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YOUTH HARVEST:
EXPLORING AN EMPLOYMENT-BASED, SERVICE-ORIENTED, THERAPEUTIC
PROGRAM FOR “AT-RISK YOUTH”

By

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Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

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In the mid-1990s, juvenile courts began establishing youth drug courts that blended the principles of restorative justice and the philosophy of therapeutic jurisprudence in an attempt to process juvenile drug offenders in a way that emphasizes rehabilitation of the offenders and restoration to the community. Over recent decades, wilderness therapy programs and horticultural therapy programs have become popular as alternative approaches for treating adjudicated and/or “at-risk” youth. The Youth Harvest program, which operates in conjunction with the Missoula Youth Drug Court, is a unique, therapeutic program that blends the goals of National Drug Courts and the principles of restorative justice with elements of both wilderness therapy programs and horticultural therapy programs.

Through qualitative research, I have explored the goals and characteristics of Youth Harvest. The study, which began in the summer of 2008 and concluded in December of 2009, included in-depth interviews with program managers and program participants, a photovoice project, and participant observation of the program’s operation. By way of these research methods, I have determined that Youth Harvest is an experiential therapeutic program that offers benefits to its primary participants and to wider community members alike. I have identified the goals and intentions of the program as well as the individual “therapeutic factors” that, altogether, create the experience in which the therapy is embedded. I have concluded that Youth Harvest can serve as a valuable example of a unique way of trying to reach and serve adolescents in need.

Due to the limited size of the study group (five adults, four adolescent participants), this research project was intended only to determine the goals and intentions of the program, from the perspective of its adult coordinators, to establish an understanding of what the Youth Harvest experience entails, and to provide a profile of several youths’ responses to participation in the program. It is exploratory in nature and offers recommendations for improvement within the program, as well as ideas for future research.

This paper is dedicated to Dylan, Frankie, Winona and Lucy,
and every other young person who has ever spent time in the system.

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First and foremost, I would like to offer an extra special thanks to and appreciation for Tim Ballard, without whom, there would be no Youth Harvest. To my mother and father and my three brothers: thank you for shaping me into the woman I am and for showering me with emotional and financial support throughout this project, as you have done all my life. To my advisor, Neva Hassanein: you envisioned this project before I could see it, pushed me in ways I would not have pushed myself, and your passion for quality, interpretive research fueled this work. To Tom Roy: you lifted my spirit and gave me confidence in my dreams. To Darrell Stolle: your honest and committed input kept me from falling off the edge just when I was about to stumble. To Sarah Carvill, who taught me how to read and write: without you, I would have gotten lost. To Phil Condon: thank you for keeping my creativity well exercised so that my mind stayed flexible enough to complete this work. To Dan Spencer: words cannot express my gratitude for who you are and what you do. To Jenae Heitkamp and Cathy Joy: you represent the best in your field; thank you for keeping me sane. To Michael Olival: thank you for showing me what to do next and for selflessly providing me with housing in which to write the final draft of this thesis. To all of my research participants: I am grateful for and impressed by your patience, willingness, strength and insight. To all of my former students at Optimist High School and Aviva High School: you are my inspiration. And to Collin Lenzi, who brought me back to life and kept me alive: thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

On a warm summer night in late July 2008, a sixteen year-old girl stood in a field of pasture. Resting on her were one hundred pairs of eyes, the eyes of community members who had just paid one hundred dollars for a plate of farm-fresh food. The young girl spoke:

I have been in the foster care system ever since I was two years old. My parents signed me away, making me a ward of the state at the age of six. I have lived in about five foster homes and three group homes. While living in one of the group homes, I discovered the Youth Harvest program. I will tell you that the people I work with [in this program] are so supportive, and they care. They have also showed me what a healthy and considerate person looks like. The PEAS farm is a sanctuary where I feel welcome. It also gives me a sense of belonging. The mobile market has brought me closer to the people that I work with and has helped me reach out into the community. The Youth Harvest program, as a whole, has proven to me that you can work and have fun doing it. Also, that people have a chance at life no matter what background they have come from. Thank you for coming and supporting the farm. I hope you are enjoying the farm and the food as much as I do.

The young girl who spoke at this fundraiser was a participant of the Youth Harvest program, a farm-based, alternative program for “at-risk” adolescents. The Youth Harvest program, founded in 2004, began and still operates through a collaboration of two primary organizations: Missoula Youth Drug Court and Garden City Harvest, a community organization that works “to provide healthy produce to Missoulians in need while educating the Missoula community and University of Montana students about sustainable food systems and agriculture” (GCH 2008).

The Youth Harvest program takes place at the Rattlesnake Community “PEAS” Farm. The title, PEAS, stands for “Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society.” This 9.5 acre educational farm serves about eighty members of the community through its CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and, in addition, produces thousands of pounds of food each year for people with low incomes in Missoula. PEAS farm internships are offered to University of Montana students every fall, spring and summer. The summer internship is the most intensive. It requires students to work at the farm from 8am to

12pm, and then share a farm-prepared lunch together, Monday through Thursday. It also includes weekly field trips to other farms in the area on Fridays.

Every summer, four to six adolescents participate in the Youth Harvest program, which entails working side-by-side with students from the University of Montana on the PEAS farm. Youth Harvest participants work on the farm Monday through Thursday, from 8am until 5pm or 8am to 12:30pm, depending on their schedule. Each participant generally works about 25 hours a week. Twice a week, they host small scale “mobile markets” of fresh farm produce at several subsidized housing facilities for senior citizens with low incomes. Youth Harvest participants are paid an hourly wage for their service on the farm, but they work in a more attentive and therapeutic setting than would be the case with an average job.

The founder and former director of Youth Harvest, a licensed counselor, defines the program as a “therapeutic, service-oriented, employment program for ‘at-risk’ teens” (GCH 2008). Five of the six available participant slots for this program are usually reserved for Missoula Youth Drug Court-referred adolescents. The Drug Court Judge recommends the program to young people in Drug Court whom he thinks might benefit from it. These adolescents then fill out an application for the job and have an interview with the program director before being officially offered a position. In addition to the Drug Court-referred participants, a sixth slot in the program is always offered to an older adolescent with the intention that he or she will serve as an informal mentor to the other participants. This mentor is often a young person who has experienced elements of family and children services and/or the juvenile justice system and has developed and demonstrates some level of self-responsibility and self-discipline. So, whereas five of the yearly participants could be accurately referred to as adjudicated youth, the term cannot necessarily be applied to all of the participants. “Adjudication is the court process that determines (judges) if the juvenile committed the act with which he or she is charged. As used here the term ‘adjudicated’ is analogous to ‘convicted’ and indicates that the court concluded the juvenile committed the act” (OJJDP 2009). The term that is used to describe all Youth Harvest participants is “at-risk.”

The term “at-risk” has become a sort of catch-all phrase to signify programs that work with abused, neglected, learning-disabled, mentally-handicapped, chemically-

dependent, and/or adjudicated adolescents. It is a somewhat ambiguous term, and is often interpreted by youth as a derogatory label. Perhaps one of the simplest and yet most comprehensive explanations of the term comes from The National At-Risk Education Network which defines “at-risk” youth as meaning, “at-risk of dropping out of school and/or at-risk of not succeeding in life due to being raised in unfavorable circumstances” (NAREN 2008). Because of its use by this program and its popularity in general, the term will have to be dealt with throughout this paper. Though when quoting others people’s use of the term, it will be defined by or left undefined by the author, I will be employing NAREN’s definition for my own usage of the ambiguous yet seemingly unavoidable term. The use of and interpretations of this term will be further explored in Chapter III.

The Missoula Youth Drug Court Judge considers Youth Harvest to be part of a restorative justice program. In addition to being a Drug Court program, Youth Harvest also bears similarities to nature-based, alternative programs designed for “at-risk” youth, such as horticultural therapy and wilderness therapy programs, but is distinct from those. The purpose of this research is to explore the characteristics and goals of Youth Harvest, to determine the ways in which it resembles both wilderness therapy and horticultural therapy, and to report on the efficacy of the program as it is perceived by its managers and participants.

This research project began in the summer of 2008. As a University of Montana PEAS farm summer intern, I was completely immersed in the PEAS program and worked daily with Youth Harvest participants. I collected data on the Youth Harvest program through participant observation and in-depth interviews with two of the Youth Harvest participants. In spring of 2009, I continued collecting data through in-depth interviews with five individuals who represent both former and current managers of the Youth Harvest program. In summer 2009, I worked with a new group of Youth Harvest participants. I spent an average of four to six hours a week at the PEAS farm doing more participant observation. All of the 2009 Youth Harvest participants were provided with cameras and were invited to participate in a photovoice method of data collection, which will be described in Chapter II. Towards the end of the summer, I completed more in-depth interviews with 2009 Youth Harvest participants.

After exploring relevant information regarding juvenile drug courts, wilderness therapy, and horticultural therapy in the Literature Review of this paper, I will further detail the qualitative research methods that were utilized in this study and will acknowledge the limitations of the research. Before presenting the findings of the study, I will provide some description of my adolescent research participants in order to familiarize you with the types of circumstances that surround, and the challenges commonly faced by, many Youth Harvest participants. I will also take this opportunity to explore interpretations of the label regularly used to identify them – “At-Risk Youth.”

In the Findings and Discussion chapter of this paper, I will identify and explain the goals of Youth Harvest based on information supplied by those who have played or who still play significant roles in the management of the program. I will also provide a detailed description of each of the therapeutic factors of the program which emerged from the data collected for this study.

In the final chapter, I will draw connections between the characteristics of the Youth Harvest program and those of wilderness therapy and horticultural therapy programs. I will refer back to the literature to further a collective understanding of the Youth Harvest experience. I will also make suggestions for ways to strengthen the Youth Harvest program as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

As Flash (2003:511) makes clear, there is a need to explore alternatives to the traditional measures taken by the juvenile justice system in dealing with adjudicated youth. Though a number of alternatives exist and are already being practiced in some cities, the purpose of this literature review is to briefly present some history on the juvenile justice system that might make clear the need for alternatives and to navigate existing research on a particular kind of alternative program, nature-based.

By using the term, nature-based, I am referring to programs that include a focus on utilizing a connection with the natural world, whether it be via an outdoor experience, the care of animals or the cultivation of plants. The most common ‘types’ of nature-based, alternative programs for adjudicated youth are horticultural therapy programs and wilderness therapy programs. In recent decades, there has been an increase in the utilization of such programs as well as an increase in the research on how they function. The Youth Harvest program in Missoula, Montana is an example of an alternative, nature-based program and will be explored thoroughly in Chapter III. But in order to help contextualize the unique program, I will be surveying the existing research on programs that utilize horticultural therapy and wilderness therapy. Because Youth Harvest does not define itself as either and yet bears similarities to both, a basic understanding of the principles of both types of programs could illuminate the study on Youth Harvest.

As a part of the Missoula Youth Drug Court Treatment Program, Youth Harvest is affiliated with the juvenile justice system. In order to further understand the program’s goals and characteristics, a familiarity with the history of the juvenile justice system is essential.

A Brief History of the Juvenile Justice System and the Rise of Drug Courts

Since its inception in 1899, the Juvenile Justice System has attempted to manage juvenile delinquency in a manner that differs from the Criminal Justice System. The Juvenile Justice System is based on the principle that youth are developmentally different from adults and on the notion that the State should have the power and responsibility to

protect children whose parents are not providing adequate care (OJJDP 1999). This notion places emphasis on the welfare of the child.

In the earlier years of the system, focus was on the offender rather than the offense, and on rehabilitation rather than punishment. Over the last century, the Juvenile Justice System has undergone many changes and is now far more similar to our criminal justice system than it was at its genesis (OJJDP 1999). A string of Supreme Court decisions during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's resulted in a system that regularly institutionalizes juvenile offenders for rehabilitation (OJJDP 1999). Though the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 called for an increase in the provision of alternatives to institutionalization, over the following decade, researchers noted that the time juveniles spent in detention centers increased rather than decreased (Flash 2003). And as the years have passed and public perceptions of juvenile crime have grown more worrisome, the Juvenile Justice System has become more punitive (Flash 2003).

In the mid-1980s, as a result of the emergence of crack-cocaine and the subsequent "war on drugs," unprecedented numbers of adult drug offenders were arrested, charged with felonies, prosecuted, convicted, and incarcerated (OJP 2003). The Office of Justice Programs reports that efforts of the courts to reduce the strain of such large numbers of drug offenders "did little to stem the tide of drug offenders flowing into the system, habilitate drug offenders already in the system, or reduce recidivism among released offenders" (2003:5). As a result, the concept of treatment-oriented drug courts began as a grassroots criminal justice initiative, and by the year 2000, more than 1,000 courts across the nation had implemented or were planning on implementing a drug court to address substance abuse and related crimes (OJP 2003).

Inspired by the success of these adult drug courts in reducing rates of recidivism, innovative juvenile justice courts began establishing youth drug courts in the mid-1990s (OJP 2003). The juvenile drug courts were based on the same philosophy as the adult drug courts, that of *therapeutic jurisprudence*, which proposes that, "the law is a therapeutic agent; positive therapeutic outcomes are important judicial goals; and the design and operation of the courts can influence therapeutic outcomes" (OJP 2003:5). Operating under the philosophy of therapeutic jurisprudence, juvenile drug courts were enabled to more closely resemble the original *rehabilitation* model of the juvenile justice

system as discussed above. Between 1995 and 2001, more than 140 juvenile drug courts were established and another 125 were being planned (OJP 2003). Missoula, Montana's Youth Court was one of the first dozen in the nation to establish a juvenile drug court.

Drug courts are often related to *community courts*, "courts designed to reflect community concerns and priorities, access community resources, include community organizations in policymaking decisions, and seek general community participation and support" (OJP 2003:5). Both types of specialized courts often emphasize the philosophy of *restorative justice*. Though there is no single definition of restorative justice, the National Institute of Justice lists seven guiding principles. Within these principles, it is noted that "the first priority of justice processes is to assist victims, and the second priority is to restore the community, to the degree possible" (NIJ 2007). Also included in these principles is the notion that the offender is responsible to both victims and to the community, that "stakeholders share responsibilities for restorative justice through partnerships for action," and that the offender should "develop improved competency and understanding as a result of the restorative justice experience" (NIJ 2007). The Missoula Youth Drug Court attempts to implement the restorative justice model with an emphasis on giving back to the community and rehabilitation of offenders.

Through over more than a decade of operation, the Missoula Youth Drug Court has implemented a number of programs, from literacy to acupuncture, to address the specific needs of juvenile drug offenders in Missoula. But the Youth Harvest program, founded in 2004, is perhaps its most unique program. As a former Drug Court team program coordinator put it, "It's the best of what [Missoula Youth Drug Court] has to offer."

It is difficult to describe Youth Harvest as any particular "type" of program other than the founder's description, "a therapeutic, service-oriented, employment program for at-risk youth." And yet, it bears many similarities to two other types of nature-based, alternative treatment programs for youth: wilderness therapy and horticultural therapy.

Wilderness Therapy

Forms of wilderness therapy have been dabbled in since 1901 when doctors at overcrowded psychiatric institutions discovered that patients living outdoors in tents

showed improved mental and physical health, but organized programs such as Outward Bound were not introduced in the United States until the 1960s (Houston 2007). Houston classifies Outward Bound, an international outdoor education program, as a wilderness experience program or WEP. WEPs, “conduct outdoor programs in wilderness or comparable lands for purposes of personal growth, therapy, rehabilitation, education or leadership/organizational development” (Houston 2007:18). Wilderness therapy (WT), also commonly referred to as *adventure-based counseling*, *adventure therapy* and more recently, *Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare*, is an “emerging alternative treatment to help clients overcome problems with addiction, facilitate adjustment or develop psychological or emotional health” (Houston 2007:18). He adds that most of these newer programs tend to include a “more intentional and specific psychotherapeutic component” (Houston 2007:18).

