University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers

Graduate School

2021

CULTIVATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR THE COMMUNITY

Keith Leighton Rongstad Jr.
University of Montana, Missoula

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd

Part of the Civic and Community Engagement Commons, and the Work, Economy and Organizations Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

CULTIVATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AT-RISK YOUTH AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR
THE COMMUNITY

By

KEITH LEIGHTON RONGSTAD, JR.

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT, 2017

Professional Paper

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts
in Sociology, Inequality and Social Justice

The University of Montana
Missoula, MT

December 22, 2021

Approved by:

Scott Whittenburg, Dean of The Graduate School
Graduate School

Kathy Kuipers, Co-Chair
Sociology

Daisy Rooks, Co-Chair
Sociology

Andrea Vernon
Public Administration and Policy

ABSTRACT

Rongstad, Keith, M.A., Fall 2021   Sociology

Cultivating Opportunities for At-Risk Youth and Food for the Community

Co-Chairperson: Kathy Kuipers

Co-Chairperson: Daisy Rooks

Garden City Harvest is a Missoula, Montana nonprofit organization. Garden City Harvest sponsors the Youth Harvest program. Youth Harvest teaches at-risk youth job and life skills. The program's mission is to improve participants' professional and personal outcomes as adults. Participants utilize farming and retail skills they learn in the program to improve their employment opportunities and learn important life skills, such as money management, nutritional literacy, and food preparation. Participants also have the opportunity to assist other vulnerable people in Missoula and to become more connected to their communities. This paper is an analysis of questionnaires that Youth Harvest staff distribute to adolescents in the program. Those questionnaires are designed to measure if Youth Harvest is meeting its goals. This analysis suggests that Youth Harvest is mostly successful in helping youth achieve professional and personal goals, but there is room for improvement.

Keywords: youth development, job skills, life skills, agricultural skills, retail skills, community connection, nutrition, cooking skills.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Garden City Harvest, a Missoula, Montana nonprofit organization, was founded in 1996. Its mission is to improve the health of Missoulians by promoting access to healthy, locally grown food for community members who are experiencing food insecurity (Garden City Harvest 2021a).[1] In 2003, Garden City Harvest launched Youth Harvest (Youth Harvest 2021a). Youth Harvest enrolls young people who are: involved in the Missoula Youth Drug Court, attend Willard Alternative High School, or about to age out of the foster care system (Garden City Harvest 2021b). Enrolled youth are mentored by Youth Harvest at Garden City Harvest's Missoula farm. Youth Harvest employs six to nine adolescents each program season (Garden City Harvest 2021a).[2] Youth Harvest is designed to help young people grow into productive, food secure adults while helping other Missoula community members access nutritious, locally grown food.

While participating in the Youth Harvest program, young people spend a season working as farmers and developing valuable work and life skills. In addition to doing agricultural work, participants attend workshops where they learn about food insecurity, conflict resolution strategies, and personal financial management (Youth Harvest 2021a). While Youth Harvest's primary focus is youth development, the program also benefits other groups of disadvantaged Missoulians. For example, young participants produce low-cost food, which they sell to local, low-income seniors who live in subsidized housing. Those seniors not only benefit from improved access to affordable, nutritious food, but their social isolation is reduced through

---

[1] The United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) defines food insecurity as "Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways" (U.S.D.A. 2021).

[2] Youth Harvest did not operate in the summer of 2020 as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, but resumed mentoring young people during the spring of 2021.

regular contact with Youth Harvest participants. Youth Harvest members deliver the produce that they grow to the Missoula Food Bank and Community Center, and to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. Additionally, Youth Harvest participants volunteer at the Missoula Food Bank and Community Center each week they are enrolled in the program.

In addition to helping other community members, Youth Harvest participants learn about food and nutrition while in the program. Youth Harvest participants often lack food preparation skills and knowledge about nutrition. To address this, the staff at Youth Harvest teach participants to cook fresh, nutritious foods; an important life skill. Research suggests there is a link between low-income status and insufficient knowledge of nutrition (White, Bunting, Williams, Raybould, Adamson, and Mathers 2004, as cited by Shaw 2006). Additionally, low-income people often lack food preparation skills (White et al. 2004, as cited by Shaw 2006). Each day of the program, a young participant assists staff with preparing lunch for participants, staff, and volunteers (Youth Harvest 2021b). Much of the food used for lunch is sourced directly from the farm. The purpose of that activity is to bolster participants' food preparation skills.

