

**Children’s Aid Society New York City Public Schools
21st Century Community Learning Centers**

Target Population	Middle school
Evaluation	3-year longitudinal, comparison evaluation
Findings	Increase in academic achievement and positive youth development outcomes
Contributing Factors	Choice in activities City-level support (NYC OST) Collaboration with schools and CBO Education system alignment Intermediary organization (CAS) support Personal relationships with staff Structured program

Overview of Program

The Children’s Aid Society (CAS) provides health, mental health, afterschool, parent, Head Start, Early Head Start, weekend and summer programs in 21 New York City community schools. Community schools provide added services to students and families through partnerships between CAS

and the school. According to the CAS “Theory of Change,” a good afterschool program is one important strategy to reach CAS’s long term goals of academic achievement and positive youth development. Each site is a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and has a different specific focus, such as “leadership” or “self-expression.” The CAS programs offer academic enrichment and youth development activities.

Program Population/Eligibility

- Program enrollment includes students in 5th or 6th through 8th grade, but staff emphasized that program enrollment is actually heavily 5th and 6th graders.
- Each program serves 250-400 youth (roughly one-quarter of the school’s population).
- From 2006-2007, 75.9% of participants were Hispanic, 21.3% were African American, 1.4% were Asian, .6% were white, and .5% were Native American.
- From 2006-2007, 51.9% were male and 47.8% were female
- Students described as English as a Second Language (ESL) students comprised 23.7% of the population from 2004-2005, 24.8% in 2005-2006, and 12.8% from 2006-2007.
- Youth attending middle schools with CAS/21stCCLC programs in NYC are eligible for this particular program.
- Youth are recruited through flyers, notices, staff phone calls, mailings, visits to classrooms, tables at parent nights, and word of mouth at the beginning of the year. Programs also approach youth who have attended in previous years.

Program Components

- A typical CAS afterschool program begins with a 20 minute snack or supper, followed by homework help, academic enrichment, and youth development activities.
- Academic enrichment and youth development programs include sewing, cooking, media arts, Recycle a Bicycle, Operation SMART (science projects for girls), Fashion Club, Hip Hop poetry, performance arts, yoga, Youth Council, Peace Games, HOPE Leadership Academy, etc.

- All programs offer study hall or homework help, and sports and recreation activities. Some programs offer “open activities” where students can relax in a less formal environment, such as movies or sports on Friday afternoons.

Overview of Evaluation

The report summarized the full results of a 3-year longitudinal, comparison evaluation of afterschool programs conducted by the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) Community Schools and prepared by ActKnowledge. The evaluation examined long-term outcomes of academic achievement, attendance and youth development. The basic goal of the evaluation was to determine if youth who attended CAS afterschool programs did better academically, behaviorally, and/or attitudinally than youth who did not attend. Therefore, the evaluation measured academic and development outcomes for a cohort of youth participants and a comparison group of nonparticipants, as well as preconditions tied to academic and development outcomes (such as active engagement in learning activities and strong psycho-social development) and program implementation. The students who were enrolled as 6th graders in 2004 were the cohort followed throughout the study. For the youth development measures, the evaluators selected 4 of the 6 schools to participate. The 4 schools were chosen to represent CAS middle schools geographically and by numbers of years as Community Schools. For both the academic and youth development outcomes, students in CAS afterschool programs were compared to similar students who did not participate in the programs. A variety of data collection methods were used. The results from this 3 year evaluation are summarized below.

Evaluation Population

- All 6 afterschool programs studied were 21stCCLC operating within 6 CAS community middle schools.
- Students were in grades 5-8.
- The population studied for the academic achievement and attendance outcomes included all youth in all 6 schools. A sample of youth were selected for youth and teacher surveys to measure youth development outcomes between participants and nonparticipants and over time.
- Students who participated in CAS afterschool programs were compared to students who did not participate.
- The 6th grade classes at all 6 CAS schools in 2004 were the cohort that was studied throughout the longitudinal study.
- For the youth development component, a smaller sample of youth was drawn from 4 of the 6 middle schools to complete a pre-test and post-test youth development survey. The youth were representative of program participants and nonparticipants at each school. Participants were enrolled in programs on a first-come-first-served basis, so the youth development survey was quasi-experimental.
- The entire sample for academic achievement/attendance measurements was 5,163, or all youth who attended the 6 middle schools. Of these, 1,766 were 8th graders (the cohort being studied) by Year 3 of the evaluation. During spring 2007, a total of 246 students completed the youth development survey.
- The 246 youth who completed the survey in spring 2007 were the final longitudinal cohort for the youth development survey. Because students moved in and out of programs, all of these students had participated in CAS after-school programs for at least one year between Years 1 and 3.

