

**PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA  
CHATHAM COUNTY**

**An Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis  
including Secondary Data Analysis and Qualitative Data Collection**

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## **PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY DIAGNOSIS**

The Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health and five graduate students from the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education at the UNC School of Public Health collaborated to conduct this community diagnosis of Pittsboro's adolescents. The purpose of this community diagnosis was to learn about the health and quality of life concerns of residents of Pittsboro, both adult and adolescent, and the resources and strengths that exist in the town for dealing with these concerns. The community diagnosis process used primary and secondary data to discover and analyze both the concerns and strengths of Pittsboro and its adolescents.

## **INTRODUCTION TO OUR COMMUNITY**

Pittsboro is a small, semi-rural, Southern town that has been in existence for over 200 years. It is the Chatham County seat, located 35 miles west of Raleigh and 17 miles south of Chapel Hill. The town was founded in 1787 and until recently, the population increased very little. The "quaint" downtown is Mecca for antiques lovers, and features over ten antiques stores. In addition, there are several old-fashioned country stores, and a local farmers market situated in the town fairgrounds. However, while antique shopping and tourism entice many to come to Pittsboro, the cornerstone of the community is the people who live, work, and are educated there.

Within the larger community of Pittsboro, we focused on adolescents. These teens, ages 11-18, either live or work in the town of Pittsboro or attend school in the Pittsboro District. While many of the adolescents do not actually live in the town of Pittsboro proper, those who work or go to school in the district are just as much influenced by the resources and activities in Pittsboro as are those who live there. This is particularly the case with after-school activities and

the county health, educational, and recreational resources that are within reasonable distance of the schools and places of employment.

Because we were working in Pittsboro with the Chatham County Coalition for Adolescent Health, it was not difficult to identify teens as our target population. The challenge came in determining which adolescents to include: only those who live within the city limits or residents as well as those who go to school or work in town. Through communications with our preceptor and the service providers we interviewed, it became clear that including the teens who come into Pittsboro daily, for school or work, along with teen residents was necessary since they all have access to the various county departments and other resources in the town and convene at local places such as convenience stores and restaurants.

While adolescents are an integral part of Pittsboro, they are a group that tends not to have a collective voice. In addition, it became apparent from the interviews that we conducted that there are several issues facing the entire Pittsboro population that have both direct and indirect effects on the adolescent community. In particular, the growing number of businesses turning teens away, the lack of funding for a city-run recreational center, and the community's lack of awareness about the existing Teen Center have precluded the ability of teens to convene in a single setting or come together around organized activities. According to one service provider, the consequence is that teens have lost their sense of community and are increasingly prevented from gaining it back. Hence, while we have defined Pittsboro as our community and teens as our focus within that community, the teens may not, in fact, sense that they belong to it. Our intent through this community diagnosis is to help Pittsboro recognize the strengths and needs of its teens and take ownership over the issues relevant to them in order to help the adolescents find their own voice and role within the larger community.

## **PART I: AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF PITTSBORO**

### **HISTORY OF PITTSBORO & IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT**

A community's history is an important part of who they are and how they function day-to-day. Many of the assets of Pittsboro, as well as the issues facing it today, have deep historical roots. Therefore, it is important to understand some of the history of Pittsboro in order to obtain a fuller picture of some of the many factors making up the current community and understand how they impact adolescents.

One community member, when asked to describe Pittsboro, responded, "There are roots for people here." Indeed, Pittsboro has a long and rich history, with much to be proud of. It was founded in 1787 as the capital of the newly formed Chatham County, and was originally named "Pittsborough", after William Pitt the Younger, the Earl of Chatham (London, 1986). Many of the original founding families came from sections of Eastern North Carolina in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and built large homes in town (Chatham Record, 1962). Although the population of Pittsboro has never been more than 5% of that of the county, it quickly became the business and cultural center, and in 1850, was still the only "important" town in the county (Hadley, 1994). Many of the factories and industries of the largely agricultural county had central offices in Pittsboro. It also housed many churches, which were the center of the social life of the town (London, 1986).

"Pittsborough Academy" was established the same year of the town's founding, 1787, and became one of the leading schools in the state. This was followed by the founding of several smaller, private academies and girls' schools. Much of the education of young people was carried out by churches (Osborn and Selden-Sturgill, 1991), including the first school for African Americans, at St. James Episcopal Church (London, 1986).

The Civil War brought a temporary halt to much of the industry and development of Pittsboro, even though the town itself escaped devastation (the Haw River was flooded and Northern troops could not cross over). Although Chatham County was initially reluctant to leave the Union (voted against it 6:1), it formed its own company which was among the first in the state to enlist; over one fifth of enlisted men died in the war. (Seagroves, 1971). Pittsboro residents have a great deal of pride in these men, as evidenced by the large memorial statue of a Confederate soldier in front of the current courthouse. The unveiling of this statue in 1907 drew the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest crowd of people recorded together in the history of Pittsboro (Hadley et al, 1971).

Pittsboro slowly recovered from the Civil War and became again a center of trading and business in the county. In 1888, the Pittsboro Railroad was completed between Pittsboro and Raleigh, an event which contributed significantly to the development of Pittsboro (London, 1986), and drew the largest crowd ever recorded in Pittsboro's history (Hadley et al, 1971). Pittsboro's first paved road, to Sanford, was completed in 1925, and in 1927 the Chapel Hill Road was completed, facilitating much faster access to surrounding resources and towns. The Chatham Record, the town's primary newspaper, was founded in 1878 by London, a prominent resident and a Democrat-Conservative (Chatham Record, 1962), and became a mouthpiece for his strong political views. The newspaper continues to this day.

Older copies of this newspaper reveal some of the tension between White and African American residents of Pittsboro which has existed since its founding. There is hardly an issue of the Chatham Record from the first six months of 1900 that does not contain editorials and other printed rhetoric promoting white supremacy and supporting the July "illiteracy" amendment which would effectively bar most newly-freed African Americans from voting (illiterate White residents would still be allowed to vote if their fathers or grandfathers had been registered). A



March 1, 1900 paper calls for white supremacy clubs to be formed in every township and county of North Carolina. One of these clubs was formed in Pittsboro and over 3000 people from the surrounding area joined it. The “suffrage” amendment limiting African Americans from voting was passed in July in the state of North Carolina to the sound of great rejoicing in the newspaper. An interesting fact not mentioned in the Chatham Record was that Chatham County was one of the few in the state to vote against the amendment. Despite the strong white support, enough African Americans and Quakers rallied around the issue that they formed the voting majority (Hadley et al, 1971).

This story is only one of many which illustrate the long history of racial inequalities and tensions in Pittsboro, a town in which slavery was a reality from the time of its founding up until the Civil War (though there were fewer slaves in Chatham than in many other North Carolina counties). While a published history of Chatham County reports that after the Civil War, good relationships existed between Blacks and whites from a social standpoint (Hadley et al, 1971), stories such as the one above suggest differently.

Though schools are now integrated, Chatham residents can vote regardless of literacy or race, and the school system employs a Director of Minority Affairs, racism remains an ambiguous and pervasive issue in the community; something which exists and has deep roots in history but is usually hidden beneath the surface and not often spoken of in public forums. Racism occasionally surfaces in more blatant forms, such as the “Pittsboro Community Pool”, a privately owned pool that will not admit African Americans to its membership, and in isolated incidences. Last year David Duke formed a Ku Klux Klan rally in the county to protest the rapid influx of Latino residents. Around the same time, a Chatham Central high school yearbook picture depicting boys with nooses around their necks appeared and was not adequately dealt

with by school administrators, leading to the forming of an advocacy group for minority students in county schools (Offen, 2000). When asked about the need for a proposed diversity training, one Pittsboro community member responded, “I think it’s needed in any community that has the kind of history Pittsboro has.”

Although Pittsboro remains the county seat and houses many of the county’s services, it is no longer a center for commerce. Most of the mills have moved out and most of the downtown stores that served residents (general stores, groceries, department stores) have gone out of business and been replaced with antique stores that attract primarily tourists. Although these bring in a lot of revenue for the town, they offer few opportunities for teenagers to either “hang out” or work, and little incentive to stay around in Pittsboro after high school graduation.

Pittsboro’s demographics have also changed dramatically in the last few decades. Several respondents remarked that many of those involved in the “hippie” movement of the 1960’s chose the Pittsboro area as a place to settle down. A lot of them have taken up organic farming, and also contribute to the many artists present in the area. This group tends to be more politically progressive than many of the longer-term Pittsboro residents. Another big change followed the advent of paved roads to nearby cities such as Chapel Hill and Raleigh, resulting in a multitude of subdivisions for day commuters to the Triangle; in fact, many of the residents of greater Pittsboro do not work inside Chatham County. This leads to a diffusion of a sense of community; many of the newer residents feel as much a part of Orange, Wake, or Durham Counties as they do Chatham County. It also leads to a considerable amount of tensions between the “older”, more rooted residents and the newer resident-commuters.

In addition, Pittsboro’s central square, the area around the courthouse, is no longer the natural gathering place for the town and county that it used to be. One large reason for that is the

way traffic flow was engineered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Previously, traffic was routed one block north of the square. With the installation of larger roads such as Highways 15-501 and 64, the main traffic flow through town became routed in a circle around the courthouse (Osborn and Seldon-Sturgill, 1991). The large volume of noisy vehicles driving straight through the center of town every day limits the utility of the public square as a gathering place and affects the character and function of the community. Many Pittsboro residents predict that this problem will only worsen with the imminent widening of 15-501 and 64 to four-lane roads.

The simple volume of newcomers to Pittsboro in the last ten years has put a tremendous strain on its resources. In 1971, the town proper held 1,447 residents (Hadley et al, 1971), and only 174 more were added between then and 1990 (12% increase). However, between 1990 and 1999, the population of the town grew from 1,621 to 2,237, a 38% increase (Office of State Planning, 1999). The town issued a six month moratorium on growth in March, 1999 because the waste treatment plan was operating at 82% of capacity. Only half a year after this ended, the town hit its cap for residential growth, and another prohibition on development was enacted in May, 2000 in order to take time to better plan for it (Chapel Hill Herald, 2000). Although growth in the town itself may be restricted at the present, the surrounding county remains the 17<sup>th</sup> fastest growing in the state (US Census figures, 2000). The need to both creatively plan for and handle current growth is an issue most Pittsboro residents agree with; however, how best to go about doing that is a subject of much contention, and decisions made will have a significant effect on the adolescents of Pittsboro as well as all other residents.

Despite recent changes and uncertainty over the future, many Pittsboro residents retain a deep sense of pride in the long history and roots of the town. The town has more historic residences and buildings still standing than any town its size in North Carolina (Chatham

Record, 1962). There is an active Chatham County Historical Association, which holds periodic meetings and events for the community, organizes preservation activities, published historical accounts and maintains a small museum in the Pittsboro Courthouse. In 2000, through the hard work of the Pittsboro Historic District Advisory Committee, Pittsboro gained entry to the National Register of Historic Places. Inclusion in this register is “widely viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate that the town is proud of its history and is interested in preserving that character,” remarked the secretary of the Historical Association (Wheatley, 2000). There are several annual town traditions which preserve the small-town community atmosphere many residents are proud of. These include the weekly Farmers’ Market and annual County Fair, the street fair in October, and the Christmas Parade.

Older documents advertising Chatham County and anniversary editions of the Chatham Record emphasize Pittsboro’s churches, location (in the very “center” of North Carolina), history, industry (emphasizing the nearby poultry plants), important people who have lived there, tradition of educational excellence, and its charm, friendliness, and hospitality as characteristic features of the town (American Legion Auxiliary, 1945; Retirement with a Purpose; Chatham Record, 1962). More recent documents have emphasized Pittsboro’s “underlying hipness” and “Norman Rockwell-type hometown touches”, as well as dwelling on its pervasive sense of history and ubiquitous antique shops (Price, 1998; Ladson, 2000).

A careful look at Pittsboro’s history yields several implications for the present. A sense of community pride in the well-preserved history and roots of Pittsboro is a strength, and means that many in the community have a stake in looking after the town. However, a tension exists between the outlooks of residents dedicated to preserving the historical, small town character of Pittsboro and adolescents who do not see much available for them and are eager to welcome

shopping malls, movie theaters, and Wal-Mart's to town. It may be difficult to develop recreational facilities acceptable and accessible to adolescents which do not destroy the historical atmosphere so important to others.

In addition, Pittsboro's history evidences an independence and self sufficiency that many residents still possess. Many feel threatened by the rapid growth and development, and perceive the larger Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, the Research Triangle Park) as encroaching on Chatham and destroying much of what is important to them. This can make it difficult for someone outside of Chatham County who wishes to work with residents towards an issue to develop a relationship of trust.

Finally, there are many divisions inside Pittsboro itself, both rooted in older history and springing from more recent history. These include distinct racial divisions, as evidenced by the mostly all-white or all-African American churches who many say are at the center of community, as well as divisions between the older and the newer residents and the more progressive and more conservative residents. The Chatham County Online Chatlist serves as one forum showcasing the strong and often emotional differences in viewpoints between different residents. These differences are often strongest when issues of growth and development are brought up, and since these issues touch so many others, they form a strong barrier against community collaboration around any one issue.

## **SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY**

The community diagnosis process began with an orientation to Pittsboro and research into its history. We tried to gather information from as many secondary data sources as possible in order to get an introduction to the community and a general picture of its dynamics and demographics. We utilized several different sources for our secondary data and a list of these

sources are included in Appendix C. We visited the Pittsboro Memorial Library, the Chatham County Health Department, the Economic Development Office, the agricultural center, the student health center at Horton Middle School known as the Body Shop, and the courthouse museum to find secondary data on Pittsboro, in addition to using the Internet and making phone calls.

While gathering this data, it became evident that much of the information available was only at the county level. For this reason, some of the secondary data collected will not be included in our assessment of Pittsboro. Another limitation to the secondary data, in terms of socio-demographics, is its age. At the time of data collection census data was only available for 1990 and the explosive growth in Pittsboro in the last five years alone makes much of this data obsolete. Furthermore, much of the data we collected was shared with us by providers in Pittsboro and we wanted to be careful not to simply present them with information they already know. In consideration of these limitations, we as a group chose to focus primarily on service provider interviews for our “outsider perspective.” We do, however, understand the importance of secondary data and used this information to reinforce and guide the issues that surfaced in our interviews. Following is a detailed summary of the methods used to collect our secondary data.

In order to collect secondary data on the demographics of Pittsboro we used on-line information and materials available at UNC Davis Library. We found data on population size, breakdown by age and race, employment rates, and educational information. This provides us with a general picture of Pittsboro and the people that live there. We were cautious when interpreting this data and applying it to our understanding of the community, however, because, as we mentioned before, all of the census data available is from 1990. There has been significant recent growth in Pittsboro so this information may not be applicable to Pittsboro today. It does,

however, provide us with an understanding of how issues facing Pittsboro may be a result of changes that have occurred recently. We also used the Internet to look at some maps of the Pittsboro community. The on-line maps provided useful information about the borders and major roads through the town but, unfortunately, gave no information on major natural landmarks or on population density.

To research history, culture, and religion, we visited the Pittsboro Memorial Library as well as the Historical Museum in the Courthouse and reviewed artifacts and historical documents. We also spoke with a member of the Chatham County Historical Association. We reviewed Pittsboro-specific documents in UNC Wilson Library and spent time looking over microfilms of old Pittsboro newspapers.

Initially, an Internet search was used to collect data on Pittsboro's government, economy and transportation; however, this search again resulted in a majority of countywide information. In an attempt to find more Pittsboro-specific data we visited the Pittsboro City Office (a branch of the Chatham County Chamber of Commerce), the agricultural office, the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation in Pittsboro and Pittsboro Memorial library. Although this second search for data also resulted in more Chatham-wide statistics some important Pittsboro data was identified.

Secondary data collection relevant to health began by using the Internet to determine what information was available from the North Carolina Office of State Planning and the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. The Chatham County Health Department also had a website which provided general information on their services. After the services were determined, we visited the health department where we were provided with up-to-date documents of local information. Phone calls were made to local providers at Chatham Together,

Child Protective Services, and Family Planning in order to obtain Pittsboro-specific data where possible. In terms of gathering information on high-risk behavior statistics for teens there were several sources available to us. We reviewed the 2000 Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey and the Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factor Indicators. In our search for secondary data sources we discovered that there is also a very extensive range of social services available to the community. These resources are listed in Appendix A.

In order to obtain information on education in Pittsboro we reviewed online school profiles from the public schools in Pittsboro. We also researched various educational resources and programs in Chatham County such as Smart Start, the Chatham Education Foundation and the Chatham County Partnership for Children.

Since lack of recreation was a theme that appeared early we included it in our secondary data search. The Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department is a major resource for the citizens of Pittsboro, especially the youth. When we visited the Recreation Department we picked up several brochures outlining various recreational opportunities (such as, 4-H, Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts, organized sports after school, church activities, the Chatham County Arts Council, and activities at Jordan Lake and Haw River) in order to get a sense of what is available to the residents of Pittsboro.

To augment our secondary data collection process, a team member also joined the Chatham County Chatlist. These daily postings were analyzed to identify themes, issues, and cultural/religious events impacting Pittsboro, as well as to begin to identify possible key informants among community members.

In addition to these secondary data sources we spent time in Pittsboro. We attended the Family Health and Fitness Fair at Central Carolina Community College, we helped staff the



Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health booth at the Pittsboro Street Fair, attended the George Moses Horton Gala at Horton Middle School, and volunteered at the Teen Center once a week. We also attended the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health Retreat and many of the coalition's subsequent monthly meetings. This involvement provided us with an opportunity to get to know the coalition members and other community members who proved to be an excellent source of service provider and key informant interviews.