This analysis is designed to help Youth Harvest staff assess whether young participants are benefitting from the program in the manner intended. To achieve that goal, I conducted an analysis of questionnaires that the program distributes to participants each year. The questionnaires contain close-ended questions and open-ended reflections administered by the program at various points in the season. My research questions listed below focus on the Youth Harvest alumni experience, positive outcomes, and the learning of valuable employment and personal skills as a result of participation in the program. Additionally, this analysis assesses what aspects of the program work well for young participants and what aspects do not.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This project is guided by the following three research questions.

1. Do Youth Harvest alumni experience positive outcomes (e.g., reduced food insecurity, enhanced employment skills, improved self-esteem, connection to the community) as a result of participation in the program?

2. What skills do Youth Harvest alumni develop while in the program?

3. According to participants, what aspects of the Youth Harvest program are working well in meeting the program's goals and what aspects need improvement?

RELATED LITERATURE EVALUATING YOUTH FOOD PROGRAMS

According to Burris, Bradley, Rykiel, and Himmelgreen (2020), food insecure youth are seldom the focus of academic studies. Furthermore, Burris et al. (2020) contend that school sponsored breakfast and lunch programs are a common method of addressing adolescent food insecurity, but argue that teenagers frequently express dissatisfaction with the quality of food they are served. Additionally, teens have little or no say in the types of food they are served at school. By teaching young people how to grow and prepare healthful food, Youth Harvest and similar programs help address quality and choice issues associated with school-based food programs. Programs that teach young people about food also address other issues, including neglect, abuse, lack of educational attainment, lack of employment skills, and others.

Opportunities for Safety

Programs provide safe locations for learning to take place. Hung (2004) writes about a youth development program called East New York Farms (ENY Farms). ENY Farms is located in the East New York neighborhood in New York City. At one time, East New York had one of the highest homicide rates in New York City. As a result, the young participants in Hung's

(2004) study regularly express concern about the violence in their neighborhood. ENY Farms provides program participants an opportunity to escape the violence in their neighborhood, which in 1993 set a record for annual homicides (126) in a single New York City neighborhood (Hung 2004). One young worker at ENY Farms said, "the garden is safe and comfortable and is a wide-open space that's different from the park; the park has open space too, but the park is sometimes dangerous" (Hung 2004:73). Hung (2004:73) notes that "Twelve of the 18 youth interns that I interviewed talked about how children need a place to go instead of being on the street, and that working keeps them out of trouble." For the youth at ENY Farm, the farm offers them the opportunity to avoid the dangerous streets of East New York.

A similar program located in Berkeley, California, Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA) offers urban youth an opportunity to avoid the streets (Lawson and McNally 1995). BYA works with at-risk young people, many of whom reside in low-income, high-crime areas of the city. BYA offers these young people an escape from their troubled neighborhoods and difficult personal lives while building essential job and life skills. While the young people at Youth Harvest do not live in high-risk urban neighborhoods like youth at ENY Farms and BYA, they too benefit from the opportunity to step away from their often-challenging lives.

Opportunities for Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Determination

ENY Farms and BYA are similar to Youth Harvest in other ways. ENY Farms and BYA provide young participants job training with a focus on agricultural work; those programs allow young people to develop skills that can help them secure employment as adults. As they gain knowledge and an ability to contribute to raising food, participants also have an opportunity to improve their self-esteem (Lawson and McNally 1995; Youth Harvest 2021c). Additionally, the community benefits from all three youth development programs because nutritious food is made

available to the public. Access to nutritious food is a boon to food insecure individuals (e.g., seniors, households led by single mothers) who may not be able to afford healthful foods without these nonprofits' intervention.

Youth development programs use employment and life skills training to create positive outcomes among youth. Positive outcomes include "decreased problem behaviors and increased self-esteem and interpersonal skills" (Bernat and Resnick 2006; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins 2004; Resnick 2000; as cited by Horning, Liden, and McMorris 2017:2). But young people must accept the methods used by youth development programs in order to be successful participants (Sachs and Miller 1992). Accepting a program's methods hinges on youths' ability to persevere when confronted with challenges. In other words, youth participants must believe in themselves if they are to successfully navigate the challenges of program participation. Sachs and Miller (1992:90) write, "an individual's self-efficacy is dependent upon the individual's personal belief that the individual will successfully complete a particular task" (Bandura 1977; as cited by Sachs and Miller 1992:90).

Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that an individual's ability to complete tasks is linked to their belief that they are capable of success (Sachs and Miller 1992). Additionally, youth development programs employ methods that "impact an individual's expectations for success" (Sachs and Miller 1992:90). Those methods include, "(a) performance accomplishments, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal" (Sachs and Miller 1992:90). Put differently, individuals successfully complete tasks when they experience initial success, when they see others succeed, when they are influenced or persuaded by others, or when they become emotionally invested in a task.