Therefore, the evaluation could not make comparisons on youth development between students who had ever participated and had never participated. Instead, comparisons were made by participation dosage, specifically 60% or more participation versus less than 60%.

- All students in grades 5-8 in the 6 Community Schools could exercise choice as to which program they attended and many of the nonparticipants (comparison group) students did attend another afterschool program. The other programs were primarily Supplemental Education Services (SES).
- All of the schools met 21st CCLC eligibility requirements and Title 1 eligibility. The percentage of students receiving free lunch at all the schools was 82% to 98%. Additionally, some of the schools were in areas with high rates of linguistic isolation, and all were in neighborhoods with high rates of other risk indicators.

Study Methodology

- The evaluation was a quasi-experimental, longitudinal comparison study.
- Outcomes were measured in two ways: by comparing participants' change over time and by comparing participants to nonparticipants. In addition, comparisons were made based on degree of program attendance. For youth development outcomes, a sample was used whereas for academic and attendance outcomes the entire population was analyzed.
- Data collection methods used for academic achievement and attendance included standardized test score data, school attendance records, and teacher responses to the 21st Century Annual Performance Review (APR) teacher survey.
- Data collection methods for the youth development component included a youth survey and teacher surveys. In addition, focus group, interviews with youth, staff, parents, family and community members, observations and the New York State After-School Program Quality Self-Assessment tool were used to explore preconditions to academic achievement and program implementation.
- To identify youth in afterschool programs, The Community Schools Information System (CSIS) data was used.
- For the academic achievement/attendance-component measures, baseline data collected in Year 1 included student demographics and standardized test scores.
- For the youth development measures, one baseline student survey was administered during the fall of 2004 and a post-test at the spring of each year, along with teacher and staff student ratings.
- For both the academic and youth development components of the evaluation, comparisons were made based on level of participation; "never participated" refers to students who did not participate, "ever participated" refers to students that participated for any amount of time, "participated in CAS 60% or more" or "high-level" attendees refers to participants that spent 60% of the time or more in the program. These categories were used to compare student outcomes on academic achievement and youth development.

Key Findings:

Overall, the findings for the 3-year longitudinal study indicated an increase in-academic achievement and positive youth development for CAS participants over nonparticipants. Students enrolled in CAS programs had higher school attendance than non-participants.

The authors do note that outcomes cannot be attributed in a causal way to the program, only association is possible due to the research method used. However, plausible arguments for causality are strengthened

because outcomes hypothesized in the Theory of Change are those found. For Year 3, the significance cutoff was .05, indicating 95% confidence that the outcome did not occur by chance.

Summary of Findings:

- Students who participated in the afterschool programs at all from 2004-2007 attained steadily higher scale scores on the math test compared to nonparticipants.
- Students who participated in the afterschool programs at all from 2004-2007 attained steadily higher reading scale scores significantly more often than nonparticipants.

Of the students who were in CAS afterschool programs from 2004-2007, 44.7% demonstrated a statistically significant increase in their performance levels in math compared to 37% of those students who did not attend CAS afterschool programs.

