging, first step.

In an extensive summary of sex and education programs, Kirby (2001) identified characteristics of effective programs, noting that a variety of components including both educational and abstinence messages are important. Likewise, the variety of potentially negative influences facing youth in the study area make apparent the need for a pregnancy prevention approach that is multi-dimensional, including components directly related to sex (education) and those that are not but are influential on teen behavior (neighborhood environment, mentors). Also, since the environment of youth is a constant, preventive measures should be sustained over time.

Key informant leaders provided several ideas for activities and programs that should be available to teens, including a recreation or teen center in the community, mentoring, more church activities, facilities for teenage mothers, more sports for teens outside of school, as well as basic activities such as fishing, skating, and cultural enrichment. One service provider suggested a "small organization formed by the teens so they can learn business skills with hands on activities, a forum where teens can express their views on a regular basis." Teen Lounge was also mentioned in a teen focus group and most other suggestions from youth focused on sports or outdoor activities.

The basic idea is to keep teens occupied in positive endeavors that, in turn, educate and empower them to put in practice appropriate values and norms, all the while involving parents and other positive role models. Consequently, building upon the existing assets or expressed interests found in teens is important to maintaining their interest and keeping them involved. A number of positive assets are present that hold strong potential for use in programs and activities.

Church Activities - One strong asset found among youth respondents was involvement in church activities, with a majority of youth indicating they are involved in church. This is congruent with the information generated by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2001b) showing that 90% of youth sampled report being affiliated with a particular religious denomination. This organization also demonstrated that youth involved in religious services “frequently” are less likely to have permissive attitudes about sex, regardless of gender and race (2001). This is a potential source to provide assets not only for those already involved but also to target those teens not involved with programs or after-school activities. An example of a Church providing outreach and energetic empowering messages can be found in St. Paul’s Missionary Baptist Church. In their Teen Abstinence Group (TAG), teens who have committed to abstinence work with peer educators trained by ENABL to speak to youth around Jacksonville about managing pressures from peers and other sources.

Social Competencies - Social competencies such as making friends, social ease around other ethnic groups, and the ability to resist peer pressure were positive assets that could potentially empower youth if built upon. Youth’s responses on positive value statements such as honesty, helping others, and equality are also areas that could be strongly empowering if utilized and strengthened.

One subject discussed in focus groups that could be used to build upon social competencies was volunteer activities. Involving youth in activities helping others in need in turn help youth feel needed and valued in their community. Expanding activities to neighborhoods out of their own exposes youth to people with a variety of ethnic and cultural identities, building on their own claims of feeling comfortable around people of different cultural or racial backgrounds. Involving teens in planning and decision-making promotes self-esteem and serves to help youth feel values. Efforts along this line include ENABL (uses teens trained to speak with other youth about abstinence), and Peer Educators used by the Teen Committee to work with other teens in the Teen Summit workshops. Other organizations empowering youth to take charge are NBA Chance, involving participants in a Youth Advisory Council and JASMYN that also involves young participants in a Youth Council.

Another asset found was the positive references to mothers. Support programs for parents (single mothers in particular) could strengthen their abilities to provide help and support for their teens. We have reported findings showing that parental involvement tends to decline as teens enter and progress through the teen years, implying that those programs targeting parents should focus on *maintaining* positive involvement through adulthood. Open interactions, encouragement, and consistent

application of boundaries and punishments are areas that we found lacking and could be incorporated in parenting programs.

Another encouraging asset was youth's indications that finishing high school and attending college is considered important. Here again, research shows that parental involvement is crucial to fostering and maintaining educational aspirations (McNeal, 1999; Qian & Blair, 1999). Interestingly, Qian and Blair (1999) found that racial and ethnic minorities show a higher level of educational aspirations than whites. Mentioned earlier was a concern among service providers that schools are not preparing youth for college or work, also mentioned was the significant problem of truancy and drop-outs. Given these concerns and other negative influences in youth's environment in this study area, maintaining enthusiasm to finish school may be difficult. Therefore, building on this asset in combination with the positive references to mothers at early ages is crucial. Parents and schools working together could be a powerful force in the overall empowerment of youth. Full Service Schools, such as those at Paxon and Terry Parker High Schools, are examples of organizations/schools reaching out to parents. These are services that target parents of students with behavioral and/or cognitive problems.

In the beginning of this section, Sawhill (2001) suggested that there are two ways to reduce childbearing outside of marriage, by encouraging early marriage or delaying childbearing until marriage, noting that encouraging early marriage is not necessarily a realistic option in the endeavor of preventing early childbearing. The more sensible option, and overall goal of the Alliance, is to encourage youth to delay the onset of sexual activity, or, if sexually active, to use protection appropriately, and to delay childbearing. Ideally, youth should be encouraged to delay childbearing until marriage, commitment or adulthood. Our study revealed that, for a number of reasons, marriage may not be valued by teens as an important goal, consequently, it may be perceived by some as more of an ideal 'fantasy'. With the high rate of single parenthood in the study area, the outlook is bleak for youth to develop a value system of abstaining until adulthood and/or marriage. Programmatic recommendations previously discussed are critical to offsetting this and other negative influences and encouraging youth to perceive the institution of marriage as an attainable reality in their future.

From our survey results, the Alliance is seen as a major force in efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy in Jacksonville. The programs have put forth extensive efforts to address important issues surrounding this phenomenon. However, much work still needs to be done. The importance of sustaining these efforts and continuing these valuable programs cannot be stressed enough, as verified by many service providers. It is hoped that the information provided here can provide insights that will enable current and future service providers, teachers, parents and all those concerned to continue and supplement their efforts to prevent adolescent pregnancies.

APPENDIX A:
Interview and Focus Group Questionnaires

APPENDIX B:
40 Developmental Assets

APPENDIX C:
Surveys

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