Self-Determination Theory is another tool that aids our understanding of how youth development programs operate. Broaddus, Przygocki, and Winch (2015) write that Self-Determination Theory assumes that humans are naturally inclined to intellectual and emotional growth, and social connection. In order for humans to achieve those conditions, three things are required: "competence, autonomy, and relatedness" (Broaddus et al. 2015:25). Put another way, people must be able-minded, must be free of excessive outside influence, and must be connected to or interact with others in order to establish personal growth and social connections. Those requirements are reflected in the methods seen in youth development programs.

Broaddus et al. (2015) describe those dynamics in their research about a third youth development program; Charm City Farm (CCF). CCF is located in Baltimore, Maryland and "promote[s] youth involvement in agriculture with the goal of improving nutrition, reducing obesity, and increasing environmental awareness" (Ozer 2007; Robinson-O'Brien, Story and Heim 2009; as cited by Broaddus et al. 2015:23). CCF also helps at-risk participants increase their employability by teaching them technical and social skills as they work on the farm. According to Broaddus et al. (2015), CCF incorporates elements of Self-Determination Theory in their program. CCF encourages intellectual and emotional growth and social connection among participants. For example, intellectual growth occurs when participants acquire greater job and life skills (e.g., agricultural skills, nutritional literacy, environmental competency). Youth at CCF also acquire social skills (e.g., non-aggression, cooperation), which help them become incorporated into society.

Race and Class Comparison

ENY Farms, BYA, and CCF are located in racially diverse urban areas (New York City, Berkeley, and Baltimore), while Youth Harvest is located in Missoula, Montana, which is 91.1%

white (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). This is noteworthy because in 2019, 18.8% of African Americans and 15.7% of Latinx people in the U.S. lived below the poverty line, while only 7.3% of whites did the same (U.S. Census Bureau 2019a). The above statistics indicate that people of color disproportionately experience poverty.

While participants at Youth Harvest, ENY Farms, BYA, and CCF all experience disadvantage, poverty in Missoula varies in key ways from poverty in more urban locations. Accordingly, it is vital that the unique experiences of the Missoulians who are people of color be acknowledged. In Missoula, this is especially true of Indigenous youth who participate in Youth Harvest; Indigenous people comprise 6.7% of Montana's population (U.S. Census Bureau 2019b). Indigenous people in the United States experience poverty at a high rate. "The percentage (26.2%) of single-race American Indian and Alaska Native people who were in poverty in 2016, the highest rate of any race group" (U.S. Census Bureau 2017).

Another important consideration when comparing these programs to Youth Harvest is race-based funding disparities. Werum (2002) writes that historic, New Deal agricultural training programs largely excluded African Americans. This is important because race-based funding imbalances persist in the modern era. For example, Garrow (2012) finds that nonprofits in predominantly African American neighborhoods receive less government-based funding than their counterparts in white neighborhoods. "Because African Americans are both negatively constructed and politically marginalized," Garrow (2012:395) explains, "government may respond to increased need in African American neighborhoods with disinvestment rather than investment."

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that young people of color, especially African American males, frequently receive more severe punishments at school, including alternative school

placements (Brown and Beckett 2007). This is notable because many Youth Harvest participants are also students at Willard Alternative High School. Brown and Beckett (2007:18) writes, "When ethnicity and gender are combined, it has been found that Black males are 16 times more likely than white females, and 156 times more likely than Asian females to receive corporal punishment." Awareness of racial inequality in both funding and practice allows this analysis to remain grounded in sociological theory and produce a balanced assessment of the Youth Harvest program despite unawareness of participants' race or ethnicity.

Gender Comparisons

In addition to race, there is a gendered element to agricultural job training programs. Job training was a significant part of New Deal Era reforms, including training for high school aged people (Werum 2002). During that era, the 1930s, the U.S. government funded programs that trained young men of high school age to work in agriculture. Young women were barred from participating in agricultural training, and were instead steered into home economics training (Werum 2002). Their exclusion from agricultural training programs and the presence of socially constructed gender roles (e.g., unpaid domestic work, unpaid care work) limited young women to home economics training (Werum 2002). Additionally, home economics programs received far less funding than agricultural training aimed at young men (Werum 2002).

There is evidence that funding disparities continue to exist in youth development programs. Johnston-Nicholson, Weiss, and Maschino (1992) find that development programs aimed at young women receive 75% fewer grants than programs that target young men. Johnston-Nicholson et al. (1992:21) write, "Organizations for girls consistently have had less funding and fewer resources than organizations for boys." Like racial disparity, it is vital that this analysis recognizes gender disparity in funding.

