



**Volume 1, Number 2**  
**Summer 2006**

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**Feature Articles**

**Integrating Youth into Community Development: Implications for Policy Planning and Program Evaluation [Article 0602FA001]**

*Barnett, Rosemary V.; Brennan, M.A.*

As non-profits, volunteer groups, and nongovernmental organizations take on increasingly larger roles in contributing to local well-being, the active collaboration between youth and adults is vital to the long-term success of community development efforts. Similarly, as service activities become standardized components of high-school programs, youth are empowered to becoming long-term contributors to local development efforts. Through this process youth engage in shared citizenship, leading to greater investment in their communities. This research was based on the premise that youth, acting as central parts of the community development process, have the capacity to improve local well-being. It reflects input from 12 key informants and 418 youth who participated in a survey conducted on the development issues contributing to their involvement. The findings of this study provide insights into the factors most directly shaping youth attitudes and involvement in their communities, as well as presenting direct implications for applied use.

**Qualitative and Quantitative Assessments of Thriving and Contribution in Early Adolescence: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development [Article 0602FA002]**

*Alberts, Amy Eva; Christiansen, Elise DiDenti; Chase, Paul; Naudeau, Sophie; Phelps, Erin; Lerner, Richard M.*

Research and practice in youth development converge in an interest in positive development, or thriving. They converge also in seeking to promote among youth an orientation to act in support of their own and others' well-being through contributions to self, family, and community. Based on the results of both qualitative (open and axial coding of parents' and students' answers to several open-ended questions) and quantitative analyses of data from Wave 2 (Sixth Grade; 2003-2004) of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), we found that adolescents and parents define a thriving youth in different ways and, as well, that the groups differ in the salience of contribution as part of their respective conceptions of thriving. We discuss the implications for research and practice of the two generational groups' contrasting views of thriving and contribution.

## **Relationships Matter: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Youth and Adults Working Together as Partners [Article 0602FA003]**

*Jones, Kenneth R.*

Highlights of a multi-method research study conducted to understand the perceptions and experiences of youth and adults working together within communities are shared in this article. The results revealed that the most positive youth-adult relationship experiences were those with supportive adults willing to share power with youth, those instituting youth-led endeavors where young people were allowed to demonstrate high levels of involvement and responsibility, and those involving participants who had previously worked as a community partner. Participants in Youth-Led Collaborations were more positive toward their experiences than those in Adult-Led Collaborations and Youth-Adult Partnerships. Also, participants in relationships located in rural areas indicated more positive experiences than those in urban areas. In addition, the critical elements of various youth-adult relationships were also underscored, thus identifying characteristics that have significant importance in nurturing interactions between young people and positive adults.

## **Supporting Social and Cognitive Growth Among Disadvantaged Middle-Grades Students in TASC After-School Projects [Article 0602FA004]**

*Russell, Christina A.; Reisner, Elizabeth R.*

The field of after-school programming remains rife with unanswered questions. What constitutes quality in after-school programs? Are after-school opportunities valuable for participants regardless of their quality? Are differences in quality associated with differences in participant benefit? This sub-study of the longitudinal evaluation of The After-School Corporation (TASC) looks at how after-school opportunities with varying features affect urban middle-grades (6-8) adolescents who live in impoverished circumstances. Supported by the William T. Grant Foundation, the study explores the associations between after-school project features and the social and cognitive outcomes of disadvantaged middle-grades participants in TASC programs. The study relies on data collected during the 2001-02 and 2002-03 school years in eight TASC projects serving middle-grades students.

## **Evaluation of Youth Leadership Training Programs [Article 0602FA008]**

*Anderson, Stephen A.; Sabatelli, Ronald M.; Trachtenberg, Jennifer*

Results of a two-year evaluation of youth leadership programs offered within community youth development programs in Connecticut are presented. Youth involved in leadership activities were contrasted with a comparison group of youth who were not involved in leadership programming. Participants in the leadership programs reported an improved sense of support from their local communities. Leadership training also appeared to offer an added benefit to males who reported significant improvements in their social self-efficacy in contrast to females engaged in leadership programs or youth comprising the comparison group. Youth who participated in the leadership programs appeared to be a uniquely talented group of individuals, initially scoring higher than the comparison group on a variety of youth outcome measures. However, a subgroup of youth who began the leadership program at a lower level of overall functioning were more likely than youth who began the program at a higher level of functioning to report positive changes.

