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# An Evaluation of Youth In(Vol)Ved: Impact on Participants' Attitudes Toward Volunteerism

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AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED: IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD  
VOLUNTEERISM

By

Kelsey G. Steines

Honors Scholarship Project

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Olivet Nazarene University

for partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

in

Business Administration

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## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

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## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	2
DESCRIPTION OF INTERNSHIP .....	8
METHODS.....	11
RESULTS .....	13
DISCUSSION.....	16
INTERNSHIP REFLECTION .....	20
REFERENCES .....	22
APPENDIX A.....	25
APPENDIX B.....	29
APPENDIX C.....	31

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Youth In(VOL)ved 2013 Itinerary .....	9
Table 2: SPRS Subscale Means and Effect Sizes .....	14
Table 3: True/False Results.....	15

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**ABSTRACT**

Youth In(VOL)ved is an 8 week youth volunteer program directed by the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross, which is located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The purpose of the program is to contribute to the American Red Cross' goal of motivating and recruiting a new generation of volunteers, which supports the organization's mission of alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies. This paper examines the impact of Youth In(VOL)ved on participants' attitudes toward volunteerism, which is information that can be used by the American Red Cross to apply for grant funding and to improve the program in future years.

The program met once a week and consisted of a half hour lesson on character and leadership development, followed by a volunteer project that was conducted at a local not-for-profit organization. Volunteer projects were held at a new organization each week. Participants came from a class of students participating in the Jane Boyd Community Center summer day camp and ranged from age 11 to 15.

The Social and Personal Responsibility Scale was adapted for relevance to the participants and was administered at the beginning and end of the program. The survey scores were analyzed using an independent samples t-test (as attendance at Jane Boyd changed from week to week) and a series of  $2 \times 2$  ANOVAs to evaluate results along demographic characteristics. Results show that post-test scores did not differ significantly from the initial assessment. This could be due, in part, to low attendance on the day the post-survey was administered.

Keywords: Volunteerism, volunteer program, attitudes, social welfare, responsibility, not-for-profit organizations, leadership development, youth

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

### INTRODUCTION

Youth In(VOL)ved is an initiative of the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross (located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa) to introduce youth to a variety of volunteer opportunities in the local community. This youth volunteer program aims to educate the youth participants on the needs that exist in the Cedar Rapids area while also inspiring them to give of their time and talents to help meet those needs. This education is achieved through teaching character development lessons as well as participation in weekly volunteer projects at area not-for-profit organizations.

Although the primary purpose of Youth In(VOL)ved is directed at the youth, the program also helps to fulfill a portion of the American Red Cross' strategic plan. According to the American Red Cross (2006), one aspect of the organization's strategy for future sustainability is to recruit a new generation of volunteers, which will help to support its mission of preventing and alleviating "human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors" (American Red Cross, 2014). Shannon, Robertson, Morrison, & Werner (2009) summarize a body of research that indicates that "youth engagement could help to sustain or revitalize organizations' volunteer base" (p. 18). Youth In(VOL)ved instills important service-related skills in a younger generation of volunteers that could result in improved rates and quality of volunteer service to the American Red Cross in the future.

The measurement of the impact of the Youth In(VOL)ved program, specifically, can also aid the American Red Cross by increasing the potential to obtain future funding through grants by evaluating program outcomes. Coley and Scheinberg (2008) explain in their guide to grant proposal writing that "an outcome evaluation can be basic, simply being able to state what changes occurred in the program participants that are

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

attributable to program activities” (p. 69). This outcome evaluation is a key part of convincing a funder to give money to a given organization or program. Appendix C includes highlights of the Youth In(VOL)ved program and the results of this research and will be provided to the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross as a supplement to the full report of results.

Until the start of this project, the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross had not collected data on the outcomes or the effectiveness of the Youth In(VOL)ved program. Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to investigate the effects that Youth In(VOL)ved had on participants’ attitudes toward social responsibility and volunteerism, as well as their thoughts on their own ability to contribute through volunteer efforts. These results could aid the American Red Cross in obtaining funding for the program and in improving the program in future years.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Knauft (1992) defines volunteerism as “any activity that is carried out to help others and not conducted for monetary gain” (p.5). Engagement in volunteerism has the potential to benefit multiple parties. Volunteering first and foremost benefits organizations in the not-for-profit sector. Independent Sector (2014) explains that volunteers fulfill a variety of roles in not-for-profit agencies and produce value for the organization that can be tangible or intangible. They provide support for a wide range of projects, demonstrate the amount of support an organization has from a community, and lend their time and specialized skills to organizations. This use of specialized skills has monetary value, as the donation of “time” can be used on internal or external financial forms.



## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

Not-for-profit organizations in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have experienced similar benefits of volunteering. According to the United Way of East Central Iowa (2013a), volunteers referred through the United Way contributed 71,513 hours of service valued at \$1.55 million in 2013. These metrics come from a five county area which includes the city of Cedar Rapids (in which the Youth In(VOL)ved program is located). This does not include hours of service from volunteers that agencies recruited without United Way help. However, despite these large contributions, there are over 200 projects in the Cedar Rapids area that require volunteers at any given time (United Way of East Central Iowa, 2013b), which is one need that programs like Youth In(VOL)ved can fulfill.