- There were no statistically significant differences in reading performance levels between CAS afterschool participants and nonparticipants for 2004-2007.
- Of CAS afterschool program participants, 20.9% increased their performance level in reading, and 29.4% increased their performance level in math for Year 3 (2006-2007).
- Of CAS participants who spent 60% of their time or more in CAS during 2006-2007, 42.1% performed at Level 3 on the math test for Year 3 (2006-2007).
- Participants had higher levels of school attendance from 2004-2007 than students who never participated in programs during that time, and greater afterschool participation was related to better school attendance.
- Significant increases were observed in self-esteem and career and aspirations, along with decreased reports in problems with communication, from Year 1 to Year 3.
- In Year 3, students who had higher (60% or more) program participation were significantly more engaged in their communities than other students.
- From 2004-2007, school engagement showed a statistically significant decrease, which could be attributed to major structural changes in the schools.
- In 2004-2005, CAS afterschool participants were significantly less likely to spend two or more hours per week watching television or playing video games and more likely to spend more than two hours reading. In 2005-2006, participants reported more often that they learned new things or acquired new skills. From 2006-2007 a significantly higher percentage of CAS participants engaged in sports, games and activities where they could get help with school or research projects.

Contributing Factors

- Choice in activities
- City-level support (NYC OST)
- Collaboration with schools and CBO
- Education system alignment
- Intermediary organization (CAS) support
- Personal relationships with staff
- Structured program

Funding

Funding from the 21st CCLC primarily supported the programs. In Years 2 and 3, CAS afterschool

programs received funding from New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development's Out of School Time (OST) Program. School funding also supported the programs.

Contact Information

Jane Quinn
Assistant Executive Director for Community Schools
The Children's Aid Society
105 East 22nd St.
New York, NY 10010
212-949-4800

janeq@childrensaidsociety.org

Evaluation Contact

Kira Krenichyn, Ph.D.
Heléne Clark, Ph.D.
Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel, Ph.D.
Lymari Benitez, Ph.D.

ActKnowledge
Center for Human Environments
365 Fifth Avenue, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10016
212-817-1906

hclark@actknowledge.org

kkrenichyn@actknowledge.org

Sources Used

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Krenichyn, K., Clark, H., Schaefer-McDaniel, N., & Benitez, L. For the Children's Aid Society. January 2006.

"Children's Aid Society 21st CCLC at Six NYC Middle Schools," Year 2 Report, June 2007. Krenichyn, K., Clark, H., and Schaefer-McDaniel, N., ActKnowledge.

"Children's Aid Society 21st Century Community Learning Centers Longitudinal Evaluation of Six NYC Middle School After-School Programs: Highlights of Findings," 2008.

Other Resources

<http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/>

Citizen Schools

Program	Citizen Schools
Target Population	6-8 th grade students
Evaluation	Strong evaluation; participants compared to matched nonparticipants
Findings	Increased levels of student engagement and achievement, higher attendance and course pass rates, lower suspension rates, positive impact on English and math course grades, MCAS ELA and math test scores, and the selection of a high-quality high school.
Contributing Factors	Collaboration with schools Continuous evaluation and improvement Goal orientated High quality staff Strong partnerships with the community Structured program Student centered Supportive positive relationships with Citizen Teachers and staff

Program Overview

Citizen Schools (CS) partners with public middle schools to provide extended day programs of educational enrichment, career exposure, and high school and college preparation for 6-8th grade students. CS is premised on a belief that an intensive 2-3year Citizen Schools experience in middle school, when combined with transition to a high-quality high school, will put most students on a path toward academic and social success. The program is offered during the school year and is approximately

400 hours for the whole year. The 6-8th grade program offers a structured extended day program from 3:00-6:00pm that incorporates academic support, apprenticeships with adult volunteers in a variety of fields as well as community explorations that seek to bring the community into the classroom and the classroom out to the community. CS also has an alumni program to help students and their families transition successfully during the high school process.

Program Population/Eligibility

- The CS program exists in 21 communities in California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Texas.
- In 2008, CS served 4,400 students at 44 school campuses and engaged 3,400 adult volunteers from the community (Citizen Teachers).
- All students at CS sponsored schools are eligible.
- CS serves 6th-8th graders in traditional public schools and public charter schools.
- According to Policy Studies Associates, CS recruits and retains students at-risk of academic failure.

Program Components

Programs vary across grades and locations, but the following components are present across the CS network.

6-8th grade program components:

- **Paid apprenticeships:** students participate in experiential learning projects led by volunteer community members (Citizen Teachers) who set goals, focus on academic support, and teach leadership skills.
- **Academic Support:** Students participate in 60-90 minutes of supervised homework time, daily.
- **WOW Presentations:** Each semester culminates in a "WOW!;" a public presentation of the projects the young people created with their Citizen Teachers through the apprenticeship program.
- **Community Exploration:** Exposes youth to the world outside the classroom and challenges them to think in new ways. On-campus explorations include dancing classes and hunger awareness campaigns; off-campus explorations include visits to universities, neighborhoods, museums, and nature centers.