## Program Articles

### **Experiential Learning: A Process for Teaching Youth Entrepreneurship [Article 0602PA002]**

*Biers, Karen; Jensen, Christine; Serfustini, Ellen*

Youth of all ages are indicating an interest in starting a business. However, few classes on business start-up and management are available. Young people who are actively engaged in learning business management concepts also develop life skills such as decision making, communicating, and learning to learn. Studies have shown that youth who are in participatory, entrepreneurship classes develop a positive attitude toward starting a business. This article addresses how the experiential learning model provides an opportunity for youth to develop entrepreneurial skills. The entrepreneurial learning model is a learning process of doing, reflecting, and then applying.

### **An Introduction to the SMARTRISK Heroes Program: Positive Social Marketing for Adolescent Injury Prevention [Article 0602PA003]**

*Groff, Philip R.; Shea, Michael P.; Conn, Robert; Ross, Doug*

This article provides background on the SMARTRISK Heroes Program, a mobile stage production that introduces young people to the prevalence of unintentional injury for their age group and presents them with a series of strategies that will reduce the likelihood that they will be unintentionally injured or killed. The program logic is consistent with theoretical work from the area of health promotion including the Protection Motivation Theory and the Transtheoretical Model of Stages of Change. The SMARTRISK Heroes Program has been the subject of a number of past evaluations that are briefly described. The program logic model was included in this article. Additional information on the program and its evaluations can be found at <http://www.smartrisk.ca> by selecting SMARTRISK Heroes, under the "Youth Tab."

## Research and Evaluation Strategies

### **Rethinking Concept Mapping for Youth Participatory Evaluation in the Context of Youth Development Programs [Article 0602RS001]**

*Brown, Jennifer Southwick*

As a mixed-methods participatory approach, concept mapping (Trochim, 1989) provides unique opportunities for engaging youth in evaluating the contexts and environments in which they develop. Youth development programs, by definition, seek to fully engage youth as partners and provide them with opportunities to effect positive change. This includes encouraging youth to be involved in the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs and activities in which they participate. Concept mapping has been used successfully with adult populations; however its utility with adolescents in the context of youth development programming has yet to be explored. This paper explores both the obstacles and successes associated with utilizing this participatory approach with youth.

### **Statistical Testing of a Measure of Youth's Perceived Improvement in Life Skills [Article 0602RS002]**

*Guion, Lisa A.; Rivera, Blanca E.*

This article presents findings from the statistical test of an instrument designed to measure youth's perceptions of the life skills that were improved as a result of their participation in 4-H Clubs. The questionnaire was administered to 126 4-H club members in Florida. The 19-item self-rating Life Skills Improvement Scale was examined for face and content validity. The

results were also submitted for exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency testing. The factor analysis yielded a four-factor solution to the 19-item scale, which accounted for 62.6% of the variance in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the 19 items was 0.88. The article also discusses implications and future use of the instrument, as well as recommendations for further study.

### **Findings from Five Out-of-School Time Focus Groups: Professional Development Preferences, Experiences and Recommendations for Future Planning [Article 0602RS003]**

*Buher-Kane, Jennifer; Peter, Nancy; Olitsky, Stacy; Kinnevy, Susan*

Evaluating professional development can assist with designing better programs in the future, yet survey instruments may not always capture the nuances of participant's experiences. Therefore, in order to develop better survey instruments, the Out-of-School Time Resource Center conducted a series of five focus groups. Questions pertained to participants' job-related needs, preferred types of professional development, characteristics of both "good" and "bad" workshops, reasons why new information is not utilized, and recommendations for policymakers/funders. Findings from the focus groups have been used to revise OSTRC pilot surveys, which will be standardized and published as an Evaluation Toolkit that can be used to design and evaluate OST conferences.

### **Nebraska 4-H Household Technology and Interest Survey [Article 0602RS004]**

*Barker, Bradley S.; Meier, Debra K.*

Nationally, 4-H has placed renewed emphasis in the areas of Science and Technology as a way to prepare youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Home access may become necessary to youth as they develop science and technology literacy via 4-H programs. A survey was sent to a random sample of 1,414 Nebraska families from a total population of 13,516. The survey examined the percentage of families that have access to computers and the Internet at home, computer components, use characteristics and specific areas of interest in science and technology. Results indicate that 96 percent of Nebraska 4-H families have access to computers at home. Nearly 92 percent of families had a connection to the Internet with a majority using dial-up connections. Families are interested in technology programs focused on basic computer knowledge and office application. In science, 4-H families indicated environment sciences and botany were areas of interest.

## **Resource Reviews**

### **Youth Development and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences [Article 0602RR001]**

*Scholl, Jan F.*

*Youth Development and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences* is the theme of a special issue of the 2006 Journal of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. The 2006 issue includes seven peer-reviewed articles, research abstracts and resource bibliographies.