8

The above factors (i.e., race and gender) are important considerations in this analysis. Youth Harvest participants come from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and are both boys and girls. Moreover, it is likely that some participants are members of the LGBTQ community. The diversity among Youth Harvest participants indicates that it is appropriate to collect race and gender data with questionnaires, a step that did not occur in recent questionnaires. Awareness of participants' demographic characteristics may allow Youth Harvest to address program issues of race and gender and provide an equitable experience for all participants. Alternatively, some race and gender groups comprise only a small portion of the Youth Harvest population; therefore, individual responses may indicate the participant who provided a specific answer. In that case, not revealing race and gender protects participants from being identified.

METHODS

Quantitative Methods

I acquired quantitative data from Youth Harvest, a program administered by Garden City Harvest. All identifiers were removed from the data (quantitative and qualitative) before I was given access. The University of Montana Institutional Review Board recommended that this step be taken. The removal of identifiers was necessary to protect the identities of respondents, not only because Youth Harvest participants are minors, but also because they did not give permission to be identified in this analysis. For the purposes of this analysis, the quantitative data are referred to as close-ended data, responses to questions with limited response categories. Youth Harvest staff provided me access to close-ended data that they compiled via a questionnaire titled the *End of Season Questionnaire* (Appendix A). The questionnaire was distributed to Youth Harvest participants at the conclusion of five different Youth Harvest seasons.

This analysis used median and mode to analyze the data reported by participants in the *End of Season Questionnaires*. The median (the middlemost response) and mode (the most common response) indicated which categories were most likely and most important to participants. In this analysis, the five *End of Season Questionnaires* were combined into one data set. This allowed for a view of statistical trends across multiple seasons, rather than trends limited to single seasons.

In addition to the *End of Season Questionnaires*, Youth Harvest staff granted me access to four additional close-ended questionnaires: *Participant Skills Questionnaire* (Appendix B*), Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaires* (Appendices C-E*), Values and Personal Characteristics* (Appendix F) *Questionnaire, and Confidence in Achieving Personal Goals Questionnaire* (Appendix G)*.* I used percentages to assess the data from the four questionnaires. Percentages indicated which categories were most important to participants. Specifically, when a question yielded a high percentage, the frequency of response was greater.

To gain a better understanding of the close-ended data, I entered the questionnaire results in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a statistical analysis computer program. I created tables that use median and mode or percentages. Those statistics (median, mode, and percentage) indicate areas that were important to participants. Additionally, I compared percentages between the pre-test and post-test phases which showed how participants' perceptions changed through the course of the season. Notably, most of the data trended upward, which indicated improvement between the beginning of the season and the conclusion.

The number of participants in Youth Harvest during each season was small, allowing for more personal attention paid to the youth who participated. However, the small number of participants created limitations, namely that the data was not as robust as in other analyses, due

to fewer respondents. The small sample size also impacted the statistics derived from the close-ended data; a small change appeared to be statistically large. The following table indicates the number of participants who completed each questionnaire.

Table 1: Number of participants per season, close-ended data

Name of Questionnaire	Number of Participants
End of Season Questionnaires (Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Spring 2019, Summer 2019, and Spring 2021)	32
Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire*	9
Summer 2017, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire**	8
Spring 2018, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire**	6
Winter 2019, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire**	3
Spring 2021, *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*	6
Spring 2021, *Confidence in Achieving Personal Goals Questionnaire*	6

Note: The number of participants per season is an estimate. In some cases, participants left the program early or were hired mid-season. In those instances, they completed a pre-test or post-test, but not both.
*Questionnaires are listed separately because questions vary by season.

Qualitative Methods

In addition to close-ended questionnaires*,* participants at Youth Harvest were asked to complete qualitative *End of Season Reflections* (Appendices H-N)*.* For the purposes of this analysis, qualitative data are referred to as open-ended data. The *End of Season Reflections* were distributed at the end of seven different seasons. These reflections offered participants the opportunity to express how they felt about their Youth Harvest experience in their own words. I used the open-ended data to enhance my understanding of the close-ended data.

The data from the *End of Season Reflections* was entered into an Excel spreadsheet. That allowed data from multiple reflections to be organized in an easy-to-navigate manner. Questions from the reflections were entered in rows. Participants' responses were entered in columns. That made it possible to read a question and then scroll to the right to view participants' responses across multiple seasons. This provided a broader view of the data. Furthermore, using Excel allowed for easy word searches. The ability to search the document simplified the process of

identifying key words. Those key words indicated what participants perceived to be important, which helped with the formation of themes. The analysis of open-ended data focused on three themes: employability, self-development, and community connection.