Volunteers have been especially valuable in Cedar Rapids during recovery from the flooding the city experienced in June 2008 that caused billions of dollars in damage (Eligon, 2013). In addition to working to help citizens return to their normal standard of living, many organizations located in the flood plain must also spend resources repairing their own facilities. Volunteers have stepped in to help organizations return to their normal operations, enabling such organizations to continue outreach in the community.

Donovan (2013) notes that volunteer rates are at their highest since 2005, with 26.8% of the United States population engaging in volunteer work at some point during the year. In comparison, 36.0% of Iowa residents volunteer, ranking Iowa fifth in the nation for volunteer rates (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2013). This has been a consistent trend over the last decade.

Organizations can experience additional benefits of volunteering through partnering with other agencies. Not-for-profit organizations located in the same community can share resources, including facilities and volunteers. Partnerships like these can enhance the attractiveness of a proposal for grant funding. Coley and

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

Scheinberg (2008) explain that such partnerships demonstrate a solid commitment to serve the intended community, something that will make a funder much more willing to financially support a given initiative.

The Grant Wood Area American Red Cross has formed partnerships like this in multiple directions through the Youth In(VOL)ved program. First, it has partnered for the provision of the program with the Jane Boyd Community Center. The American Red Cross coordinates program content and activities and fulfills a part of its strategic plan (by developing a new generation of volunteers), while Jane Boyd provides the program participants, reducing the American Red Cross' need to recruit for the program and easing the responsibility of Jane Boyd staff for six hours a week. Additionally, each of the organizations that hosted volunteer projects benefited from the work hours of Youth In(VOL)ved participants. It is partnerships like these that make programs like Youth In(VOL)ved more attractive to potential funders.

It is also known through a number of studies that volunteerism includes many benefits for the volunteers themselves. These positive results include increased rates of secure attachment throughout the lifespan (Gillath, et al., 2005) and increased parental involvement with youth volunteers (Oesterale, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). The research of Sauer (as cited by Parker and Franco, 1999) also demonstrates that improved academic performance, school attendance, and classroom behavior are associated with participation in youth volunteer programs. Putnam (2000) explains that volunteerism also promotes a healthy society, social responsibility, and allows for the creation of strong social ties. Similarly, the results of the research of Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Kielsmeier (2000) show that helping behavior and concern for others (two components of social responsibility) are related to the practice of volunteerism or service

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

learning (as cited in Sutherland et al., 2006, p. 3), making the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale (to be described later) an appropriate tool of measurement for Youth In(VOL)ved. If the activities Youth In(VOL)ved provides results in an increase in a positive view of volunteerism and a greater likelihood that participants will continue to volunteer, the participants may enjoy many of these benefits.

Multiple studies have examined how the role and prevalence of these benefits are manifested in low-income communities of color. In fact, Schwartz and Suyemoto (2013) describe that youth organizing programs (programs that allow youth to take action in their community) may be especially effective for urban youth of color because such programs treat participants as positive resources that have potential for development, instead of “problems to be contained” (p. 342). This is especially relevant for Youth In(VOL)ved, given the demographics of participants and the community from which they come.

The Jane Boyd Community Center is located in the Oak Hill Jackson neighborhood of Cedar Rapids. Most of the Jane Boyd summer day camp participants (and subsequently Youth In(VOL)ved participants) live in the same neighborhood. In contrast with the city of Cedar Rapids as a whole, in which 13.7% of the population is living below the poverty line, 42.2% of Oak Hill Jackson residents are living below the poverty level. Roughly one-third of Oak Hill Jackson residents are non-white (Urban Mapping, Inc., 2011).

A number of other factors related to demographic characteristics also have an effect on youth attitudes and participation in volunteering. Shannon, Robertson, Morrison, and Werner (2009) describe that younger youth (ages 8-12) face several constraints in volunteering. These include structural constraints like lack of time or

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

opportunities to volunteer, interpersonal constraints which result from potentially negative interactions with staff of host organizations or parents, and intrapersonal constraints such as lack of enjoyment of the volunteer activity. They found that younger youth were not empowered to navigate the constraints they faced. These factors differ from older youth (age 13 and up) who face similar constraints but are better able to navigate them and find solutions. The value of this younger sector of capable volunteers is largely overlooked, as the Corporation for National & Community Service (2013) does not include volunteers below the age of 16 in their measurements of volunteer rates and the value of time spent serving the community.

Gender also plays a role in attitudes toward volunteering. Sutherland et al. (2006) summarizes a body of research that indicates females typically show larger gains in self-esteem and Social and Personal Responsibility Scale scores as a result of service learning programs. They also displayed more positive attitudes toward community service programs.

Whether a volunteer or community service program is mandatory (in that program participation is required although the nature of the work is for the benefit of others) similarly affects intentions to volunteer in the future. Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) found that participants who initially were not inclined to freely volunteer were even less likely to volunteer after completing a mandatory volunteer program. Intentions of students who indicated they were likely to volunteer of their own volition initially were unaffected by mandatory programs.