## **SECONDARY DATA**

### **Demographics**

Demographics of the Pittsboro/Chatham County area have a distinct influence on teens. Age, ethnic affiliation, health, education, income, and transportation all play significant roles. While data on many community characteristics exist, much are not teen-specific. And, depending on what the data pertain to, they may be obsolete. In fact, most of the data we uncovered is more than a decade old, including some of the data described in this section. However, what we chose to include is pertinent to the teenage population of Pittsboro. Our selection of demographic information was based on our secondary research on teens in the community. In this section we discuss our analysis of demographics and their relevance to the teens of Pittsboro.

## *Age*

Data from the State Office of Planning estimates that in 1996, adolescents, ages 11-18, made up only 11% of the population, while senior citizens, ages 65 and up, made up 20% (Chatham County Economic Development Corporation, 1998). While, this data are several years old and apply to the entire county, we believe they are relevant in this case, particularly in their ramifications at the city level. For instance, Pittsboro has turned much of its focus to its senior citizen population, which is expected to mirror the county and national trend by increasing over the next few years. Illustrative of this is the fact that in the town of Pittsboro alone, where the population is estimated at around 2,237 (Office of State Planning, 1999), there are four retirement communities and/or assisted living facilities, including Galloway Ridge at the Fearington Village, the Somerset House, the Pittsboro Bible Assembly, and the Laurels of Chatham. In addition, the Chatham Council on Aging is headquartered in Pittsboro. Their new facility, located behind the Pittsboro campus of Central Carolina Community College and on the same land as recently developed luxury homes, is situated across from a dilapidated Social Services building, which is home to several services including Chatham Together, a group dedicated to assisting disadvantaged youth. While ageism is not a blatant issue in Pittsboro, the location of resources geared toward the various age groups warrants some consideration. This is especially important when considering that Galloway Ridge is located in the beautiful rolling pastures of the exclusive Fearington community, eight miles south of Chapel Hill, and that the Somerset House is positioned near thriving businesses, a church, and residential lots, while the Teen Center is located next to a rundown car lot in what is considered to be the “bad part of town.” And, because teens without the company of adults have been branded as nuisances and

relegated to the sidewalks and the traffic circle since being kicked out of several establishments, they are left with the impression that they are not welcome in their own town.

### *Education*

Students in Pittsboro attend one of the six district schools, which include Pittsboro Elementary, Perry W. Harrison, Moncure, North Chatham, Horton Middle, and Northwood High (see School District Map in Appendix C). Most of the teens attend Horton or Northwood, which are the town's only two secondary schools (Chatham County Schools, 2001). Therefore, we consider schools and education as means to define our adolescent population. In fact, much of the data that we gleaned from the schools, particularly Horton and Northwood, are what we extracted to roughly characterize the adolescent community of Pittsboro with respect to performance indicators, future plans, and ethnic affiliation. Detailed data adapted from Chatham County Schools (CCS) Profiles (2001) for students at Horton and Northwood are located in Table 2 in Appendix C. Performance indicators and future plans are found in Tables 3 through 6. Ethnic affiliation will be described later.

According to the CCS Profiles, 413 students attended Horton and 760 students attended Northwood during the 1999-2000 school year. Out of the attending students, 13 at Horton were retained in the same grade, compared with 81 at Northwood, where 51 students dropped out of school.

Some of the special services in both schools focus on: Limited English Proficiency students, of which there are four at Horton and 16 at Northwood; the migrant population, represented by three students at Horton and six students at Northwood; and Academically Intellectually Gifted Students (AIG), which consist of 80 students at Horton and 88 students at Northwood.

As a measure of parental involvement in their children's education, we also looked at CCS Profiles' parents' membership in the 1999-2000 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). 36 parents were involved at the middle school, while 117 parents participated at the high school.

Performance data indicate how students are faring in school. At Horton, students in all grades scored mostly at level three or four (out of four possible) on reading and math tests. In addition, their scores on computer competency increased over the past four school years. Students at Northwood, on average, scored higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in 2000 than those during the previous year whereas scores on Advanced Placement (AP) tests remained steady. On high school performance exams, most students scored at level two or three (out of four possible) in all but one subject (CCS Profiles, 2001).

To get a sense of the future of Pittsboro teens, we felt it was important to look at the graduating seniors. We found that in 2000, 149 students graduated from Northwood. This is a 19% increase in the graduation rate from the previous year. Also, 5 high school certificates were awarded. Of the graduating students, 49% planned to enroll in a four-year college or university, 34% in a community college, and 3% in a trade, technical, or business school. 2% of the graduating seniors planned to join the military, 2% planned to seek employment, while 9% had "other" plans (CCS Profiles, 2001). These data, in particular, are aligned with opinions of some of the service providers we interviewed, who say that while most students in Pittsboro go on to college or other schooling, there are still a considerable number who pursue other avenues.

### *Ethnic Affiliation*

Although somewhat apparent among Pittsboro adults, ethnic affiliation seems to be less of an issue for teens. According to one service provider, teen social networks are racially diverse and adolescents are not really affected by the racial problems that adults face or that may be

typical of living in the South. Kids of all races supposedly socialize with each other in the schools, where the ethnic make-up is largely White and African American, as well as outside of school, where the ethnic composition is only somewhat different. The ethnic composition of the middle school and high school in Pittsboro is found in Table 1 in Appendix C. In brief, Horton Middle is 31% African American, 66% White, 2% Hispanic, and 1% other. Similarly, Northwood High is 27% African American, 70% White, 1.8% Hispanic, and 1.2% other (CCS Profiles, 2001). These statistics reflect a slightly larger African American population than that of the town, which is around 20%, and a slightly smaller White population, which in Pittsboro is more than 70% (Interview data, 2000). While provider interviews suggest that ethnic affiliation is not a significant issue for teens, conversations with community members suggest that racial attitudes parents might have may influence interactions among teens, particularly if race determines where teens can and will hang out.

### **Health**

Another important issue is health. Essential to life for Pittsboro teens, adolescent health and the goal of improving it are what initially brought us to the community. With the charges presented to us by Maria and the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health, we were given an adolescent focus within our assigned community and took that opportunity to discover all the factors that affect adolescents and their well-being. Thus, we see health demographic information as particularly important. The issues that we examined were drug use, leading causes of death, crime, and STDs and teen pregnancy.

Like much of our secondary data, health information is measured at the county level. Thus, we apply this information to Pittsboro with caution. However, because a large number of

students who live outside the city limits attend school and other functions in Pittsboro, or use its services and resources, we feel it is necessary to report the data.

### *Drug Use*

According to the 2000 Chatham County Schools Alcohol and Other Drug Survey, drug use decreased in the county between 1999 and 2000. Although we cannot speculate that these data accurately reflect Pittsboro teens, we feel that they are worth examining since providers suggest that drugs impact teens across the county. While more specific results about drug use are outlined in Table 7, Appendix C, important conclusions will be discussed here.

The summary of findings from the survey reveals several points with regard to tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, inhalant, and other drug use among Chatham County teens. First, students tend to see tobacco as the most harmful of all the drugs, while they believe their friends and parents see marijuana as the most harmful. Second, the number of students who report they drink and drive dropped to its lowest level at 6%, while the number of students who report that they have ridden with someone intoxicated remained level, but at its lowest since 1990. Third, since 1998, early experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and inhalant use decreased among students who report drug use sixth grade or earlier. Except for experimentation with marijuana, which has remained level, this decrease among experimentation with drugs also holds true for this who report drug use eighth grade or earlier. A fourth finding is that lifetime and habitual use of all drugs decreased since 1998, with inhalant and tobacco use showing the most significant changes. Fifth, the use of drugs before and after school is down as is the number of students who believe that it is easy to get drugs at school. Finally, students are having a more difficult time buying cigarettes or alcohol at convenience stores.

Overall, it appears from these data that alcohol and drug use is declining in Chatham County. However, its presence still causes concern for community members and providers, leading us to assume that alcohol and drug use will continue to have a significant impact on Pittsboro adolescents.

### *Leading Causes of Death*

Using the Health of Chatham 2000 provided by the Chatham County Health Improvement Project (CCHIP) we found that the Top 10 Causes of Premature Death in Chatham County from 1994-1998 were heart disease, cancer, stroke, motor vehicle and other unintended injuries, pneumonia and influenza, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, diabetes, homicide, suicide, and Septicemia. A comparison of Chatham County to North Carolina shows that motor vehicle injury deaths are higher in Chatham County than in North Carolina. This could be explained by the fact that rural counties usually show higher motor vehicle deaths than urban counties. Chatham County did reach and surpass the goals of Healthy Carolinians 2000 to decrease mortality rates for heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and other injuries. Healthy Carolinians 2000 objectives were not met for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and unintentional motor vehicle injuries. Accidents and injuries, especially motor vehicle injuries, are the highest risk for those under 20 years of age. This last fact is very important since there is such a reliance on motor vehicle transportation in the county, particularly among teens seeking entertainment and recreation outside of Pittsboro. Thus, the community's teens might be at particular risk, since they have to rely so much on car transport to get around.

### *Crime*

Research at the Jordan Institute for Families in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill suggests that the earlier youths engage in crime,

aggression/violence, drop out of school, or begin using drugs, the greater the likelihood that they will have chronic and increasing problems in the future (NC Office of Juvenile Justice, 2000). For instance, McCord and Ensminger (1995) found that teacher ratings of aggression at age 6 predicted arrests for violent crimes up to age 33. In another study, it was reported that two-thirds of boys with official arrests for violence by age 26 had high teacher ratings of aggressive behavior at ages 10 and 14 (Stattin & Magnuson, 1989). A close examination of crime statistics among teens in Pittsboro is therefore necessary to assess the health of adolescents now and in the future. Again, like most of our data, this information exists at the county level. However, we will report it in this case because the Pittsboro teen community encompasses more than just those teens who live within the city limits.

While more detailed crime data for Chatham County is presented in Appendix C, Table 8, a brief summary follows. The rate of juveniles' first appearance in court in 1995 was 52 per 1,000 youth, while the rate of juvenile arrests in Chatham County in subsequent years up to 1998 for youth ages 6 to 14 remained steady at zero. The rate of school violence and safety violations for the county remained steady at 5.5 per 1,000 teens between 1997 and 1999, which fell from 13.9 per 1,000 in 1996. In comparison, the average rate for North Carolina between 1997 and 1999 was 6.1 per 1,000 teens and 6.6 in 1996. Fortunately, there were no reported cases of firearm possession at school in Chatham County between 1995 and 1999, and juvenile arrests for weapon law violations have steadily decreased since 1994, from five per 1,000 teens to one per 1,000 teens in 1998. On average, the overall rate of crimes and arrests for teens in Chatham County have been well below that of the state in the last several years.



### *Nutrition and Exercise*

Although we do not have documented reports of this information, interviews with school nurses at Horton Middle School reveal that obesity is a growing problem among Pittsboro youth and teens. In fact, most of the visits to the school clinic are for weight problems. Factors contributing to this are the lack of access to information about healthy eating, lack of access to healthy food options, and the lack of access to recreation. A vicious cycle develops when teens have no nearby recreational center to access, (as is the case in Pittsboro), and look to other options instead, such as eating. And when little to no healthy food options are present, they eat whatever they can.

### *STDs and Teen Pregnancy*

Our final health topic examined STDs and teen pregnancy. Chatham County Health Department statistics indicate that for teens younger than age 14, the rate of sexually transmitted disease diagnosis in 1997 was 14.1 per 1,000 teens; a statistic which is only 4.8 points below that of North Carolina. By comparison, health department data show a much more alarming rate for teen pregnancy. In fact, while teen pregnancy rates for the state have decreased over the last decade, those for the county have increased. In 1994, the teen pregnancy rate was 90.4 per 1,000 teens between the ages of 15 and 19, while the rate for North Carolina was 95.4 per 1,000 teens between the ages of 15 and 19. In contrast, the county rate in 1998 hovered around 96.8 per 1,000 teens, whereas the state rate had dropped to 85.5 per 1,000 teens. Even more appalling were the six pregnancies among 10-14 year olds in 1998, a rate of 4.5 per 1000 teens between the ages of 10 and 14.

Although STDs among adolescents are critical to consider, teen pregnancy has drawn more attention to the county over the past few years because of its noticeably high rates.

Chatham's startling teen pregnancy rates prompted graduate students from the Maternal and Child Health Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health to conduct a survey to investigate Chatham teens' knowledge about sexual health and pregnancy and STD prevention. Results of the survey revealed that "adolescents in the County need more information about reproductive health services. Many teens do not know basic facts about their own reproductive health and are not prepared to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease." (See Table 9, Appendix C, for detailed survey results)

Certainly, STDs and teen pregnancy have an impact on both teens and others in the community due to the issues' myriad of social and economic consequences. But what is even more contentious than the problems that ensue is the discussion sparked from legislation related to the issues, specifically the debate over North Carolina's Abstinence Until Marriage Legislation for school health curriculum. And, since the county health department is located in Pittsboro, these concerns may have a much greater influence on the local community. The effects could be felt further if rates continue to rise and people respond by assessing adolescents more frequently and to a greater extent. It will be interesting to not only follow the research and reactions of the community to the information, but to also monitor the impact that the issues will have on teens as data continue to surface.

### **Income**

According to the Chatham County Statistical Abstract, per capita income for Chatham County in 1990 was \$20,721. Unfortunately, neither Pittsboro nor teen-specific data is available for income. It is estimated, however, that most of the income earned by Pittsboro residents comes primarily from employment in professional and other services (39.9%), manufacturing (18.7%), and wholesale and retail trade (18.4%). One of the primary employers of those

working in manufacturing is Townsends, Inc., a poultry processing company. It employs over 405 full-time employees from the immediate and surrounding areas. Adding to the established industries, newer technologies have brought additional jobs to Pittsboro, such as computer software development at Blast, Inc. Blast, however, only employs about 20 people full-time. Besides these industries, Pittsboro residents also receive their income through employment in schools and the government.

For Pittsboro teens, employment comes in the form of retail and service jobs, particularly in fast-food restaurants and grocery stores. Other means of earning income are babysitting and other such household tasks. Interestingly, according to one service provider, most of the income a teen earns is not spent in the town of Pittsboro, but is used to save up for a car or to get out of town for entertainment.

### **Transportation**

Closely related to income and employment is transportation. Because 41% of Pittsboro residents commute to work outside of town, transportation, and resulting traffic, are issues worth mentioning. Two U.S. highways intersect at the courthouse circle in Pittsboro. U.S. 15-501 leads north to Chapel Hill and south to Sanford. U.S. Highway 64 travels west to Siler City and east to Raleigh. This structure results in heavy commuter traffic moving through town. Although the traffic circle system in the center of Pittsboro alleviates some of the bottleneck, the road structure also has led a large number of travelers passing through Pittsboro on their way to other destinations. While this has increased tourism, it has also magnified traffic problems. In addition, congestion downtown makes it a dangerous place for teens walking along the streets and sidewalks after school. It is hoped that the construction of the Highway 15-501 by-pass that will be opening this year may ameliorate traffic difficulties in the downtown area.

Because the only public transportation system in Pittsboro, Chatham Transit, serves only those with health needs, the main transportation problem for adolescents centers on the inability to get around. This deficiency in public transport for teens and a clear dependence on motor vehicles that contributes significantly to the lack of access to recreation and other activities among adolescents without cars. From our own experience in trying set up adolescent focus groups, we learned how necessary transportation is for teens to participate in activities.

### **Resources Available**

Pittsboro has a plethora of resources available to the community, especially considering that it is a relatively small town. The availability may be due to the fact that Pittsboro is the county seat, meaning that the majority of services offered are at the county level and not just applicable to Pittsboro. However, being located in Pittsboro makes services more accessible to residents of Pittsboro. Several of the resources available are to address the host of social issues confronting all communities, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and at-risk children.

There are other resources available to enhance the community such as local churches, Pittsboro Memorial Library, the 4-H clubs, GirlScouts/BoyScouts, the Pittsboro Teen Center, Central Carolina Community College, Rural Advancement Foundation International, Jordan Lake and the Haw River. Jordan Lake and the Haw River are the two major recreational parks in Pittsboro. Jordan Lake State Recreational Area offers 13,900 acres of recreational opportunities such as boating, camping, fishing, swimming, and hiking. The Haw River, which runs through Chatham County and eventually into Jordan Lake, is also available to residents of Pittsboro and the surrounding community. Table 10 in Appendix F lists commonly utilized resources, their telephone numbers, and the major purposes of these agencies and organizations. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of the resources available in Pittsboro. Rather, it is a list of the major

organizations and agencies that we came into contact with throughout the Community Diagnosis process.

The most valuable resource of Pittsboro is its people. There is a diverse population in Pittsboro and though there may be challenges, this diversity gives Pittsboro many strengths. Pittsboro has many voices: the young, the old, people who have been born and raised in Pittsboro, those who have just moved to Pittsboro recently, the Latino population, African-Americans, Republican, Democrats, and active community members. The list could go on, but the common denominator of all of these people is that they call Pittsboro home and add a flavor to Pittsboro that is attracting more and more newcomers every year.

## **SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS**

### **Methodology**

Once we had compiled all of our secondary data sources and reviewed them for the most pertinent information we were ready to start interviewing service providers that worked in Pittsboro in order to gain their “outsider’s perspective” of the community. Our secondary data, together with our informal impressions from time spent in the community, informed the questions that made up our interview guide for the service providers and the types of probes we should consider during the interviews. We pretested our initial interview guide with our preceptor, Maria Hitt, and made minor adjustments using suggestions and feedback from her. Our revised interview guide was used with all of our subsequent service provider interviews. It included questions on services provided, Pittsboro as a community, and adolescents in Pittsboro.

Since we wanted to get a picture of what life was like for teenagers in Pittsboro we compiled a list of service providers that interact with teens in their work. We interviewed people that worked in the schools, the court system, the health department and various other social

service agencies. These included two middle school nurses, one high school nurse, the director of minority affairs for Chatham County, the substance abuse counselor for Chatham County, a health education teacher at Northwood, the director of Chatham Together, Chatham County's recreational director, the youth pastor at Pittsboro Baptist Church, a Pittsboro family physician, a juvenile court judge, and the health educator at the Chatham Health Department. These service providers and agencies were identified as key informants as a result of multiple discussions with the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health and through weeks of researching agencies that have consistent and extended contact with teens. A complete list of people that we interviewed is included in Appendix B.

