Contents

As part of a longitudinal, mixed-method study with Boy Scouts of America, we conducted five focus groups with a diverse group of 46 program leaders in order to better understand their perceptions of how they influence youth. Drawing from grounded theory analysis methods, we found that leaders believed they promoted positive youth outcomes, including character and self-confidence, through caring youth-leader relationships and facilitating opportunities for youth to participate in and lead skill-building activities and apply skills in different contexts. Leaders differed in the particular outcomes that they emphasized. Implications of these findings for future research and practice are discussed.

Military youth have unique challenges, particularly when a parent is deployed. Camp participation has been linked to multiple positive outcomes, thus camps have become popular as a setting for addressing these youth's unique needs. With limited existing research on outcomes related to participation, this study explored to what extent participation in OMK camps affected military youth's self-efficacy for communication, coping, and social skills. Participants responded to an online instrument three months after camp. Both campers and parents reported the largest increase in self-efficacy for communication skills, followed by social skills, and then coping skills. Open-ended responses overwhelmingly supported that developing friendships was one of the greatest benefits of attending a camp. The results are consistent with the literature regarding the importance of connectedness. Recommendations for conducting camps are offered. These finding may also be useful to those working with other special populations in the camp setting.

Community engagement in identifying issues of collective concern to address health disparities is an approach that is central to conducting community-based participatory research. It is particularly important for youth to be engaged in dialogue around issues that affect their lives. Participation of this nature is understood, within a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, to be an element of primary prevention vis a vis health risks. Photovoice has been an increasingly used methodology

to enable youth to identify and address issues relevant to their daily experiences. We implemented a six-week Photovoice project guided by a PYD approach with Latino immigrant youth (n=12) from Langley Park, MD. This article describes the experiences of facilitators in implementing the program, testing a new curriculum, and also presents results related to changes in PYD assets among participants. We also offer recommendations for future Photovoice programs with similar populations and aims.

Practices and Approaches of Out-of-School Time Programs Serving Immigrant and Refugee Youth

Hall, Georgia; Porche, Michelle V.; Grossman, Jennifer; Smashnaya, Sviatlana
Opportunity to participate in an out-of-school time program may be a meaningful support mechanism towards school success and healthy development for immigrant and refugee children. This study extends existing research on best practices by examining the on-the-ground experiences of supporting immigrant and refugee youth in out-of-school time programs. Findings from semi-structured interviews with program directors in 17 Massachusetts and New Hampshire programs suggest a number of program strategies that were responsive to the needs of immigrant and refugee students, including support for the use of native language as well as English, knowing about and celebrating the heritage of the students' homeland, including on staff or in leadership individuals with shared immigrant background, and giving consideration to the academic priorities of parents. The development of such intentional approaches to working with immigrant and refugee youth during the out-of-school time hours will encourage enrollment of, and enhance effectiveness with, this vulnerable population.

Program Articles

Science Saturdays: A Ground Up Approach to Partnering with Content-Rich Corporate Volunteers

Ripberger, Chad; Blalock, Lydia B.
This article discusses the pilot year of a 4-H Science project in which Mercer County 4-H partnered with content-rich corporate volunteers of a global STEM corporation to plan and implement six Science Saturdays for 4th-7th grade youth from Trenton and surrounding urban neighborhoods. The program was a ground up initiative designed and implemented by a core group (mostly women), which expanded to include 31 corporate volunteers by the end of the pilot year (2013-2014). The Science Saturdays were held once a month with each session focused on a different theme and included demonstrations or experiments along with other supporting activities. While all four program goals were met during the pilot year, results from the 4-H Science Common Measures survey did not reveal significant increases or improvements in youth outcome objectives. Findings and implications are discussed, as well as current and future programming.

Excel Initiative: Excellence in Youth Programming

Borden, Lynne M.; Hawley, Kyle R.; Mentzer, C. Eddy
The Excellence in Youth Programming (Excel) Initiative strives to support youth programs in delivering high quality programs. The backbone of Excel is the Youth Development Observational Tool (YDOT) which allows for the virtual assessment of program staff who work with children and youth ages 9-18 years. The YDOT also allows Excel to provide structured feedback to programs. Excel has several unique features, including a virtual platform and a focus on the relationships between adults and youth participating in after-school programs. Offering structured assessment and interaction online eliminates expenses, provides convenient access for programs around the globe, and allows for unobtrusive assessment of worker-youth interactions. Excel is also integrated

into a broader network of resources, tools, and research for those working with children and youth ages 9-18.

Measurable Changes in Pre-Post Test Scores in Iraqi 4-H Leader's Knowledge of Animal Science Production Principles

Smith, Justen O.; Kock, Tim; Garcia, Zurishaddai A.; Suyundikov, Anvar

The 4-H volunteer program is a new concept to the people of Iraq, for decades the country has been closed to western ideas. Iraqi culture and the Arabic customs have not embraced the volunteer concept and even more the concept of scientific animal production technologies designed to increase profitability for producers. In 2011 the USAID-*Inma* Agribusiness program teamed with the Iraq 4-H program to create youth and community entrepreneurship opportunities for widowed families. Iraq 4-H provided the youth members and adult volunteers and Inma provided the financial capital (livestock) and the animal science training program for the volunteers. The purpose of this study was to measure the knowledge level gained through intensive animal science training for Iraqi 4-H volunteers. Researchers designed and implemented a pre and post test to measure the knowledge of fifteen volunteers who participated in the three day course. The pretest exposed a general lack of animal science knowledge of all volunteers; over 80% of the participants incorrectly answered the questions. However, the post-test indicated positive change in the participants understanding of animal science production principles.

Research and Evaluation Strategies
Breaking it Down: Defining the Framework & Evaluating the Impact of a Peer Education Program

Blackburn, Kathleen Burke; Greene, Imaani; Malloy, Shintele; Himelstein, Rima; Hanlon, Alexandra; Ibrahim, Jennifer K.

Evaluation in the field of youth development continues to evolve. Youth development programs vary significantly in their focus, setting and outcomes. Community-based programs seeking to create or strengthen their evaluation methods and tools may have difficulty identifying what to measure and how to capture anticipated outcomes. This article focuses on a youth development program combining service learning and peer education, serving urban adolescents ages 14 to 19. The purposes of this study are: 1) to illustrate a strategy used to clarify and align core activities, anticipated outcomes and evaluation tools, and 2) to provide an overview of the updated data collection instruments created by the program.

Resource Review
YA4-H! Youth Advocates for Health: Teens as Teachers

Flesch, Jeffrey M.; Lile, Joy R.; Arnold, Mary E.

Although the research literature speaks to the necessity of having a high-quality training curriculum for teens as teachers (TAT) programs, there are very few TAT training curricula available to practitioners. This review provides practitioners with a preview of the *Youth Advocates for Health* (YA4-H!) TAT training curriculum. The YA4-H! TAT training curriculum exposes teens to several domains necessary to teach younger youth effectively, such as getting to know their audience, preparing to teach, teaching tips and tools, reflection and evaluation time, and recruitment strategies to help practitioners select youth to teach. Drawing from published research including Lee and Murdock's (2001) work on best practices for preparing teen teachers to teach, this review presents an overview of the lesson categories included in the YA4-H! TAT training curriculum.