As of 2007, Houston reports that there are 38 wilderness therapy programs and between 500 – 700 wilderness experience programs and that it has been established both anecdotally and empirically that treatment for adolescents in wilderness settings is more effective than in traditional settings (Houston 2007). He adds that wilderness therapy has been found to reduce rates of recidivism, improve self-perceptions and increase social adjustment and that therapists attribute these successes to the experiential frameworks, challenge components, and cooperative tasks involved in wilderness therapy programs (Houston 2007). Another element of wilderness therapy that distinguishes it from traditional, one-on-one, talk therapy is the use of real or perceived risk which may also serve as a significant factor in the success of these kinds of programs. Advocates of wilderness therapy have argued that traditional approaches such as individual therapy may not be as effective as alternative treatments for adjudicated youth, and that juvenile detention centers spend valuable tax dollars on conventional therapy for clients who might benefit more from WT programs (Houston 2007).

The Youth Harvest program in Missoula differs from most wilderness therapy programs in that it does not take place in a remote wilderness location. Rather than being removed from their normal surroundings for a week or weeks at a time, Youth Harvest participants remain in the community, working on the farm six to eight hours a day, four to five days a week. However, many of the components of wilderness therapy programs

to which success has been attributed appear to be present in the Youth Harvest program. These similarities and differences will be discussed further in Chapter IV.

Horticultural Therapy

In addition to the variety of wilderness therapy programs, horticultural therapy has been used in alternative programs for adjudicated youth. The American Horticultural Therapy Association defines horticulture therapy (HT) as, “the engagement of a person in gardening-related activities, facilitated by a trained therapist, to achieve specific treatment goals” (AHTA 2009).

In the United States, different forms of agriculture have been utilized at various institutions for people with disabilities for the last 200 years (Relf 2006). As McGuinn specifies, in earlier years, “Institutions frequently included a large inmate-run farm which provided food for the staff and inmates. The therapy was largely incidental, but even at that time the work itself was viewed as beneficial to the patient” (McGuinn 1999:1). One of the earliest establishments of a farm as a location for therapeutic and rehabilitation efforts was the Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth, which was founded in 1886 (Relf 2006). Since this time, the potential benefits of human/plant interactions in therapeutic and/or rehabilitation settings have been explored and applied in a variety of different programs that have eventually become commonly known as horticultural therapy.

Today, horticultural therapy programs exist all across the United States; yet, there have been no national studies to determine if program numbers are increasing, decreasing or static (Relf 2006). Relf, whose research on horticultural therapy encompasses its variety of applied uses beyond programs for adjudicated youth, urges for a higher level of rigorous research to provide the evidence of efficacy required by health policy experts and regulators. Toward that end, Relf has suggested a number of theoretical models on which to base research in the field of horticultural therapy. According to Relf’s *Dynamics of Horticultural Therapy* (displayed in Figure 1), the “interaction” represents a setting for social exchange in various forms, the “reaction” represents the innate response of human beings to plants, and the “action” represents the act of cultivating and caring for the live plants. Relf “put forth the concept that the actual act of caring for living plants

worked in many different ways to benefit the client, based on experience, observation and research in the literature. Her theory was that the care of living plants is the unique element that HT brings to a treatment program and the mechanism involved needs to be fully understood and utilized” (2006:11).

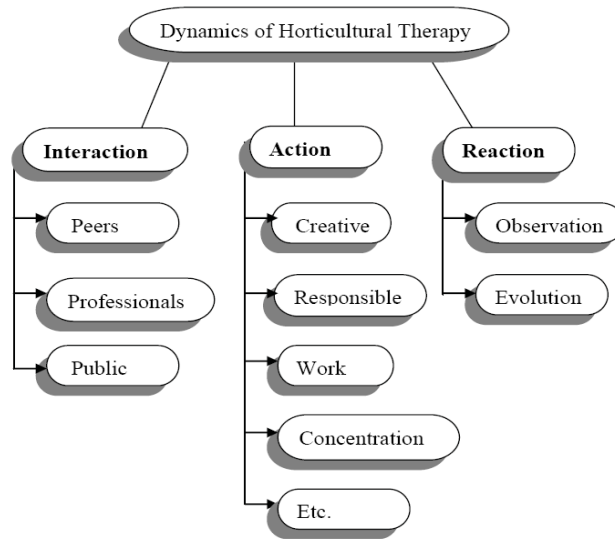


Figure 1. Graphic representation of the mechanisms by which Horticultural Therapy works based on the model proposed by Relf. (2006: 12)

Relf seeks to clarify the defining characteristics of horticultural therapy and advocates for rigorous research (based on theoretical models) that aims to evaluate the efficacy of HT programs. Her frustration with the lack of uniform terminology in the field as well as her desire for the kind of research that might be publishable in the “clinical and medical journals that provide the underlying basis for academic, programmatic and policy decisions” is understandable. If the field of horticultural therapy is to be authenticated as a viable method of treatment, it is important that it be clearly defined and that respected evidence of its efficacy is made available.

The Youth Harvest program in Missoula might easily be classified as a horticultural therapy program. In fact, at one point early on in its developing years, the program coordinators attempted to label it as such. The result was an immediate decline in funding and support. This illustrates an issue to which Relf draws attention: to some, horticultural therapy is not considered *real* therapy. Part of the reason for that, Relf says, is because many programs that include an emphasis on gardening/working with plants are

referred to as horticultural therapy programs even though they do not meet certain qualifications such as having measurable treatment goals and being led by licensed horticultural therapists. Due to the fact that the Youth Harvest founder and former director is not trained as a “horticultural therapist” but rather as a licensed clinical professional counselor, and due to the fact that the program does not necessarily have clearly defined “specific treatment goals,” I am not sure if Relf would classify Youth Harvest as horticultural therapy or not. But throughout my research, it has become clear that the dynamics of horticultural therapy defined and referenced by Relf are clearly apparent in the Youth Harvest program. Therefore, a foundational knowledge of and application of Relf’s theoretical model may illuminate the analysis of the Youth Harvest program. Because of the time limitations of this research project, I cannot collect the “demographics and census data,” nor can I conduct the kind of rigorous, outcomes-based research Relf argues for. However, in addition to promoting a clearer understanding of the Youth Harvest program specifically, careful, qualitative research of this program might also help untangle the current research quagmire within the field of horticultural therapy.

The Need for Process-Based Research

Houston (2007) has pointed out which components of WT have been commonly credited with its success: experiential frameworks, challenge components, cooperative tasks and real or perceived risk. Relf has put forth a series of theoretical constructs to be used “as a starting point for establishing effective theories of human–nature interaction in a therapeutic or treatment setting for future research in HT” (Relf 2006:7). In determining which aspects of Youth Harvest make the program therapeutic in nature, we can compare it to other types of nature-based, alternative programs for adjudicated youth. Throughout my analysis, I consider the presence of Houston’s WT success components within the program, as well as if and how Relf’s *Dynamics of HT* theoretical model can be applied.

Relf notes the need for more quantitative research projects that can evaluate the outcomes of these types of programs under the assumption that such studies, assuming they discover positive outcomes, would encourage those within the field of public health

to be more willing to accept these types of programs as valid and valuable alternatives to more traditional or widely accepted methods of dealing with the variety of conditions that horticultural therapy programs treat. Though the potential benefits of homogenizing the terminology used to describe these programs and an increase in positive, outcomes-based studies are easily recognizable, there is also a need for process-based research.

Mcnamara (2002) points out that a significant amount of research has demonstrated the benefits of adventure programs, but as Houston phrases it, “focus on outcome variables has precluded a thorough understanding of how and why adventure therapy works” (Houston 2007:16). There is a need to identify the common threads of programs that appear to be successful. There is a need to determine which aspects of an individual program appear to be the most effective. To do so, it is imperative to acquire the perspectives of those who run and operate such programs as well as those who participate in them. Furthermore, analysis of programs that aim to serve “at-risk” youth present an additional impetus for the inclusion of participant voice in the study. In programs designed for “at-risk” youth, the participants are often marginalized members of society. If the topic of study is asking whether or not a particular type of program designed to habilitate or rehabilitate “at-risk” youth is effective, then the “at-risk” participants deserve to have their input recognized. It is for this reason that my participant observation of the program, participants’ photography and participant interviews are so central to this research. It was through these methods that I was able to acquire participant voice and perspective.

CHAPTER II: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Research Methods

Preliminary Research

This research project began with three months of participant observation that entailed complete immersion in the Youth Harvest program throughout the summer of 2008. As a full-time, PEAS farm university student, I worked side-by-side with Youth Harvest participants for the duration of the program. At the end of the summer, I conducted interviews with two of the seven adolescents who had participated in the program throughout the summer. The interview guide was developed and refined based on my participant observation and included the following topics: how participants came to be involved in the program, what they learned from the experience, what they felt they gained personally from the experience, which aspects were the most meaningful, which aspects were the most challenging, how Youth Harvest compares to other therapeutic and/or court-referred programs in which they have participated, why they would or would not recommend the program to other young people and suggestions for improvement.

Throughout the summer of 2008, my methods were unstructured and my research question was uncertain. The experience, however, enabled me to subsequently develop what I felt to be purposeful questions about Youth Harvest: How do the managers and partners of this program define its goals? In what ways are those goals being met? How do the participants interpret their experiences in the program? Is the program generating any unanticipated results? And how might the program be strengthened? I was then able to devise appropriate methods for answering these questions.

1. In-depth interviews with program founders and partners

Throughout the spring of 2009, I conducted semi-structured, one-hour long interviews with adults involved in the program. I interviewed the program founder/former director, the current program director, the Missoula Youth Drug Court Judge who refers participants to Youth Harvest, the Drug Court program coordinator who helped implement the program, and the director of the PEAS farm, which is where the program takes place. These participants were chosen, because they are the adults who are

and have been the most intimately involved with the Youth Harvest program since it began. Though interviews with other adults related to the program would have been undoubtedly informative, I am confident that these participants represent the key players in the program's structure and operation. The primary topics covered in these interviews included: the principal goals of Youth Harvest; to what degree those goals are perceived to be met; which components or aspects of the program contribute to the achievement of those goals; the benefits of the program to both the participants and the community in which the program operates; the obstacles or challenges to the program's success; and suggestions for improvement.

The participants listed above are five of seven people I originally approached for interviews. The other two would-be participants, a Human Resource Council employee responsible for securing the funds with which Youth Harvest participants are paid and a former Youth Harvest supervisor, expressed an interest and willingness to be included in this research. However, due to the time constraints of this project and scheduling obstacles, I was unable to interview either of them.

2. Participant observation 2009

In summer of 2009, I continued my research with another three months of participant observation of the Youth Harvest program. Though I was not a PEAS farm intern this time around, and hence spent far less time at the farm than I had during the summer of 2008, my methods were more structured and my research more directed. Throughout the summer, I spent an average of four to six hours a week with Youth Harvest participants on the PEAS farm, and joined them several more times on their "mobile market" trips to subsidized housing facilities for senior citizens with low incomes. I recorded my observations in detailed field notes within 24 hours of the observations and used them in conjunction with other forms of data to conduct my analysis.

Throughout this summer, I was also employed as a "Relief Therapeutic Care Worker" at a temporary shelter home for adolescents in Missoula. Though my employment there was completely unrelated to my research, three of the six adolescents who participated in Youth Harvest during the summer of 2009 also spent some time

living at the shelter home at which I worked. I had some concerns that this would complicate my relationship with these participants. While at the farm, I was just another university student who happened to be doing a research project on the program in which they were involved, but when at the shelter, I was a care worker, responsible for cooking their meals, getting them to their appointments, and amongst other things, holding them accountable to the house rules. Though, at times, this made my role as a paid care worker more challenging, it allowed me a much more personal and intimate perspective on these young people's lives. Rather than getting to know them only in the PEAS farm environment, through the shelter, I got to spend time with them in a variety of settings such as: taking them to a swim hole on a hot, Saturday afternoon, watching scary movies with them on a Friday night, meeting their parents, and even taking them to their court, probation, and/or drug testing appointments. Though unintended, this experience influenced my research perspective on the Youth Harvest program.

3. In-depth interviews with 2009 Youth Harvest Participants

Towards the end of the summer of 2009, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth, one-hour interviews with three of the 2009 Youth Harvest participants. The interview guide was developed and refined based on my participant observation that summer as well as the themes that had emerged during my analysis of the spring interviews with the program's founders and partners. The primary topics covered in these interviews were: what they learned from the experience; what they felt they gained personally from the experience; which aspects were the most meaningful; which aspects were the most challenging; whether or not they view Youth Harvest as an "employment based, service-oriented, therapeutic program;" how Youth Harvest compares to other therapeutic and/or court-referred programs in which they have participated; why they would or would not recommend the program to other young people and suggestions for improvement.

4. Photovoice

In addition to the interviews with the 2009 participants, I utilized a Photovoice method to further explore participants' perspectives and interpretations of their experiences in the program. Photovoice is a participatory research method that enables

participants to express themselves through a photographic technique (Jurkowski 2008). My intentions for using this method were to provide an accessible medium through which Youth Harvest participants could critically engage in discussions about their experiences and to empower them by giving them an opportunity to supply data for this research project based on *their* interests and needs.

Researchers have used this method for a variety of subjects and samples. It can be especially helpful when working with people who, for whatever reason, are incapable of writing and/or articulating themselves clearly. Though I feel that all of the Youth Harvest participants I worked with over the course of the two summers were perfectly capable of expressing themselves through words, I am also well aware that there are some topics and experiences that are better recalled through photography. Using cameras is fun, and providing them a simple medium through which to capture their experiences was not only a research method, but also my gift to them for participating.

At the beginning of the summer 2009 each Youth Harvest participant was given his or her own disposable camera to be kept at the farm. They were trained on the Photovoice method. This training included instruction on how to operate and care for the cameras, requests to ask permission before taking pictures of people, and the general purpose of the method.

Participants were asked to think about which aspects of the program they found to be the most interesting and satisfying, which aspects they found to be the most challenging and what they were learning. They were instructed to use their cameras to take pictures of things they felt expressed the above-stated considerations. They were also encouraged to photograph any other elements of their experience with which they personally identified.

Though I reminded them to utilize their cameras on a weekly basis, for many of the participants, it seemed to be just too much of a hassle to carry the camera around with them throughout the workday, and they would rarely return all the way to the barn where the cameras were kept to photograph something worthwhile in the field. Because I had not seen many of the participants utilizing the cameras much over the summer, towards the end of August, I began to feel that perhaps this method was a lost cause. However, as I had told them that I would develop the film for them and that we were going to have a

group meeting during which we would share and discuss them, I wanted to stay true to my word. So I did. The meeting was extremely casual. Each participant was encouraged to select three to five photos that visually captured some of the most notable aspects of their experiences. They were then each given an opportunity to express to the group why they chose the photos they did and what each one meant to them.

I did not filter the images the participants chose to include or the comments they shared about them. Throughout Chapter III, you will encounter twelve photographs taken by Youth Harvest participants, integrated, where relevant, into the discussion. Under each one is a quote about the photo by the young person who selected it for inclusion in this project.

5. Analysis

This research project generated a variety of forms of data: detailed field notes from two summers of participant observation, complete transcriptions of all interviews, the photographs from the Photovoice method, and notes from the Photovoice group forum.

Informally, my analysis began in the field during summer 2008 while working with the Youth Harvest participants. I was observing their experiences, having my own experience, building relationships with them and drawing conclusions in my head about what was occurring. This informal analysis - the birth of new ideas, changed ideas and more questions - has continued throughout the interviewing and transcription process, my 2009 participant observation experience, and throughout an ongoing review of the literature.