The types of agencies/institutions represented in the interviews focused on areas of research the team members identified. These sectors include government and policy, education, health care, religion, recreation and community. The rationale for selecting these particular sectors and agencies was based on observations and research of Pittsboro's past and current issues in addition to discussions with Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health members.

Each interview that we conducted was tape recorded with permission from the individual being interviewed. There was also a note-taker at each interview to record comments and non-verbals during the interview. We chose to transcribe all of our interviews because of our goal to perform inductive research. By transcribing, we had a written record of the entire interview and were able to revisit the transcriptions as necessary throughout the community diagnosis process. We were able to pull our themes directly from the transcriptions and incorporate many quotes into our final document as well as the community forum, helping to ensure that we presented a description of the views and concerns of our respondents as accurately as possible.

### **Themes from Service Provider Interviews**

Because Pittsboro has such a long history and has retained a small and stable population until recently, it has remained a deeply rooted community. Although outsiders are attracted to the area, it is still very much populated with families who have lived there for generations. This deep-rootedness has led some providers to express concern over their inability to move the town council to consider or lend support to new ideas and programs. Despite this frustration, other providers mentioned that one of the strengths of Pittsboro is its comparative openness to considering new ideas and a diversity of views and backgrounds. In comparison to other towns in Chatham County, Pittsboro was identified to be the most liberal and accommodating area. One provider attributed this to Pittsboro's proximity to Chapel Hill and UNC because only 17 miles separate these two areas. Another strength identified by providers was the ability of Pittsboro's residents to overcome racial, political, and religious divisions when there was a crisis, and to work together to solve it and help each other.

The majority of providers interviewed mentioned lack of recreation as a concern. Often, the respondent listed the lack of options as no movie theater anywhere in the county, no public swimming pool, no YMCA, no recreation center, no malls, no game rooms, no pool tables, and nowhere for teens to hang out. Service providers mentioned that teens have been discouraged from congregating at the library, the local eating establishments, and most antique stores downtown. Those adolescents who can drive go often to Chapel Hill, Raleigh, or Durham; however, those who do not have access to a car or are underage, and do not participate in after-school activities, have little to do in the afternoons or on weekends. Although there is a teen center that is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons as a place for teens ages 11-15 to hang out after school, few service providers were aware of this recreational option. On the

policy level, providers mentioned that the recreation issue is being addressed through the Parks and Recreation Plan, a recent election issue. This plan would provide for land acquisition and development into county parks, with facilities catering to a variety of recreational interests.

Providers also mentioned the lack of commercial industry in Pittsboro as a concern because it also limits the opportunities of adolescents in the area of finding employment. Except for the few positions open at a handful of chains such as Hardee's or Pizza Hut, adolescents must leave town in order to find a job. Therefore, many younger teens or those who do not have cars are not able to find employment.

Several of the providers interviewed identified this lack of opportunities as the main determinant underlying a high rate of substance abuse and unsafe sexual practices among Pittsboro adolescents. One provider even suggested that if something were not done soon, Pittsboro would eventually become an unsafe place to live. Secondary information from the police department, newspaper articles, and the health department, confirms that drug abuse and trafficking is, indeed, one of the issues facing youth in Pittsboro.

Another issue facing Pittsboro identified by service providers was that of growth and development. Chatham County, in part because of its close proximity to the Research Triangle urban areas, is facing what many refer to as "unbridled growth". Many "bedroom communities" to Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Durham, and other cities are springing up throughout the county. Although the growth is most intense in the northeastern part of the county, it also affects Pittsboro. Of specific concern is the widening of 15-501, one of the highways going through Pittsboro, to four lanes, and the creation of a bypass around the town. Some providers predict the bypass will render Pittsboro a "ghost town", while others foresee it resulting in significant



growth and development, since commuting to Chapel Hill and Raleigh will become much more efficient.

Education was another issue discussed frequently among service providers. Among providers working in county schools, there was a general sense of dissatisfaction regarding policies they must work under. Among providers outside the education system, there was a general question regarding the quality of education provided to Chatham County residents. Chatham County educators and educational administrators appear to be most frustrated with school policies regarding abstinence-only sexual education and school accountability, both of which they feel cause great harm to at-risk adolescents. Two other providers referenced the systemic emphasis on good test scores, known as school accountability, that precludes giving at-risk students the time and attention they need to make healthy choices.

Other comments concerning quality of education may be related to the impending teacher crisis. Chatham County teachers are paid supplements significantly lower than in surrounding counties. This fact, coupled with the imminent resignation of many dedicated school teachers, means that it may soon be very difficult to fill vacant positions with high quality teachers, and to retain them in employment. This issue is only exacerbated by the overall growth in the county, which necessitates new schools and more teachers. Pittsboro providers discussed the need of the local school board, largely composed of older members whose children have grown up and finished school, to recognize and respond to the growing needs present in the school system.

One of the challenges on which there appears to be disagreement is that of racism or racial tension. Pittsboro is around 20% Black with a much smaller percentage of Latinos than other towns in Chatham County. Overall, it seems people agree that racism is not as much of an issue in Pittsboro as it is elsewhere; however, there is a question as to whether or not it is still

something that needs to be addressed. Pittsboro's history is certainly replete with racism: its effects are shown all the way from the institution of slavery present at its founding; to the white supremacist groups formed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century supporting Black disenfranchisement; to the current town presence of the "all-white swimming pool". Regardless of Pittsboro's history, however, one provider told us that racial issues were something that adolescents really came together around. Another dismissed the possibility that there might be racial tension in school, and still another stated that the racial tension wasn't any different than you might expect anywhere else in the South.

Another issue explored was the influence of faith communities on adolescent norms and behaviors. Providers seem to agree that churches are a primary way Pittsboro residents define their own communities of identity; however, they know little about area churches and the actual impact they have on Pittsboro. The extent of teen involvement in these faith communities is also unclear.

A further challenge identified by providers is that of changing values, both in adolescent culture and in the town and nation as a whole. They credit society's and families' declining values and norms as one of the reasons adolescents seem to be more seriously involved in substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, and crimes.

Providers, especially those working with teens seem to universally acknowledge that adolescents are good, creative, and energetic at heart and advocate for resources to be devoted and tailored to them. However, there appears to be very little exploration of the idea of teens being a useful, vital part of a community. No programs were found which seek to mobilize adolescents to identify and help resolve problems in their communities, or come together in other forms of social action. Interventions and programs targeted toward teens tended to be more

reactive in terms of keeping them out of trouble, than proactive such as recognizing and utilizing their potential to serve and benefit the community. One service provider is currently trying to reverse this trend by forming a teen advocacy group for this very purpose.

**PART 2: AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF PITTSBORO**  
**GAINING COMMUNITY MEMBER PERSPECTIVES**

**Methodology**

The interview guide we used with community members was modified from our service provider guide to elicit what it is like to live, rather than work, in Pittsboro. The guide included questions about family, neighborhood, school, and health and social issues. The focus group guide was much shorter than the individual interview guide and was intended to guide an open conversation between several community members about issues facing Pittsboro and community resources available to address these issues. The guides for both types of interviews and the focus group are attached to this report in Appendix A. Also included in Appendix A are the fact sheets that were read to each individual that was interviewed describing the interview process. All interview and research materials were reviewed and approved by the School of Public Health Institutional Review Board.

The Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health was invaluable in helping us identify key informants to interview. We also contacted people that we had met at the Family Health and Fitness Fair and the Pittsboro Street Fair. The community members that we spoke with were people that we felt could provide new perspectives on or add to the information that had come out of our service provider interviews. As with the service provider interviews, each interview and focus group was tape recorded after permission was obtained from the individual(s) being interviewed. A note-taker was present at each interview and all interviews were transcribed.

With a special interest in Pittsboro adolescents we recognized the importance of hearing their voice. We received approval from the Institutional Review Board for Study on Human Subjects to conduct focus groups with adolescents but we were not permitted to contact them

directly or conduct individual interviews. This stipulation, and the parental consent that had to be obtained, proved to be difficult barriers to getting focus groups with adolescents set up. Through various community contacts we tried to set up several focus groups with adolescents in Pittsboro. Unfortunately, none of them happened due to various reasons. We recognized that this lack of adolescent voice might lead to a picture of the Pittsboro community that is different than if we had adolescent input and so we tried to gather teen voice in other ways.

### **Limitations of our Methodology**

Although the goal of the community diagnosis project is to gain entree into the community and many attempts were made to gather an objective perspective of the Pittsboro community, it is impossible for the process not to be guided somewhat by our own perceptions and assumptions. We would like to take an opportunity here to recognize the potential for this in our community diagnosis. We tried to get a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives regarding the Pittsboro community; however, it was infeasible to talk to everyone. Therefore, we made decisions on who we thought would be valuable people to interview based on the information we were trying to elicit from the community. We looked towards obvious places where we could find people that would have input into what life was like as a teen in Pittsboro, but we may have overlooked some valuable sources of information.

Another limitation to our data collection is the lack of diversity in the population of people we interviewed. Certain subpopulations within Pittsboro were more accessible than other subpopulations. We have great representation from white adults in Pittsboro but have little voice from the African-American population and no voice from the Hispanic population. Due to barriers mentioned before we also had limited access to teen voice in Pittsboro. We realize that this has shaped the information that we have gathered and the issues that have emerged and that,

had we had greater representation from these other subgroups, the resulting picture may have been different.

Our role as “outsiders” coming in to conduct a community diagnosis on a community that we were not members of most likely had an impact both on how we approached the project and on how the community approached the project. We, as a team of public health students from the University of North Carolina came into the community with a background of education on the technique of community diagnosis. We also had our own political and philosophical viewpoints that may have affected how we approached the community by guiding our decision on who we should talk to, how we interpreted what we heard, and what leads to follow.

In addition to us bringing our assumptions into the process, the community members also may have had perceptions and assumptions about us that affected their participation in the process. We experienced some resistance from some community members who were hesitant to talk to students from Chapel Hill. A few residents appeared to feel over-studied and frustrated at being the subject of an academic assignment. This skepticism may have kept them from getting involved in the Community Diagnosis process and may have skewed the voice we were able to collect from the community.

## **THEMES FROM COMMUNITY MEMBER INTERVIEWS**

### **Adult Community Members**

Several community members struggled with their definition of Pittsboro; most community members seemed to agree that the community of Pittsboro encompassed more than just the territorial jurisdiction, and included much of the surrounding county. Many who lived outside the actual town still identified themselves as being from Pittsboro. One thing which all Pittsboro adult community members agreed about was that Pittsboro had many strengths which

made them happy to live there. They identified Pittsboro as a “strong, supportive community” in a good location: close to Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Durham and yet still with the “feel of country life”.

Community members also made clear that the community of Pittsboro is not homogeneous, but is made up of distinct group. These include racial groups as well as groups defined by their length of residence in Pittsboro: “There’s very different groups of people. You know, there’s sort of the people that have been here forever, and their culture. And there’s sort of the more younger people that are probably mostly hippies,” commented one respondent. Groups are often defined by their political leanings: whether they are conservative or more “progressive”. One focus group was self-identified as being on the progressive side, and participants spoke of their community as both distinct and close-knit:

There’s a mix in here (*indicating this room*) which is what some people would call liberal – us folk – or progressive – and we all tend to fit into that category so therefore we all know each other – everybody – it’s tight in the sense of culture, and it’s tight in the sense of the type of entertainment we enjoy – it’s tight in the sense of all the people we know – it’s tight in the since that we all hang out and go at one point or another to the General Store – it’s tight in the sense that we all belong or have, at one point or another, belonged to the same organizations, because there’s a great deal of volunteerism.

Residents’ pride in Pittsboro became apparent in this same focus group after the facilitator summed up the list of issues they had been discussing and asked if there were any others they wanted to talk about. Apparently disturbed by the facilitator’s focus on weaknesses, the community member defensively replied, “It’s a lovely place – God’s country. It’s a great place to live. We all enjoy it tremendously in spite of the things that are detracting.”

One of the major issues which is detracting from the quality of life of native Pittsboro residents is growth and development. People that have recently moved to Pittsboro find it an

ideal town to live and raise a family and recommend it to others. This causes a great deal of nervousness among those who want to keep the rural nature of the county intact. One community member stated, “For a town of comparable size in North Carolina, we have more than our share of environmentalists here, and artists who really have strong opinions on matters of growth so that it (Pittsboro) doesn’t become like a Cary or Fuquay Varina. I was down there recently and it was a subdivision city. And a lot of people here don’t want that.” In addition, when asked what they would tell someone who was considering moving to Pittsboro, one focus group member replied, “Well, I would say that they shouldn’t plan on coming – that’s what I would tell them. I’d try to think of all the negative parts about living here.” He was echoed by another participant: “I agree. I would discourage them from moving here, if I could. Keep them away so we could keep to ourselves.”

All residents, regardless of their opinions about newcomers, recognize that growth is inevitable and would like to see Pittsboro grow responsibly. With growth comes a need for the infrastructure to support it. Though Chatham County’s growth is mostly residential, many argue that this is not enough because it does not provide a tax base that can support the growth (with money for schools most of all; but also for sewer, water, and transportation). There are many suggestions about how to cope, as well as many disagreements. Some community members argue for the need to combine residential growth with commercial or industrial growth so that the tax base can expand. However, the two major industrial growth opportunities offered to Chatham County over the last six months, an enormous landfill to serve four states and a CP&L nuclear waste facility, have both carried serious consequences for the environmental health of the county and been the subject of much heated debate. After a substantial surge of community protest, the landfill proposal was withdrawn (though many suspect it may resurface in the



future), but the nuclear waste facility remains a current issue. Residents who argue for the need for industry or commercial development to add to the tax base urge the need to find creative ways to locate and attract businesses that will not bring down the quality of life. “Everybody’s looking for the ideal, smokeless industry that does not pollute, that employs high class, high paying individuals,”, commented one interviewee, “and those are hard to find.”

Increasing the residential tax base is also a subject of emotional debate. Property tax evaluations this year dramatically raised the value of most Chatham County properties, and some more than doubled. This will probably result in higher taxes for most residents. Some argue that this is a necessary step to bring properties up to their current value rates and provide needed money for the school system, while many others feel cheated since they do not believe they are receiving the public services such taxes merit. One chatlist member even suggested picketing the tax offices. Another bone of contention is a proposed bill to levy an “impact tax” on any new residential developments to support the cost of new and expanded schools.

Community members, though reticent to see new development and industries, can at the same time recognize the possible benefits. A Teen Center board member commented on how the development they didn’t really want coming in could also become something to sustain or increase Teen Center services. “We may be sitting in a good chair and that may be this year or five years from now if we play our cards right”, he said. Thus, there is conflict not only between people with opposing viewpoints, but within individual community members over the issue of growth and development. Many community members are struggling to identify exactly where the perfect compromise exists between unbridled growth and “smart growth”.

Education was a common theme discussed by community members. People felt that, within Chatham County, there is a real range in the quality of schools. Areas of the county that

have experienced more growth have better schools than areas that have not experienced such growth. Growth is causing the schools to become crowded and the tax base isn't there to deal with that growth or to pay the teachers wages that are competitive with other surrounding counties. This combination of growth and lack of resources causes many community members to be concerned over the quality of schools. One community member stated, "In Chatham County we're not able to pay our teachers as much as other counties, like Alamance and Durham and all those other counties. So what happens is the good teachers might come here for two years and they can just go 30 minutes away and make a lot more money."

Transportation also came up as a concern among community members. There is limited public transportation system in the county, which makes it very difficult for teens that don't have their license or for other community members that do not have a car to get around. The lack of transportation limits the activities and opportunities that are available to the teens. One community member stated, "If you have a car, and parents are willing to take you places, then there are lots of activities for you. If you don't have parents who have the time or means of transportation, there is nothing." Some community members also expressed concern over safety of the roads in Pittsboro. As a result of the many high traffic roads that cut through the town, it is more difficult to run to a friend's house across town. Also, Chatham County roads are narrow and there are not many streetlights, making it a dangerous place for inexperienced adolescent drivers.

Lack of recreational opportunities for community members, and especially for the younger population in Pittsboro, was a topic recognized by all of the community members that we spoke with. One community member said, "I'm kind of in a mentoring relationship-and the one young lady, she is bored beyond bored – bored to the point of being very angry about being

bored.” Community members are concerned that the lack of fun, creative ways for teens to spend their time will force them to turn to unhealthy, risky behaviors such as the use of drugs and sex. There are some organized sports offered by the schools and the Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department but there is not much else available for adolescents who are not interested in competitive sports or who cannot get a ride to practices and games. There are several groups in Pittsboro who recognize this problem and are trying to address it. Two of these groups are the Teen Center board and those working towards a Pittsboro YMCA.

The Teen Center offers a place for teens who are between 11 and 15 years old to hang out after school. The Pittsboro Teen Center began six years ago by a group of concerned parents who decided they needed to provide a place for their children to go after school. They held some fundraisers and gained access to an old community-owned building about a half a mile from Horton Middle School. The Teen Center began with teens themselves on the advisory committee. These teens would help make the rules, decide what was going to go on, and even help interview and vote for potential directors. At one time, the teens who attended were numerous and active enough to raise their own funds to take a trip to Carowinds Amusement Park.

However, both interest in and attendance at the Teen Center have waned in the last year. Teens currently allowed at the center cannot be more than 15 years old, and it is rare to see over seven attendees in a certain day (and about half of those who do attend seem to be younger than 12 years). Many in the community do not appear to know about the Teen Center and many who do know do not attend. The current Board has found it extremely difficult to recruit volunteers for the Teen Center this year or raise any kind of sustained interest in the community. Board members find this hard to understand. “Maybe this is what happens when you start something,

you know,” commented one founding member, “because there’s a lot of excitement at the beginning, and it’s like, and then you have a wall and, you know, I can’t quite understand...”