6th grade only program component:

- **School Navigation curriculum:** 6th grade students learn study skills, including organization and how to ask for help.

7th grade only program component:

- **Success Highways curriculum:** 7th grade students explore their current lives, motivators, actions, and goals through a targeted confidence-building curriculum that incorporates assessments, classrooms activities, and interactions.

8th grade only program component:

- **The 8th Grade Academy:** Offers apprenticeships with adult volunteers and community explorations. It also helps participants apply to and succeed in high-quality high schools and to raise their aspirations for college. To do this, CS holds high school fairs and hosts dinners and other events for parents and students, during which CS staff provides families with information and resources about high schools and the high school application process, if applicable. CS also takes participants on college visits, where students visit classes, attend social events, and engage in other activities that provide a concrete awareness of college life. 8th Grade Academy also assigns each student a writing coach (typically a local lawyer).
- **Alumni Program:** Supports students and their families during the high school transition process by providing college access resources and a network of supportive adults.

Overview of Evaluation

Policy Studies Associates (PSA) launched the 6-phase quasi-experimental longitudinal study in 2001 and will continue the evaluation through 2010. The evaluation thus far focused on programs in the Boston area. CS sponsored this evaluation to assess whether their middle school program had a positive effect on students throughout high school. The 4th phase in particular focused on transitions from 8th to 9th grade and 9th through 10th grade. The 5th year report describes all of the 8th Grade Academy participants included in the study and looks at how the students fared in 9th, 10th and 11th grades. The 6th phase report will look at success in 12th grade, including graduation rates. Effects measured include the selection of a high-quality high school, attendance, suspension, course pass rates, promotion, etc. The final summary report of this study will be published in 2010. CS participants were studied from their 8th grade years through high school and effects were compared to a matched control group of students from the same schools. In Phase V, in addition to the control group, the CS participants were compared to all Boston Public School (BPS) students to allow for an understanding of how CS participants fared across the larger context of the BPS school system.

Evaluation Population/Eligibility

- For the study, 5 cohorts of 8th grade students, who attended the CS 8th Grade Academy in the school years 2001-02 through 2005-06, were assessed at three BPS charter schools that have CS programs.
- The total number of participants in the 5 cohorts was 448 and around the same number of control group students were assessed.
- The evaluators matched the treatment and control group students on the following characteristics: gender, race, grade in school, eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, student test scores on the fourth grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA), school attended, bilingual education status, and special education status.
- The youth were followed from their 8th grade years through high school.
- In addition to the control group, the CS participants were compared to all BPS students to allow for an understanding of how CS participants fared across the larger context of the BPS school system.
- Of the sampled youth, CS participants were more likely to be poor and students of color than all BPS students: 94% were minority, with 68% being African American, and 85% qualified for free/reduced lunch versus 86% minority and 72% free lunch in all of BPS. Compared with all BPS students, CS participants scored lower on their 4th grade math and ELA standardized tests at significant levels.

Study Methodology

- The study was quasi-experimental in design. In all phases, CS participants were compared to matched nonparticipants.
- The matched nonparticipants in the control group may have been enrolled in other out-of-school time programs.
- The study is slated to have 6 phases, the 5th of which was completed in 2008.
- In Phase 5, two comparison groups were used: the matched nonparticipants used in Phases I-IV and BPS students as a whole.
- The comparison group of BPS students as a whole was used in order to gauge how CS 8th Grade Academy students fared on the MCAS mathematics test in comparison to BPS's district population. The evaluators calculated how many of the district's 4th graders achieved proficiency on the 4th grade MCAS mathematics test and compared that statistic with the percent of 8th Grade Academy participants who scored at those levels during their 4th grade year. The evaluators followed the same process to compare the 8th grade MCAS mathematics test scores for CS participants and 8th grade BPS students to compare academic progress between the two groups from 4th-8th grade.
- Test scores, grades, attendance rates, etc. were used as pre- and post-tests and were recorded when students started the program and then in an ongoing manner as they progressed through the program. Students who dropped out of the program at any time were not assessed after dropping out.
- Data sources came from BPS files and CS data.
- Year 1 of the evaluation took place during the 2001-02 school year; Year 2: 2002-03; Year 3: 03-04; Year 4: 04-05; Year 5: 05-06.