A final factor related to this research that determines the effectiveness of youth volunteer programs is the depth of service that exists in the program. Clark and Powell (2007) explain that a youth program that exhibits "deep justice" includes a physical

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

response (providing a tangible remedy to needs), a relational response (personal involvement with the recipients of service), and a systemic response (working to fix whatever trends or larger societal issues that cause the problems that require service). These authors would argue that a youth volunteer program that includes deep levels of service yields a greater impact for the recipient of the service as well as a greater change in attitude toward service for the youth participants.

The Social and Personal Responsibility Scale is the primary measurement tool used in this research. This original scale from Conrad and Hedin was developed to remedy some of the issues present in earlier scales that also measured responsibility, including a tendency to elicit responses that were socially desirable, undermining the validity of the tool (1981). Additionally, the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale (SPRS) was designed to relate more directly to community based educational programs, making it an appropriate tool for measurement of the Youth In(VOL)ved program.

The SPRS was designed according to the assumption that a person will act in a responsible manner when a person has “a responsible attitude toward others in society” (p. 7), is competent to act on their concern for the welfare of others, and feels that their actions will actually make a difference. It is out of these conditions that the five subscales of the SPRS were developed.

The subscales are Social Welfare, Duty, Competence, Efficacy, and Performance. Social Welfare and Duty are both included in the overarching category of “Attitudes Toward Being Responsible” and measure concern for societal problems and the extent to which participants feel responsible for fulfilling social obligations, respectively. Competency reflects the extent to which participants feel they have the ability to help others, while Efficacy focuses on the outcome, measuring the extent to which

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

participants feel their actions and contributions to society actually make a difference, a characteristic that affects the quality of participation according to Checkoway (2010).

The Performance subscale examines whether participants perceive that they actually perform responsible acts.

### **DESCRIPTION OF INTERNSHIP**

This research project was conducted during the summer of 2013 alongside my internship at the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross, which partially fulfilled the requirements for the Not-for-profit Management concentration of the Business Administration major at Olivet Nazarene University. I worked under the Volunteer Manager three mornings a week for thirteen weeks in order to complete the 165 required work hours for the internship. My primary responsibilities were to plan volunteer recognition events and to coordinate and implement the Youth In(VOL)ved program.

Though a significant portion of my time was spent preparing for the two volunteer recognition events (for which I recruited area businesses to supply the resources necessary for the event), another main focus during the internship was preparing for Youth In(VOL)ved. In planning the program I followed the general framework provided to me by the Volunteer Manager and obtained her approval before finalizing any details that were not explicitly communicated to me originally.

To conduct this eight week program, the American Red Cross partnered with the Jane Boyd Community House, a not-for-profit agency in Cedar Rapids that enhances "the academic, emotional and social well-being of children and families in our diverse community with programs focused on developing successful and productive adults" (Jane Boyd, 2014). These programs include housing support and a summer day camp,

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

among others. The Youth In(VOL)ved volunteer program was provided for two classes of children who were attending the day camp. One class included children ranging in age from 8 to 10 years and the other class included children who ranged in age from 11 to 15 years. Each class participated in Youth In(VOL)ved on separate days of the week. This research project evaluates only the 11 to 15 year-old class. All students in these classes who attended the Jane Boyd summer day camp on a day that Youth In(VOL)ved was held were expected to participate in the program. For this reason I consider Youth In(VOL)ved to be a mandatory volunteer program, in that participation in the program is required but the nature of the work completed in the program is conducted for the benefit of others.

Youth In(VOL)ved was one of many activities that the 11 to 15 year-old youth participated in during the week at Jane Boyd. Examples of other activities include swimming, time in the Jane Boyd computer lab, and a substance abuse education program. Wednesday mornings were dedicated exclusively to Youth In(VOL)ved. The Jane Boyd summer day camp attendance, and subsequently the Youth In(VOL)ved attendance, varied week to week due to participants' varying summer schedules.

The program started each week with a character or leadership development lesson that lasted approximately a half hour. As requested by the Volunteer Manager, I used an existing American Red Cross curriculum that covered topics like leadership and problem solving to plan the lessons, modifying the content as necessary. Each lesson consisted of a warm-up game, a brief lecture and discussion time, and ended with an activity that reinforced the content of the lecture. Many of the activities came from the American Red Cross curriculum, but I edited and added content as I found necessary in order to make the lessons engaging and age-appropriate.

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

Following the lesson, the Jane Boyd instructors would take the youth to a volunteer site at a local not-for-profit agency (the Volunteer Manager and I also attended, but traveled separately). I coordinated these volunteer projects with the agencies at the beginning of the summer and selected organizations that represented a variety of subject areas within the not-for-profit field. Exposure to each organization and the respective volunteer opportunities was brief, but the wide exposure to the many areas of need that require volunteers was put in place so that the youth would have many opportunities to find a cause to which they connected. Table 1 lists the host organizations, the subject of the organization's work (adapted from the organizations' mission statements which were obtained from their respective websites), volunteer project descriptions, and the subject of the character development lesson.