Although board members persevere in their work with the Teen Center and hope to achieve non-profit status and perhaps eventually have a facility of their own, they are beginning to feel discouraged with the lack of community awareness and support.

Another group (with very little understanding of or contact with the Teen Center group) is working towards getting a YMCA in Pittsboro. It has been a difficult process because the population base is not big enough to support such a venture. A recent meeting with representatives from Chapel Hill explored the possibility of a Pittsboro YMCA slowly developing under the larger umbrella of the Chapel Hill YMCA. Some see a YMCA as being a long way off and so the question then becomes what to do in the meantime.

When asked about how teens contributed to the community, adults had trouble formulating an answer. One focus group member responded, “I’m sure they contribute in many, many ways – I don’t know what...” Like service providers, some community members seemed to struggle with the self-centeredness and immaturity they saw in adolescents. However, community members tended to agree on the fact that adolescents were the future of Pittsboro, and as the future were very important to the community. One community member framed the teens’ current contribution to the community in terms of their individual learning and development:

I think kids from 11 to 18 are ... exploring themselves and learning how to explore other people and learning about appreciation of diverse people and so really they’re contributing to the community by learning about others and by becoming accepting of others and really integrating all these sort of complex intersocial relationships in a more in-depth way. So it’s really by learning about those things, they’re contributing to the community in a larger sense.

A few community members commented on their desire to see more opportunities available for adolescents to become involved in community activities. One respondent expressed the desire for community involvement to be a credit requirement for high school juniors and seniors, so that they could get a sense of what's going on in the community and contribute to it.

### **Adolescent Community Members**

Although we were not able to conduct any formal focus groups with adolescents, we had an opportunity to hear their voice through several other avenues. Through our time volunteering at the Teen Center we had the opportunity to interact with adolescents on a more informal, casual level. This interaction allowed us to get an initial feeling of some of the issues that Pittsboro adolescents are facing as well as some of their strengths in addressing these issues. In addition to our contact at the Teen Center, the county health educator was able to survey some of the students that she works with at Northwood High School. Their responses to questions about school, substance abuse, self-esteem, violence, recreation and health were summarized providing a lot of rich, useful data on adolescent concerns. We also had access to information from a focus group done for another purpose at Horton Middle School. In general, many of the issues discussed by teens were similar to the ones that were brought up by both service providers and community members. Following are some of the most common themes that arose.

Issues relating to a lack of recreational facilities for adolescents were the most frequently cited ones. Teens in Pittsboro are craving places to “hang out” and spend the free time that they have during the evenings and weekends. Among the kinds of things that they wanted to see available were a movie theater, a bowling alley, an arcade, a community center with basketball courts and more parks and fields for them to play sports in.

In addition to improving recreational options for teens some of them also suggested more opportunities to get involved in school and the community, something some of the adults we talked to also want to see. Some teens wanted to see a wider variety of options available to them in school such as a larger arts program, the addition of a cosmetology program at Northwood High School and tutoring available during school and after school. Among the suggestions for opportunities made available to teens in the community were more concerts and carnivals, an opportunity for older teens to mentor younger teens through Chatham Together, basketball exhibitions that brought surrounding teams into the area to play, and other volunteer opportunities. One teen even suggested putting together an advisory board for teens in order to give them a voice, which is something that an adult in the community is also interested in doing. As one teen said, “More programs at the middle school level, sports, and big brother/big sister would encourage teens not to get started on bad behaviors like smoking and drugs.

Some of the teens also made suggestions for how to improve the Teen Center. Most of them knew it existed but felt that there wasn’t enough available there for them to do. They wanted to see computers and a game room put in and suggested more structured activities such as “movie night” and field trips. Another issue is the age restrictions at the Teen Center. Some high school students would like to see a Teen Center started that would be open to older teens.

Many of the suggestions made by the teens mentioned above would also help address the issue of the lack of employment opportunities for teens. There are not a lot of places for teens to find minimum wage retail or food service jobs within Pittsboro. If movie theaters and bowling alleys opened up there would be more jobs available to teens. In addition to expanding the options of paying jobs, volunteer opportunities would also provide teens with a structured, committed activity that helped them learn responsibility. For example, both the mentoring

suggestion and the advisory board for teens would require a regular time commitment from those involved. One community member felt that, if teens got more involved in the community, they would be more likely to stay in Pittsboro or return to Pittsboro after college.

There were many health issues brought up by the adolescents. Some teens wished there were more counselors available and more people to talk to about issues. They may be aware of services available to them such as the Health Department but, as one teen said, “Teens may be afraid to come to the health department, think they might be seen by someone they know, and are not sure if it is really confidential.”

With regard to most of the health issues discussed by the teens, most of them felt that peer pressure was a big problem and a reason for many of the risky behaviors taking place. Teen perceptions lead them to believe that most of the other teens around them are engaging in risky behaviors. One teen speculated that 75% of teens are pressured into risky behaviors. When asked what the major issues facing teens in Chatham County were, many of the teens mentioned issues surrounding teen pregnancy and pressure to have sex. Smoking, drugs and alcohol were also listed and some thought that there were too many teens using. Some teens suggested more education on both issues. Some wanted to see more drug abuse education while some wanted to see more birth control education in addition to the abstinence education that is provided in school.

Another concern of teens also needs to be considered when considering the issues mentioned above. Many teens don't have access to transportation and therefore, many of them highlighted the need for transportation options made available to them. The teens are going to need ways of getting to jobs, recreation and the health department and other social service

organizations. It was also mentioned that transportation to recreational opportunities already available in the area, such as Jordan Lake, was needed.

Finally, teens mentioned low self-esteem as an issue that many of them face. Some teens feel that their peers are super critical and think they are better than others and if someone is different than others they aren't accepted. Stereotypes from adults were also mentioned. A few teens suggested creating programs to address this issue of low self-esteem.

## **PITTSBORO COMMUNITY FORUM**

### **Forum Description**

From the outset of the Community Diagnosis process, we planned to hold a community forum after talking with providers and community members in Pittsboro. A community forum is an open public meeting to discuss issues relevant to the community. These can include both “burning issues” that need immediate attention and also less urgent issues that have persisted and still need addressing. The community forum is viewed as an opportunity to bring together concerned members of the community to initiate dialogue and collaborate with one another to institute pathways for change. Though there was no formal planning committee for the forum, it was a collective process that began at the beginning of the community diagnosis project with guidance and input from the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health. From the first visit to Pittsboro, we began to plan for the forum. We incorporated questions into our interview guides about which location and nights of the week would be most accommodating for Pittsboro residents. Tuesday night emerged as the best option since church activities and other obligations took priority most other weeknights, and Central Carolina Community College became the chosen locale due to its proximity, spacious accommodations, supply of chairs and tables, and availability.



Once the date and venue was decided upon, the formal planning process began. This included mailing invitations, preparing food, collecting supplies, organizing our research, and preparing materials. Although we employed many modes of advertisement were utilized, word of mouth was the most effective in reaching those who participated in the forum. We posted fliers in popular town venues such as schools, the General Store, and the Memorial Library, posted an announcement on the Chatham County Chatlist, placed an announcement in the Chatham Record, mailed personal invitations to over 50 people, and visited a middle school soccer team to tell them about the forum and distribute fliers. Our preceptor personally invited people to attend, as well.

Other preparations for the forum included planning the agenda and activities which would take place throughout the evening. Several members of the Community Diagnosis team participated in an empowerment class in order to incorporate empowerment methods of interactive participation into the forum. These methods facilitate participants to take control of issues facing their own community, through critically reflecting on the current situation and identifying attainable action goals to improve that situation. To identify and clearly present salient community issues, we transcribed and analyzed our interviews and focus groups to identify common community themes affecting adolescents. These themes became the focal point of the forum, which were encompassed in the main activity of the evening, Force Field Analysis, to be discussed later.

The forum was held on April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 7 to 9pm. The agenda was as follows:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 7:00-7:20 | Food, mingling, icebreaker                         |
| 7:20-7:35 | Introductions, explanation of Force Field Analysis |
| 7:35-7:40 | Deciding upon theme of choice for small group work |
| 7:40-8:20 | Force Field Analysis                               |
| 8:20-8:40 | Report back to larger group                        |
| 8:40-9:00 | Wrap up/Closing comments/Evaluation                |

The room was set up with a semi-circle of chairs to promote an open atmosphere for discussion and allow participants to feel that they were all on the same level. Salient community themes with quotes and pictures posted up around the room. These included recreation, transportation, opportunities for youth, education, growth and development, drugs and alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy, race relations, and community perceptions of teens/teen voice in the community. We also set up a refreshments table. Participants' first stop upon entry was a table set up with a sign-in sheet to record contact information. This sheet also designated boxes for participants to check indicating interest in receiving of the final document, a forum summary, or becoming part of a committee to continue dialogue initiated during the forum.

After signing in, participants moved on to our opening activity.: a table with an assortment of multi-colored "hands" cut from construction paper. Participants were encouraged to select a hand and answer the following questions:

What's one thing you like about living/working/going to school in Pittsboro?  
What's one thing you don't like about living/working/going to school in Pittsboro?  
What's one thing that would make Pittsboro a better place for teens?

Participants answered each question on a finger of their hand, decorated it, and then taped it upon a designated wall. Some of the answers to "what people like about Pittsboro" were: the people, the small town atmosphere, little traffic, the Haw River, and the size of the public schools. Some of the answers to "what they do not like" were: there is not much to do, it's small town, people's narrow views, school system apathy, no good walking trails, too many people moving here, and not enough restaurants and traffic. Answers to the final question about "what would make Pittsboro a better place for teens" included: more activities, a YMCA, "activities with

transportation”, a Boys & Girls Club, “real adolescent pregnancy prevention”, and “more after school programs promoting physical activity”.

After completing the “hands” activity, participants had a chance to help themselves to the refreshments. They could also walk around and look at the themes on the wall. This gave participants a chance to start thinking about community issues and discussing them informally with each other before the forum began.

At approximately 7:20, we introduced ourselves, our instructors, and our preceptors and opened with a brief statement of the purpose for the forum. Then the forum participants introduced themselves. They included providers and community members in Pittsboro. Among approximately twenty participants, the list included a County Commissioner, a county judge, several community members involved with the Chatham County Chatlist, a health educator, representatives from the “Body Shop” school-based health clinic, a reporter from the Chatham Record, a juvenile court counselor, a representative from Chatham Together, a substance abuse counselor, a post-doctoral student from UNC-Chapel Hill working with the community, and several members of the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health. Among these participants were also several concerned parents.

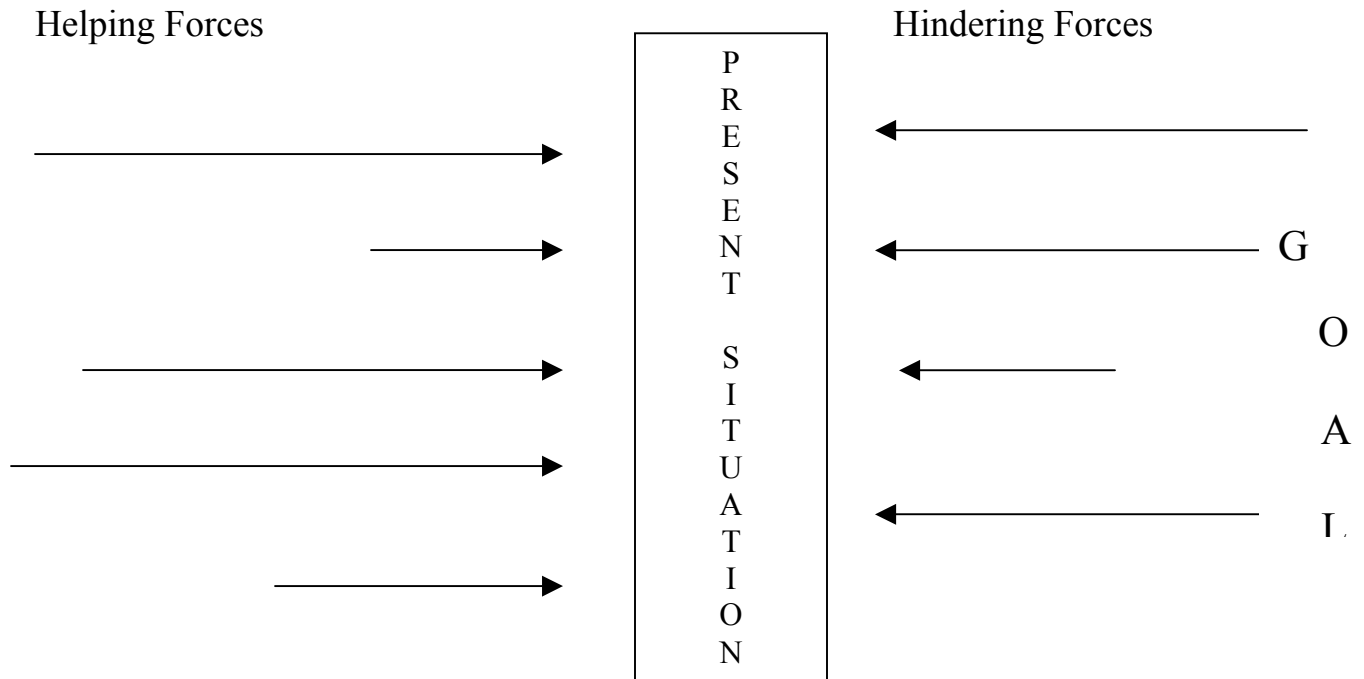
Following introductions, we described the forcefield analysis activity. Forcefield Analysis is an empowerment technique used for “listing, discussing, and evaluating the various forces for and against a proposed change” (Hope et al, 1995). This activity works best in groups of 3-5 people when they discuss a theme they are interested in and familiar with. First, the group identifies the present situation in their community related to the theme, as well as a goal they would like to work towards. The present situation is listed in the middle of a page and a goal is written on the right hand side of the page. The group then brainstorms all the “forces” which

hinder their goal from being realized (hindering forces), as well as all the forces which could help facilitate the realization of their goal (helping forces). On the left hand side of the present situation all “helping” forces are written and on the right side all the “hindering” forces are listed. The facilitator for each group might suggest types of forces to consider such as available resources, attitudes of people, organizational structures, vested interests, people, present or past practices, and social or organizational trends.

Arrows are then drawn with to correspond with each force listed. Arrows corresponding with helping forces point in the direction of the goal, while arrows corresponding with hindering forces point away from the goal. The length of each arrow indicates the strength of that force. After all the forces have been listed, the group chooses one to focus on. The chosen “force” becomes the new goal and action steps are listed which will facilitate community members to achieve that goal. Choosing a hindering force would suggest action steps towards reducing the strength of that force. Questions to consider both in rating the strength of a force and in choosing a force which represents a workable and reachable goal include: Are they (the forces) valid? How significant are each of them? Which ones can be altered? Which cannot? Which forces can be altered quickly? Which forces, if altered, would produce rapid change?

The diagram on the following page gives an idea of what Forcefield analysis “looks” like.

### What Forcefield Analysis looks like:



Note: Arrows can be the same length even on the same side since some forces may have the same strengths.

In order to facilitate the forcefield analysis discussion in the Pittsboro community forum, each participant received a colorful post-it note. The participants had five minutes to look at the displayed themes with relevant quotes and pictures and decide which theme they were most passionate about and wanted to discuss. They then placed the post-it note under the selected theme. After rating the themes the participants divided up into groups to discuss the theme they had selected. The five themes chosen for discussion were race relations and teen voice, STDs and teen pregnancy, transportation, recreation and opportunities for youth, and drugs and alcohol. A Community Diagnosis team member facilitated each group. The groups had approximately 30 minutes to do the activity and then reconvened in the larger group. A representative was self-selected from each group to report back to the larger group the current

situation related to their theme, the helping and hindering forces they perceived, the identified goal, and the action steps to achieve the goal.

### **Outcomes of the Forum**

By using force field analysis, participants at the forum moved together from identifying the current situation to developing numerous action steps that the community can take to address the issues they chose. The following is a description of each group's defined goals related to the current situation, forces affecting this situation, and action steps:

#### *Race Relations*

For the topic of race relations, one goal of the group was to hold a community forum surrounding racial issues to discuss topics such as interracial relationships. Another goal was to make the "all white" pool a community issue and to use it as a means to bring to light what's going on underneath the surface. The current situation regarding race relations was identified by the participants to be the lack of adults talking about racial issues, thus giving tacit approval to underlying racism in the face of a rapidly changing population. They also determined that differential treatments of different races exists in the schools and community. Hindering forces toward reaching their goals were identified as the fact that the pool is private, and that focusing on the pool might narrow and obscure the larger racial issues underneath. They also identified unspoken rules and history behind this deeply rooted issue as other possible hindering forces. They expressed concern that the community forum would end up "preaching to the choir" because people with racist attitudes wouldn't come to the meeting.

Helping forces and suggestions to reach these goals were the ideas of publicly challenging the "all white" pool, providing a public access pool open to everyone, and using triggers and the "SHOWED" method of discussion at the race relations community forum. They

also felt it was important to get youth involved in the meeting because they are most likely to have an integrated voice. Of these helping forces, giving youth a voice was prioritized and action steps toward achieving this goal include having focused discussions in after-school groups, having a film & discussion series open to the public or in the schools, and getting kids involved in decision making processes at community level. Logistically, they determined that having vans available to get kids to the community forums would be important. From these action steps, having a town hall in school/holding a school forum was determined as the best idea. This would involve giving the kids a chance to let their voices be heard in an organized fashion with no need to defend or debate their views. Logistically, they would like these voices to be recorded. Realistically, they determined that a potential problem with this idea is that there is currently no political/school board support for such an event and that parent voices would be needed as well, however, they may not come to the event.

### *Transportation*

For the issue of transportation, the goal set by the group was to provide teen transportation to all programs. The current situation regarding this issue was identified as a lack of transportation for teens in the area. Hindering forces identified as preventing attainment of the goal were racism, liability issues, cost, classism, tight politicians, and the fact that the idea was too practical.