Key Findings

Based on data from Phases 1-4, CS had a positive impact on academic indicators including attendance, school suspension, promotion, English and math course grades, MCAS ELA and math test scores, and the selection of a high-quality high school. In addition, data from Phases 1-4 indicated that CS has been successful in attracting and retaining educationally at-risk students and in putting these students on a path toward academic and social success. Survey data from Phases 1-3 indicated that participants felt a strong sense of connection to the program, experienced positive relationships with adults and peers and had opportunities to take on leadership roles. Effects are reported separately for middle school success measures (attendance, suspension, promotion, course grades, and MCAS test scores) and 9-10th grade success measures (selection of high-quality high school, attendance, suspension, 3rd marking period English course grade, 3rd marking period math course grade, and on-time promotion to 10th grade). Additionally, effects are reported based on program exposure (high exposure, low exposure, all).

Findings:

The following effects are based on data of middle-school success measures for CS participants compared with matched nonparticipants in Phases I-III. Findings are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

School Attendance:

- Positive effect for all 6th and 7th grade participants during 1st year of exposure.¹
- Positive effect for 7th grade participants with high exposure in their 2nd year.²
- Positive effect for all 8th grade academy participants.³
- Positive effects, although not statistically significant, were found for 7th grade participants with low-exposure in their 2nd year.

School Suspension:

- Positive effect for all 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year.⁴
- Positive effects, although not statistically significant, were found for all 7th grade participants in their 2nd year and all 8th grade academy participants.

Promotion to Next Grade:

- Positive effect for high exposure 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year.⁵
- Positive effect for low exposure 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year.⁶
- Positive effect for all 8th Grade Academy participants.⁷
- Positive effects, although not statistically significant, were found for all 7th grade participants in their 2nd year.

English Course Grade:

- Positive effect for high exposure 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year.⁸

¹ Statistically significant with 99.9% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.001).

² Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

³ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

⁴ Statistically significant with 99.9% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.001).

⁵ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

⁶ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

⁷ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

⁸ Statistically significant with 99.9% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.001).

- Positive effects, although not statistically significant, were found for 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year, low exposure 7th grade participants in their 2nd year, and all 8th Grade Academy participants.

Math Course Grade:

- Positive effect for high exposure 6th and 7th grade participants during 1st year.⁹
- Positive effect for 7th grade participants during 2nd year with 99% confidence.
- Positive effects, although not statistically significant, were found for all 8th Grade Academy participants.

MCAS ELA:

- Positive effects for high exposure 6th and 7th grade participants during their 1st year.¹⁰
- Statistically significant positive effects for all 7th grade participants in their 2nd year with 99% confidence.
- MCAS ELA data was not available for 8th Grade Academy participants.

MCAS Mathematics:

- MCAS mathematics data was not available for 7th grade participants in their 2nd year.
- Positive effects for all 8th Grade Academy participants.¹¹

The following effects are based on data of 9th grade success measures for former 8th Grade Academy participants compared with matched nonparticipants as reported in Phase IV. Findings are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

Selection of high-quality high school:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹²

Attendance:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹³

Suspension:

- Positive effect for high exposure participants.¹⁴
- Positive effect, although not statistically significant, was found for low exposure participants.

3rd marking period English course grade:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹⁵

3rd marking period math course grade:

- Positive effect, although not statistically significant, was found for all participants.

On-time promotion to 10th grade:

- Positive effect for high exposure participants.
- Positive effect, although not statistically significant, was found for all participants.

⁹ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

¹⁰ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

¹¹ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

¹² Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

¹³ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

¹⁴ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.01).

¹⁵ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

The following effects are based on data on 10th grade success measures for former 8th Grade Academy participants compared with matched nonparticipants as reported in Phase V. Findings are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.