Table 1: Youth In(VOL)ved 2013 Itinerary				
Week	Volunteer Site	Subject of Organization's Work	Volunteer Activity	Subject of Lesson
1	American Red Cross	Emergency relief	N/A	Program introduction
2	Waypoint Services	Crisis intervention for women and children	Weeded garden, cared for children in daycare	Resolving conflict
3	Indian Creek Nature Center	Environmental education and land protection	Cleared walking trails	Active listening
4	Science Center	Science education	Sorted Lego kits	Problem solving
5	Salvation Army	Human needs in local community	Weeded garden for food pantry	Public Speaking
6	Willis Dady Emergency Shelter	Shelter and housing/employment assistance	General clean-up	Diversity
7	Catherine McAuley Center	Women's transitional housing and basic education for adults	Created start-up baskets and awareness posters, yardwork	Leadership
8	Iowa Donor Network	Facilitate organ and tissue recovery, public education	Made awareness bracelet packages for donor families	Positive decisions



## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

Generally, the host organization would give a brief presentation to the youth that included a description of the work the organization does and of the importance of volunteers to the organization. Next, the youth would receive instructions on the volunteer project and would work on the project for approximately one hour with supervision from the Volunteer Manager and me, their Jane Boyd leaders, and the host organization staff. After a short debriefing period once the volunteer project ended, the program was over and participants returned to the Jane Boyd Community Center with their leaders.

### METHODS

Participants' attitudes toward volunteerism and sense of responsibility for their surrounding community were measured using a custom adaptation of the Social and Personal Responsibility Scale (Conrad and Hedin, 1981). To complete the survey, participants were directed to first read two statements and choose the statement that they most identified with. Next, they indicated how descriptive the chosen statement was of them by selecting either "almost always true for me" or "sometimes true for me." In this study, each of the 21 survey questions was adjusted for relevance to the participant group, though the content and sentence structure of each of the questions remained intact. To illustrate this point, the statements in the original SPRS tool began with the phrase with "Some teenagers..." In an effort to ensure that all participants, regardless of age, could identify with the statements this phrase was changed to read "Some people..." since some participants were under the age of thirteen.

Demographic data (age, race, and gender) of participants was also collected. Post-surveys included four additional true/false questions and four open-ended questions about the program. These questions were used primarily as feedback for the

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

American Red Cross, but also provide some insight into the effectiveness of the program for the purposes of this study. The survey can be viewed in its entirety in Appendix A and a complete report of the responses to the open-ended questions can be found in Appendix B.

Despite plans to distribute the pre-survey at the start of the program during Week 1, pre-surveys were not distributed until Week 3 of Youth In(VOL)ved due to the decision of American Red Cross staff to postpone the survey because of time constraints on other program activities. Parental consent forms were administered at the Jane Boyd Community Center, and youth participants completed the Informed Consent form at the time the survey was administered. Fourteen valid pre-surveys were collected from the 11 to 15 year-old Jane Boyd class, though some questions were not answered according to the instructions and were therefore unable to be scored.

Attendance at the Jane Boyd summer day camp and Youth In(VOL)ved program changed week to week, so post-surveys were not matched with the pre-tests. The number of youth in attendance decreased at the end of the summer because some of the schools in the area had started classes. For this reason only seven post-surveys were collected following the character development lesson and volunteer project on the final day of the program. All participants who took the post-survey had completed at least one week of the Youth In(VOL)ved program, but as indicated by the final item on the post-survey, only five of the seven in the post-test sample had also taken the pre-survey.

Each survey question was given a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4 based on the participant's response. Conrad and Hedin's (1981) article that included the SPRS tool also included a key to score answers. A score of 1 indicated a low orientation or negative attitude

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

toward responsibility on the corresponding subscale, while a 4 indicated a high orientation or positive attitude toward responsibility. A statistical software package was used to analyze the data. Means between the samples were compared using an independent samples *t* test, which was conducted for scores on each question as well as scores on each of the subscales (calculated as the sum of the scores for each item in the subscale). Additionally, demographics were analyzed using multiple 2 × 2 ANOVAs. In total, fifteen 2 × 2 ANOVAs were conducted so that each demographic characteristic (age, race, and gender) was measured with the scores on each of the five subscales. The score on the subscales served as the dependent variable, while the demographic characteristics and the edition of the survey (pre- or post-) served as the independent variables. It was hypothesized that scores on all subscales of the SPRS would increase after participation in the Youth In(VOL)ved program.

### RESULTS

The means for each item on the pre-survey were all above 2.5000, which means that the overall group attitude toward social responsibility was a positive one. Two of the items on the SPRS survey were not assigned to a subscale, and therefore were deemed irrelevant to this study. Therefore, only nineteen items were scored. Scores on eighteen of the nineteen individual items on the survey did not differ significantly between the pre-survey and post-survey. Item #20, in which participants chose whether they identified more with the statement, "Some people aren't worried about finishing jobs they promised they would do," or, "Other people would feel really bad about it," was the exception. In this case, the group who took the pre-survey ( $M = 3.5385$ ,  $SD = .66023$ ) scored significantly *higher* in responsibility than the post-survey group ( $M = 2.2857$ ,  $SD = .48795$ ),  $t(18) = 4.393$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 2.05947$ . However, using the .05

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

level of significance indicates that 1 in 20  $t$  tests are likely to have a significant outcome by chance alone. Since a  $t$  test was conducted for each of the nineteen items on the survey and the subject of fulfillment of obligations was not specifically addressed by Youth In(VOL)ved, it is likely that this outcome was simply due to chance.