Helping forces were identified as writing transportation into organizational grants, expanding Chatham Transit, and providing gasoline vouchers. Action steps identified by the group were popularizing this view of the need for transportation, educating people on grant writing, signing petitions, having a community forum on the issue, getting press coverage and performing a research study or “fact finding” mission to get the facts on the issue.

### *Recreation and Opportunities for Youth*

For the issues of recreation and opportunities for youth, the goal set by the community group was to provide a basic recreational facility. The current situation related to this goal was defined as an overall lack of opportunities for recreation among youth. Hindering forces toward reaching the goal were identified as lack of money, security, lack of adult and youth support, and lack of transportation.

Helping forces toward reaching the goal were identified as the increased growth in the area, organized sports leagues, the community college and non-profit organizations as potential resources, and having caring commissioners in the area. Action steps based on growth include increasing the percentage of resources from developers toward recreation, having caring commissioners increase the allocation of funds, having non-profit organizations provide recreational programs, and providing art and theater events at the Central Carolina Community College. The group determined that all of these action steps depend on increasing parental support and volunteers.

### *Substance Use*

For the issue of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use among teens, the goal of the group was to delay the use of these substances until age 21 and to prevent alcohol use while driving. The current situation is that alcohol is the most commonly used drug followed by tobacco and marijuana among school age youth. Hindering forces toward reaching this goal of delayed onset of substance use were failure on the part of the schools to address these issues, the difficulty in finding people to do this type of work (such as special education teachers and teachers in general), the need for/lack of an adolescent day treatment center, the lack of consequences for using these substances and the easy availability of these substances.



Helping forces that could aid in the attainment of the goal were identified as increased education on the subject of substance use, an increase in alcohol free events such as Project Graduation, positive attitudes related to Project Graduation, negative attitudes towards substance use in general, and increased information and activities related to delaying substance use. Other logistical helping forces were identified as having a clinical and therapeutic resource person available and police department involvement. Of these helping forces, changing community attitudes/ promoting substance-free messages was prioritized. Action steps identified by the group were the use of the parent-to-parent training program in the community (which is designed to help parents talk to their teens about these issues) changing the signage in convenience stores (part of “targeting marketing literacy”), and educating grocery store employees to be more aware of inhalant, alcohol, and tobacco sales to minors.

#### *Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

For the topic of sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy, the goal was defined as having no unplanned “teen” pregnancies in the area. The current situation related to that goal was defined as the current existence of teen pregnancy. Hindering forces toward reaching that goal were the existence of the abstinence only school policy, teens not using birth control, limited access or perceived limited access to birth control for teens and lack of parental involvement.

Helping forces toward reaching the goal were identified as having a comprehensive health education curriculum in the school system, continuing current classes given in schools by the health educator, the existence of the Body Shop at Horton Middle School, and having more school based health clinics. The community group then prioritized the comprehensive health education curriculum as the goal they wanted to pursue. Action steps related to this goal were

identified as having UNC School of Public Health students put together a report on the costs of unplanned pregnancies to Chatham County (such as foster care and premature births), creating a coalition of parents and teens to speak to the school board, churches, civic organizations and teachers and adding a Hispanic liaison to the coalition. Other action steps included lobbying individual school board members through more informal means in addition to formal presentations and offering all programs in Spanish as well as English.

#### *Additional Outcomes*

In addition to identifying these action steps, people in the community need to be committed to organizing support for their implementation. For this reason, Maria Hitt, the health educator at the Chatham County Health Department, volunteered to facilitate organization of people into committees to begin working on these issues. A few forum participants did sign up to be on these committees in the future. Another outcome of the forum was the recruitment of two new board members to the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health. Furthermore, another School of Public Health student will be working in Chatham County building a coalition around changing the abstinence only school policy which was discussed during the meeting.

The community forum brought together a diverse group of people who were not usually present together at meetings surrounding these issues. Several participants learned facts and viewpoints related to Pittsboro adolescents that they had not previously known. This may benefit them in the future work with this population.

Evaluation of the community forum by its participants was positive overall and everyone expressed a willingness to remain informed about the issues that were discussed. There was also agreement on the idea that the dialogue facilitated by the forum would indeed lead to implementation of some of the action steps mentioned. A participant also discussed the

effectiveness of force field analysis as an effective mechanism for organizing people around an issue. One participant mentioned a desire to broaden the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health's mission to encompass all of the issues discussed that evening and another participant did express regret that more teens had not been involved in the forum.

## **IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR RESEARCH**

### **Differences of Insider & Outsider Views & Implications for Adolescents**

One of the weaknesses of this analysis is that we were not able to interview any adolescents directly. Therefore, we can only comment on differences we have perceived between insiders and outsiders views of adults in Pittsboro. Through our observation and work with teens in the Teen Center, as well as through other information we gained throughout our research, we have good reason to believe that the insider view of Pittsboro adolescents is significantly different from that of adults. In particular, we are regretful that teens did not have a chance to provide an alternative to the widespread view among providers and adults that they are "self-centered" and "immature". We feel it is important the adolescents get a chance to reflect on and express the ways they see themselves contributing to the community of Pittsboro. One of the major recommendations to emerge from our findings is the importance of seeking out the voice and perspectives of adolescents in Pittsboro, and involve them in the process of creating opportunities for themselves.

Throughout our interviews with service providers and community members, we discovered that there is little disagreement on what the issues are which are facing adolescents in Pittsboro. Everyone we talked with identified recreation, opportunities for youth, transportation, and growth and development as things which needed to be taken into account. The major

differences came in how these issues were interpreted, and in people's ideas of how to go about solving them.

One of the things that became increasingly clear as our research progressed was that the community of Pittsboro wanted to remain independent and distinctive. Several service providers who lived outside Pittsboro expressed frustration to us at not being able to get things done, and people not wanting to change. However, it appears that much of the opposition service providers feel may stem less from an unwillingness to change and more from an unwillingness to be changed and shaped by outsiders. The fast influx of people from surrounding cities is a real threat to native Pittsboro residents, and well meaning and enthusiastic offers of help from those perceived as outsiders (even those who have recently moved to Pittsboro and are living there) may be resisted.

In a recent Pittsboro meeting exploring the possibility of beginning a YMCA in town, many of these concerns surfaced. The meeting was attended by administrators from Chapel Hill's YMCA, who were offering to partner with Chatham County to create a Pittsboro branch. Although a previous study indicated that Chatham did not have the present resources to independently support a YMCA and everybody at the meeting strongly felt the need for a YMCA, meeting participants were reluctant to accept Chapel Hill's offer of help. Part of this reluctance stemmed from previous tension with the Chapel Hill YMCA; however an even larger part seemed to stem from a fear of "Chapel Hill expanding to absorb Pittsboro", as one resident expressed it. Even when assured that a Pittsboro YMCA branch would have its own board and take on the character of the community, participants were reticent and wary.

This tension was felt very keenly by us as outsiders, especially during the last few months of our research. Though welcomed by service providers as partners and resources, we were

unable to establish much trust with many community members themselves who had seen too many Chapel Hill university students come in for short research or intervention projects. We sometimes felt rebuffed when we offered ourselves as resources to community people.

This has implications for those wishing to mobilize the community around adolescent issues. The tension between long-time “natives” and service providers or newer transplants with strong ties to Chapel Hill or other surrounding cities may lead to an atmosphere of distrust and uncooperativeness, even when these two groups may be interested in the same issues and outcomes. This can be misconstrued as “small-mindedness” or “old boys philosophy” by outsiders, and at the same time be seen as “trying to take us over” by insiders.

The service providers we spoke with were, on the whole, more politically “progressive” and interested in gaining support for policies and programs which reflect their political or philosophical leanings. Although the community members we interviewed also identified themselves as “progressive”, they made it clear that there are very different groups within Pittsboro, who hold very different opinions. A proposed policy such as comprehensive sexuality education, which is one of the focuses of the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health may meet with a great deal of opposition among some of the more conservative community members or churches who would otherwise show a great interest and commit a lot of energy to improving life for adolescents in Pittsboro. To truly elicit the help and support among the different groups (both progressive and conservative) in Pittsboro in order to work towards a common goal, organizers may have to be very careful to find some common ground that all groups can agree on (such as the need for more youth opportunities), rather than focusing on making central issues which would be more controversial. This may or may not be possible.

Service providers we interviewed seemed to underrate the impact of racism in Pittsboro, often responding that it was not a big issue or did not seem to come up very much. “I don’t see it as too much of a problem right now. There is always going to be separation,” responded one provider. Another, who even knew about the all-White swimming pool, downplayed the impact of racism in the community:

I’m sure that it exists but it isn’t blatantly rampant, other than the all-white swimming pool – but I think that’s like an old tradition that just has remained. I’m sure that we have the same kind of racial divide that you have anywhere I’ve ever been in the South. And that certainly impacts everybody, and I think that there probably is racism. But it’s not like we have incidents or marches or protests or people killing each other or beating each other up, you know, like real flagrant examples of racism. I think it’s much more kind of under – just sort of an undercurrent of life, that people just sort of accept.

However, by taking a look at the racial history of Pittsboro, as well as through talking to certain community members, it becomes apparent that the issue of race relations is one which not only affects adolescents, but also has a big affect on many efforts at community collaboration. The opposition community members met with when they tried to organize to change the “all-white” pool, shared one community member, was so strong and persistent that they gave up. This indicates that racism in Pittsboro is still a force to be reckoned with.

The Teen Center is one example of the less blatant but still significant effects of race relations. Board members expressed both their desire to see the diversity of the community expressed in the Teen Center attendees and their frustration in doing that. The students attending the Teen Center the previous year were mostly African American, which meant that many white children did not feel included, according to some community members. After a change in directorship, many of the African Americans stopped attending. Although there is more of a mix of teens attending the center now, attendance as a whole is extremely low. At the recent

fundraiser, the only African American in attendance was the director (as opposed to the previous year when the majority of the fundraiser attendees had been African American). Board members expressed some of the complexities of the situation during a focus group:

But part of our goal is supposed to be to help facilitate acceptance between different groups of people, whether they're white and their families have been here forever and they're Hispanic and they have no real experience with the culture or if – to really get everybody to understand that being different is okay. But the problem that I see mostly is that young people are more willing to say, “Oh, the differences are okay, you know, this Black, he's my friend.” But then when it starts moving beyond that, then the parents start freaking out. And so it's a real struggle, because some people in this community probably would not approve of, you know, sort of intermixing of races, and I mean, those kinds of things, I mean, they would actually disprove very strongly, and so it's very touchy.

It seems like the stance here, and it hasn't been like that everywhere I lived it, it's safest to keep to yourself, and don't get too involved, you know, stay separate. That's the way you can have a nice life. And if you get too involved, and if you stick your neck out, you're asking for trouble.

Several of the community members attending the forum in April also chose to talk about race relations as an issue facing Pittsboro adolescents. They spoke of their frustration at the community silence involving the current issues related to race relations, as well as the immense difficulty they perceived in being able to organize any meaningful kind of community forum to discuss the issues.

The implications of the race relations issue for service providers and those wishing to organize the Pittsboro community to address adolescent issues is that it cannot be ignored. It is present, deeply rooted in history, and appears to affect much of what goes on in the community as well as relationships and opportunities of adolescents. The recent influx of Latinos may serve to bring the issue more to the surface, but in any case, it is something which needs to be recognized and talked about, both by service providers and community members.

Finally, as evidenced by the platforms of candidates running for local election last November, recent Chatham Chatlist discussions, local newspaper articles and casual talk, growth, development, and related taxes are huge issues in Pittsboro right now. As previously mentioned, Chatham County is growing by leaps and bounds and many community members are afraid of becoming “another Cary”. The issues involved are both emotional and divisive, and have the possibility of obscuring the needs and issues of adolescents in Pittsboro. Service providers and others who are interested in mobilizing community resources to make Pittsboro a better place for adolescents need to recognize and validate the immensity of the growth and development issue, and find a way to relate and integrate it into adolescent-related work.

### **Recommendations**

It is our recommendation that the community work toward collaboration around the issue of teens. Results from our work in Pittsboro over the last six months, which includes our interviews, attendance at community events, volunteering at the Teen Center, informal conversations with and observations of community members, and our community forum point to the need for organizations interested in teen issues to work together to improve life for teens in the city. The Teen Center Board, for example, might benefit from joining forces with groups within the county’s health and recreation departments to increase the reach, publicity, and number of activities available for adolescents. By also collaborating with non-governmental groups, the Teen Center could work towards procuring more resources for equipment and activities. And, by forming partnerships with well-known and respected organizations to promote the Center, the board would ensure positive exposure and, it is hoped, attendance.

We highly recommend that collaborative efforts around teen issues also involve the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health. Because health is influenced by a myriad of factors in



a teen's daily life, including recreation, education, and environment, we propose that organizations working in these, and other adolescent-oriented areas, team up with the Coalition for Adolescent Health in a non-categorical approach to improving the quality of life for teens in Pittsboro. It would be an asset to the Coalition's board to have members representing the various groups. In effect, this cooperation would not only bring in a variety of perspectives, it would unite agencies and individuals across the city in the cause of improving life for teens. In addition, it would address the disparate nature of the relationships between existing groups interested in helping Pittsboro teens.

Pittsboro's residents represent its richest resource, and we recommend finding a way to incorporate community residents into the discussion around adolescent issues. Just as there appears to be a lack of collaboration between some of the service agencies involved in providing resources for adolescents, we have found a corresponding lack of collaboration in the community as it relates to adolescents. This is evidenced in the lack of communication between those community members interested in a Pittsboro YMCA and the Teen Center Board. Both these groups are dedicated to the same final goal, to increase recreational opportunities for younger adolescents. If they work together, they could possibly create a synergy that would enable each to reach their goal more efficiently. There are also many active churches in the Pittsboro area. Although we suspect that many of these churches have their own programs for adolescents, an ecumenical community coalition of churches and members to focus on adolescent issues could be a very powerful way of addressing some of the themes brought up through our Diagnosis.

As a way to mobilize community residents, we would suggest the formation of a Pittsboro specific coalition to address adolescent quality of life as a whole. This coalition could work in partnership with the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health (CCHAH) but would be

able to identify and target broad issues that a diversity of residents agree on (such as opportunities for youth), rather than potentially divisive issues (such as teen sexuality).

One of the most consistent findings throughout every stage of our Community Diagnosis was the need for adolescents to have their own voice about their role as members of the Pittsboro community. Teens seem to have very little control over community decisions that involve them, and very little chance to contribute in a visible and productive way to the community as a whole. All the evidence we have suggests that this lack of control and involvement does not represent a deficiency on the part of the adolescents so much as it represents wider community norms and barriers which limit teen participation and discourage their voice from being heard.

One of the specific ideas of how to facilitate more of a teen voice and presence in Pittsboro (emerging from the community forum) was to have a school forum in which teens got to speak about things that concerned them. Having this event take place during school hours would remove the transportation barrier currently preventing teens from coming to events planned for them. If parents as well as the school board attended this forum, it could be an incredibly effective way for their voice to be heard by a variety of listeners. If non-school forums for the purpose of giving teens a voice are planned, we recommend word-of-mouth advertisement that begins at least a month before the forum, as well as transportation which can take the adolescents directly to the venue.

Another way to facilitate teen voice in Pittsboro is to form a teen coalition in Pittsboro. They could either be included as a separate but partnering counterpart to an adult community member coalition, or sit side by side on a multigenerational Pittsboro coalition. A version of this idea, forming a teen advisory board, is currently being pursued by Maria Hitt, our preceptor and the chairperson of the CCAH. This could be an excellent way for the CCAH to listen to and

reflect the current concerns of Pittsboro teens in their programs and advocacy. If this teen board is formed, it may be important to let its members select and pursue their own goals related to their quality of life, even if these do not fit into the primary concerns of the CCAH members.

Finally, we would suggest that semi-structured after-school programs be made available at venues such as the Teen Center or Horton Middle School. These programs could provide teens with both a fun place to relax and play and also a structured, facilitator-led time of coming together to collectively identify concerns in their lives and community, reflect on what is at the root of these concerns, identify workable ways to address these concerns, and then work together to actually translate their plans into action. By working through this cycle, teens will not only be able to contribute in tangible and visible ways to Pittsboro, but will become empowered to take control of their own lives and the issues which affect them.

Adolescents are not only the future of Pittsboro, but they are an important part of its present. They represent a dynamic and energetic portion of the population. Although they are undoubtedly learning important skills and knowledge for use in the future, they are also full of potential to make a difference now. They are in need of more community attention, recreational and employment opportunities, and community resources directed towards them. Just as important as providing resources and opportunities for adolescents, however, is recognizing them as a valuable and indispensable community resource and encouraging their empowerment and contribution as full and valuable members of the Pittsboro community.

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## **APPENDICES**

## INTERVIEW FACT SHEET

September 26, 2000

We are graduate students in the UNC Chapel Hill School of Public Health in the department of Health Behavior and Health Education. One of our degree requirements is that we conduct a Community Diagnosis. A Community Diagnosis is a type of research project where we assess the strengths and weaknesses of and help identify future directions for a community. We will be working in the Pittsboro community and focusing on the experiences and concerns of adolescent community members.

We will be conducting interviews with individuals who reside in the Pittsboro community. We will also be interviewing service providers for their input into the assets and needs of those in Pittsboro. If you are a provider, we will be asking you about the services you provide, the population you serve, challenges you face, and issues important in the Pittsboro community. If you are a community member, we will be asking you about your personal experience in this community, your opinions concerning your neighborhood and schools, your views about health and social issues in Pittsboro, and your ideas about future directions or recommendations for Pittsboro. After conducting these interviews, we will summarize our findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the community, and present them (both written and verbally) to the Pittsboro community.