Formally, I used the process of interpretative content analysis to uncover patterns of meaning within the textual data (Berg 2004). Both informal and formal analysis of this project began inductively. As previously mentioned, I did not even have a central question or hypothesis when I first began, and even once my research approach became more structured, the categories of meaning and the relationships between those categories very much emerged from the data and the experience. However, as these patterns emerged, they were considered in light of previous research, particularly the Dynamics of

horticultural therapy put forth by Relf (see pgs 9-10) and the success components of wilderness therapy identified by Houston (see pgs 8, 11).

Research Limitations

Inexperience and Uncertainty

When I first began this research, I felt that my greatest limitation was my own uncertainty about what I was doing. Though I had acquired training in social and cultural research methods through my undergraduate degree in Anthropology, it had been almost a decade since I had practiced them. I was unsure of what my graduate level research should look like, and I was unfamiliar with the program I was setting out to study. At the time, I failed to recognize how beneficial this uncertainty would turn out to be. It allowed me to explore Youth Harvest with an open mind, acute curiosity and few pre-conceptions. It also led me to spend more time on the project than I had originally intended. Had I been more experienced and well practiced in social research methodologies, I may have succeeded at getting more participant interviews during the summer of 2008, and hence, may not have continued working with and studying the program the following summer. However, I cannot blame my failure to get more interviews entirely on my own inexperience. Much of it simply comes with the territory of working with a vulnerable population of teenaged research participants.

Working with a Vulnerable Population

Because the Youth Harvest participants I worked with were all under the age of eighteen, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) deemed them a “vulnerable population.” In accordance with the IRB stipulations of my research project, I had to obtain parental permission before I could interview them. Getting any teenager to remember to get his or her permission slip signed can be difficult in and of itself, but when you are working with teenagers who are living in a detention center or a group home and who may not have stable relationships with their legal guardians, this task becomes all the more challenging. Though all of the Youth Harvest participants whom I invited to participate in my research expressed willingness if not outright desire to do so, many of them simply did not ever get all the necessary forms signed and turned in to me.

Also, when working with this type of population, one must factor in the unpredictability of their presence. During the summer of 2008, two of the participants left the program mid-summer without advanced notice. Their slots were filled by two new participants in early August, leaving me with only three people who had participated in the program from start to finish. I was only able to interview two of these three. And for reasons I do not want to disclose (out of respect for my participants' confidentiality) one of these two interviews was unsuitable for inclusion in my analysis. During the summer of 2009, one of the participants dropped out of the program mid-summer, another one of the participants was placed in detention and was denied work-release permission mid summer, and the guardian of another one of the participants actually denied permission for her son to be included in the research. Out of the six 2009 participants, I was able to interview three, leaving me with a grand total of four usable interviews.

Just as my inexperience and uncertainty served as advantages as well as limitations, in a way, so too did my failure to complete more interviews with Youth Harvest participants. Because my sample of actual research participants turned out to be so small, each of these young people's voice and perspective was lent even more credence throughout the process of analysis and played powerful roles in shaping the findings of this research. Because one of my primary goals with this research was to empower the young individuals for whom Youth Harvest operates, I view this as a success.

Researcher's Perspective and Personal Struggles

As I am a person before a researcher, I am susceptible to all of the insecurities, failures and personal biases that any human being is. The experiences of my own adolescence, my professional years as a high school teacher in Los Angeles, and the challenges I faced in my personal life throughout the year and a half I spent working with and studying the Youth Harvest program all influenced the methods, the analysis and the findings of this research project.

As an adolescent, I was a regular user of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and an assortment of hallucinogenic drugs. These habits of mine once landed me in the hospital,

twice got me arrested, and led to the times during my teenage years that I spent in jail and on probation. Luckily for me, I had two loving parents who had both the patience and the resources to guide me through these hard times and on to a college education and a professional career. It was no accident that I developed a passion for working with struggling teenagers, particularly the ones who are not blessed with the guidance I had.

Throughout the five years I worked as a special education high school teacher for “emotionally disturbed” adolescents in Los Angeles, California, this passion of mine grew. I began to see the “revolving door” of the system. I worked with children who were cycled from foster care to group homes to detention centers and back to foster care over and over and over again, each time around becoming more hardened. I watched as they were placed on multiple medications that affected their weight, their skin and their ability to concentrate. I saw them being fed cheap, government-issued foods for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I witnessed the catastrophe that would occur every week when they were forced to do group therapy – something neither the students nor the therapists at my place of employment truly desired to do. And I was painfully aware of how little exercise and exposure to the outdoors these children experienced.

Whether they were living in the residential care facility or somewhere else in the city, their experiences with nature were limited. I worked with other teachers to develop nature classes and a school garden through which our students could develop personal relationships with the natural world and get some exercise. Though participating in these classes or working in the garden did not produce miraculous or immediate results for our students, I could see the subtle, positive effects it had on most of them. So when I learned, years later, about the Youth Harvest program in Missoula, Montana, I was naturally very interested. And my obvious bias is that I assumed it was likely a great program before I ever set foot on the PEAS farm or met one participant.

However, when I began my internship on the PEAS farm and, simultaneously, my research project on Youth Harvest, I was no longer the young, confident, high school teacher I had been in Los Angeles. Because I had spent the month of May attending a sustainability travel seminar in Guatemala, I began the farm program one month later than the other university students and the Youth Harvest participants. On my first day, it was clear that everyone had already bonded, and everyone seemed to know what they

were doing, except me. I felt like an outsider. I had just quit smoking (my thirtieth birthday present to myself) and was suffering the depression and withdrawal that goes along with such a decision. I was also suffering from the onset of an anxiety disorder that greatly worsened throughout the year to follow and ended up impeding my research even more. I feared judgment from the director of the program and from the other university students, because of my lack of knowledge/experience in farming, the poor quality of my skills and abilities, and also because of my personal habits. To put it simply, I was a wreck from day one.

In July of that first summer, my 52 year-old aunt died after a long battle with various incarnations of cancer. I flew home for the funeral. In August of that first summer, one of my dearest childhood friends died from an accidental drug overdose. I flew home for another funeral and took up smoking again. Needless to say, it was a difficult summer and towards its end, I began to feel like a failure in more ways than one.

Though I may not have succeeded in getting a lot of interviews with Youth Harvest participants that summer, because of my circumstances, I feel like my perspective of working at the farm may have been more similar to the YH participants than it was to the other university students. Despite the obvious differences between us (me being significantly older, a graduate student, and not in Drug Court), when I entered the program, I was not a stable, well-situated adult who knew what she was doing and felt comfortable in her surroundings. I was a depressed, unstable, traumatized individual reeling from recent anxiety onslaught, trying to break a drug addiction, and feeling untrusting of both the teacher and the other university students up there. I was in a state of fear, resistance and withdrawal. Though this seemed like a huge disadvantage at the time, when the therapeutic factors of this program (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter III) emerged from the data during my analysis, I realized that I myself had actually experienced them.

CHAPTER III: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Youth Harvest is a unique, therapeutic program that blends the goals of National Drug Courts and the principles of restorative justice with elements of both wilderness therapy programs and horticultural therapy programs. Each of these, varied approaches are inherent in the goals and structure of Youth Harvest and contribute to its success as an experiential therapeutic program that offers benefit to its primary participants and to wider community members alike. And each of these approaches can be identified within what I describe below as the “therapeutic factors” that, altogether, create the experience in which the therapy is embedded.

Though the program does not have a list of written goals and objectives to which its directors adhere, after interviewing members of both involved organizations (Missoula Youth Drug Court and Garden City Harvest) who have all been integral in the creation and sustained operation of the program, three primary goals emerged from the data.

These three goals are to provide each Youth Harvest participant with:

1. A positive employment experience
2. Positive community connections through service-oriented work
3. A positive therapeutic experience

Throughout this chapter, I explore each of the above stated goals based on the data that emerged from my interviews with the coordinators of the program, and my interviews with the participants of the program as well as my participant observation with Youth Harvest. Through said exploration, I attempt to decipher the meaning and intention of each goal from the perspective of the program’s coordinators. I also present the evidence or recognize the lack thereof that these goals are realized in the field through the voices of the participants and through my own experience. After presenting the data that explain these goals, I explore the ways in which the Youth Harvest program bears similarities to wilderness therapy programs and horticultural therapy programs.

Out of respect for all of my research participants’ privacy and/or confidentiality, pseudonyms are used herein. The adult research participants will be referred to by their titles: Missoula Youth Drug Court Judge, a former Drug Court Program Coordinator,

Founder of Youth Harvest, Current Director of Youth Harvest, and the Director of the PEAS farm. The adolescent research participants will be referred to via pseudonyms: Dylan, Frankie, Winona and Lucy.

Any exploration of the Youth Harvest program would be incomplete without a description of the young people it was created to serve. Though each young person who participates in the program is unique and individual, it is described as a program for “at-risk” youth. Before beginning a discussion about the findings of this research regarding the goals of the Youth Harvest program and the therapeutic factors present therein, it is important to understand who these “at-risk” participants are and to explore interpretations of the label that is used to describe them.

“At-Risk” Youth

When I first learned about the Youth Harvest program, which was described to me as a summer farm program for “at-risk” youth, I wondered exactly what kind of risk factors its participants would possess. I had only been living in Missoula for a few months and, compared to the city of Los Angeles where I had lived for six years prior, it seemed like an ideal community with very few problems. I made the incorrect assumption that the issues of poverty, drug abuse, domestic violence and gang involvement that played such significant roles in placing so many of my Los Angeles students “at-risk” simply were not very prevalent in Missoula. Hence, I questioned how the “at-risk” youth of Missoula, or more particularly, the extent of their struggles, would compare to the kinds of issues I was used to seeing.

After living in Missoula a bit longer, I became aware of what a huge poverty problem exists there. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2006 to 2008, 17.8% of individuals living in Missoula County were living below the poverty level. This is compared to the 15.1% of individuals living below poverty level in Los Angeles County during the same years. Though gang violence is certainly not as rampant in Missoula as it is in Los Angeles, teen drug use is considered by many to be of significant concern. And unfortunately, domestic violence can occur in any city, and is often perpetuated by financial stress and drug and alcohol abuse.

The Youth Harvest participants I met and worked with over a period of two summers had faced all kinds of obstacles in their lives before setting foot on the PEAS farm. Because the majority of them are referred to the program through Missoula Youth Drug Court, many of them had substance abuse issues, or at the very least, had been arrested more than once under drug and/or alcohol related charges. In addition, many of them had made more than one appearance in a courtroom of juvenile justice for charges ranging from truancy and probation violations to car theft and assault. But not all of the participants had records with the justice system. Some of the young people I met through Youth Harvest, people like Winona and Lucy for example, had never been arrested for anything. These young people had been deemed “at-risk” not because of things they had done, but because of the circumstances of their family lives. As Winona declared in a speech she delivered at a PEAS farm fundraiser in 2008, she was placed as a ward of the state at age six and had lived with five different foster families and in three different group homes since that time. Lucy described the Youth Harvest participants in her interview by saying, “We’ve all pretty much been through the system . . . in the sense that we’ve gone through foster care and adoption.”

As was discussed briefly in the Literature Review of this paper, the term “at-risk” seems to have become the default label for a wide range of young people. It is used to refer to people who have been abused, neglected, or have been removed from their homes for some reason. It is used to refer to people with learning-disabilities or mental handicaps. It is used to refer to the behaviorally-challenged, the chemically-dependent, and/or the adjudicated. And it is used to describe young people living at or below the poverty level.

As a commonly used term, the descriptor, “at-risk” succeeds in notifying people that the youth being described are somehow different from a *normal* or *regular* young person. But what does it really mean? And more importantly, what effect does it have on the young people it is used to define?

Throughout the remainder of this section, I explore my research participants’ responses to this term. It is not my intention to vilify those who use the term, nor do I propose a replacement for it. My purpose here is simply to explore the meaning of the

term to those who use it and to draw attention to the responses of the young people on which it has been used.

When asked their opinion about the term “at-risk,” all of my adult research participants explicitly recognized the danger of labeling in general, and they had interesting things to share about the meaning of the phrase. The PEAS farm director summarized it as follows:

In colloquial terms, I'd say [it means] kids whose families were really screwed up. So they're facing a whole bunch of social obstacles that people who don't come from screwed up families don't face. And I'm not talking about their mom had abandonment issues or some middle class crap, I mean like people whose families were really screwed up, like their parents were absent, or they were abusive or alcoholic, or they were just dirt poor. Bad things have happened to these kids in the past, so at-risk, I don't know if that's the right... I didn't make up the term. **At-risk sounds like negative things could happen in the future if some intervention isn't made. That seems to be the meaning behind it. But the way I would describe these kids is bad things have already happened, and we're kind of dealing with that.**

In this response, we can see that the speaker has a pretty clear idea of what the term means, but is yet, uncomfortable with the use of it. He also points out that the term places an emphasis on the future as opposed to the past. One Youth Harvest participant, Winona, had much to say about this. Winona is the young lady who delivered the speech that is transcribed in the introduction to this paper. Just before she stood up to address that speech to a group of more than one hundred people, the woman handing over the microphone referred to the Youth Harvest program as a program for “at-risk” youth. Winona did not take well to this introduction.

Well, when I was giving my speech, the lady was like, ‘the at-risk youth.’ I almost freaked out on her. I was like, ‘I am not at-risk.’ What do you think? I don't think we're at-risk, because what are we going to do? We're not at-risk. We're not. We're just kids that obviously don't have good family lives, and we obviously came from hard situations. **How could you call us at-risk? We've already been through the risk. We've lived through it. You can't just go up to us and be like, ‘You are at-risk.’ I've been through the risk ok!** You can't tell me I'm at risk. I'm already done with that. I'm 17. I know what I'm doing, hopefully. And you can't tell me that I'm at risk, because I'm not. It sounds like I'm going to cut myself or go get hospitalized. ‘At-risk’

reminds me of something really, really bad, horrible. It's like an expectation, like a bar. And I don't want to set that bar for myself.

Combined with her obvious aversion to this term, Winona also had a frustrated lack of clarity regarding its meaning.

I don't really understand what they mean by 'at-risk.' Does it mean that I'm suicidal, or does it mean that I'm, uh, bad for society? I don't really understand, but I know for a fact that I'm not at risk for anything. Does it mean that I'm at risk for drugs? There could be a million things, and I know I'm not one of them, because I'm not an 'at-risk' teen.

In our discussion about the term, the founder of the program reflected on the difficulties involved in needing to specify to what population a program is geared while at the same time trying to avoid pathologizing and labeling them:

I don't use the term with the kids. And I'm conscious of labels and terms. Those kinds of labels generally are used to just to frame what it is that we're doing, but also for funding purposes as well. That's a catch-all phrase that allows some kind of flag that this is a program that works with difficult populations. But I feel like I'm careful to, like for example, inform [the participants] that we're not out to change who they are. It's just a very sensitive approach to letting the kids know that we're not coming at them from the perspective that they're broken and need to be fixed or 'at-risk' and need to be saved. I'm just really careful not to get into that kind of stuff. And labels are a problem. Part of that's just being lazy and not coming up with creative terminology too.

The founder makes a good point here, but coming up with creative terminology that is any less demeaning than "at-risk" is more challenging than one might think. I put each of my Youth Harvest research participants on this task and, with all of our heads together, we failed to come up with a term that they everyone could accept. We discussed the following terms: disadvantaged, underprivileged, troubled, and youth-in-need. None of them passed as being completely void of insult.