The analysis of the scores on the five subscales also did not differ significantly between the pre-survey and post-survey groups. However, the calculation of effect sizes (displayed in Table 2) indicates that scores on four of the five subscales may have differed significantly if the survey had been administered to a larger sample.

<b>SPRS Subscale</b>	<b>Pre-Survey Mean</b>	<b>Post-Survey Mean</b>	<b>Effect Size</b>
Attitude on Social Welfare	10.5000	11.5714	0.505
Attitude on Duty	12.3846	11.7143	0.392
Competence	8.8462	9.1429	0.150
Efficacy	10.8333	10.0000	0.378
Performance	12.5833	11.1429	0.594

Based on Cohen's (1988) determination of small, medium and large effect sizes which correspond to estimated  $d$  values of .2, .5, and .8, respectively, the scores on the Competence subscale showed little change between the pre- and post-survey. The effect size of the Attitude on Social Welfare and Performance subscales was medium, indicating that the scores differed by over .5 standard deviations each. However, it is important to note that the mean of scores on the post-survey in comparison with the pre-survey increased only in the Attitude on Social Welfare subscale. The Performance effect size shows a sizable decrease in scores, as do the effect sizes of Attitude on Duty and Efficacy, although these effect sizes are small according to Cohen's estimates.

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

A series of 2 × 2 ANOVAs were conducted to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics and the pre- and post-survey scores. Age was one demographic variable that was investigated. Two age groups were created for the investigation: Ages 11-13 and Ages 14-15. This division was made in order to separate middle school-aged students (11 to 13 years) and high school-aged students (14-15 years). Gender and race were also investigated. The race investigation included White, Black, Native American, and Multi-racial groups. No differences between any of the groups created based on the demographic characteristics of age, gender, or race were shown to be statistically significant.

Responses to the True/False and open-ended questions on the post-survey provide some additional insight to students' perceptions of what they gained from the Youth In(VOL)ved program. Table 3 lists the percentage of respondents who answered "true" on each of the four True/False statements.

<b>Table 3: True/False Results</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>% "True"</b>
I enjoyed visiting a variety of volunteer sites (as opposed to if we went to one site for every week of the program).	100.00%
I would consider going back to one or more of the volunteer sites on my own to volunteer.	71.43%
I feel that I know more about the needs that exist in the Cedar Rapids community after this American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program.	100.00%
I am more likely to volunteer in my community now that I have participated in the American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program.	85.71%

The results of the statement, "I enjoyed visiting a variety of volunteer sites," is further supported by the answers participants gave to the open-ended question, "How

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

can we make the American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program better in the future?"

Three of the seven respondents suggested that the program could be improved by adding additional volunteer sites to the schedule.

### DISCUSSION

As the calculation of effect sizes for each of the subscales indicated, participants' scores on the Duty, Efficacy, and Performance subscales decreased. Examination of the individual items on the Duty and Performance subscales shows that although these dimensions relate to social responsibility, they may have been interpreted as relating to contexts aside from those relevant to the issues addressed by Youth In(VOL)ved.

Efficacy, however, evaluates the locus of control individuals have over their circumstances. Lower Efficacy scores indicate that a participant has an external locus of control and believes they are not capable of governing their circumstances. One possible explanation for the decline in Efficacy scores is that through the exposure to the stories of people who receive host agency services (particularly at sites like the Salvation Army, the Catherine McAuley Center, and Willis Dady Emergency Shelter), the youth may have drawn the conclusion that sometimes unfortunate circumstances simply cannot be avoided despite attempts to escape them. In this way, lower scores on the Efficacy dimension may not reflect their perception of their *personal* lack of ability to make positive contributions to the community, but instead humanity's ability to change circumstances. Additionally, the efforts of professionals and other volunteers in comparison with their own, more basic contributions to the volunteer projects provided for them may have been interpreted that other people have community issues under control and do not need the efforts of the youth participants. This possibility is limited by

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

the fact that most agencies specifically addressed the many needs at their organization, but is still a possible reason for a decline in Efficacy scores.

In contrast, scores on the Attitude on Social Welfare subscale increased. This dimension of social responsibility was perhaps the subscale most directly addressed by Youth In(VOL)ved. Items on this dimension address interest in helping others, and the scope of circumstances in which a person should help others, such as who to take care of and the necessity of compensation in order to make contributions to the community. It is a reasonable assumption that Youth In(VOL)ved exposed participants to a number of issues that may have sparked individual interests and to models that demonstrate helping behavior across a variety of conditions.