We would greatly appreciate your participation in our interviews, since you are familiar with the Pittsboro community, including its assets and needs. Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not required to give your name or reveal any personal information. We do not anticipate any physical, psychological, or social risks to come to you as a result of this interview. You will not be compensated for your participation. With your permission, we would like to audiotape the interview. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. All information collected will remain confidential. This interview should last 30-40 minutes.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects, a board of researchers that makes sure study projects are honest and appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or about your rights as a research participant, please do not hesitate to contact one of us, our project preceptor, or our faculty advisor. Our names and contact information are listed below. Feel free to contact us by calling collect, if necessary.

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Michelle Manning, UNC Graduate Student Contact | (919) 966-3761 |
| Maria Hitt, Preceptor                          |                |
| Chatham County Health Department               | (919) 542-8220 |
| Geni Eng, DrPH, Faculty Advisor                |                |
| UNC School of Public Health                    | (919) 966-3909 |
| Sara Ackerman, MPH, Faculty Advisor            | (919) 966-0057 |

Thank you for your time. We appreciate your participation.

Michelle Manning  
Group Contact for Dana Eckroad, Heather McDaniel, Molly Pescador, and Susanne Schmal

## FOCUS GROUP GUIDE INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction:**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm going to be facilitating our focus group today. This is \_\_\_\_\_, who will be taking notes and assisting me during our discussion. We will be here about 45 minutes to talk to you about the community of Pittsboro, and about your opinions concerning the strengths of Pittsboro and the challenges it faces. We are especially interested in hearing about the adolescents of Pittsboro. Your insights and opinions on this subject are important, so please say what's on your mind and what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

### **Consent:**

You are not likely to experience any risks from being in this focus group.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-CH School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects. This means that a panel of experts has looked over all that is being asked of you and the panel feels that you will be safe from harm if you agree to participate. Do you have any questions about this study or today's focus group?

Your participation in this discussion is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, may refuse to answer any questions, or may quit at any time. Do you agree to participate in this discussion?

During the discussion we are going to record what is said on a notepad. If you have no objections, we will also tape record the discussion to make sure we don't miss anything. Only the 5 members of our group will listen to the tape. Afterwards, the tape will be erased. You can ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the discussion. Do you agree to have this discussion taped?

Okay, let's begin. [Turn on tape recorder]

We've got a lot to cover, so we will all need to do a few things to get our jobs done:

1. Talk in a voice at least as loud as mine.
2. There are no wrong answers, just different opinions. We are looking for different points of view. So, just say what's on your mind.
3. We do have a lot to cover, so you may be interrupted at some point so that we can keep moving and avoid running out of time.
4. We value your opinions, both positive and negative, and we hope you choose to express them during the discussion.
5. Everything said is confidential and will not be repeated.



## **PITTSBORO COMMUNITY MEMBER FOCUS GROUP GUIDE**

- Let's start with introductions; we don't need to know your names but we would like to know how long you've lived in Pittsboro and what you do, either for a living or a hobby or whatever you'd like to share.
- If someone were considering moving to Pittsboro, what would you tell him or her?  
(Probe: Work, schools, church, community feeling, housing, access to resources, health, growth & development, recreation, local government...)  
    Best things about Pittsboro  
    What are the problems/issues facing Pittsboro
- How do people get along in Pittsboro?  
(Probe: race/ethnicity, age, class, newcomers)
- What is life like for teens in Pittsboro? (probes...)
- How do you think teens contribute to the community?
- In what direction do you see Pittsboro going over the next 5 years?  
    How do you see the residents getting involved in this?
- Tell me about a time when the community has worked together to accomplish something.
- If you were in charge of teen services, what would you do?
- Is there anything else you want to tell about the Pittsboro community?
- Who else can we talk to?
- We will be conducting a forum Tuesday night, April 3, from 7:00 – 8:30 at the CCCC Multi-Purpose Room. Do you have any suggestions? You can write down your ideas or talk to us about them.

## **PITTSBORO ADOLESCENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE**

- Start with Icebreaker
- Please write down three words you would use to describe Pittsboro (if you want, you can draw a picture instead of writing down words) and then we will share them.
- If another teen were considering moving to Pittsboro, what would you tell him or her?  
(Probe: schools, community feeling, recreation & fun, jobs to be had, things to do, growth & development)
  - Best things about Pittsboro
  - What are the problems/issues facing Pittsboro
- What are some of the issues facing teens in Pittsboro?
  - If a teen were worried about one of these issues, where would he or she go?
- How does the Teen Center contribute to the quality of life for teens in Pittsboro? What can be done to improve it?
- What positive things do you think teens contribute to the community?
- What do you think Pittsboro will be like in 5 years?
  - Do you plan to stay around in Pittsboro?
  - Will you return? Why or why not?
- If you were able to change Pittsboro in any way right now, what would you do?
- We will be conducting a forum Tuesday night, April 3, from 7:00 – 8:30 at the CCCC Multi-Purpose Room. Do you have any suggestions? You can write down your ideas or talk to us about them.

## INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE

### Key Informant Interview for Pittsboro Provider

#### Introduction:

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm going to be leading our interview today. This is \_\_\_\_\_, who will be taking notes and assisting me during our discussion. We will be here about 30 minutes to talk to you about what role your group or organization has in the greater community of Pittsboro, and about your opinions concerning the strengths of Pittsboro and the challenges it faces. We are especially interested in hearing about the adolescents of Pittsboro. Your insights and opinions on this subject are important, so please say what's on your mind and what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

#### Consent:

You are not likely to experience any risks from being in this interview. Your participation will not affect your job or your status at \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of organization*).

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-CH School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects. This means that a panel of experts has looked over all that is being asked of you and the panel feels that you will be safe from harm if you agree to participate. Do you have any questions about this study or today's interview?

Your participation in this discussion is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, may refuse to answer any questions, or may quit at any time. Do you agree to participate in this discussion?

During the discussion we are going to record what is said on a notepad. If you have no objections, we will also tape record the discussion to make sure we don't miss anything. Only the 5 members of our group will listen to the tape. Afterwards, the tape will be erased. You can ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the discussion. Do you agree to have this discussion taped?

Okay, let's begin. [Turn on tape recorder]

We've got a lot to cover, so we will all need to do a few things to get our jobs done:

1. Talk in a voice at least as loud as mine.
2. There are no wrong answers, just different opinions. We are looking for different points of view. So, just say what's on your mind.
3. We do have a lot to cover, so you may be interrupted at some point so that we can keep moving and avoid running out of time.
4. We value your opinions, both positive and negative, and we hope you choose to express them during the discussion.
5. Everything said is confidential and will not be repeated.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS**

### **SERVICES**

1. Why did you choose to work in this community?
2. How long have you worked in this community?
3. Tell us about the services you provide  
(Probe: who's served, Are there people in your target population who need your services but are unable to access them? Source of funding?)
4. What other organizations provide similar or complimentary services to this population?  
(Probe: collaborate with other services? Relationship with other services?)
5. What are your biggest challenges at work?

### **COMMUNITY**

1. How would you describe Pittsboro?  
(Probe: Would you define it as a community?)
2. What are the strengths of Pittsboro?
3. What are the challenges facing Pittsboro?  
(Probe: race relations?)
4. How has Pittsboro changed over the last five years?
5. How have your services evolved to meet these needs?
6. How are the residents of Pittsboro involved in determining the services that you provide?

### **ADOLESCENTS**

1. What are the strengths of adolescents in Pittsboro?
2. What do you think are the major issues facing Pittsboro adolescents?  
(Probe: specific to Pittsboro?)
3. What are the implications of these issues?
4. What services does your organization provide to address these issues?
5. If you were in charge of adolescent services for Pittsboro, what types of services would you provide? What about services for Pittsboro at large?

Would you like to recommend someone else to be interviewed?

Do you have any suggestions for the time, place, day of the week, etc. for the community forum?

\_\_\_\_\_, have I forgotten anything?

Thank you so much for your participation today.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS / COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

### **SELF AND FAMILY**

1. How long have you lived in Pittsboro?
2. Do you currently work in Pittsboro? (Probe: job title, responsibilities)
3. How well do you know the adolescents of Pittsboro?
4. Do you have any interactions with the adolescents of Pittsboro?

### **NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY**

1. How would you describe Pittsboro?
2. What is it like to raise a family in Pittsboro? (If applicable)
3. Describe life in Pittsboro for adults. (Probe: jobs, recreation, social interactions, church)
4. Describe life in Pittsboro for adolescents. (Probe: jobs, recreation, hangouts, activities, solving differences)
5. What makes you proud about living in Pittsboro?
6. How do people support each other in Pittsboro?

### **SCHOOL**

1. Where do your children go to school, if applicable?
2. How do you feel about the local schools? (Probe: positives, challenges, teacher shortage)
3. What kinds of programs/services do schools provide? (Probe: in school, after school)
4. To what extent are parents involved in what goes on at school?

### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

1. What do you think are the challenges facing Pittsboro? (Probe: growth, development, racism, classism)
2. What do you think are the challenges facing the youth of Pittsboro? (Probe: tobacco, drugs, crime, recreation)
3. How have these challenges affected you and your family personally?
4. What strengths/resources does Pittsboro have to help deal with these challenges?

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. How has Pittsboro changed since you've been here?
2. What do you think Pittsboro will be like in five years? Ten years?
3. If someone were to ask you if Pittsboro is a good place to live and raise a family, how would you respond?
4. If you were the mayor, what would you do to improve Pittsboro?

Suggestions about the forum? Place, time, how to advertise it?

## FOCUS GROUP FACT SHEET

January 22, 2001

We are graduate students in the UNC Chapel Hill School of Public Health in the department of Health Behavior and Health Education. One of our degree requirements is that we conduct a Community Diagnosis. A Community Diagnosis is a type of research project where we assess the strengths and weaknesses of and help identify future directions for a community. The community in which we will be working is Pittsboro. We will be focusing on the experiences and concerns of adolescent community members.

We will be conducting discussion groups with individuals who reside in the Pittsboro community. Each discussion group will be composed of 6-8 adolescents. We will be asking discussion group members to talk about their experiences as members of the Pittsboro community, issues affecting the adolescents of Pittsboro as well as strengths they bring to the community, and any recommendations they might have concerning the overall health of the Pittsboro community and its adolescent population. After conducting these discussion groups, we will summarize our findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the community, and present them (both written and verbally) to the Pittsboro community.

We greatly appreciate your participation in a discussion group, since you are familiar with the Pittsboro community, including its assets and needs from an adolescent's perspective. Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not required to give your name or reveal any personal information. We do not anticipate any physical, psychological, or social risks to come to you as a result of this discussion group. You will not be compensated for your participation. With your permission, we would like to audiotape the discussion group. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. You can also stop participating in the focus group at any time. The focus groups will be held in public settings, but in private rooms, to assure your privacy and prevent those not participating in the group from overhearing the discussion. All information collected will remain confidential. This discussion group should last 45-90 minutes.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects, a board of researchers that makes sure study projects are honest and appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or about your rights as a research participant, please do not hesitate to contact one of us, our project preceptor, or our faculty advisor. Our names and contact information are listed below. Feel free to contact us by calling collect, if necessary.

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Michelle Manning, UNC Graduate Student Contact | (919) 966-3919 |
| Maria Hitt, Preceptor                          |                |
| Chatham County Health Department               | (919) 542-8220 |
| Geni Eng, DrPH, Faculty Advisor                |                |
| UNC School of Public Health                    | (919) 966-3909 |
| Sara Ackerman, MPH, Faculty Advisor            | (919) 966-0057 |

Thank you for your time. We appreciate your participation.

Michelle Manning  
Group Contact for Dana Eckroad, Heather McDaniel, Molly Pescador, and Susanne Schmal

## PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT: FOCUS GROUP

March 16, 2001

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are graduate students in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health working toward our Master's degree in Health Behavior and Health Education. One of our degree requirements is the completion of a community project, which is conducted by several students working together as a team. We are conducting our project in Pittsboro and talking with service providers and community members of all ages to gather information. We hope to use this information to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the community and to identify future goals for improving the health of adolescents in Pittsboro.

We would like to get to know the adolescents of Pittsboro by talking with groups of adolescents (called focus groups). The purpose of these focus groups is to get specific ideas and opinions about what growing up in Pittsboro is really like. We will ask about day-to-day issues that all adolescents face, including questions about family, neighborhood, school, health, and social activities. The focus groups will be conducted at local schools, libraries, and other community settings in Pittsboro, but will be held in a private room to assure privacy and prevent others not participating in the group from overhearing the discussion. With your permission and theirs, we will take notes and use a tape recorder during the focus group. They have the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. All information collected will remain confidential, and we will ask them not to reveal anything they learn about other group participants during the focus group. This focus group should last 45-90 minutes. The notes will be destroyed and the tapes erased at the end of the spring semester in May 2001. The information from the tapes will be helpful to use in clarifying certain points, and may be used for this and other courses in Health Behavior and Health Education. Every thing your child says in the focus group is strictly confidential and his/her name will not be associated with any of his/her answers. No risks of any nature are expected from this study.

If we have your permission for your son, daughter, or adolescent in your custody to participate in a focus group, please sign and date the statement below and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. The focus group will take place at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. Your son, daughter, or child in your custody will have the details explained to them prior to starting the focus group. Even if you give consent, your child (child in your custody) has the right to refuse participation at any time during the focus group without repercussions. We will let your child (child in your custody) know who referred them to us; however, the adult who gave us their name will not know whether or not they chose to do the focus group. We hope your child (child in your custody) will decide to talk with us, but they are not required to do so. The information they provide could help address concerns of all young people in Pittsboro and benefit the community as a whole.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects, a board of researchers that makes sure study projects are honest and appropriate. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please don't hesitate to call our Principal Investigator or our Faculty Advisor at the numbers listed below. Please call collect if necessary. The names of our other team members are also listed for your information.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Michelle Manning, UNC Graduate Student                                     | 919-966-3919 |
| Sara Ackerman, MPH, Faculty Advisor  | 919-966-0057 |
| Dana Eckroad, UNC Graduate Student   |              |
| Heather McDaniel, UNC Graduate Student                                     |              |
| Molly Pescador, UNC Graduate Student, Susanne Schmal, UNC Graduate Student |              |

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please sign this consent form and return by the stated date. Keep the duplicate copy for your records.

---

I **DO** give my consent for (child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in a focus group as part of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health's Community Diagnosis in Pittsboro.  
Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ADOLESCENT ASSENT: FOCUS GROUP

March 16, 2001

Dear Adolescent:

We are graduate students in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health working toward our Master's degree in Health Behavior and Health Education. One of our assignments is to complete a community project in a team. We are conducting our project in Pittsboro. To get information about Pittsboro, we will be talking with people who provide help and activities to the community as well as other community members of all ages. We hope to use this information to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the community and to identify future goals for improving the health of adolescents in Pittsboro.

We would like to get to know the adolescents of Pittsboro by talking with groups of young people (called focus groups). The reason for these focus groups is to get ideas and opinions about what growing up in Pittsboro is really like. We will ask about day-to-day issues that all adolescents face, including questions about your family, neighborhood, school, health, and social activities. The focus groups will be conducted at local schools, libraries, and other public places in Pittsboro but will be held in a private room to assure privacy and prevent others not participating in the group from overhearing the discussion. With you and your parent or guardian's permission, we will take notes and use a tape recorder during the focus group. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or stop the audio tape at any time. All information collected will remain confidential, and we ask that you not reveal anything you learn about other group participants during the focus group. This focus group should last 45-90 minutes. The notes and tapes will be destroyed at the end of May 2001. The tapes will help us to remember and explain what we learn from the focus group. The information on the tapes may be used for this and other classes in Health Behavior and Health Education. Everything you tell us in the focus group is private and your name will not be matched with any of your answers. We do not think you will be taking any risks by helping us with this project.

If we have your permission to include you in our focus group, please sign and date the statement below and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. The focus group will take place at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. You will have the details explained to you before you start the focus group. You have the right to stop participating in the focus group at any time. We will let you know who referred you to us; however, the adult who gave us your name will not know whether or not you chose to do the focus group. We hope you will decide to talk with us, but you are not required to do so. The information you give could help people understand the concerns of young people in Pittsboro and benefit the community as a whole.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health Institutional Review Board on Research Involving Human Subjects, a board of researchers that makes sure study projects are honest and appropriate. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please don't hesitate to call our Principal Investigator or our Faculty Advisor at the numbers listed below. Please call collect if necessary. The names of our other team members are also listed for your information.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Michelle Manning, UNC Graduate Student | 919-966-3919 |
| Sara Ackerman, MPH, Faculty Advisor    | 919-966-0057 |
| Dana Eckroad, UNC Graduate Student     |              |
| Heather McDaniel, UNC Graduate Student |              |
| Molly Pescador, UNC Graduate Student   |              |
| Susanne Schmal, UNC Graduate Student   |              |

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please sign this consent form and return by the stated date. Keep the duplicate copy for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
I, (adolescent's name) \_\_\_\_\_ **DO** give my consent to participate in a focus group as part of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health's Community Diagnosis in Pittsboro.



## **LIST OF INTERVIEWEES**

- Chatham Together Employee
- Community Lawyer
- General Contractor
- Health Department Employee
- High School Nurse
- Judicial System Employee
- Juvenile Court Judge
- Member of Chatham County Historical Association
- Middle School Nurse
- A Second Middle School Nurse
- NC State Employee who resides in Pittsboro
- Parks and Recreation Representative
- Physical Therapist and Carpenter
- Physician
- Retired Part Time Employee of Chatham County Schools
- School Administration Employee
- A Second School Administration Employee
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Teacher-Resident of Pittsboro for 42 Years
- Youth Pastor

## SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

1. 1990 U.S. Census Data
2. Chatham County Chatlist
3. Chatham County Economic Development Corporation
4. Chatham County Health Improvement Project
5. Chatham County Historical Association
6. Chatham County Partnership for Children
7. Chatham County School profiles
8. Chatham County Statistical Abstract
9. Chatham Education Foundation
10. Chatham Together
11. Child Protective Services
12. Family Planning
13. Health of Chatham 2000 draft
14. Historical Museum in the Courthouse
15. Microfilms of old Pittsboro newspapers
16. North Carolina Office of State Planning
17. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics
18. Pittsboro City Office (a branch of the Chatham County Chamber of Commerce)
19. Pittsboro Memorial Library
20. Smart Start
21. The 2000 Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey
22. The agricultural office
23. The Chatham County Health Department
24. The Chatham County Parks and Recreation Department
25. The Chatham Park Foundation
26. The Health of Chatham 1996-1997
27. The North Carolina Juvenile Crime Prevention Planning Project, Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factor Indicators
28. Wilson Library

## FORUM INVITATION

March 15, 2001

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We would like to personally invite you to share your ideas and perspectives at a community forum focused on the health of adolescents in Pittsboro.