'Underprivileged' would be talking about their downfalls in life and not having as much money or not having parents or getting a shitty hand in life. I think it would just remind them about that. And 'disadvantaged' would make them feel ripped off. They're disadvantaged from everybody else who got a normal life. - Dylan

It's really hard, because either way you're labeling. I think most kids who are in that situation hate to be labeled. I mean they're already in enough trouble as it is, so now you're giving them another name? - Lucy

Another term for 'at-risk youth?' I wouldn't call them 'at-risk.' I'd just call them by their name. - Dylan

Regardless of whether or not this term, used to describe Youth Harvest participants and the participants of many other treatment programs, is considered offensive or politically correct, it is used, as the Youth Harvest founder mentioned, to quickly and easily inform people that a particular type of population is being served – a challenged population, if you will. Whether the reason for it is an issue of poverty, drug use, domestic abuse, neglect, or something else, children who are deemed “at-risk” face more considerable obstacles on the path to adulthood.

Over the two summers I spent working with Youth Harvest participants, I met a number of strong, young individuals who had been presented with, what I think most people would agree to be, more than their fair share of significant challenges while growing up. I was lucky to befriend a young man who lost his mother when he was in sixth grade, flunked more than one semester of school thereafter, racked up a rap sheet that makes him look dangerous on paper, and after being raised in a family with a history of serious drug addictions, now struggles to control his own. He is easily one of the most delightful and inspirational people I met while living in the city of Missoula. I was also lucky to get to know a young woman who was removed from her biological family at age four, forced to testify against them at that same age, and still attends therapy to help her cope with the trauma she endured during those early years of her life. She is a bright, capable person now who seems to focus more on the blessings of her life than on her misgivings. Like these two, each Youth Harvest participant has his or her own unique story and has faced his or her own unique challenges. The purpose of the program is to present these young people with an opportunity to gain a positive employment experience, to establish positive connections with their community and to benefit from a positive therapeutic experience, so that they might be more equipped to rise above the obstacles that put them “at-risk.”

Positive Employment Experience

All of my adult research participants commented on the importance of the employment aspect of the program. As the former Drug Court program coordinator said, “These kids need experience being in a job setting where they’re being compensated for their work and valued in that way, but they also need kind of a special first time employment experience . . . in a clean environment.” The founder of the program further emphasizes this point, “For a lot of the kids, this is their first job, and the emphasis is on them being successful and giving them a positive first-time work experience and hopefully providing them with a positive reference.” Each Youth Harvest participant fills out an application and goes through an interview process with the program director to provide them with a learning experience in acquiring employment.

Both of the Drug Court affiliates (the judge and the program coordinator) mentioned the importance of participants, who often come from low-income families, getting paid for their work and being able to contribute to their household income. The judge noted, “Most of them don’t have opportunities for other jobs and their families are, generally speaking, at or below poverty. So it’s an opportunity that they’ve never had before where someone’s actually offering them a job. They’ve always been turned down for jobs, but [through this program], they have that opportunity, [and] the money helps.”

The majority of the Youth Harvest participants with whom I worked over the course of two summers, whether they were Drug Court-referred or not, viewed the program, quite simply, as a “job,” rather than as a therapeutic program. When asked how he got involved in the program, Dylan responded:

Well, I’m in the Drug Court program and [the Drug Court judge], he was talking to me about working here for the summer and stuff when the summer was coming up. And so he got an application for me, and I finally filled it out at the beginning of the summer, and I was put in the clink, you know, jail, and then I started working here. So, I like it. It’s pretty fun.

Another participant, Winona, who was chosen to fill the mentorship role, described her initial involvement as follows:

I was living at [a group home] for girls, and I was looking for a job. The manager, like the head honcho, she told me, ‘Do you want a job on a farm?’ And I was like, ‘Oh, heck yes,’ and then I got all excited. She said,

‘The PEAS farm has this program, and I told them that I had a good person to do it.’ So, I just signed up and it just went from there.

With regards to the judge’s comment that many of the Youth Harvest participants would have trouble finding employment elsewhere, not all of the participants agreed with that observation. In fact, the two young men I interviewed already had plans to work other jobs, and felt mandated by the judge to work for Youth Harvest instead. However, despite their initial reluctance, they were both ultimately satisfied with the work:

It was like the judge was telling me [to work for Youth Harvest], but I didn’t want to do it. . . I really didn’t want to do this at first, but then as soon as I got here and started doing it, I was like, ‘Man, this aint that bad.’ It’s kind of fun. . . You couldn’t ask for a better job. - Dylan

It was more of a ‘Fill this out. You don’t have a choice.’ Even if I got the other job, he [the judge] probably would’ve made me come [here] anyway. But I’m glad I came though and did this summer. It was an experience, definitely. - Frankie

On the other hand, one of the female participants, Lucy, was very grateful for the opportunity from the beginning. When asked how the \$7.25 wage factored into her decision to accept the job, she said, “It was nice. A summer job. It’s so hard [to find work]. I put in quite a few applications, and I couldn’t get a job anywhere else, so, it’s pretty exciting.” Though both of the young men quoted above felt they could have gotten more money at a different job, they also agreed that the Youth Harvest wage made them feel better about participating in the program. Frankie said, “I probably could’ve gotten more, but it wouldn’t have been as fun as this.” Dylan’s response was, “Well, money’s money, and its \$7.25, which is a little more than minimum wage, and I was looking for a summer job too, so the money kind of helped me, my decision making, or, you know, liking it and stuff.”

After having listened to each of my adult research participants emphasize the importance of a *positive* employment experience, it was hard not to notice the fact that all of my adolescent research participants repeatedly emphasized how “fun” the job is. Though each of them mentioned this more than once in their individual interviews, the emphasis on “fun” became even more apparent through their photovoice selections.



Photovoice Image 1: Finn

“This is such a good picture of Finn. I chose this picture, because it took us like twenty minutes to get him to sit like this, and I’ve had lots of fun with him.”



Photovoice Image 2: CSA Set Up

“This one, you can’t really see because the flash wasn’t on, but it’s CSA - helping to set up for CSA - which was a lot of fun.”



Photovoice Image 3: Chicken After Chickens

“I chose this one here of J-boy running, trying to catch the chickens. He looks like a chicken. Look at him, with his arms out.”

Youth Harvest participants also gain specific job skills through the program. These skills range beyond the farm work skills of moving irrigation pipe, planting and harvesting vegetables, etc., and even beyond the invaluable skill of being able to work as part of a team towards specific goals. As part of the mobile market program, the Youth Harvest participants set up mini-farmers markets outside of subsidized housing facilities for low-income seniors, and the Youth Harvest participants are responsible for selling the produce. The current Y. H. director says, “It’s an incredible process to watch. They get experience with money handling, talking to people and being comfortable selling a product, which are all really big life skills.”

Youth Harvest participant, Winona, confirmed her supervisor’s comment when she spoke about her experience with Mobile Market:

Oh wow, I hate dealing with money. I hate dealing with money and [the Y.H. supervisors] would always be like, “Winona gets to do money today.” And I was always like, ‘Please no, please,’ because I’m not very good in math or counting or adding or doing the, ‘oh you gave me five dollars. It’s only 25, 35 cents. How much change do I give you?’ Oh I learned so much about money. . . It helped me out, just counting up how much they owed me and then handing it off and saying, ‘He owes me a

buck fifty' when the 25 cents adds up. A buck fifty is a lot of vegetables. You have to dig through the bag and, 'Oh, you got four potatoes.' That's only fifty cents.

When I joined the Youth Harvest group on their Mobile Market trips, I witnessed the participants exhibiting the "life skills" that the director speaks of first hand. On each trip, one participant would be placed in charge of the money box, and every time I joined them, the young person with this responsibility took it very seriously. They were all very polite when they spoke to their customers, explaining the products that were on display and even giving tips on how to prepare them. Youth Harvest participant, Lucy, described one such scenario:

One woman had never seen kohlrabi, and so she was talking about it, and we told her what to do. So she branched out and she bought some and used it and was so excited about it and bought it from us for the rest of the year that we had some. So just sharing different things with them about different produce, so that they don't think that they *have* to pickle it or *have* to fry it or *have* to do it this, that they can just eat it raw. They can eat it in its natural form.

Even the most difficult of all the Youth Harvest participants I worked with, a young man on work release from detention with whom I never had an interview, managed himself well while on Mobile Market trips. While at the PEAS farm, this young man almost always wore a scowl on his face, failed to complete the tasks asked of him and grumbled rudely to the university students, the PEAS farm director and his Youth Harvest supervisors alike. But while working at the Mobile Market, I heard him referring to customers as "Mam" and "Sir," and politely asking them if they needed anything else. On occasion, he even smiled at them.

Two of the adult interviewees also focused on fostering the development of responsibility and work ethic by refraining from "overly structured" program demands. As the PEAS director put it, "I set a tone that is positive and relaxed and informal, that's non-controlling, that lets people know that they're trusted. I'm psyched to give them responsibility and walk away and see them do what I think they know I think they can do." The founder of the Youth Harvest program adds:

I was really conscious of not wanting to develop a program that the kids would then have to learn how to work and become savvy to and navigate in order to get through it or get out of it. Obviously, there was some structure. There was some clear expectation about being at work on time and some level of work performance, but I wanted them to find their own way into the experience as opposed to knowing clearly what's expected of them.

During her interview, when comparing the Youth Harvest experience to other treatment programs she has participated in, Winona said, "Its way more experience for me, working with other people, and not exactly taking orders. It wasn't like a boss, coworker sort of situation. It was more of a friendly environment that I could ease into."

Towards the end of each of my interviews with the Youth Harvest participants, I asked them what they might tell future prospective employers they had gained from working for Youth Harvest. These were their responses:

Probably... hard-working. I learned to work hard in the hot weather and everything. And you've got to stay busy here, so no time for slacking, and you work with a lot of people so you're pretty much a team player. I learned how to be a team player. – Dylan

Good work ethic, social skills, cooperating with others, and punctuality.
– Frankie

Diligence and sticking it out through the weather. – Lucy

Leadership. I gained leadership a lot, because none of the other kids were really working, so I kind of had to step up. . . And that I had potential, that I could be responsible and have a better outlook on life. It's not like it totally turned my life around, but it just helped me see better things than what I was seeing before. I hated getting up early in the morning and riding my bike, and then I got used to it. It taught me how to wake up in the morning. – Winona

Positive Community Connections through Service Work

All five of my adult research participants placed high value on the construction of positive relationships that takes place in the Youth Harvest program as well as the benefits of the service work for both the Y.H. participants and the community member recipients. These relationships and the value of service work will be further explored in the discussion of the program's therapeutic factors below as they are important

components of the therapeutic experience. The primary purpose in distinguishing this goal from the next one is to allow for an opportunity to explore the elements of restorative justice that appear to be inherent in the program's goals.

Both of the Drug Court affiliates emphasized the importance of keeping adolescents in the community rather than enrolling them in a treatment program in another city or state. In discussing how the Youth Harvest program came to be, the Drug Court Judge commented, "It was an idea that would keep kids here in the community." The former Drug Court program coordinator adds, "We wanted to keep them at the farm, because the farm was right here. I could drive out to the farm at lunch time, and I could see how many kids showed up and how they were doing and what kind of place they were in mentally and emotionally. I couldn't do that if they were in Indiana or some other treatment program."

In addition to the simple notion of keeping kids in their community and partnering with community organizations, both elements of the restorative justice model, the Drug Court Judge specified the other ways in which the program operates in conjunction with restorative justice philosophy. When asked about the main goals of the Youth Harvest program, the judge responded:

To build some identity with the community, to build some sense of responsibility because they're there everyday. To give them a new perspective on a project where they can actually see a plant grow and be harvested and provide support. So all of the elements of what is called restorative justice, where there still is some repayment to the community. They're working up there, and they're giving the community food back. So they're, quote, paying for their crime. There's some rehabilitation, because they're up there doing good things. They're not stealing hubcaps or smoking dope. And they're also building that tie to the community through all of this work. So that's the ideal, I think, of the restorative justice model that we attempt to implement in Youth Court and why we even have a Youth Court in this country.

When asked what he thought were some of the biggest benefits of participating in the Youth Harvest program, Dylan responded:

Seeing people around Missoula that live here [and] getting to know the community a little better, because really, it's a small world out there. And just learning new skills out there. So in case you want to... your grandparents have a farm or something, you'll know what to do. Or if you want to start one, you'll have that little bit of information. And, I think the

stories from the old people are pretty good. I like that. And just making money, working, because the longer you work, the better you get at it.

In this response, we can see Dylan, clearly emphasizing the benefit of acquiring job skills and the importance of earning money that are integral to the program, but what I find even more interesting is that here, in his initial response to this question, the very first thing he emphasized was a connection to the community. And he also referenced the time he got to spend with the customers of the Mobile Market in his comment about the “stories from the old people.”

Though the restorative justice elements of the program were emphasized more immediately by the Drug Court judge, two of the Garden City Harvest staff also mentioned this. The founder of the program said, “It’s about restoration and restorative, therapeutic approaches as opposed to punitive approaches. And it also kind of fits into the restorative justice [model] where the kids are giving back . . . and part of it is an identity level thing that the kids are seen as just taking from, or they see themselves as just taking from the community, whether it’s through theft or resources or by being in the system, but [through this program] they get to be seen and see themselves as giving back.” When asked whether or not he views Youth Harvest as a service-oriented job, Frankie shared:

[It is] most definitely a service to the community and other people, because it donates so much food to the food bank, and everything that’s grown up here goes straight to the community. It’s not sent out. It’s not shipped anywhere else. It goes straight to Missoula, so it’s most definitely a community service.

When asked if it makes him feel good to be a part of something that is service-oriented, he said, “Oh yeah. Most definitely.”

The current Youth Harvest director also commented multiple times about the restorative justice elements of the program. When asked about contributions the program makes to the community at large, she responded, “I’m hoping that because it is part of a restorative justice model that we’re putting out youth who are better equipped to handle life.” Though many of my research participants alluded to this idea, this statement directly points toward the seventh principle of restorative justice: that the offender should

“develop improved competency and understanding as a result of the restorative justice experience” (NIJ 2007).

Positive Therapeutic Experience

This goal is not mutually exclusive from the first two, because as was explicitly stated by four of my adult research participants and obviously implied by one, the therapeutic process is embedded in the entire experience. Though experiential therapy is itself not unique, the Youth Harvest program is unique in the variety of components that contribute to the therapeutic experience. Because of the central importance of this program goal and because of its complexity, the primary focus of this discussion will be on the therapeutic factors of the Youth Harvest experience.

All of the adult interviewees declared that the program is “therapeutic” without ever being asked directly if it is. They also all remarked about *how* the program is therapeutic, all saying one way or another that the therapy is embedded in the work of the program. Some went into more detail about hard work, being outside, working with plants, being a part of a group/community, being valued/feeling necessary, and doing something “meaningful.” Through the coding process of my content analysis, I have developed the category of “therapeutic factors” (Displayed in figure 2). The founder and former director of the program, who is a licensed professional counselor, outlined many of these topics as being therapeutic factors, and it is from him that I borrow the term. He did not, however, explicitly reference *all* of the categories and sub-categories shown in the table below as being therapeutic factors. These emerged from the content analysis of my interviews and were verified by my participant observation experience.

Though none of my research participants declared that a “positive therapeutic experience” was a goal of the program, the factors listed and explored below are the therapeutic elements of the program that were the most consistently emphasized by all participants. Though not defining them as therapeutic factors in particular, most of the adult research participants referenced at least some, if not all, of these factors during their general descriptions of the program and/or when answering questions about the program’s goals and perceived benefits.

The therapeutic factors have been divided into two primary categories based on information supplied by the founder and affirmed by the current director. During his interview, the founder stated, “The kind of work and the community that’s formed around it, that’s the main therapeutic agent.” Though the current director of Youth Harvest notified me that she does provide formal therapy in the program through weekly one-on-one check-ins and weekly group therapy meetings with participants, when commenting on her role of “offering the therapeutics” of the program, she said, “Most of that comes from the work that is done there with other people and the relationships that are formed.” Bearing these comments in mind, I have placed the variety of therapeutic factors apparent in the program under one of two categories: the kind of work done and the community relationships formed.