Attendance:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹⁶

Pass math course in 3rd marking period:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹⁷

Pass English/Language Arts 10th-grade MCAS:

- Positive effect for all participants.¹⁸

Pass math 10th-grade MCAS:

- Positive effect, although not statistically significant, was found.

Comparison to District Wide Massachusetts Comprehensive System Assessment (MCAS) Results

Overall, the gap on MCAS scores in math between CS participants and BPS students seems to be narrowing from 4th to 8th grade and by 10th grade the gap in math MCAS scores seems to disappear.

- In 4th grade, 6% of CS participants achieved proficiency compared to 13% of BPS students overall; in 8th grade, 13% of CS participants achieved proficiency compared to 22% of BPS students overall.
- In 10th grade, 46% of CS participants achieved proficiency on the math MCAS test compared to 44% of BPS students overall.

Contributing Factors

- Collaboration with schools
- Continuous evaluation and improvement
- Goal orientated
- Highly qualified staff
- Strong partnerships with the community
- Structured program
- Student centered
- Supportive positive relationships with Citizen Teachers and staff

Funding

How CS is funded: Current major investors are Atlantic Philanthropies and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

CS is sponsoring this study – general funds paying for it.

Contact Information

Juliet Vile (JVile@policystudies.com) is the contact at PSA now.

The CEO of CS is Eric Schwarz: EricSchwarz@citizenschools.org

¹⁶ Statistically significant with 95% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

¹⁷ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

¹⁸ Statistically significant with 99% confidence the outcome is not due to chance (p<.05).

Joel Horwich: joelhorwich@citizenschools.org.

Sources Used

Preparing Students in the Middle Grades to Succeed in High School: Findings from Phase IV of the Citizen Schools Evaluation, Policy Studies Associates, by Lara Fabiano, Lee Pearson, et al. December 2006.
Establishing a Foundation for Progress Toward High School Graduation: Findings from Phase V of the Citizen Schools Evaluation, Policy Studies Associates, by Lee Pearson, J.D. Vile, and E. Reisner, January 2008.

Other Resources

Citizen Schools website: <http://www.citizenschools.org>
PSA website where all CS studies can be found:
<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Citizen%20Schools.html>

Seeds to Success

Target Population	Students 14-18 years of age with an IEP
Evaluation	Program to Watch; non-experimental evaluation conducted internally without a control group
Findings	Improvements in money management and banking skills, understanding of healthy lifestyle practices, developing workforce readiness skills, utilizing resources, working with others, using information, understanding systems, and working with technology
Contributing Factors	Active/Experiential Learning Community support School Collaboration/Partnerships (curriculum alignment) Structured program Student Centered Supportive Adult Relationships

Overview of Program

Seeds to Success is a youth farm stand project that began in 2003. Its mission is to provide workforce preparation to teens; create retail outlets that bring affordable, nutritious foods to consumers and improve food security; teach teens life skills; offer service learning for youth and economic development opportunities for local farmers and communities; and offer career training internships to college youth, who act as supervisors for the high school students. Seeds to

Success combines basic financial management, nutrition and food safety education, food systems education, and workforce readiness training with employment opportunities, internships, economic development projects, community service, and food security initiatives. It is located in Gloucester County, New Jersey. In 2007, Seeds to Success became the first youth farm stand in New Jersey to qualify as an authorized food stamp vendor, allowing customers to purchase produce with food stamps. Programming is delivered both in-school and during the summer. Seeds to Success is comprised of two in-school components, FUNdamental Finance (a financial basics course and assessment) and Jersey Fit (a healthy lifestyles and fitness course and assessment) and an 8-week summer farm stand work readiness component.

Program Population and Eligibility

- Participants range in age from 14-18 and attend Woodbury, Paulsboro, and Glassboro High Schools as well as an alternative school for special needs youth, Bankbridge Regional School. Up to one third of the students in the summer program come from the Bankbridge Regional School.
- Youth served must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and most youth are low-income.
- The communities of Woodbury and Paulsboro were targeted because they are lower-income communities where at least 20% of the population lives in households with incomes below the poverty level.