We are a group of graduate students at the School of Public Health at UNC. In partnership with the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health, we have been working in Pittsboro for the past seven months to assess the strengths and weaknesses of this community and identify the experiences and concerns of adolescent community members. We have looked at secondary data related to Pittsboro, interviewed service providers working with adolescents, and interviewed community members (adults and adolescents), both individually and in focus groups. The upcoming forum will be a time to present the themes that emerged from our research, as well as actively discuss issues facing Pittsboro adolescents and generate ideas about how to mobilize community strengths to work on some of these issues.

The forum will take place on Tuesday, April 3, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Multi-Purpose Room of the Central Carolina Community College in Pittsboro. We would greatly appreciate your presence as well as your input in this action-oriented time of discussion.

If you plan to attend this forum, please let us know by March 23 by calling (919)966-3919 and choosing extension 3. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of our planning committee. You are also welcome to invite others that you think may share an interest in planning towards action to improve the quality of life for adolescents in Pittsboro.

Sincerely,

Dana Eckroad  
Michelle Manning  
Heather McDaniel  
Molly Pescador  
Susanne Schmal

## **REPORT FOR PITTSBORO COMMUNITY FORUM REGARDING ADOLESCENTS**

Central Carolina Community College, Multipurpose Room

Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Chatham Coalition for Adolescent Health and  
UNC School of Public Health, Health Behavior & Health Education Department

### **Agenda:**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 7:00 – 7:20 | Food, mingling, icebreaker                         |
| 7:20 – 7:35 | Introductions, explanation of Force Field Analysis |
| 7:35 – 7:40 | Deciding upon issue of choice for small group work |
| 7:40 – 8:20 | Force Field Analysis                               |
| 8:20 – 8:40 | Report back to larger group                        |
| 8:40 – 8:55 | Wrap up/Closing comments                           |
| 8:55 – 9:00 | Evaluation   |

**\*\*If anybody would like to join a committee to pursue some of the actions steps identified in this forum to benefit adolescents in Pittsboro, please contact:**

Maria Hitt, Health Educator  
Chatham County Health Department  
mhitt@emji.net  
542-8214

## **Forum Participant Responses from Icebreaker Activity**

### **What I like about living/working/going to school in Pittsboro:**

- People
- A friendly place
- Small community – easy to get to know people, open space, no traffic
- People
- Small town atmosphere
- Small town atmosphere
- “Real” community
- Friendliness
- Small town
- Small community
- I like the land, Haw River
- Little traffic, pretty small town
- Working with Pittsboro – small community receptive to new ideas
- I know most people
- Friendly
- Size of public schools

### **What I don’t like about living/working/going to school in Pittsboro:**

- Not much to do
- 4 lane highways
- People’s narrow views
- Small minds
- People don’t want change
- School system apathy
- No Chick-Fil-A here
- Small town
- Small community
- Too many people moving here
- Not enough sidewalks E & W of downtown on 64
- No good walking trails
- Not enough restaurants
- Traffic
- Government revenues available for services

### **Something that would make Pittsboro a better place for teens:**

- More activities
- Better access to recreation facilities
- Less access to alcohol, tobacco and drugs, more recreational options/opportunities
- YMCA
- Teens need more recreational opportunities
- More activities
- Activities that would involve (teens/parents)
- More activities
- A mall
- Boys & Girls club
- Activities with transportation
- A teen center for older teens near library with computers and healthy food
- More after school programs promoting physical activity
- Athletic facilities
- Recreation
- Real adolescent pregnancy prevention

### **What People Interviewed said about the same questions:**

#### **What I like about Pittsboro:**

##### ***Small town, lot of antiques, artsy:***

- “I would describe it as Mayberry. It’s fairly clean and people are relatively happy. It’s an easily walkable town. It’s a great place to be.”

##### ***People are involved, committed, accessible, and know each other; oriented towards family:***

- “I think that people in Pittsboro feel like they’re part of the community. People really care about this town. There’s a lot of groups that work towards the betterment of Pittsboro.”
- “People here really do want to know each other. To the point of being obnoxiously nosey at times. So people do watch and I think they get a little concerned about the community at large.”
- “There are roots for people here.”

##### ***But close to lots of other opportunities (in Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Durham, RTP):***

- “You’ve got the best of both worlds where we’re at.”

##### ***Therefore, more progressive, diverse, and liberal:***

- “It’s a small town, but on the other hand, it’s rather progressive for a small town. Seem like we tend to pick up things and change quicker than a lot of other places do.”

#### ***GOOD VARIETY OF SERVICES (HEALTH DEPT., CCCC)***

#### ***GOOD CHURCHES – HELP GET THINGS DONE***

### **WHAT I DON’T LIKE ABOUT PITTSBORO**

#### ***GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, LOSE SENSE OF COMMUNITY, STRAIN ON SERVICES,***

#### ***UNCERTAINTY ABOUT NEW BYPASS***

- “Pittsboro is probably evolving into a community that is not as distinct and separate as it once was and is more integrated into the overall RTP economy than it was 10 and 20 years ago. My guess is that people’s sense of community would be changing as a result of the changes that are occurring.”
- “I think the strain – the changes – would put a strain on any community, and that Pittsboro as a town is – its overall options are controlled as a result of its location within the county.”
- “Pittsboro’s probably going to be a ghost town when this new road goes through!”
- “15-501 will kill us – the commercial growth you see around interchanges is going to happen – I wouldn’t doubt that there’s going to be a McDonalds and Burger King and all that stuff. And that’s what’s kind of kept this town apart from Cary and Apex.”

#### ***DOESN’T REALLY HAVE RESOURCES OR POWER TO MAKE DIFFERENCE***

- “I think that a small municipality is not necessarily intended to, nor does it have the resources to really take the initiative in addressing many of the societal problems that it might well be aware of.”

##### ***Distinct splits in town (between old and new, haves and have nots)***

- “There’s still some people who kind of would like to live in the former years, where things were different – everybody just accepted this good old South, but that’s not the way it is.”
- “Small townish with some very distinct splits in it. One group wants to keep it the way it’s been for years and the other wants to make changes and have them done in a certain way so sometimes that’s really hard.”

##### ***Very politic – hard to get things done***

- “There are people that do hold a lot of power and if you get on the wrong side, maybe, or don’t know how to approach them in the right way, then it could get in the way of getting things accomplished.”
- “The town as well as the commissioners are run by old, white men. It’s the old boy’s club, until they die off or something, we are stuck with it.”

## **HOW TO MAKE PITTSBORO A BETTER PLACE FOR TEENS**

***More recreation – need after school recreation, a Rec Center or Youth recreational facility, more entertainment***

***(shopping centers, movie theaters)***

- “There is no place to be entertained in Chatham County and people left to their own devices tend to choose inappropriate or poor ones at best.”
- “Their free time, where they don’t have anything to do, is so dangerous for teenagers.”
- “Ideally, more people at home with their kids would be nice or someplace for them to go cheap enough that everyone could afford it because what happens is, the people who can afford it have somebody and the ones who can’t, they leave them by themselves.”
- “You have to have an adult who cares about kids, who’s going to be the leader, form the group, and really make it happen, so a lot of kids really don’t get into those kind of things because they just don’t have the opportunity to participate.”

***Education – lower high drop out rate, raise college attendance rate***

- “Parents need to get more involved in PTA, particularly at the high school level. It’s notorious for no parent involvement. But that’s the typical way, I think – parents are more involved in elementary and as their kids get older they get less and less inclined to attend those kind of meeting.”
- “We have the school boards – many of the members of our school board have been on it forever. And the county does not elect anybody new, so you know, things aren’t going to change there...so, we’ve had candidates to run who are parents of younger children who are really interested in seeing change occur and they’re not elected. So people just prefer the status quo.”

***Transportation – need better system***

***Teen Council – to involve all three high schools, to organize Teen Trips***

***Health Clinic – teen clinic for older teens, clinic like Horton’s Body Shop but in other schools***

***Church involvement & activities – increase awareness of the spiritual aspect of teens’ lives***

***Various other opportunities for youth***

***Counseling – drop-out & drug prevention services & diversity training county-wide***

***Policy changes regarding abstinence only education in school***

## **Quotes & Issues Posted on Walls (from Interviews):**

### **GENERAL PITTSBORO QUOTES FROM WALL**

- “It’s a lovely place – God’s country. It’s a great place to live.”
- “It has the small town atmosphere, small enough school so that pretty much everybody knows everybody... Close enough to Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill to get all those benefits, whereas a lot of small towns don’t have nearly as much as we have. I mean, we’ve got a lot of good things that come from the influx – we’ve also got a few bad things. But I mean, otherwise, you’ve got the best of both worlds where we’re at.”
- “I think that people in Pittsboro feel like they’re part of the community. People really care about this town.”
- “There are roots for people here.”
- “There’s something about this place that attracts people who want a laid-back, quiet lifestyle, who want to be out in the country.”
- “I think that there’s a wide range of people here, and a wide range of cultures and a live and let live atmosphere.”
- “It’s a small town, but it’s rather progressive for a small town.”
- “Most people who live in Chatham County don’t live in either of the metropolitan areas, because Chatham County is so big and the people are so spread out that it’s hard to feel a sense of community...”

### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Chatham County Population Increase 1990-2000: 27.3% (17<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in state)
- Pittsboro Population Growth 1990-1999: 38%
- “Pittsboro is a small town that’s afraid to get big.”
- “Within the next 15 years we’re going to be Chapel Hill’s Cary.”
- “I think that a degree of development is inevitable and making it positive as opposed to negative seems like the opportunity which is at hand.”
- “I would discourage them from moving here, if I could, keep them away so we could keep to ourselves.”

### **RACE RELATIONS**

- “I feel like there’s a lot of white people in this community that are not very accepting of the Black people.”
- “I don’t see it as too much of a problem right now. There is always going to be separation.”
- “I’m sure that we have the same kind of racial divide that you have anywhere I’ve every been in the South. And that certainly impacts everybody, and I think that there probably is racism. But it isn’t like, blatant – other than the all-White swimming pool. I think it’s much more kind of under – just sort of an undercurrent of life, that people just sort of accept.”
- “Young people are more willing to say, “Oh, the differences are okay, you know, this Black – he’s my friend.” But then when it starts moving beyond that, then the parents start freaking out. And so it’s a real struggle, because some people in this community probably would not approve of sort of intermixing of races, they would actually disapprove very strongly, and so it’s very touchy.”
- “It’s a challenge sometimes to get the community to recognize and be culturally aware and just value the wonderful flavor that we have because we are so many different colors and we bring so many different pieces of our culture to the larger community with us.”

### **TRANSPORTATION**

- “It would be nice to see Point-to-Point public transportation in the mornings and the evening that would allow people in Pittsboro to get from a terminal here to a terminal in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Durham, or RTP within a reasonable amount of time.”
- “People that do not have driving privileges or automobiles are very constrained in terms of being able to take advantage of human services or employment opportunities.”
- “If you have a care, and parents are willing to take you places, then there are lots of activities for you. If you don’t have parents that have the time or the means of transportation, there is nothing.”



### **EDUCATION**

- “What I’d like to say, too, is that in Chatham County we’re not able to pay our teachers as much as other schools, like in Alamance and Durham and all those other counties. So what happens is the good teachers might come here for two years and they can just go 30 minutes away and make a lot more money, so...”
- “There are a number of kids who fall between the cracks. Kids who are dropping out of school at age 16 and working for just anyone, and having problems.”
- “The schools here are not as good as they could be, although a lot better than they used to be. They are challenged by the growth, I think, to a large extent, so they’ve built a lot of new schools; they have tried to upgrade when they can, but they are limited to some extent.”
- “The primary challenge that I face is with the current atmosphere of school accountability. Teachers are scared to death about doing anything other than what’s being tested. As a result, it’s been much more difficult to get teachers involved in other kinds of activities.”
- “Yeah, it seems like the quality of the schools, it’s not that good, and that’s really important and it definitely seems to me like a lot of young people are marginalized.”

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH**

- “There’s also very few job opportunities in this community and a lot of the kids that are working are working in Chapel Hill because there’s just no work down here – whether that be child employment while you’re in school or future potential stuff.”
- “A lot of our kids get caught up in working after school, which keeps them from doing some of the community service, but a lot of these kids have to, if they want their own car, they have to pay their own bills. I think it’s great that they are willing to work for what they want. It’s a two-sided coin – it’s good if they want to get out and work, but it keeps them from some volunteer work in their community.”
- “This isn’t an area where if people have prospects for their future – they’re not going to hang around here, they’re going to go somewhere else.”
- “I’m kind of in a mentoring relationship – and the one young lady, she is bored beyond bored – bored to the point of being angry about being bored.”

### **DRUGS & ALCOHOL**

- “Drugs are a problem here just like they are anyplace else.”
- “The drug problem has gotten a little worse – I imagine it’s going to get a whole lot worse with the 64/15-501 breezeways passing through here.”
- “Drugs and alcoholism. That’s the problem. Last year my daughter could walk home from school because we live right downtown, now I have to provide transportation because there are open beverages on the street, there’s drug dealing on 15-501.”
- “They’re experimenting in things that they may think they’re ready to try and handle but they get in over their heads a lot of the time.”
- “I haven’t heard of many keg parties like they do in Chapel Hill, thankfully, you know...teens and alcohol and males and females together don’t mix.”
- “Most of the youngsters that I talk to don’t want to quit getting high – they like their life, they like getting high – they don’t think they’re in that much trouble, and they don’t care much about what I say.”

### **STD’S AND TEEN PREGNANCY**

- “I think a lot of parents still have their heads stuck in the sand, saying that their child’s not doing that. Because people think it’s in bigger cities. It’s everywhere.”
- “That little bridge there at Horton Middle School, you know here you cross over that little bridge near the Laundromat...a lot of girls go down there and lose their virginity and smoke pot under that bridge.”
- “If I had my druthers, I would prefer to teach something besides abstinence just because I know these kids are not abstaining and the thing that scares me is the multiple partners. I could probably handle them being sexually active a little bit better than I could handle ‘This is my sixth or seventh person I have been sleeping with.’”
- “I think it’s just totally absurd that we just put our heads beneath a bushel basket over here and act like if we say abstinence is the best policy then nobody is going to have anything.”

### **TEEN VOICE**

- “Teens may be afraid to come to the health department, they think they might be seen by someone they know, not sure if it is really confidential.”
- “If there were more activities for teens to take part in, they might get into less trouble.”
- “Teens don’t want to take the time to help, they are involved in sports, too much homework, don’t have time.”
- “More programs at the middle school level, sports, big brother-big sister, would encourage teens not to get started on bad behaviors like smoking and drugs.”

### **RECREATION**

- “There’s very little recreational activities besides the organized sports and stuff like that – there’s not a lot offered for kids especially.”
- “There is no place to be entertained in Chatham County and people left to their own devices then to choose inappropriate or poor ones at best.”
- “Their free time, where they don’t have anything to do, is so dangerous for teenagers.”
- “Ideally, more people at home with their kids would be nice, or someplace for them to go cheap enough that everyone could afford it because what happens is, the people who can afford it have somebody, and the ones who can’t, they leave them by themselves.”
- “They need a place and that’s why I said it’s sort of shocking to me in a sense knowing that we do have something just around the corner, a Teen Center just for them and they’re not going there... so I don’t know why they’re not going to the places that’s made for them, you know. That’ll be something to check into.”

### ***Community Perceptions of Teens***

- “I think they are pretty well respected and well tolerated.”
- “I think there is a lot of opportunity for teens to have a voice.”
- “I guess I think their value system is messed up, but that’s partly me being older, I guess, too.”

## **FORCEFIELD ANALYSIS SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT SELECTED ISSUES:**

### **RACE RELATIONS (ALSO TEEN VOICE DISCUSSED)**

#### **The Current Situation:**

- Adults are not talking about racial issues, thus giving tacit approval in the face of a rapidly changing population.
- Differential treatments of different races in school and community.

#### **Goals:**

- Community forum for racial issues – discuss things such as interracial relationships
- Make the “all white” pool a community issue (as a reflection of what’s going on underneath)

#### **Hindering Forces identified:**

- Pool is private
- Money issue with pool; economic issues
- Focusing on pool would narrow and obscure the larger racial issues underneath
- Unspoken rules
- Historically, deeply rooted issue
- Community forum would end up “preaching to the choir” – people with racist attitudes wouldn’t come

#### **Helping Forces & Suggestions:**

- Publicly challenge the “all white” pool
- Provide a public access pool open to all
- Intentionally work and work and work
- Use triggers and “SHOWED” method of discussion at community forum
- \*\*Give youth a voice – they’re most likely to have an integrated voice\*\*

#### **Action Steps towards giving youth a voice:**

- Have focused discussions in after-school groups
- Have a film & discussion series open to the public or in the schools
- Get kids involved in decision making processes at community level
- Have vans available to get kids to community forums

**#1 Chosen idea:** \*\*Have Town Hall in school – hold a School Forum – give kids a chance to let their voices be heard in an organized fashion & record their voices – no need to attack or debate their views, just let them be heard (problem with this: no political/school board support for such an event; need voices of parents too & parents may not come.)