Therapeutic Factors

<u>Kind of Work</u>	<u>Community Relationships</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging, body-oriented work. - Mastery of skills • Meaningful Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working together towards tangible goals. - Personal Accomplishment. - Giving back to society. - Growing food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging in PEAS community • Relationships with PEAS students • Interaction with wider Missoula community. • Relationship with Drug Court Judge • Informal therapy with Youth Harvest Director.

Figure 2. Table of the therapeutic factors present in the Youth Harvest program.

As was mentioned in the section on “Positive Employment Experience,” all of my Youth Harvest research participants viewed the program primarily as a job. When questioned about whether or not they viewed the program as therapeutic, only one of the four adolescent interviewees responded with, “definitely.” After discussing it further, two of them elaborated on ways in which the program could be considered therapeutic and one of them remained adamant that it was just a job. However, throughout their

interviews, each of the Youth Harvest research participants made reference to the above listed therapeutic factors of the program regardless of whether or not he or she considered the program to be therapeutic. As I explore each of the therapeutic factors in this section, I reference both the adult and the adolescent research participants as well as my participant observation and my own personal experiences with the program.

THE KIND OF WORK

Physical Work

This topic combines the therapeutic factor of actual physical farm work with the therapeutic factor of the success or confidence the youth feel by mastering, so to speak, specific skills. “That means the hoeing and weeding and moving [irrigation] pipe, and the therapy part is embedded in that” (PEAS director). Winona, whom the PEAS Director put in charge of picking and arranging the flowers after spotting her talent for it, said:

After a while, I have to say I got a little tired of it, but at first I was all gung ho. I was like, ‘Yeah! I don’t have to weed!’ And then it was like, ‘Ouch, these flowers are kind of pokey, especially the sunflowers.’ But I learned how to pick all of them. He taught me. I could be a flower shop girl now.

Winona was not the only Youth Harvest participant who found a particular job/skill to master. Lucy became our queen of tomato trellising and pruning. And over the course of the two summers I spent working with them, I watched many of the participants develop favorite jobs up at the farm, at which they became well-practiced by the summer’s end

The former Drug Court program coordinator mentioned repeatedly how great it was for the kids to be “outdoors” and “in the sun.” Two of the Youth Harvest research participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of this throughout their interviews:

I like getting out in the morning and being out all day, getting that vitamin D in my skin and eating good food with good people. But the only part that sucks about it is when I’m leaving, and work’s over, because I have to go back to detention, and it’s sort of depressing. But other than that, it’s good. It’s way way fun. – Dylan

It uplifts me, because on Mondays I don’t feel like doing it, because it’s Monday you know, but as soon as I get going, it’s fun. It’s great. And

just me being in jail all day is just so depressing and going back is so depressing, but when I'm outside, and I actually get to feel the sun on my skin and just be outside and breathe that air... it's just uplifting. – Dylan

It was really exciting, good to be outside all day. . . It's just a positive experience – being outside all day. . . not having to work in some super store or stuff like that. - Lucy

The Drug Court program coordinator also noted the feelings of success that resulted from their experiences in the program, “Those kids would come to court filthy dirty, and there was a kind of pride in them being dirty and [in] having been there when the pig got out, and they had to get the pig back in. Or kids would sometimes come to court with flowers or vegetables and give them to the judge.” This comment reminds me of the one-week period during which Frankie was living at the shelter home where I worked. Every evening, he would come home from the farm either with fresh vegetables to share with the house or flowers to put in a vase on the table. And even if he got home an hour before dinner, he would generally hang out in his farm clothes until after we ate. Though the other staff members would encourage him to shower immediately so as to enforce proper personal hygiene, I remember just smiling at him and thinking about myself during my first summer at the farm. I always hung out in my dirty clothes for a while after getting home as well. I was proud of my farm filth.

The former Youth Harvest director commented on the benefits of the physical work itself more than once. For example, “It's something about the embodied, the physical work, where the primary tool is one's body, that provides... I think that that's a way in for kids that are either overly in their heads or overly identified on some emotional level, and I think work and physical activity stabilizes and balances whatever that stuff is.” He also alluded to the confidence that comes along with the work:

What I look for is a sense of ease with the work... a sense of mastery on some level of moving irrigation pipe, carrying produce boxes, washing the carrots...it's more of an embodied kind of understanding that I think is reflected somehow. And how are you going to measure that? I have no idea. But, there's a sense, and again, my focus is very relational, so I'm looking at relationships between people, but also a relationship to the work and the land too, and I guess my sense is... something happens. But how do you talk about what happens? I still struggle.

The Drug Court Judge repeatedly mentioned that what the Youth Harvest participants do up at the farm is “hard work.” He also shared, “I know there’s an old analogy that if these kids were just out on a farm during the summer, they’d get well. We don’t have that approach anymore in justice or in families. I know families used to send their kids out to the farm in the summer, and I know... historically, troubled kids have gone out to agriculture to sort of get straightened out. I don’t know what the actual data was, but there are stories, and there are experiences where that’s happened.”



Photovoice Image 4: Hard Work

“I picked this one because it shows hard work and team effort and back-breaking labor.”

What is apparent in this topic of physical work is a link to one of the success components of wilderness therapy referenced by Houston (2007): participants being challenged. In referencing how she sees many of the participants approach the program at the beginning of the summer, the current director said, “Many of them are wanting to be clean and tidy . . . or you know, girls that want their nails done and can’t even fathom getting dirty. So that component, in and of itself, I think is the hardest at the beginning, because they’re people who’ve never gotten dirty. They’ve never worked outside. I think that’s always a huge stumbling block, [and] I think it’s really hard for them to do

manual labor.” Though all four of my Youth Harvest participant interviewees *did* in fact have experience working outside and *were not* afraid to get dirty, for many of the Youth Harvest participants, the current director’s comment is accurate. And despite any previous experience and/or a comfort with being outside and getting dirty, all of the participants faced challenges at some point throughout their work experience on the farm. Even Frankie, who referred to his job with Youth Harvest as “working in a field, messing around with plants, and playing in the dirt all day... a pretty easy job,” admitted that on day one, he “was exhausted at the end of the day.” He elaborated, “My first day I was in the wash shed all day, so it was freezing cold, and it was a day like this, all rainy and nasty out.”

The wash shed he is referring to here is the place where all the produce is thoroughly cleaned before being boxed up for CSA members. The job consists of standing all morning in front of a screen-top table and spraying down vegetables with a hose. As even summer mornings in Montana can be particularly chilly, especially early in the season, both the air outside and the water coming out of the hose were frigid on Frankie’s first day. After several hours of wash shed duty, one’s fingers are red and feel frozen, and despite the fact that we have waterproof aprons on hand for wash shed workers, no one ever completes the job without soaking their shins and feet. Though Frankie repeatedly emphasized how his job with Youth Harvest was easier than he thought it was going to be, when asked if he would recommend the program to other young people, he said:

Yeah, if they weren’t lazy, and if they were hardworking and had a good work ethic, but if they were lazy and they just wanted to do it, just to get money, then it’s not the job for them, because it takes a commitment. This is fun and stuff for the first two weeks, and then after that, it’s just the same old thing everyday. You just have to come to work. Do it. Get off. Same thing. Every single day. It kind of gets old after a while, but you just have to be consistent with it.

For Frankie, it seems that one of the greatest challenges was being able to persevere after the excitement of a new experience wore off. He admitted that, if he had not been in Drug Court and, hence, susceptible to Drug Court repercussions for skipping work, he would have quit the job. “It was really, really getting old up here. I was beginning to

slack, and then I realized, ‘Oh wait. There’s only like two more weeks until summer is over.’ So I just kicked it into gear and started doing a lot of stuff, but I’m tired. This job exhausts me.”

Meaningful Work

One of the things stressed most frequently by the founder and the current director but also by other research participants is that the work the youth do at the farm is meaningful. In describing the program, the founder began with, “One of the therapeutic aspects of it is that the work is meaningful and has purpose.” Through the coding process of content analysis, I was able to distinguish four aspects of the kind of work done in the program that qualifies it as meaningful: working together towards tangible goals, personal accomplishment, giving back to society, and growing food.

Working Together Towards Tangible Goals

As the program founder put it, “There can be a sense of fulfillment and enjoyment out of working together towards some kind of goal.” The PEAS director describes the program as “small groups of people . . . working shoulder to shoulder at humble tasks, where the differences between people erode, and where there are obvious tangible results.” This element of the program, all of the participants working together to accomplish goals, represents another of the wilderness therapy success components referenced by Houston (2007) – cooperative tasks.

After spending two summers working with the Youth Harvest participants, it became clear to me that the element of “working with others” in the program might carry different meaning for different participants. During the summer of 2008, I witnessed a lot of organic, collaborative efforts between Youth Harvest participants and the university students. During the summer of 2009, I witnessed the majority of the Youth Harvest participants bonding with and working more with each other and one of them wanting to work mostly with the Youth Harvest supervisors and university students. However, regardless of whom the Youth Harvest participants felt the most comfortable working with, there are very few one-man-jobs at the PEAS farm, and every task has a clear and tangible purpose. If your job is to make potting soil mix, you need at least two people,

and the goal is to create soil in which to plant seeds. If your job is transplanting starts, it is ideal to have at least two people and the goal is to move the young plants safely to the open field where they can grow. If your job is weeding, you need as many hands as you can get, and the goal is to nurture the plants to their best growth potential by removing their competitors from their environment. Perhaps the most collaborative of all the jobs at the farm is harvesting, which occurs twice a week. There are multiple tasks involved on harvest days ranging from the actual harvesting of a wide variety of vegetables, to washing, to boxing, to loading, to distributing. Each task is completed more efficiently when a team of people is assigned to it, and each team is working towards the greater collective goal of delivering fresh food to the PEAS farm CSA members, the customers of the Mobile Market, and the people who depend on the Missoula Food Bank.

Personal Accomplishment

In addition to the tangible results of harvested food, one of the primary goals for all Youth Harvest participants is to complete a season successfully. As the Drug Court Judge explains, Youth Harvest participants “take our local, nonprofit garden from the very beginning stages to the very ending stages, so it’s a complete experience, ideally.” This goal is represented in the table of Therapeutic Factors as “personal accomplishment.” As the current director says, “To start something and to finish something is huge for some of these kids.



Photovoice Image 5: The Roses

“The roses, because it took them a long time to get started. And there are still roses out there now.”

When asked what she thought were some of the benefits of the program, Lucy responded:

I think the benefits would be... students or teens or whatever being able to see the positive influence of everything that's here, like planting, then seeing things grow and then harvesting and seeing the positive of what they've done with that. They planted it. They've helped produce it for a positive – it's going to CSA or it's going to mobile market. And it's something that *they* did, so it's a positive influence, a positive... accomplishment.

Later in the interview, after she said that she “definitely” thought the work itself was therapeutic, Lucy explained why she felt that way:

Because it's, once again, that positive reinforcement of seeing something grow and seeing something be produced that *you* have done. So it's complete positive, self-esteem, uplifting for that person to be like, 'I did this. This is something I accomplished.' Just the sense of accomplishment, and then it's *not*, 'You're a bad student. This is what you did. You're getting a ticket. Or you're getting jail time or you're getting community service.' [Instead, it is,] 'This is what you guys did. This is the kind of program we're going to try to use to kind of direct your thoughts, anger, anxiety, whatever the issue is or whatever, and help you figure out other ways to outlet certain things in a controlled environment.

When asked what he felt was the most meaningful part of his experience with Youth Harvest, Dylan responded:

On Monday, when I cooked those green fried tomatoes, it was so good... first time I ever cooked them. And people told me 'good job.' That's what I like to hear, 'good job.' So, the most meaningful [part of the experience for me is] probably that the bosses aren't mean to me. They don't keep any pay from me, because I ain't acting up. I know I'm doing my part.

I asked for clarification of this response by saying, “So you might say the most meaningful part about it is just knowing that you're doing a good job?” And he responded, “Uh huh. That self sense of worth and taking pride in what you do.”

Giving Back to Society

The third element that makes the work meaningful is that the participants are “giving back to society,” specifically to people in need. The program founder explains, “More than half the food, by weight, goes to people in need in the Missoula community. So a great amount of [the kids’] efforts are going to growing food for people in need. Everybody gets . . . that there’s something of value in doing that.” In a comment on the same aspect of the program, the PEAS director reflects the restorative justice element inherent in the notion of giving back, “Some of these kids have committed crimes beyond just smoking pot where there maybe actually was a victim . . . there’s the possibility that there’s a feeling that they’re giving back or that they’re atoning for having done something wrong.” In addition to the feeling of atonement that may come along with growing food for people in need, the current director comments on how this meaningful work might also help the participants view themselves with a different identity. “We go to the food bank twice a week as well, so they get to drop off food and weigh it and see the food bank and see people waiting for the food that we’re bringing in. I think that it’s hopefully providing some meaning for them and [helping them] see that they’re not delinquents like they’ve been coined as. They’re not just kids stuck in the system.” The founder of the program commented on this as well, “There’s an identification of ‘I’m doing something of value,’ but there is also identification, hopefully a deeper appreciation of connectivity to ‘what I do matters.’ So there’s an identification with one’s self as a needed and valuable human being.”

As mentioned previously, the major, service-oriented aspects of the program are the delivery of food to the Missoula Food Bank and Poverello Center and the Mobile Market. In discussing the experience of delivering food to the Food Bank on a weekly basis, Lucy shared the following insight:

The Food Bank is interesting to see, because there’s so much in there, but it seems to me that it’s not nutritious, not healthy. So we’re bringing them something that is [nutritious], and it’s really exciting to see. Here’s all the leftover sandwich stuff that other places bring, and then here’s our fresh produce. So it’s pretty rewarding to see that, and you know that somebody’s going to get that [fresh produce]. They’re going to eat something that’s good for them.

Though all of the Youth Harvest interviewees shared similar comments about the rewarding feeling that comes along with delivering fresh food to the Food Bank and the Poverello Center, it is apparent that the most impactful, service-oriented aspect of the program for them is participating in the Mobile Market. As Dylan described:

I had no idea this was going on around town. And it's kind of cool to be part of it. It's kind of cool, because you get to go to those old folk's homes and hear all their stories, and they've got good stories. You get to help people out and be outside, and it's pretty fun. I think it's good that we get to go to the homes, because all those old people can't get out and they can't go to the farmer's market or wherever to get fresh veggies or go to the store or nothing. And we go there, and we give them fresh vegetables that are good, real good organic food for a hell of a deal you know, so it's pretty good. And just going out and helping out the Poverello and the Food Bank and everything... it's good karma. It gives me the sense [that] I'm doing something good. You know, I'm helping out my community. I'm not being selfish or nothing. It gives me a sense of worth I guess you'd say.

Winona, who also had much to say about the Mobile Market, believes that the experience, though fun for the Youth Harvest participants, is especially valuable for the senior citizens to whom the food is sold:

It's good for them to see younger children, because it connects them. To see the younger kids serving them, helping them out, hooking them up with good food... it just shows them that the world isn't going to the pot. I guess that's what they say. That's what my grandma used to say all the time. "The world isn't going to the pot." And the food, we sell it for dirt cheap, a bundle of five big carrots for 25 – 50 cents. It's fun, but I think it's more valuable for them than it is for us. It helped me see that not all these elderly folks have a family that comes to see them 24 – 7. And they're alone a lot of the time. It just makes me want to go visit them more often. So I think I will definitely try to maybe help out some elderly person the next time I see one.



Photovoice Image 6: Hot Day's End

“I picked this one because it was the end of one of the hottest Mobile Market days, and we were so excited.”