Similarly positive is the fact that the responses to the True/False questions on the post-survey indicate a greater awareness of the needs that exist in the Cedar Rapids community. Parker and Franco (1999) found that 30% of their participants indicated they would have provided service if they had known of the opportunities that existed (p. 171). When viewed in this light, the wide exposure to the needs and opportunities for volunteerism that exist in the Cedar Rapids community through the Youth In(VOL)ved program may, indeed, increase rates of volunteerism in the future.

As alluded to above, several limitations exist in this study. First of all, American Red Cross staff instructed that I postpone the administration of the pre-survey the first two weeks of the program in favor of accomplishing other activities in the program in the face of time constraints. This meant that the pre-survey was not administered at the true start of the program and that the pre-survey group already had some level of exposure to the Youth In(VOL)ved character development curriculum and volunteer projects at the time they completed the initial survey. This exposure could have had an

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

effect on participants' attitudes and could have served to elicit socially desirable responses, making the pre-survey results invalid.

Additionally, there was no way to control program attendance. Youth In(VOL)ved participants likely varied greatly in their amount of exposure to the program content, and it's even possible that participants in the post-survey group only attended the final day of the program. These factors, along with the simple drawback of a small sample size are likely influences on the somewhat undesirable results.

It is also possible that the program itself is a cause of the decline of scores on some of the SPRS subscales. Despite having a structured plan of events with an overall program format that was consistent each week, the time spent at the agencies that hosted volunteer projects was directed by each individual agency. Some agencies allowed for twenty minutes or more of discussion about the role of volunteers while others gave only a brief introduction and then instructed the youth on the volunteer project. For this reason, even if the number of Youth In(VOL)ved sessions attended by each youth participant could have been held constant, there still would have been variety in the amount of content each received if they attended different weeks of the program.

Another drawback of the program includes the availability of age-appropriate volunteer activities for the youth. Many agencies require extensive training of volunteers, particularly in order to work with clients. Due to time constraints, this was not possible. The current structure of Youth In(VOL)ved does not exhibit deep justice as described by Clark and Powell (2007) because volunteer projects almost exclusively exhibit a physical response. The projects that were available often required general clean-up, either inside an agency's facilities or outdoors. Volunteer projects rarely



## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

included a relational component in which youth worked directly with the recipients of their service, and the systemic component of community needs was never addressed. These factors together may have affected the outcome of the post-test scores, as the social component of the SPRS instrument was largely lacking.

Several opportunities for further study arose from this research. The first, most obviously, includes a replication of the study under conditions that are more constant. Though it would certainly require more time and resources from the American Red Cross, there is opportunity for further partnership with the Jane Boyd Community Center which has multiple classes in their summer day camp that together total at least a hundred students. If more classes were involved in the program, many of the issues that arose because of the small sample size could be eliminated. This, however, again raises the issue of insufficient age-appropriate volunteer projects in the Cedar Rapids area.

An additional opportunity for further study exists in examining the responses of participants on the SPRS tool across different age groups. Youth In(VOL)ved was also provided for a class of 8 to 10 year-olds who were not measured (a request of American Red Cross staff). Shannon, C.S., Robertson, B.J., Morrison, K.S., and Werner, T.L. (2009) indicate in their review of literature that research on volunteerism and this age group is largely lacking. Evaluating the program's effect across a greater range of ages could potentially produce statistically significant differences between groups on the SPRS tool.

Additionally, in order to determine what "best practice" for the American Red Cross' Youth In(VOL)ved program is, it would be helpful to conduct a study in which the current program format (which provides participants with a brief exposure to a wide variety of sites) to a more concentrated program that focuses more intensely on depth

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

of service at a single organization, perhaps at the American Red Cross itself. If results showed that a deep justice format were more effective, this could serve to provide more benefits for participants as well as to engage participants more deeply in service to the American Red Cross, thereby more efficiently achieving the goal of recruiting a new generation of American Red Cross volunteers. Another option would be to alter the focus of the classroom portion of the program (the character development lessons). Currently, the program addresses a variety of social skills and issues. Including instruction on systemic issues in the classroom lecture and discussion time may support the service learning at the volunteer sites more effectively, and could produce a greater change in measures of social responsibility. Along these lines, it would be helpful to not only measure youth intent to engage in further service with the post-survey, but to specifically measure intent to engage in further service to the American Red Cross.

### **INTERNSHIP REFLECTION**

Aside from learning from the results of this research study and gaining insight into improvements that could be made to Youth In(VOL)ved in the future, my internship at the American Red Cross gave me a better picture of the role volunteers play in not-for-profit organizations. Through planning recognition events, I saw how paying tribute to the work the volunteers accomplish keeps them happy and excited to continue their service to the organization, and through coordinating Youth In(VOL)ved I was exposed to a multitude of roles that volunteers fill in the Cedar Rapids area. These two things alone, aside from all other knowledge gained, made this internship experience worthwhile.