#### **Transportation:**

**Current Situation:** Lack of transportation for teens in the area.

**Goal:** To provide teen transportation to programs.

#### **Hindering forces identified:**

- Racism
- Liability issues
- Cost
- Classism
- Tight politicians
- Idea is too practical

#### **Helping forces identified:**

- Writing a transportation grant
- Expanding Chatham Transit
- Providing gasoline vouchers

#### **Action steps:**

- Popularizing this view of the need for transportation
- Educating people on grant writing
- Signing petitions
- Having a community forum on the issue
- Getting press coverage
- Performing a research study or “fact finding” mission to get the facts on the issue.

## **Recreation & Opportunities for Youth**

**Current Situation:** An overall lack of opportunities for recreation among youth.

**Goal:** To provide basic recreational facilities

### **Hindering forces identified:**

- Lack of money
- Security
- Lack of adult support & youth support
- Lack of transportation.

### **Helping forces identified:**

- Increased growth in the area
- Organized sports leagues
- The community college and non-profit organizations as potential resources
- Having caring commissioners in the area

### **Action steps based on growth:**

- Increasing the percentage from developers toward recreation
- Having caring commissioners to increase the allocation of funds
- Having non-profit organizations provide recreational programs
- Providing art and theater events at the Central Carolina Community College
- \*All of these action steps depend on increasing parental support and volunteers

## **Drug & Alcohol Use:**

**Current Situation:** Alcohol is the most commonly used drug followed by tobacco and marijuana among school age youth.

**Goal:** To delay the use of these substances until age 21 and to prevent alcohol use while driving

### **Hindering forces identified:**

- School failure in the educational system
- Difficulty in finding people to do this type of work such as special education teachers or teachers in general
- Need for/lack of an adolescent day treatment center
- Lack of consequences for using these substances
- Easy availability of these substances

### **Helping forces identified:**

- Increased education on the subject of substance use
- Increase in alcohol free events such as Project Graduation
- Positive attitudes related to Project Graduation and negative attitudes to substance use in general
- Increased information and activities related to delaying substance use
- Having a clinical and therapeutic resource position available
- Police department involvement

### **Action steps towards changing community attitudes/ promoting substance-free messages:**

- The use of the parent-parent training program in the community which is designed to help parents talk to their teens about these issues
- Changing the signage in convenience stores (part of targeting marketing literacy)
- Educating grocery store employees to be more aware of inhalant, alcohol, and tobacco sales to minors

### **STDs & Teen Pregnancy:**

**Current Situation:** The existence of these issues in Pittsboro

**Goal:** Having no unplanned “teen” pregnancies

#### **Hindering Forces Identified:**

- The existence of the abstinence only school policy
- Teens not using birth control
- Limited access or perceived limited access to birth control for teens
- Lack of parental involvement

#### **Helping Forces Identified:**

- Having a comprehensive health education curriculum in the school system
- Continuing current classes given in schools by the health educator
- Existence of the Body Shop at Horton Middle School
- Having more school based health clinics

#### **Action steps towards instituting a comprehensive health education curriculum:**

- UNC School of Public Health students put together a report on the costs of unplanned pregnancies to Chatham County such as foster care and premature births
- Create a coalition of parents and teens to speak to the school board, churches, civic organizations and teachers
- Add a Hispanic liaison to the coalition
- Lobby individual school board members through more informal means in addition to formal presentations
- Offer all programs in Spanish as well as English

**Table 1. 1999-2000 Racial Composition of Students (% of total students)**

| School Name    | African American | White | Hispanic | Other |
|----------------|------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Horton Middle  | 31%              | 66%   | 2%       | 1%    |
| Northwood High | 27%              | 70%   | 1.8%     | 1.2%  |

\*Adapted from Chatham County Schools Profiles (2001)

**Table 2. 1999-2000 Profile of Students**

|   | Horton Middle | Northwood High |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| <b>School Characteristics</b>   |               |                |
| Average class size  | 25            | 19.3           |
|   |               |                |
| Membership (180 <sup>th</sup> day )/Total attendance (% enrolled)                               | 413 (95.1%)   | 760 (94.7%)    |
| Number of in-school suspensions   | 132           | 394            |
| Number of out-of-school suspensions   | 99            | 311            |
| Number of students retained   | 13            | 81             |
| Number of students who dropped out  | N/A           | 51             |
| Number of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students  | 7             | 16             |
| <b><u>PTA</u></b>   |               |                |
| Number of members   | 36            | 117            |
| <b><u>GRADUATING STUDENTS</u></b>   |               |                |
| Number of graduates   | N/A           | 149            |
| Number of certificates awarded  | N/A           | 5              |
| Number of graduates planning to enroll in 4 year college or university (% of graduates)         | N/A           | 73 (49%)       |
| Number of graduates planning to enroll in 2 year community college (% of graduates)             | N/A           | 51 (34.2%)     |
| Number of graduates planning to enroll in trade, technical, or business school (% of graduates) | N/A           | 5 (3.4%)       |
| Number of graduates planning to join the military (% of graduates)                              | N/A           | 3 (2%)         |
| Number of graduates planning to seek employment (% of graduates)                                | N/A           | 3 (2%)         |
| Number of graduates with other plans (% of graduates)   | N/A           | 14 (9.4%)      |

\*Adapted from Chatham County Schools Profiles (2001)

**Table 3. 1999-2000 Performance Indicators–Horton Middle (% of students tested)**

|         | Mathematics |         |         |         | Reading |         |         |         | Number Tested |
|---------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
|         | Level 1     | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |               |
| Grade 5 | 5.2%        | 15.3%   | 39.2%   | 40.2%   | 5%      | 14%     | 45%     | 36%     | 98            |
| Grade 6 | 5%          | 21%     | 33.7%   | 39%     | 4%      | 29%     | 30%     | 37%     | 104           |
| Grade 7 | 6%          | 16%     | 36%     | 42%     | 8%      | 21%     | 22%     | 48%     | 98            |
| Grade 8 | 8%          | 14%     | 42%     | 36%     | 2%      | 16%     | 37%     | 44%     | 107           |

\*Adapted from the Chatham County Schools Profiles (2001)

**Tables 4-6. 1999-2000 Performance Indicators–Northwood High (% of students tested)**  
*\*Adapted from the Chatham County Schools Profiles (2001)*

**Table 4. 1998-2000 Standardized Testing Scores**

|     | 1998   |      |       | 1999   |      |       | 2000   |      |       |
|-----|--------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|
|     | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total |
| SAT | 511    | 485  | 996   | 485    | 459  | 944   | 481    | 503  | 984   |

**Table 5. 1998-2000 Advanced Placement Testing Scores**

|            | 1998-1999           |                          | 1999-2000           |                          |
|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
|            | Total number tested | Number scoring 3 or more | Total number tested | Number scoring 3 or more |
| English    | 0                   | 0                        | 11                  | 11                       |
| US History | 20                  | 19                       | 25                  | 19                       |
| Biology    | 0                   | 0                        | 0                   | 0                        |
| Calculus   | 3                   | 2                        | 12                  | 3                        |
| Chemistry  | 3                   | 1                        | 4                   | 2                        |

**Table 6. 1998-1999 High School Performance Scores**

|                  | High School Performance |         |         |         | Number Tested |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
|                  | Level 1                 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |               |
| Algebra I        | 10%                     | 31%     | 50%     | 9%      | 157           |
| Biology          | 15%                     | 30%     | 38%     | 16%     | 190           |
| ELP              | 11%                     | 24%     | 37%     | 28%     | 209           |
| English I        | 7%                      | 24%     | 44%     | 25%     | 206           |
| English II       | 5%                      | 25%     | 44%     | 26%     | 199           |
| US History       | 16%                     | 28%     | 33%     | 22%     | 183           |
| Algebra II       | 8%                      | 32%     | 37%     | 23%     | 129           |
| Physical Science | 15%                     | 36%     | 39%     | 10%     | 168           |
| Geometry         | 11%                     | 30%     | 43%     | 16%     | 172           |
| Physics          | 3%                      | 3%      | 68%     | 26%     | 31            |
| Chemistry        | 17%                     | 24%     | 39%     | 21%     | 126           |

**Table 7. Alcohol and Drug Use**

|  | <b>1995-1996</b> | <b>1997-1998</b> | <b>1999-2000</b> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Tried marijuana 6<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>       | 4%               | 6%               | 5%               |
| <b>Tried alcohol 6<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>         | 19%              | 23%              | 30%              |
| <b>Tried tobacco 6<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>         | 18%              | 20%              | 17%              |
| <b>Tried inhalants 6<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>       | 6%               | 9%               | 5%               |
| <b>Tried marijuana 8<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>       | 12%              | 15%              | 15%              |
| <b>Tried alcohol 8<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>         | 35%              | 38%              | 36%              |
| <b>Tried tobacco 8<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>         | 32%              | 34%              | 29%              |
| <b>Tried inhalants 8<sup>th</sup> grade or below</b>       | 10%              | 12%              | 7%               |
| <b>Lifetime use – marijuana</b>                            | 21%              | 23%              | 21%              |
| <b>Lifetime use – alcohol</b>                              | 43%              | 45%              | 44%              |
| <b>Lifetime use – tobacco</b>                              | 40%              | 39%              | 33%              |
| <b>Lifetime use – inhalants</b>                            | 11%              | 13%              | 8%               |
| <b>Lifetime use – cocaine/crack</b>                        | 4%               | 4%               | 3%               |
| <b>Lifetime use – hallucinogens</b>                        | 5%               | 6%               | 5%               |
| <b>Lifetime use – uppers or speed</b>                      | 9%               | 8%               | 7%               |
| <b>Lifetime use – prescription medications not for you</b> | 13%              | 14%              | 10%              |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – marijuana</b>                 | 13%              | 12%              | 10%              |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – alcohol</b>                   | 20%              | 19%              | 18%              |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – tobacco</b>                   | 23%              | 21%              | 16%              |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – inhalants</b>                 | 4%               | 4%               | 2%               |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – cocaine/crack</b>             | 2%               | 2%               | 1%               |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – hallucinogens</b>             | 2%               | 2%               | 2%               |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – uppers or speed</b>           | 3%               | 3%               | 3%               |
| <b>Use within last 30 days – prescription medications</b>  | 5%               | 6%               | 4%               |

**Table 8. 1996-1998 Juvenile Crime Rates<sup>†</sup>**

|   | <b>Chatham County</b> |             |             | <b>North Carolina</b> |             |             |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
|   | <b>1996</b>           | <b>1997</b> | <b>1998</b> | <b>1996</b>           | <b>1997</b> | <b>1998</b> |
| <b>Rate of juvenile arrests prior to age 15</b>           | 0                     | 0           | 0           | 15.27                 | 15.15       | 16.42       |
| <b>Rate of school violence and safety violations</b>      | 13.9                  | 5.5         | 5.5         | 6.6                   | 6.0         | 6.1         |
| <b>Rate of student firearm possession at school</b>       | 0                     | 0           | 0           | 1.3                   | 1.3         | 1.2         |
| <b>Rate of juvenile arrests for weapon law violations</b> | 2.9                   | 4.4         | 1.5         | 12.1                  | 13          | 13.3        |

<sup>†</sup> All rates expressed per 1,000 youth or teens

\* Adapted from the North Carolina Office of Juvenile Justice Juvenile Delinquency Risk Factor Indicators (2000)

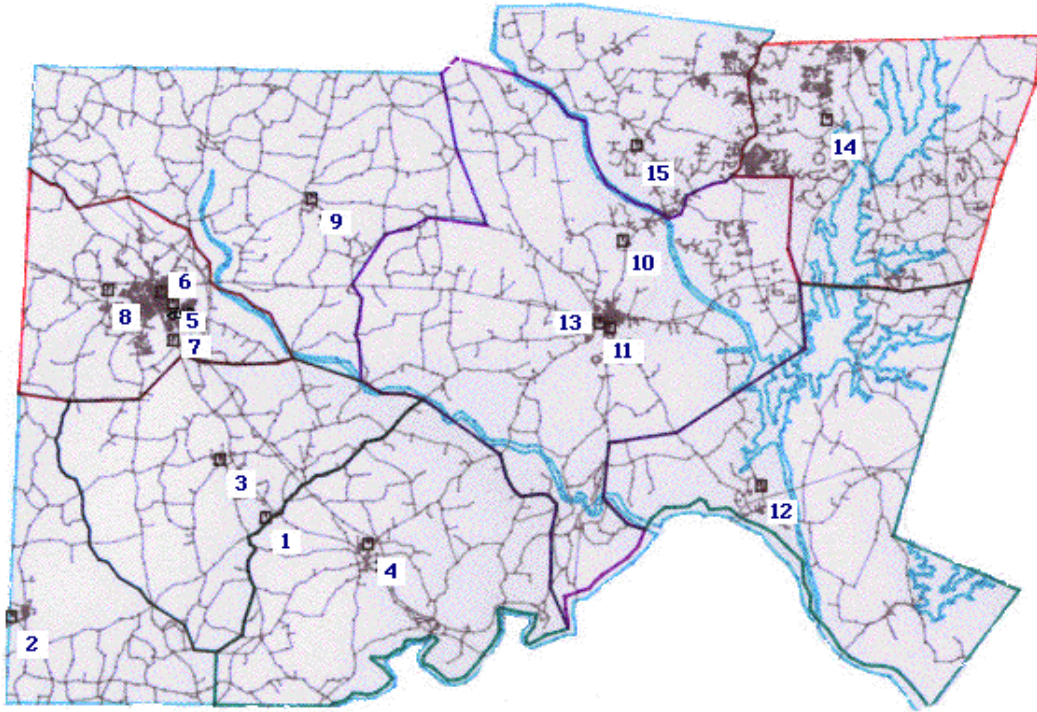


**Table 9. 1999-2000 STD and Teen Pregnancy Survey Results**

|   |
|---|
| <b>70%</b> of teens said they are too embarrassed to see the education and reproductive health services they need.  |
| <b>33%</b> of teens incorrectly cited the need to get parents' permission as a significant barrier to teens seeking health services and education             |
| <b>33%</b> disagreed that getting pregnant (or getting someone else pregnant) at this time in their lives would be one of the worst things that could happen. |
| <b>64%</b> disagreed with the statement that they would wait until marriage to have sex because of concerns about getting pregnant.                           |
| <b>35%</b> of teens were unaware that condoms offer the best protection (next to abstinence) against STDs.  |
| <b>78%</b> could not correctly identify the time during a girl's monthly cycle when the average girl is likely to become pregnant if she has sex.             |
| <b>75%</b> of the health care providers surveyed think there is inadequate education and services related to pregnancy and STD prevention for teens.          |

\*Adapted from a summary by the Chatham Crossroads (June/July 2000)

**Figure 1. Map of Chatham County School District.**



**Chatham Central District**

- 1. Chatham Central (9-12)
- 2. Bennett (K-8)
- 3. Bonlee (K-8)
- 4. J.S. Waters (K-8)

**Siler City District**

- 5. Jordan-Matthews (9-12)
- 6. SAGE Academy (8-12)
- 7. Chatham Middle (5-8)
- 8. Siler City (K-4)
- 9. Silk Hope (K-8)

**Pittsboro District**

- 10. Northwood (9-12)
- 11. Horton (5-8)
- 12. Moncure (K-8)
- 13. Pittsboro (K-4)
- 14. North Chatham (K-8)
- 15. Perry Harrison (K-8)

**TABLE 10: PITTSBORO RESOURCES**

| <b><u>AGENCY/<br/>ORGANIZATION</u></b>            | <b>Major Purpose or Population Served</b>   | <b><u>TELEPHONE #</u></b>        |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Central Carolina Community College                | To advance the lifelong educational development of adults in the community  | (919) 542-6495                   |
| Chatham Arts Council                              | A non-profit service organization to provide opportunities to enrich cultural life of Chatham County through people experiencing the arts; to bring artists together in celebration of creativity and diversity in community; support and nurture excellence in arts through partnerships with local organizations; and to work with school programs to encourage children to experience and to express themselves through the arts | (919) 542-0394                   |
| Chatham County Council on Aging                   | To support persons over age 60 with independent living and assisting with maintaining physical and mental wellness  | (919) 542-4512                   |
| Chatham County Department of Parks and Recreation | To expand and enhance existing recreation opportunities provided to residents of Chatham County   | (919) 542-8252                   |
| Chatham County Economic Development Corporation   | To enhance the quality of life in Chatham County through the promotion of economic activities including the attraction of new business and industries and the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries   | (919) 542-8274                   |
| Chatham County Health Department                  | To create a healthy environment that includes the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being of the community  | (919) 542-8214                   |
| Chatham Together                                  | To match mentors with at-risk youth   | (919) 542-5155                   |
| Chatham Transit                                   | To provide Chatham County residents with daily subscription route non-emergency medical transportation to Chatham county human service agencies. Medical transportation can also be provided to cities such as Chapel Hill, Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Greenville.<br>In addition, transportation is provided for Work First transitional/employment program participants as well as rural general public residents.                | (919) 542-5136                   |
| 4-H Clubs   | To provide educational enrichment activities to meet the needs and development stages of youth  | (919)542-8202                    |
| GirlScouts/BoyScouts                              | To assist girls and boys growing strong in body, mind, and spirit, and to have fun!   | (919) 542-1890                   |
| Headstart   | To improve the lives of low-income children by providing quality comprehensive child development services that are family focused, including education, health, nutrition and mental health.  | (919) 542-5028                   |
| Jordan Lake State Recreational Area               | To provide scenic, public park for recreational activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, camping, and hiking  | (919)362-0586                    |
| Pittsboro Memorial Library                        | To serve as an educational resource for the community   | (919) 542-3524                   |
| Pittsboro Teen Center                             | To provide a safe, multi-cultural environment for recreational and social activities for adolescents, including facilities, programs, and staff in order to foster well-being and racial diversity and lessen crime among adolescents   | (919) 542-0187<br>contact person |
| RAFI (Rural Advancement Foundation International) | RAFI is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable improvement of agricultural biodiversity, and to the socially responsible development of technologies useful to rural societies.  | (919) 542-1396                   |