Lucy, who thoroughly enjoyed the Mobile Market experience, adds, “It’s so so cool, because you see their happy faces, and they’re so excited about it. It’s something that they’re sitting out there looking forward to, waiting for you to come, so it’s really fun. I really enjoy it.”

Growing Food

The fourth element that makes the work meaningful is that the participants are growing food, and in doing so, are responsible for the care of living plants. As the founder of Youth Harvest said, “There are very few things as direct as growing food for oneself and other people . . . it has clear purpose and meaning.” The Drug Court judge further emphasized the value of this aspect of the program, “It’s an all-encompassing life experience in the community, and it’s a very meaningful one centered on food. I find a lot of solace in working with food or agriculture, and I think that many of the youth that we have in the program feel that same way, get that tie strengthened in a way, if not built.” This element of the program may be the most significant regarding the link between Youth Harvest and the philosophical foundations of horticultural therapy, because as Relf noted in discussing her theoretical models of horticultural therapy, “They

all share the underlining philosophy that the interrelationship with a living organism which has existed throughout all of human history is the essential element creating positive benefits” (Relf 2006:2).

The founder of Youth Harvest, the licensed counselor who really crafted the structure of the program and ran it for 5 years, explicitly mentioned over and over a connection to something “real,” a hope that the participants could connect with something “beyond themselves, beyond modern technological abstraction.” In discussing the hopes and goals he had for the program when it first began, he said:

One of the big pieces that I was hoping for was that it had an aspect, the experience had some... sense of being real, whatever that means, in the sense beyond. And I don't mean to jump that all of modern culture isn't real or anything like that, but it's overly abstract. It's overly removed from real inherent, basic components or foundations of, in my belief, of what it means to be a human being.

I think that there is something that's lost due to this fragmented, disconnected way that modern life continues to seem to be going. And yeah, working the land, obviously it's very romantic, it's very ideal, and potentially, it's somewhat of a regression. It has somewhat of a backward feel to it, but I think there's something there that's important to stay connected to, and to find a contemporary way to do that. We're going to continue to need to grow food, and that seems like a clear basic way to do that.

So part of it for me is about a relationship to what is something other than themselves . . . Now obviously, agriculture is human-centered, but it's somehow connected to some larger rhythms that are beyond human constructs.

I feel like there's something, some level of, and this is a hope, this is my bias, that on some level there's some kind of resonance that makes sense to them, because we're not that far along in our evolutionary cycle away from that kind of stuff.

Though there was no direct mention in the Youth Harvest participant interviews of a communion with nature resulting from the work of growing food, evidence of connections with the landscape and relationships with the plants they grew and even the animals to which they tended became apparent through many of the participants' photovoice selections.



Photovoice Image 7: Rows of Greens

“I picked this one because it’s sick looking. It’s got the landscape and all that. And each row is a different color than the next one.”



Photovoice Image 8: Purple Kale

“I chose this one, because it’s a cool picture of Kale.”



Photovoice Image 9: Orchard Gardens

“I like the picture of the Orchard Gardens with the sweet pea blossoms off to the right. It looks like there’s a big old storm coming in the back. The sky is all dark. And then the bright red flowers.”



Photovoice Image 10: Chickens and Cock

“I picked this one with the chickens and the cock, because it’s a good picture of them.”



Photovoice Image 11: Steve

“And then Steve, because he was sweet. He’s the only duck, and he thinks he’s a rooster... just like Babe.”

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Belonging in the PEAS Community

Most of my adult research participants touched on the factor that the experience with Youth Harvest facilitates a sense of belonging for the youth involved, and that by being a part of the work that is done at the farm, they come to feel valued and necessary. As the PEAS director put it, “The hope is that they will fall victim to the same set of good circumstances that the college kids typically do, and that they begin to see themselves as a real part of this community, that the functioning of it - that the carrots grow and the kale is bunched and the broccoli looks good - is dependent on them, just as much as it’s dependent on everyone else, that they belong. And they don’t just belong; they’re necessary. And it’s that feeling of belonging and being necessary that I think yields a sense of attachment and bonding.”

This “bonding” that the PEAS director spoke of seems to begin almost immediately up at the farm. I believe that is why I felt so out of place towards the beginning of my first summer there, because I began the program late, and everyone up

there already seemed like best friends. But the following summer, I was around from the start. I vividly remember the first day for the 2009 Youth Harvest participants. By the time I arrived, Lucy and the boys were playing with the caretaker's dog in front of the barn, and the other female Youth Harvest participant was doing yoga on the porch with some of the university students. By mid-morning, this young lady was singing verses of "My Girl" with the PEAS director while they planted pumpkins, the boys were planting peppers and riding around in the back of the pick-up with some of the male university students, and Lucy was opening up to me about her "communication disorder" while we weeded the beets in the far-north field.

Most people who work at the PEAS farm, be they university students or Youth Harvest participants, develop a sense of ownership over the place. It is as apparent in their relaxed body language when they are showing a guest around as it is in their use of pronouns, "Our carrots. Our squash. Our corn." I watched and listened to Frankie do both of these things one day during the summer of 2009 when I arrived with several other youth shelter kids to pick him up from the PEAS farm. And I did the same thing when I brought my boyfriend to the farm to show him around mid-summer 2008.

During her interview, the former Drug Court program coordinator repeatedly referred to Youth Harvest as the "best" program Drug Court offers. When I asked her what about the program makes it the best, her response included, "One of the most amazing things about the program is that the kids made lunch and sat at the table for lunch with other members of the community and were seen as valuable people and participants in the process. And that is a powerful experience for a kid who is being told over and over again in the various arenas of their life that they are not worthy and not valuable."

When discussing what she felt she gained personally from participating in the program, Winona shared:

It built my self-esteem a lot hanging out with you guys. I didn't have very good self esteem, so going up there and having you guys tell me I'm wonderful and amazing... it kind of just made me feel better about myself. That was the main thing I got out of it. It was just a big boost in my self confidence. I was like, 'Yeah. I can actually do something that's worth it.'

The PEAS director mentioned that he has heard from past participants years after they were in the program, “not all of them, but some of them, that it was a really great summer, that they had a really good time.” He thinks that the reason why they feel this way is because “They were part of a group, and everyone likes to feel like you’re on the in rather than on the out. We’ve had kids who’ve come back a year or two later, looking for something to do, and you can see it in their eyes, they’re lost and they don’t know exactly their way back or what they’re looking for, but this was something that felt alright.”

Relationship with PEAS Students

This is a therapeutic factor that was stressed by all of my adult research participants, and also one of the aspects of Youth Harvest that makes it so unique. The Drug Court judge noted the informal mentorship that occurs when the Youth Harvest participants “interact with Environmental Studies students who are in college . . . kids who are more their own age [but] better role models than what they’ve had before. Most of these [Youth Harvest] kids are dropping out, want to drop out, or are just hanging on by their teeth in school, and through this interaction which includes a lunch . . . where they actually cook and eat together as a community up there, it really builds more of a tie for these kids to their community.” As Winona put it, “The people up there pumped me up and they just got me feeling better about things. It taught me that it’s ok to look up to adults, because most adults up there are really healthy . . . I’ve lived with horrible situations and stuff like that. It taught me how to look up to people that are strong and not just pretending to be strong by being rude and mean and vicious.”

The PEAS director emphasized the importance of these youth-to-college student relationships multiple times. When asked why he felt it is such an important element of the program, he responded, “I’ve seen some people get really into it . . . and those are people who have bonded to another adult here. Not to one of the staff, but to one of the university people. . . . When the teenagers attach themselves to a couple of university kids, some really solid strong relationships [are] formed.” As the founder of the program put it, “[The Youth Harvest participants] are integrated with people that aren’t that much

older than they are, but who are at a different level of development and functioning, and I think just being around that is healthy and therapeutic.”

When answering whether or not she feels the program’s goals are met, the current director said, “I think the relational piece is usually always met. . . I see true friendships and mentoring relationships happening between the college kids and the youth harvest kids.” This is something I can verify through my participant observation experience. For example, I vividly remember overhearing a 2008 Youth Harvest participant carrying on a conversation with a university, PEAS student as we were weeding the carrots in the late July sun. He gave a detailed description of a fight he had been in with a classmate that resulted in his expulsion from that school. He then began to badmouth the school officials for expelling him. The PEAS student, a shoeless, young man with dreadlocks hanging halfway down his back, responded by defending the position of the school officials not tolerating physical violence in the school, and he encouraged the Youth Harvest participant to learn from this mistake and to try really hard to refrain from attempting to solve future disagreements with physical violence. “A truly strong man,” said the PEAS student, “doesn’t react to every challenge by swinging his fists.” The YH participant responded, “Yeah, yeah, I guess you’re right.”

Because this element of the Youth Harvest program is not forced, it doesn’t necessarily occur for every participant. For instance, during the summer of 2008, every Youth Harvest participant, save the young man who was on work-release from detention, seemed to develop a mentor-type relationship with one or more of the university students who were working at the farm that summer. However, during the summer of 2009, the majority of the Youth Harvest participants, though they certainly formed working relationships with the university students, seemed to develop more meaningful relationships with each other. Lucy, on the other hand, developed a strong bond with one of the Youth Harvest supervisors and, based on what I observed while at the farm, worked mostly with this supervisor and other university students. When asked what she felt was the most meaningful part of her experience, she spoke about the patience of the university students she worked with and how they were always willing to answer “lots of tedious questions.”

Relationships with wider Missoula Community

As was previously discussed in the section entitled, “Positive Community Connections through Service Work,” in addition to becoming a part of the PEAS community, the Youth Harvest experience helps create a tie for the youth to the Missoula community in general. A large part of this connection comes from knowing that the food they are growing is going to feed people in need. As the Drug Court judge mentioned, “They get to stay in the community and hopefully they feel more part of the community than normal [or than they would by] going out and picking up cans along the side of the road.”

But in addition to this more abstract connection to the community, the Youth Harvest participants are given opportunities to interact and even form relationships with Missoula community members. These interactions occur when community volunteers come up to work at the farm. One such volunteer from a church group who worked for a day on the farm last summer could not distinguish the Youth Harvest participants from the college students. She asked one of the YH girls what her major was. This made the YH participant smile and blush. Other volunteers would show up randomly wanting to help, but not knowing what to do. On more than one occasion, I watched YH participants show community volunteers what needed to be done and how to do it. But, once again, the most influential connection to the wider Missoula community seems to occur through the Mobile Market.

The program founder describes, “They go once a week and set up this market and sell their food at subsidized rates, and the idea is that that helps provide a connection to what they’re doing has value, has a need. And also, it’s about the bridging of a generation that they might not come in contact with, normally. It’s, in a way, kind of, two marginalized populations having an experience together.” The current director seconds this, “I think the bridging of these two generations is really incredible. It’s funny to watch [the YH participants] interacting with older people for the first time in comparison to the last time when they can actually have a conversation and realize that they are real people with stories to tell and they’re able to ask questions. I think it’s one of the most amazing parts of the program.”



Photovoice Image 12: Mobile Market Customer

“This woman, you can’t really see, because she turned away right as I took it, but she’s mentally disabled, and she always comes down just to talk to us. This was the first day she bought anything. I took this picture just two weeks ago. She’s been there everyday we’ve come this summer and she finally bought something. She’s just super fun.”

Winona, who had much to say about Mobile Market, shares some more details:

I liked Mobile Market. I think my favorite part was just interacting with them. I’m not trying to say that to sound good; they have some good stories to tell. This old man told us about his goats, and how he had three goats: Penny, Lany and Billy, or something like that. One of them was Penny and one of them was Billy... I know that. He took them all over Missoula with him. He just told us about that and he let us borrow his chairs. They’ve got a lot of good things to say and they’re really wise.

Relationship with Drug Court Judge

In section I, I described the philosophy of *therapeutic jurisprudence*, which proposes that, “the law is a therapeutic agent; positive therapeutic outcomes are important judicial goals; and the design and operation of the courts can influence therapeutic outcomes” (OJP 2003:5). In his interview, the Drug Court judge referenced this several times. As he explains it:

We try to effect some change rather than just order change. We try to make the community safer from a long-term perspective, because with drugs and alcohol . . . they can't just quit without a lot of assistance. And that's the whole idea behind the Drug Court, whether it be adult, juvenile or family, is that the relationship with the authority figure is the one that does even more to effect change. . . . If [the kids] can have that person in a courtroom applaud them, give them some kind of additional incentive, a tangible thing - whether it's an ice cream card or ten gallons of gas for their mom's car - that sort of thing reinforces that change and promotes a lot more than the punitive side, which [is] just always slapping their hands. And they get slapped so many times, and it doesn't make any difference.

All Missoula Youth Drug Court participants meet with the judge once every week, whereas in a normal court, the judge said, "You'd see a youth two or three times during the whole time they're with the court." The former Drug Court program coordinator commented on the importance of this:

The relationship that they had with the judge personally, standing before him every week, and saying, 'I didn't get to school, I had a fight with my mom, I used, I didn't use, yeah, I smoked tobacco but not weed.' All that interaction that happened in court every week was probably as pivotal to their success or lack of success as any other or all the other things combined. And also, so many of the kids didn't have dads, or [they] had dads who had just decided, 'I'm in over my head and not going to interact with this kid anymore.' And the way the judge would go through every aspect of their week was a much fiercer inventory than any parent is up for really. [It was a] huge relationship they had with the judge.

Including this relationship as one of the therapeutic factors is somewhat problematic for several reasons. This relationship is not exclusive to Youth Harvest participants. It occurs for all Youth Drug Court participants, some of whom do not take part in the Youth Harvest program. In addition, each year, one of the YH participants is selected from outside of the Drug Court and hence would not be receiving this aspect of the program. However, because the majority of the YH participants do engage in this weekly relationship with the judge, and because it is a requirement for their participation in the Youth Harvest program, I feel it is necessary to include this as being one of the important therapeutic factors of the program.

Interestingly enough, though Dylan and Frankie (the two adolescent interviewees who were in the Drug Court program) both had a lot of negative things to say about Drug

Court, they actually confirmed much of what the Drug Court affiliates said about the intentions of the program through their complaints. Both Dylan and Frankie felt strongly that Drug Court had been misrepresented to them, and their major complaint is that the Drug Court program asks too much of the kids involved. As Frankie put it:

What I heard about Drug Court was totally different than what is was. What I heard was that is was a lot easier; it didn't take up as much of your time, and that once you graduate you get the drug charge taken off your record like it was never there. It actually does take the drug charge off your record, but it takes up ALL of your time, and the stuff that they make you do is just absolutely ridiculous.

In addition to the roughly 25 hours a week he spent working for Youth Harvest, Frankie attended "Drug counseling... Drug classes, and then I have to go take UA's and just all sorts of BS. I don't get home until 6:30 at night, and I leave at about 7 in the morning." When asked about his relationship with the Drug Court judge, Frankie responded simply, "He's a judge." However, both he and Dylan confirmed that they do meet with the judge once a week, along with everyone else in the Drug Court program. When asked if he appreciates the opportunity to check in with the judge on a regular basis, rather than having a complete stranger call the shots regarding his standing in the program, Frankie said, "No. I don't appreciate the fact that I check in with him, because it's just something else that's a hassle that I have to do. But it's pretty much a need though too. If I screw up, how am I going to get a consequence if I don't go see the judge?"

In discussing the notion of innovative approaches versus traditional punitive methods of working with adjudicated youth, Frankie was the only Youth Harvest participant that ever told me he prefers the latter. "I think it would be so much easier to just get a fine [or] go sit in jail for four days." He said. However, he elaborated, "But I don't think it would change anything. I think it would be like, whatever, I'll go sit in jail, get out of jail, pay the fine, be done with it. You'd be doing the same thing again." When asked how that compares to the Drug Court program, he responded, "I think it makes you think about stuff, most definitely. It makes you, the Drug Court program, I think it actually makes you be clean."