Diversity Information: As outlined in the 2000 Gloucester County Demographic Survey, 46% of households in Paulsboro and 38% of households in both Woodbury and Glassboro fall at or below the federal poverty level. The farmstands bring economic development in at-risk communities in the following ways: employment benefits to local special needs youth, expanded markets for local farmers and

availability of fresh nutritious produce to residents. The farmstands accept Food Stamps, WIC and Senior Farm Market coupons, so limited resource persons have a convenient way to redeem their vouchers and access healthy fresh produce for themselves and their families. In the five years of operation 2003-07, the youth employment demographics include the following:

Totals listed by Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Caucasian/White	12	13	11	9	10	6
African American/Black	11	13	20	20	12	14
Hispanic/Latino	-	2	3	2	4	4
Asian	-	-	1	1	-	-
Total	26	28	34	32	26	24

All employed youth have qualified for the project because each one possesses an *Individualized Education Plan* (IEP) The IEP promotes supported transition from school to the workplace. The plan is based on individual needs and current abilities. The retention rate of these youth is exemplary with an average of 95% completing their work experience each year. Due to the limitations of the program each employee is able to work only for four years. In the fifth 12 of the 26 youth were first year employees, two worked for four years, four for three years and eight returned for a second year. In the limited resource communities in which these young people live, these retention rates for long term work are noteworthy. The widening population growth and increased diversity within Gloucester County is reflected in the broad racial and cultural representation, as detailed above.

- 100-125 students are served through FUNdamental Finance annually, and about 200-250 are served annually through Jersey Fit.
- Schools help the program coordinators identify youth who are eligible (i.e. appropriate motor skills) and who they believe would thrive in the program. 9th and 10th graders are especially recruited because they are less likely to have already had work experience.
- Interested teens complete a job application and are interviewed.

Program Components

Students receive the finance and nutrition programs in their regular classes (mostly health, physical education, math, and science classes). In two schools, the guidance counselors are the administrators; in one school, a teacher is the administrator; at Bankbridge, the school-to-work coordinator administers the finance and fitness nutrition programs. Seeds to Success has developed its own pilot series on money and banking entitled "FUNdamental Finance for Farmstands."

- Financial basics: The FUNdamental Finance program is offered in school. The course assesses correctly completing a bank check, deposit slip, and check register. (4 weeks)
- Healthy lifestyle practices: The Jersey Fit program is offered in school. Youth participate in an 8-week food safety and nutrition intervention, which includes hands-on, skill-building activities and games, encourages youth to consume more fruits and vegetables, and teaches youth how to read Nutrition Facts Labels.

- Workforce readiness through farm stand work: Students who are selected complete training prior to starting work and continue to receive regularly scheduled training sessions during the summer and throughout the school year to operate their farm stands. Students are assessed as they work at the farm stand during the summer on using a scale, writing checks, using the price list, writing a resume, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, decision-making, and citizenship. Minimum wage is paid to the students when they work at the farm stand.

Overview of Evaluation

The evaluation was non-experimental and conducted internally without a control group. Outcomes reflected participant improvements in money management and banking skills, understanding of healthy lifestyle practices, developing workforce readiness skills, utilizing resources, working with others, using information, understanding systems, and working with technology (scales, calculator, and cash register).

Evaluation Population

Various numbers of students completed the pre- and post-tests depending on how many youth were participating in each component of the program.

Methodology

- Pre- and post-tests were used to measure financial basics, healthy lifestyle practices and workforce readiness through farm stand work, and scales were mostly used to assess changes from pre- to post-test.
- There was no control group.
- College interns served as supervisors and rated students with checklists and observations to assess competence in the Skill-A-Thon skills and in the SCANS Skills and Competencies Checklist (this method is used because many of the youth have difficulty writing.)
- The SCANS Skills and Competencies Checklists assessed whether participation in the youth farmstand increased youth workplace competencies in the areas of utilizing resources, working with others, using information, understanding systems, and working with technology. Farm stand supervisors used the checklist to rate students as needs improvement, shows improvement, satisfactory, outstanding, or not applicable.
- Students also took written tests for in-school components to assess their knowledge on nutrition, filling out a check, etc.

Key Findings

The key findings for the evaluation reflect participant improvements in money management and banking skills, understanding of healthy lifestyle practices, developing workforce readiness skills, utilizing resources, working with others, using information, understanding systems, and working with technology.