I also was able to achieve the three goals I set for myself at the outset of the internship. The first of these was to gain a better understanding of the role of volunteers

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

in a non-profit organization. This occurred primarily through observation, both at the American Red Cross and at Youth In(VOL)ved host organizations. My second goal was to become more efficient at event planning through my work on the volunteer recognition events, which I was able to do through learning to use new software programs and by improving my communication skills. My final goal was to get better at leading groups of people, specifically the children in the youth program. I felt that the simple act of spending more time with the youth allowed me to adapt to their needs and be a better leader. I learned I needed to be clear, detailed, and concise in my instructions, and also aware of all the activity that was happening at once.

Beyond accomplishing these goals that will be beneficial for my future career, I gained insight into the direction I'd like for my career path to take. Observation at the various host organizations allowed me to evaluate my preferences for types of organizations I'd like to work for. After speaking with the various agency directors, I was most interested in the small, community-based organizations dedicated to improving the psychological, social, or economic health of individuals and communities. This knowledge will help to direct the steps I take as I move forward to start a career.

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

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## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**APPENDIX A**

The following is a reproduction of the post-survey that was administered at the end of the Youth In(VOL)ved program. The pre-survey is identical in form except that it does not include Part 3, which contains a series of True/False and open-ended questions.

**Part 1**

**Please answer the following three questions.**

1. What is your age? (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. What is your gender? (check one)       Male       Female
3. What is your race? (check all that apply)
  - White
  - African-American
  - Asian- Pacific Islander
  - Hispanic
  - Native American
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2**

**To answer the following questions, there are two steps.**

1. **For each question, decide whether you are more like the people described by statement A or statement B. Circle the letter of the statement that you identify with most.**
2. **Decide whether the statement you chose is *almost always* true for you or *sometimes* true for you. Check the circle next to your answer.**
  1.
    - a. Some people feel bad when they let people down who depend on them.
    - b. Other people don't let it bother them that much.

Sometimes true for me       Almost always true for me
  2.
    - a. Some people think it's the responsibility of the community to take care of people who can't take care of themselves.
    - b. Other people think that everyone should take care of themselves.

Sometimes true for me       Almost always true for me

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

3. a. Some people are interested in doing something about school problems.  
b. Other people don't really care to get involved in school problems.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
4. a. Some people let others do most of the work in a group.  
b. Other people help in a group all they can.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
5. a. Some people seem to find time to work on other people's problems.  
b. Other people find taking care of their own problems more than enough to do.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
6. a. Some people are interested in what other students in class have to say.  
b. Other people don't care about what other students say.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
7. a. Some people are interested in doing something about problems in the community.  
b. Other people are not that interested in working on problems in the community.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
8. a. Some people carefully prepare for community and school assignments.  
b. Other people usually don't prepare much.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
9. a. Some people would rather not present ideas in a group discussion.  
b. Other people feel comfortable in presenting ideas in a group discussion.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
10. a. Some people let others know when they can't keep an appointment.  
b. Other people don't call ahead when they can't make it.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
11. a. Some people think people should only help people they know—like close friends and relatives.  
b. Others think people should help people in general- whether they know them personally or not.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
12. a. For some people, it seems too difficult to keep commitments.  
b. Other people manage to keep commitments.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me



## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

13. a. Some people's ideas are almost always listened to in a group.  
b. Other people have a hard time getting the group to pay attention to their suggestions.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
14. a. Some people don't think they have much say about what happens to them.  
b. Other people think they can control what will happen to their lives.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
15. a. Some people don't think it makes sense to help others unless you get paid for it.  
b. Other people think you should help others even if you don't get paid for it.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
16. a. Some people are good at helping others.  
b. Other people don't see helping others as one of their strong points.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
17. a. Some people feel obligated to complete the tasks assigned to them by the group.  
b. Other people don't feel bound by group decisions.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
18. a. Some people think when good things happen it's because of something they did.  
b. For others, there seems to be no reasons—it's just luck when things go well.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
19. a. Some people prefer to have someone clearly lay out their assignments.  
b. Other people prefer to make up their own lists of things to do.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
20. a. Some people aren't that worried about finishing jobs they promised they would do.  
b. Other people would feel really bad about it.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me
21. a. Some people think they are able to help solve problems in the community.  
b. Other people don't think they can do anything about them because a few powerful people decide everything.  
 Sometimes true for me  Almost always true for me

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**Part 3**

After having completed the American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program, please circle True or False for the following questions.

1. I enjoyed visiting a variety of volunteer sites (as opposed to if we went to one site every week of the program).

True                      False

2. I would consider going back to one or more of the volunteer sites on my own to volunteer.

True                      False

3. I feel that I know more about the needs that exist in the Cedar Rapids community after this American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program.

True                      False

4. I am more likely to volunteer in my community now that I have participated in the American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program.

True                      False

5. What was your favorite volunteer site you visited in this program (American Red Cross, Indian Creek Nature Center, Waypoint, Science Center, Salvation Army, Willis Dady Shelter, Catherine McAuley Center) and what did you like about it?

6. What did you like about the classroom part of Youth In(VOL)ved?

7. What didn't you like about the classroom part of Youth InVOLved?

8. How can we make the American Red Cross Youth In(VOL)ved program better in the future?

I took the first round of this survey earlier in the program.