Dylan, who spent over a month of the 2009 summer in detention, had similar complaints about the program, but his displeasure with it seemed more personal. Unlike Frankie, who was placed in Drug Court because of marijuana charges and does not believe he has a chemical dependency problem, Dylan refers to himself as “an addict” from a “family with a history of addiction.” He believes that the trouble he has gotten into in life, which “progressed from stealing bikes to fighting, to getting a burglary felony” is a result of his drug addictions. When asked how Drug Court compares to the regular court system, he said, “Man, they’re way more involved. It’s good sometimes, but a lot of the times, I think the stuff that they’re doing is pretty stupid.” Dylan’s negativity about Drug Court was largely fueled by the fact that they had kept him in detention for so long after he failed to cooperate in the last treatment program he had been placed in:

They’re keeping me in jail. I’ve been there for a month and a half, and I didn’t use. I was doing good, you know, just because I didn’t want to be in treatment. I asked them to take me out. I talked to my counselors. I think they’re kind of overdoing it a little bit. And you know a couple kids wanted to quit the job, but they wouldn’t let them, because they got other jobs you know, but they won’t let them quit. I guess they want to see us stick with it, but you know, it’s kind of ridiculous sometimes.

Later in the interview, when asked if he would recommend Drug Court to other young people who have gotten into trouble, he responded, “That’s kind of tricky, because, let’s see, I hate Drug Court. I’m just going to put that out there. They have helped me, but I hate the program. I hate it.” When asked to elaborate on why he felt this way, he said:

One thing I don’t like about it is they get too involved with your family. I don’t like that. They go in there, and they try to change your family and try and make it better, but you know it’s not going to change. I mean it might change here after a while, but I have a feeling it’s going to be the same. I have a feeling I’m not going to be able to live with my dad, because of stuff that happened. I’ll probably visit, be friends with him, good friends, but just living in the same house, probably couldn’t do it. . . I wouldn’t want to and I think they’re trying to fix that. They just get too involved, and they’re too picky.

Through this comment, we can see that Dylan’s displeasure with the program goes beyond anger at being kept in jail for too long and beyond feeling like the program asks too much of him. Much of his dislike for the program has

to do with how involved they are in his family issues. He also mentioned that although he knows there is a group of people responsible for making decisions about his program plan, he holds the judge accountable, because he's the enforcer. When describing his relationship with the judge, Dylan said, "He's been nice. He picked me up and brought me to work, and he got me on work release. But I don't look too kindly on him, because I think (subconsciously or something) that [I hold him solely accountable]. I think, 'this guy's not letting me go home' instead of [thinking of] the eight other guys with him that are saying that, you know?"

Just as Frankie more or less badmouthed the Drug Court program throughout the entire interview only to affirm its effectiveness, Dylan's final comment on the program was as follows: "I guess them being so involved caught me in some stuff, so it got me the help that I needed. So I guess it's good. But when I look back on it, I'll think... what I bunch of fuckers, but I'm glad I did that. I'm glad I took the treatment."

Informal Therapy with Program Director

The former director of Youth Harvest noted his role as a therapist in the program several times throughout his interview. "There's the clear, more therapeutic aspect of it, where I've just relied on my training and knowledge and approach to try to develop a relationship that's both supportive and challenging and [in which] I try to attempt to identify some of the themes that are troublesome for [the participants] and address them and name them in a way that's not pathologizing, but doesn't dismiss them either." He specified the manner in which this therapy played out in the field:

From the therapist side of things, I was attempting to facilitate a therapeutic experience, assume the role of the therapist, while at the same time, trying to get out from underneath the role of the therapist, and trying to do it in a non-traditional way, to be aware of therapeutic factors and the experience, but then also, relationally, to try to be cued in on some of those and to address and deal with them contextually as they rose.

The Drug Court program coordinator referenced this same therapeutic method that the former director described, and emphasized its value and importance:

These kids experienced a therapeutic relationship with a counselor who was deeply authentic. While they were out there doing something good for the community, growing food for people who couldn't afford it, they were also healing themselves in their conversations with [former director]. They were actually having on-the-spot healing take place. I really believe that. And I don't just say that because it sounds good and because I hope for that to be the truth. I know. Kids told me that. Kids told me, 'Wow. You know, I wasn't quite sure about that [former director] when I first met him. He seemed a little soft.' But they came back and said, '[The former director] said something to me this week that really made a difference,' or 'He said something that changed the way I see my mom.' So that's a kind of valuable, therapeutic experience that I just don't think you get when you step into Western Montana Mental Health.

The Drug Court judge also commented on the importance of this informal therapy and how it compares to traditional, one-on-one, talk therapy:

It's a regular therapist working with kids, but outside the office, and I don't know what the data is on how much change is actually effected in the therapist's office, but I would think that more is actually accomplished outside. This is an area where these kids seem to be more willing to talk, and if they're troubled, the person there who is professionally trained . . . can see that and they can work with them there. They don't have to go to the office. They can process it and keep working on it as long as they need to. So you don't have that disconnect, and you don't have to drag [them] off like they're some sort of, something different or something diseased. You can [do it] right on the spot, which I think is the way families used to work or the way families should work and the way the community should work.

As was previously mentioned, the majority of Youth Harvest participants view the program simply as a job rather than as a therapeutic program. In his interview, the founder of the program spoke of wanting to de-emphasize the more overt therapeutic elements of the program, such as one-on-one weekly meetings with participants, so as to reduce the participant resistance that often comes along with that. However, seeing as how most of the Youth Harvest participants I worked with over the course of two summers were not even aware of the therapeutic intentions of the program, one could argue that the typical resistance is not (or is no longer) a significant issue for this program.

The current Youth Harvest Director has emphasized that "formal" therapy is still offered to the participants. I have not included this in my table of therapeutic factors for two reasons. First, I did not sit in on or witness any of the formal one-on-one or group

therapy sessions that are held at the farm, so I have no participant observation data for this element of the program. The therapy that I witnessed occurring in the program during both of the summers I worked with Youth Harvest participants was very informal and spontaneous, just as the former Drug Court Program Coordinator describes above. Second, though most of my adolescent interviewees did confirm that they attended weekly group meetings with the supervisors and other participants, there was no other mention of the “formal” therapy of the program in any of my interviews (with the adults or the participants). Because I have no data on this element, it did not emerge as one of the therapeutic factors during the coding process of my analysis.

Most of the Youth Harvest participants do not seem fully aware of how their relationships with the program director (or supervisor) are therapeutic in nature. Lucy, however, seemed to see it quite clearly:

[The supervisors] are always talking to one of us to see where we’re at, making sure that we’re ok, and they understand... I’ve seen them quite a few times when someone’s having a really difficult time, and they’re like, “Ok, just go calm down for a minute and we can talk about it.” They don’t care that they’re not working at that moment. All that matters is if they can get calmed down with whatever the situation was and then talk about it. And then with our group time, it’s the same thing. It’s very communicative, talking honestly about what’s going on, and if you’re frustrated with someone and why you’re frustrated with them.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was not to determine if the Youth Harvest program “works,” but rather to understand *how* it works. I have investigated what the directors and primary facilitators of the program define as the program’s goals. In doing so, and by exploring participant responses to the program and by spending two summers immersed in the program, I have uncovered the primary components through which this experiential, therapeutic program operates. As I mentioned several times in the discussion above, most of the Youth Harvest participants were unaware of the therapeutic intentions of the program, and yet through their interview responses and through my participant observation, I can confirm the presence of the therapeutic factors described by the program directors and affiliates. The adult research participants perceive the program as being successful. Though they all admit that the goals of the program are not met for every individual participant, they agree that for most of the participants, the program is successful. One of the most interesting conclusions of this research is that the lack of a diagnosis and the lack of forced formal therapy combined with the informal and organic nature of the professional therapy this program provides might very well be the largest contributing factor to its success.

Through this research, I have also uncovered the ways in which the Youth Harvest program bears similarities to wilderness therapy and horticultural therapy programs. Both the founder/former director and the current director of Youth Harvest have experience working for wilderness therapy programs. In discussing how the program got started, the founder/former director explained, “Part of it was coming out of my history. My early history in the field was spending a couple of years doing three-week-long wilderness therapy backpacking trips, and so I was familiar with the experiential therapy idea and it seemed like there were enough ingredients at the PEAS farm that might allow for some kind of program to be developed.”

Through the exploration of the goals and therapeutic factors of the Youth Harvest program, the components that make wilderness therapy successful, referenced by Houston (2007) - experiential frameworks, challenge components and cooperative tasks - have become individually identifiable. The component of

real or perceived risk is not as apparent in the Youth Harvest program as it may be in many wilderness therapy programs, but it is not altogether absent either. Though Youth Harvest participants remain in their communities and are not pushed to survival extremes, they do spend long days, working challenging, physical labor in an environment that, for many of them, might seem quite foreign. Each participant knows that he or she will be able to go home at the end of the day, but while at the farm, they are expected to work hard. Even during break times, which are minimal, there is no television, no video games, no couch to nap on, no McDonalds, no Taco Bell. They risk the absence of familiar comforts, ridicule from their peers, and the possibility of failure with each task they attempt.

In today's society, adolescents often turn to the internet, video games, movies and substance abuse to escape confronting their issues. And after years of exposure to traditional treatment strategies, many "at-risk" youth have learned to navigate programs through reinforced performance without ever facing their problems. Houston (2007) points out that:

In the wilderness, clients can no longer rely on poor coping skills that worked in urban life. Within the solitude of wilderness, kids are confronted by their issues and find it difficult to cope, forcing them to expand their available coping resources. Thus, clients must utilize more adaptive skills to succeed. As clients experience success through these activities, they experience new situations as less threatening and may experience a greater sense of personal empowerment. Some argue that WT is a more effective alternative to institutional settings precisely because of these factors.

Though this effect, documented in WT programs, may not be as intense for Youth Harvest participants, their experiences on the farm put them in an environment with similar factors.

One apparent difference between WT and Youth Harvest is that whereas most WT programs require payment from participants, Youth Harvest provides an hourly wage. Houston (2007) affirms that cost of services is a problem in the field of wilderness therapy, often restricting its benefits to a limited spectrum of clientele. Because Youth Harvest operates via a combination of state funding through Missoula Youth Drug Court and support from Garden City Harvest,

participants and/or their family members do not have pay for the program. Hence, the benefits of the program are not restricted to those who can afford to pay for it as is often the case with privately operating WT programs.

Though some of the individual links between Youth Harvest and horticultural therapy were identified in Chapter III, they can be further explored holistically. An understanding of the therapeutic factors of Youth Harvest enables us to identify them as they relate to the elements displayed in Relf's *Dynamics of Horticultural Therapy* model (Displayed on pg. 10).

In Relf's model, the "interaction" represents a setting for social exchange in various forms including peers, professionals and the public. As evident through the community relationships categories of therapeutic factors, Youth Harvest participants are provided opportunities for such social exchange. Through the program, they develop relationships with the other Youth Harvest participants (their peers). They develop relationships with the PEAS farm director, the Youth Harvest Director and supervisors, and the Drug Court Judge (professionals). Youth Harvest participants also develop relationships with University Students and a wide variety of other community members through the CSA, the Mobile Market and the Food Bank and Poverello Center deliveries (the public).

The "action" segment of Relf's model represents the act of cultivating and caring for live plants and includes the following elements: creativity, responsibility, work and concentration. Youth Harvest participants typically employ each of these. They are given the responsibility of properly caring for and handling PEAS farm produce as well as tending to farm animals. Their creativity is encouraged and tangibly explored through tasks such as pruning fruit trees, "suckering" tomatoes and arranging flower bouquets for CSA members. The work is taken seriously, and many of the tasks require careful concentration.

The "reaction" segment of Relf's model represents the innate response of human beings to plants, and includes observation and evolution. I witnessed Youth Harvest participants engage in a variety of types of observations that ranged from a young girl expressing that she never before knew that onions grew long green leaves, to a young man pointing out the poor condition of the broccoli in the south field, to kids being able

to identify particular weeds by the end of the summer. It could be easily argued that “evolution” occurs within each Youth Harvest participant through the identity changes discussed in Chapter III. Through participation in this program, they might come to identify themselves as being necessary, skilled, responsible, and a valued member of a community.

As I mentioned in Chapter II, as each of the therapeutic factors of the Youth Harvest program began to become apparent to me through the process of content analysis, I became aware that I had experienced many of them myself. I most certainly benefitted from working with my body outside. It was physically healthy, but also allowed me, as the founder of Youth Harvest put it, to stabilize and balance many of the emotional struggles I was working through at that time. My confidence grew as I gained new skills, and I took pride in knowing that the work I was doing would result in a variety of forms of benefit to the community to which I was slowly becoming adjusted. Were it not for my involvement in the PEAS program, my adjustment to and my connection with the community would not have occurred as quickly or smoothly as it did. The relationships I formed with the other farm workers during the summer of 2008 grounded and supported me through a challenging phase of my life. And though my relationship with the current Youth Harvest director was that of a peer rather than that of a client, I spent more than one occasion verbally working through my personal issues while physically working in the field and, in turn, was counseled by her words and comforted by her presence. Perhaps beyond all else, I benefitted from what the founder of the program spoke of as a “connection to something real,” something beyond myself, through the work I did with plants, animals and soil.

Had I not been conducting a research project on the program, I may have never fully realized the effect that my experiences at the PEAS farm had on me and, hence, I did not expect my adolescent research participants to come to similar conclusions. But surprisingly, whether they were each fully or even partially aware of the presence of each therapeutic factor that has been described in this discussion, evidence of their exposure to these factors became apparent during the process of coding their interviews and their photovoice selections and commentary.

Youth Harvest appears to be a unique, therapeutic program in that it blends the goals of National Drug Courts and the principles of restorative justice with elements of both wilderness therapy programs and horticultural therapy programs. It can serve as a valuable example to a variety of different types of programs of unique ways of trying to reach and serve adolescents in need. Based on my research and experience, I have developed recommendations for the Youth Harvest program and for future research.

Recommendations for Youth Harvest

When asked if she would recommend Youth Harvest to other young people, Lucy responded, “Definitely.” She went on to say, “I wish it could be a bigger program so more kids could do it, so more kids could have the opportunity to have the positive experience that this is.” I would not recommend increasing the number of kids selected to participate every summer beyond six, because based on the size of the farm and the number of university students that are paying for an educational experience there, any more Youth Harvest participants might not be manageable. As the PEAS director put it, “It hasn’t evolved a whole lot over the years, and I think that’s because we hit a formula that works, and it’s a pretty tight formula, so there’s not that much room for change.” However, it would be possible to make participation in the program available to a larger group of young people who might benefit from it.

As of now, five of the six yearly participants are referred through Missoula Youth Drug Court, and one slot is reserved for the mentorship position. Though the numbers always vary, there are times (such as towards the end of summer 2009) when there are only three or four young people enrolled in the Drug Court Program. As one of my research participants shared:

If it’s mid-May, and there are only six kids in Drug Court and we want four of them, you can’t be too selective. If we could look through the whole Youth Homes population along with Drug Court, we could offer the job opportunity to all of them. Maybe half of them are interested. So now we’re picking six out of hundred instead of four out of six. We’d have a better chance of picking kids for whom this is going to work more.

This would certainly expand the opportunity to a much larger group of young people who could benefit from the program whether or not they are enrolled in the Drug Court program. And it would also improve the likelihood of successes within the program. However, the obstacle here, as is so often the case, is money. Most of the funding for the Youth Harvest program comes from the state and federal funding of Missoula Youth Drug Court.