- Knowledge of financial basics: The FUNdamental Finance for Farmstands Assessment was used to determine if students developed money management and banking skills, including how to complete a bank check, deposit slip, and check register. Of the 102 students in 4 schools taking the pre- and post-tests, the pre-test mean score (out of a 1-5 scale) was 2.66 and the post-test mean was 3.61 (26% improvement). (See below)

Through the four week series, *FUNDamental Finance for Farmstands*, special needs teens in four high schools learned personal financial skills, cash register operations and basic banking procedures. I supervised three (3) interns who taught this series in addition to my own classroom teaching, reaching 666 youth in a five (5) year period. Pre-Post tests were used to measure the increase in ability to correctly complete a bank check, prepare a deposit slip, and record a check register. The following shows overall annual (pre-post test) results and follow-up data for special needs students since 2004:

Year	Number of Students		Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Pre-Post Score Difference
	Pre	Post	%	%	
2008*	160	149	30.2%	66.5%	36.3
2007*	118	102	41.3%	61.4%	20.1
2006	133	118	51.0%	72.6%	21.6
2005	93	91	47.3%	71.2%	23.9
2004	68	42	38.5%	66.5%	28.0

* Includes additional data on completion of a check register.

- **Healthy lifestyle practices:** Through Jersey Fit, 140 completed pre- and post-tests. Students identified healthier foods: 61% at pre-test, 74% at post; identified fruits that did not grow locally: 21% to 68%; and identified fruits and vegetables grown locally: 54% to 74% (fruits) and 42% to 78% (vegetables). Students also improved their understanding of USDA recommendations through farm stand work and their ability to handle food safely at a statistical significance of 95% ($p < .05$).
- **Workforce readiness:** 26 youth completed pre- and post-tests on how to fill out a check correctly, with the mean score from pre- to post-test increasing from 4.25 to 4.9 (number of questions answered correctly out of 12). A Skill-a-thon was also done at both the beginning and end of the summer, using the SCANS Skills and Competencies Checklist. The youth were tested on: produce identification, use of scale and knowledge of weights, knowledge of produce measurement terms, ability to make change and process government vouchers, bagging produce, and use of a cash register. Youth are scored by supervisors who watch them, so that paper and pencil tests are not needed. There was a statistically significant increase in scores for all 6 indicators together ($p < .05$), but only one (bagging produce) reached significance on its own. On skills such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, etc. that were measured, 15 out of 18 indicators had statistically significant positive outcomes from pre- to post-test.
- The youth retention rate was 89% in 2004 and 100% in 2007 and 2008.
- Secondary outcomes regarding economic and community development, community service, and food security were also assessed. Outcomes, measured qualitatively, are positive. Qualitative outcomes regarding how the communities perceive the farm stands were also positive.

Contributing Factors

School Collaboration/Partnerships (curriculum alignment)
 Active/Experiential Learning
 Student Centered
 Supportive Adult Relationships
 College Mentors

Funding/Costs

Funding is provided by the Children, Youth and Families-at-Risk: New Communities Project, U.S. Department of Agriculture, CSREES, 2003 - 2008, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Jersey Fresh Matched Funds, Grant, 2004 - 2008 Valero Refinery Benefit for Children Golf Classic, 2005 - 2008, Borough of Glassboro (NJ), Neighborhood Preservation Funding, Program, 2005 - 2008 Glassboro (NJ) School District, 2005. (Taken from <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/pod-leadership/seeds2success.pdf>)

Contact Information

Linda Strieter, County 4-H Agent Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Gloucester County
Offices of Government Services
1200 N. Delsea Drive
Clayton, NJ 08312
856-307-6450 x. 3
strieter@aesop.rutgers.edu

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Citation info:

Linda A. Strieter, MA: 4-H Agent and Assistant Professor
Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Clayton, NJ
strieter@aesop.rutgers.edu

Luanne J. Hughes, MS, RD: Family & Community Health
Sciences Educator and Associate Professor
Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Clayton, NJ
hughes@aesop.rutgers.edu

Other Resources

<http://cyfar.rutgers.edu/seeds.asp>