Yes

No

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

## APPENDIX B

## SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ON POST-SURVEY

(Demographic characteristics of respondents has been removed)

**What was your favorite volunteer site you visited in this program and what did you like about it?**

Respondent #	Site	Reason
1	Salvation Army	"Because I really like getting active and doing yard work"
2	Catherine McAuley Center	
3	Science Center	
4	Iowa Donor Network	"Informational"
5	Waypoint, Iowa Donor Network	
6	Science Center	"It was fun."
7	Indian Creek Nature Center	"Because we chopped down trees"

**What did you like about the classroom part of Youth InVOLved?**

Respondent #	Comment
1	
2	"We did different activities."
3	"None of it"
4	"Wasn't a lot of hard work"
5	"I just like to do different things."
6	
7	"That they explained what we would do each time they came"

**What didn't you like about the classroom part of Youth InVOLved?**

Respondent #	Comment
1	
2	"Outside work"
3	"Most of it"
4	"Wasn't any work"
5	"I love this class"
6	
7	"The applesauce feeding" (A game in a character development lesson)

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

**How can we make the American Red Cross Youth InVOLved program better in the future?**

<b>Respondent #</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1	"Well I think it was fine the way it was so I don't really know"
2	"More places"
3	<i>Answer not legible.</i>
4	"Go a lot more places"
5	"I like it the way it is"
6	"More sites to visit"
7	"It is already good enough"

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

### APPENDIX C

The following information is the content of the summary document of the 2013 Youth In(VOL)ved program that was provided to the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross along with the formal research report of this project. It is designed to give an overview of the program that would be quickly and easily understood by someone with no previous exposure to Youth In(VOL)ved. It includes a summary of this project's research results and a description of the program. The document specifically addresses information like resources required, goals and objectives of the program, and program evaluation information, which are all necessary components of a successful proposal for grant funding. The actual completion of a grant proposal, however, is a responsibility of the American Red Cross.

### Youth In(VOL)ved 2013 Highlights

Youth In(VOL)ved, an initiative of the Grant Wood Area American Red Cross (ARC), is a youth volunteer program with the following goals:

- To **cultivate a new generation of volunteers** that will carry out the American Red Cross' mission of preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies.
- To develop participants' sense of **social responsibility**, which has been linked to increased rates of volunteerism and subsequently an improved sense of well-being.

### Program Overview

**Participants** consisted of two classes of youth from the Jane Boyd Community Center summer day camp. Classes ranged from ages 8-10 years and 11-15 years.

**Weekly activities** directed at achieving program goals included a character development lesson (warm-up game, 10 minute lecture, and final reinforcement activity) adapted from American Red Cross curriculum and a volunteer project conducted at a Cedar Rapids not-for-profit agency. The weekly itinerary follows:

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

Volunteer Site	Volunteer Activity	Subject of Lesson
American Red Cross	N/A	Program introduction
Waypoint Services	Weeded garden, cared for children in daycare	Resolving conflict
Indian Creek Nature Center	Cleared walking trails	Active listening
Science Center	Sorted Lego kits	Problem solving
Salvation Army	Weeded garden for food pantry	Public Speaking
Willis Dady Emergency Shelter	General clean-up	Diversity
Catherine McAuley Center	Created start-up baskets and awareness posters, yardwork	Leadership
Iowa Donor Network	Made awareness bracelet packages for donor families	Positive decisions

**Required resources** include transportation for youth and program leaders to volunteer sites, supplies for games and activities, and printed lesson materials.

**Partnerships** between the American Red Cross, the Jane Boyd Community Center, and the agencies that host volunteer projects multiply the impact of Youth In(VOL)ved:

- ARC coordinates and directs the program, easing the responsibilities of Jane Boyd staff for six hours per week.
- Jane Boyd provides the participants, reducing the American Red Cross' need to recruit for the program.
- Host agencies receive approximately 30 work hours from the efforts of the youth volunteers.

## Research Summary

### Methods

Conrad and Hedin's Social and Personal Responsibility Scale survey tool was administered to youth participants before and after the Youth In(VOL)ved program.

The scale measures participants' attitudes toward social responsibility, their competence to perform socially responsible acts, and the extent to which they feel they are effective in acting in a socially responsible manner.

Additional True/False and open-ended questions were asked of participants on the post-survey.

### Results

Statistical tests demonstrated that participation in Youth In(VOL)ved had no statistically significant effect on participants' sense of social responsibility, though this may have been due to a small sample size.

However, the True/False and open-ended questions imply that Youth In(VOL)ved positively impacted participants in other ways:

- 100% of respondents indicated they learned more about the needs that exist in their community.
- 100% of respondents enjoyed visiting a variety of volunteer sites (as opposed to visiting the same site every week).

## AN EVALUATION OF YOUTH IN(VOL)VED

- 85% of respondents are more likely to volunteer on their own after participating in Youth In(VOL)ved.

### **Implications**

A larger sample size and a more controlled environment would better allow accurate conclusions to be drawn about the effects of the Youth In(VOL)ved program on youth social responsibility. It is clear that participants enjoyed the variety of volunteer projects provided by the current structure of the program, but some changes to the program might be necessary in order to effectively improve social responsibility attitudes.