My recommendation then is to set the sometimes-fluctuating yearly enrollment in the Youth Harvest program firmly at six young people. Three of the participants should remain Missoula Youth Drug Court-referred, keeping the collaborative effort between

Missoula Youth Drug Court and Garden City Harvest alive and keeping necessary funding available. The other three participants should be pulled from the much larger, Missoula Youth Homes population. Youth Homes is a non-profit organization that operates multiple group homes, shelter homes, treatment programs, foster care and adoption services across Western Montana. Though Youth Homes and Youth Harvest already work together informally, if the relationship between the two organizations was formalized in that offers for employment in the Youth Harvest program were extended through the directors of Youth Homes group homes and shelter homes to the young people who receive these services, the pool of applicants for Youth Harvest would be significantly larger. More young people in need would be granted the opportunity to participate in the program, and the Youth Harvest director would be able to select participants for whom the program is well suited.

In addition to extending the opportunity to participate in Youth Harvest to a larger group of young people, another recommendation is to extend the number of work hours available to Youth Harvest participants who are interested in working more. Currently, they work an average of 25 hours a week. One of the goals of the Drug Court program is to fill as many hours of a participant's week as possible with productive, healthy activities. Expanding the work hours from part time to full time would help accomplish this goal in a manner in which participants would likely be receptive. As Dylan mentioned, "I want more hours. I'd rather be working all day. I like to work. I like it. You get something done and you feel a sense of accomplishment, and you're making money so, you know, what's not to love about it?" Since funding for the program is already an issue, I understand that this may be a challenging endeavor, but it is one that would be well worthwhile.

With regards to the actual structure of the program, I have one more recommendation. There are a wide variety of daily tasks to be accomplished at the PEAS farm. The selection process for who is to be placed in charge of what task is organic and spontaneous in nature. It usually occurs informally as the group of workers gathers on the porch of the barn each morning. It is my opinion that creating some sort of rotational schedule of tasks for the Youth Harvest participants would be beneficial. Each Youth Harvest participant would have his or her own weekly employment chart which lists the

variety of tasks that become available throughout the summer. The chart would include things such as: irrigation, weeding, vegetables harvested, washing, flower arranging, CSA set up, tomato trellising, vegetables planted, operating machinery (mower/weeder), and other projects (building pea trellis/laying black plastic/etc.). At the end of each day, each participant would check off the tasks he or she had completed that day and, if appropriate, jot down some specific notes about each task in the box provided. Youth Harvest participants could then select (and be encouraged to select) daily tasks based on what they have and have not experienced already. This would enable Youth Harvest participants and supervisors to keep better track of the work skills practiced by each participant. It would encourage participants to try new things and work with a wider range of people and might also help diminish the feeling of monotony that some participants (be they Youth Harvest workers or university students) sometimes experience at the farm. An example of such a chart is available in Appendix C.

My last recommendation is in regards to the informal therapy that occurs in the program. As was explained in detail in Chapter III, the therapeutic nature of Youth Harvest is very much embedded in the whole experience. However, I believe that the informal therapy that occurs between the Youth Harvest director or supervisors and the Youth Harvest participants is an extremely important element of the program that should not be overlooked or de-emphasized. The founder of the program and the current director, as well as the 2009 additional supervisor, all demonstrated an ability to remain conscious of the emotional whereabouts of each Youth Harvest participant and to assist each participant in processing his or her issues as they arose. It is precisely this element of the Youth Harvest program that makes it more attentive and therapeutic than your typical summer job. It is for this reason that I suggest that the positions of Youth Harvest Director and Youth Harvest Supervisor should always be filled by persons with training and/or experience in social work, counseling, or working with behaviorally challenged youth.

Because the university students who work at the PEAS farm are not necessarily trained to work with young people and are often times completely unaware of the Youth Harvest program before meeting its participants, I also recommend that the Youth Harvest Director meet with the PEAS students ahead of time to describe the intentions of

the program and the expectations for its participants *before* it begins. University students should also be encouraged to remain aware of their positions as informal mentors and to communicate any concerns they might have or any challenges that might arise with regards to their relationships with Youth Harvest participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research project raised some important questions regarding the ambiguity of some terminology. As was discussed in Chapter III, the term “at-risk” is not always clearly understood either by those whom the term is used to refer or by those who feel forced to use it in order to distinguish the clientele their programs are geared to serve. In addition to the lack of clarity surrounding the term’s meaning is the concern that it is often interpreted as a pejorative phrase. For adolescents already beset by gross challenges and obstacles during this developmental stage of life, the widely accepted use of this term may be more damaging than we might assume. Though any descriptor used to signify an association with poverty, violence, drug-abuse, disability or criminal behavior is likely to be deemed derogatory by some, a more in-depth exploration of this term, “at-risk,” could further important dialogue about the danger of labels and might even lead to more appropriate terminology that can be used to describe this challenged population.

The word therapy can also carry multiple meanings depending on which of a wide variety of commonly used adjectives precedes it. To say that a program is therapeutic generally implies that it facilitates some measure of healing either of a disease, a disorder or a behavior. This is distinguished from developmental programs which more simply promote healthy, age-appropriate growth. In order to verify that a program is indeed therapeutic then, one would first have to diagnose what needs healing and then provide some measurement of the healing that takes place. Relf argues that, “The difficulties in forming a coherent profession [in horticultural therapy] go beyond the lack of adequate and appropriate research to the core problem of uniform terminology in the field” (Relf 2006:4). She explains:

The widely used lay terms ‘pet therapy’ and ‘garden therapy’ with inference of a volunteer-led, feel-good activity transitioned to the professional terms horticultural therapy and animal-assisted therapy but

without an accompanying transition in meaning to a goal-directed treatment modality under the guidance of a trained professional. Attempts to broaden the profession of HT by claims that it encompasses all positive benefits of human–plant interaction have instead created the impression that it cannot be a legitimate profession because anyone can do it and all people benefit (analogous to claiming that all physical activity is therapeutic; therefore anytime anyone runs/walks/swims, it is physical therapy) (Relf 2006:4).

With regards to the Youth Harvest program, the majority of its participants are congruently enrolled in formal therapy and many are diagnosed with specific behaviors/disorders before entering the program. What is missing is a valid measuring of healing. The question is: what makes such a measurement valid? Sound science is often synonymous with quantitative research. Quantitative research however, cannot account for all of the complexities of individual human behaviors and perspectives.

Quantitative research with a goal of collecting data such as recidivism, future employment and further education of Youth Harvest participants could be helpful in determining the efficacy of the program according to the more scientific standards often required for continued funding of programs. Though I do not believe that such quantitative data can “prove” the efficacy of programs any more than qualitative data can, as Relf notes and as the Missoula Youth Drug Court judge shared with me, such data is often requested or required to validate therapeutic programs.

Due to time constraints and the other limitations of this research, no past participants of the Youth Harvest program were included. Future qualitative research with past participants, especially those who are now adults and can reflect on the experience, could produce interesting findings about how the program affects participants in long run. A combination of future qualitative and quantitative research could produce a more holistic report of this program as well as shed light on similar programs.

Another thing to consider is that although Youth Harvest bears similarities to both horticultural therapy and wilderness therapy, it may be an example of a different type of therapy altogether: agricultural therapy. Relf has drawn attention a new movement currently gaining momentum in Europe, Canada and New Zealand that is often associated with terms such as “Farming for Health” or “Farm Care” (Relf 2006: 309). “This

movement,” she says, “involves farmers and the health-care community collaborating to provide a healthful environment and economic stability to members of both communities” (Relf 2006:309). So the idea of health-care oriented, or more specifically, therapeutic programs collaborating with farmers or farm-based organizations to promote positive results for all involved parties is out there. Though the term agricultural therapy (being used to describe programs in which the therapy is embedded in the experience of working on a farm) may not be well-established, if at all, it seems to be a more accurate way to describe Youth Harvest. As we have seen through the example of Youth Harvest, “agricultural therapy” could encompass elements of horticultural therapy, wilderness therapy and animal therapy all in the same program. It is a term worth exploring further.

As I mentioned in my conclusion, whereas most WT programs require payment from participants, Youth Harvest provides an hourly wage. This not only makes participation in the program available to people of all economic classes, it also serves to provide some financial support to participating families in need. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Youth Harvest program is any less expensive than wilderness therapy programs. The cost is simply derived from different sources. Future research on the cost effectiveness of the Youth Harvest program could help clarify the use of the program’s funding and could potentially be used to justify requests for additional funding for the program. The latter would be necessary if Youth Harvest directors wish to implement the recommendation to expand the work hours of the program to interested participants. Such research could also be potentially useful to wilderness therapy programs whose directors wish to make participation in their programs more accessible to families with low economic incomes.

As is usually the case for any type of program, there are some participants for whom it works and some for whom it does not. All of my adult research participants noted that although they view the program as successful for most of the participants, there are some young people for whom the program does not seem to work. Future research that explores who the program seems to work for, who the program does not seem to work for and why could not only produce interesting findings but could also be used to strengthen the selection process for participants.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE – ADULTS OF THE PROGRAM

Interview Guide: Adults Associated with Youth Harvest Program

Personal Involvement

1. How did you first come to be involved with Youth Harvest?
2. How would you describe your role in (or your relationship to) the Youth Harvest Program?

Program Description

3. How would you describe the Youth Harvest program to someone who has never heard about it?
4. A lot of program descriptions I've read seem to employ one or two particular adjectives to define the program. What adjectives or descriptive phrases might you use to define what *kind* of program Youth Harvest is if you had to define it in a one or two sentence answer.

Participants

5. How are participants selected for the Youth Harvest program?
6. From what I understand, YH is not a mandated program. If a kid were to turn down the courts recommendation for this program, what might he/she end up doing instead?
7. Would you say that participation in this program is an alternative to incarceration?
8. The Youth Harvest Web page describes its participants as “at-risk” teens? How would you define the phrase “at-risk?”
9. Based on your experience, how do you think the participants view the program? Why do you think so?

Goals/Efficacy

10. What would you say are the main goals of the Youth Harvest Program? As a person who participates in/supports this program, what are the first things that pop into your head when asked the question, “What are the main goals of this program?”

Probe: Any others?

11. Now I want you to think about the list of goals you just stated, and sort of, analyze them one by one. Do you feel that each of these goals has been realized?

12. Now here's the really hard question, How? How has each of these goals been realized? (or why haven't they?)

Probe: What are some of the obstacles you see in the way of achieving program goals?

Probe: Which components of the program do you think contribute most to its success? (And by "success" I mean achieving the program's goals)

13. What would you say are the main benefits that the youth gain from participating in the program?

Probe: Any others?

14. Are there any aspects of the program that you feel might be more beneficial than others?

(If necessary, provide examples: mobile market, association with college kids, work outdoors, connection to nature, etc?)

Bigger Picture

17. Do you know of any programs that are similar to Youth Harvest (those in which a court offers an adolescent offender a position working in a farm/garden setting as part of their treatment/probation/etc.)?

Probe: Could you tell me more about that?

18. Have you encountered any resistance amongst your professional peers regarding your support of or your participation in this program?

Probe: What kinds of concerns have been expressed?

19. Do you have any thoughts about how this program relates to the juvenile justice system as a whole?

Probe: How would you compare it to more punitive programs designed for adjudicated youth?

20. What contributions, if any, do you think this program provides to the community?
To society at large?

Suggestions

21. Do you have any suggestions for improving the Youth Harvest Program?

22. Is there anything else you would like to say?

23. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE – ADOLESCENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Interview Guide for Youth Harvest Participants

Before any interviews take place, I will clearly explain my research project to all of the Youth Harvest participants as a group in the presence of their supervisor. They will be invited to ask any questions they might have, and will be asked if they would like to participate. YH participants will be informed that their participation is completely voluntary and that their identities will be kept confidential. If they agree to participate, interviews will not take place until I have received the IRB-approved consent forms from both the YH participant and his or her legal guardian. Interviews will take place on the PEAS farm during program hours.

Introduction: Thanks so much for taking the time to chat with me for a bit and answer some of my questions. So, I know I've already explained my research project to you guys, but just to remind you, I am trying to learn what being in the Youth Harvest program is like for people. I'm interested in your experience, what you feel you learn from it, what you feel you gain from it and just what you think about it in general.

I know that you've only just started the program, so I don't expect you to be able to answer any of those questions right now. Right now, I just want to get an idea of where you're coming from and how you're feeling about starting this program. I only have seven questions for you, and this will probably only take about twenty minutes, ok?

Before we start, I want to remind you that your identity will be kept confidential. I will not use your name in any written reports or presentations. I also want you to know that though I will be discussing my research project with (program supervisor) throughout the summer, I will not be sharing with her any of the information you share with me during interviews. I won't complete my paper or presentation until December, so none of your staff or supervisors will have access to my research until after you have completed the program. So feel free to be as honest as you feel comfortable being. I want to know what you really think. Your answers will in no way affect your participation in the program.

If it is ok with you, I would like to tape record the interview. This ensures that your responses are recorded accurately and that way, I can pay attention to you instead of trying to scribble down what you're saying. Is that ok with you?

Why Youth Harvest?

1. Tell me a bit about how you first became involved with Youth Harvest.
Probe: Did you volunteer to participate in this program?
Probe: Why/Why not?
2. You get paid to work for Youth Harvest, right? How much? Did this factor into your decision to be a part of this program?

3. Have you participated in any other therapeutic or court-imposed programs before?
If so: How would you compare Youth Harvest to the other programs you have participated in?

Views on Food and Farming?

4. Prior to Youth Harvest, did you have any experience gardening or farming?
5. Now I'd like you to think about what you learned from participating in Youth Harvest.
 - What are some of the things you have learned to do related to food and farming that you didn't know how to do before you started the Youth Harvest program? Any skills, that kind of thing? Can you talk a little about that?
 - What else have you learned about? (probes: food issues; hunger/food insecurity; community).

Personal Information. (Reminder that Questions do Not have to be answered)

6. How old are you?
7. What school do you go to?
 - Do you like school?
 - Struggles vs. Success in school?
8. Where do you live?
9. If not answered in number one... What charges resulted in your placement in Drug Court?
10. Have you ever been in trouble with the law prior to these most recent charges?
11. Why do you think you engage(d) in illegal activities?
12. Do you see yourself continuing to have similar problems in the future? Why/ Why not?
13. How do you feel about the term "At-Risk Youth?" Do you consider yourself "At-Risk?" If asked, what term might you recommend to identify young people who are commonly referred to as being "at-risk?"

Program Successes and/or Failures

14. Now that you've had quite a bit of experience with Youth Harvest, let's talk about your views about the benefits of the program. What do you feel you've gained personally from participating in it?
 - What aspects of your experience at the farm do you feel were the most meaningful for you? Why?
15. What aspects of Youth Harvest were the most challenging for you?

16. What did you think about the Mobile Market Program? Did you enjoy working with senior citizens? Do you think the experience is valuable for them? ... for you, the youth harvesters? Why/Why Not?
17. Think back to when you first started in Youth Harvest and what you were expecting at that point. Did it turn out to be like what you expected? Why or why not?
18. Do you feel like it's a therapeutic program? Why? Why not?
19. Would you recommend this program to other young people? Why? Why not?
20. What suggestions do you have, if any, for changes to Youth Harvest for the future?
21. On the Garden City Harvest web site, it is stated that participants come out of "Youth Drug Court as a result of the courts recognition that innovative approaches to working with youth often provide a depth of experience and care that moves beyond strictly punitive measures and the limitations of traditional therapy." Do you feel that this program succeeds in doing this?

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE WEEKLY TASK CHART FOR Y.H. PARTICIPANTS

Jobs	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Vegetables Planted					
Vegetables Harvested					
Weeding					
Irrigation					
Flowers					
CSA Set Up					
Washing Vegetables					
Operating Machinery					
Mobile Market					
Tomato Trellising					
Other Projects					