Quotations from *End of Season Reflections* were then entered in a Word document and placed next to data from the close-ended tables. That process highlighted connections between the open-ended and close-ended data. This link was important because the open-ended data was primarily used to enhance the close-ended data in this analysis.

The small sample size had a more profound effect on close-ended data than on open-ended data. In this analysis, median, mode, and percentage were used to evaluate the close-ended data. When the sample size was only three people (winter 2019), a single change between the pre-test and post-test appeared to be large, plus or minus 33%. In reality, only a single person changed their response, a small variation of one response. Open-ended data was not affected in the same fashion; minor variations did not create the appearance of substantial change. Table 2 lists the number of completed reflections per season.

Table 2: Number of participants per reflection, open-ended data

Name of Reflection	Number of Participants
Spring 2017, *End of Season Reflection*	2
Summer 2017, *End of Season Reflection*	8
Spring 2018, *End of Season Reflection*	6
Summer 2018, *End of Season Reflection*	7
Spring 2019, *End of Season Reflection*	7
Summer 2019, *End of Season Reflection*	7
Spring 2021, *End of Season Reflection*	6

Note: The number of participants per season is an estimate. The above table only accounts for participants who completed a reflection at the end of a season.

RESULTS

Respondents

Table 3 represents the number of participants who completed each questionnaire and when they completed it. This is helpful because it allows for easy visualization of the sample size for each questionnaire. Table 3 also indicates when specific questionnaires were distributed. When the same questionnaire was distributed multiple times, the results are sometimes combined into one table. That allows for an analysis of data trends across multiple seasons, rather than being limited to a single season.

Table 3: Characteristics of Respondents

Year	Season	N (at time of distribution)	Valid N	*End of Season Questionnaire*	*Participant Values Questionnaire*	*Self- Evaluation of Skills*	*Values and Personal Characteristic*	*Confidence in Achieving Goals*
2017	Summer	8	8	NA	8	8	NA	NA
2018	Spring	6	6	6	NA	6	NA	NA
	Summer	7	7	7	NA	7*	NA	NA
2019	Spring	6	6	6	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Summer	7	7	7	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Winter	3	3	NA	NA	3	NA	NA
2021	Spring	6	6	6	NA	NA	6	6

NA: Questionnaire was not distributed
*Post Season Only

Areas of Greatest Development, Growth, and Learning

Table 4 shows responses to the question, "How much did you develop, grow, or learn [characteristic]?" The characteristics (variables) are found in the left-hand column of the table. Participants assign a rating to each question. The rating scale is as follows: 0 (None), 1 (Some), 2 (More), or 3 (Heaps). SPSS was used to calculate the medians and modes.

Table 4: Median and Mode: How much did you develop, grow, learn?

Variables			
How much did you develop, grow, learn?	**Median**	**Mode**	**N**
COMMUNICATION			
Ability to Express Self Openly and Honestly	2.0	2.0	31
Positive Communication	2.0	2.0	32
Giving/Receiving Feedback	2.0	1.0/2.0*	32
Skill in Conflict-Resolution	1.5	1.0	32
General Social Skills	2.0	2.0	32
Public Speaking Skills	1.0	1.0	32
JOB/LIFE SKILLS			
Ability to Problem Solve	2.0	2.0	32
Ability to Set and Achieve Goals	2.0	2.0	32
Leadership Skills	2.0	2.0	32
Teamwork Skills	2.0	2.0	32
Work Ethic	2.0	2.0/3.0*	31
Ability to Take Direction	2.0	2.0	31
Reliability	2.0	1.0	32
Willingness to do What Needs Done	2.0	2.0	30
Competency at Farming	3.0	3.0	31
Confidence in Getting a Job	2.0	3.0	32
SELF			
Self-Confidence	1.0	1.0	32
Self-Awareness/Identity	2.0	3.0	31
Self-Advocacy	2.0	1.0/2.0/3.0*	30
Self-Responsibility	2.0	2.0	31
Self-Motivation	2.0	2.0	30
Coping Strategies (Ability to Manage Anxiety, Depression, Anger)	2.0	1.0	31
Sense of Independence	2.0	3.0	30
COMMUNITY			
Willingness to Help Others	2.0	2.0	32
Concern for Wellbeing of Others	2.0	1.0	32
Value of Community Service	2.0	3.0	31
Sense of Belonging/Community Connection	2.0	3.0	31
Network of Support	2.0	2.0	31
HEALTH			
Physical Health	2.0	2.0	31
Mental Health	2.0	1.0	31
Self-Care Practices	2.0	2.0	32

Source: Spring and Summer Sessions, 2018 and 2019; and Spring Session, 2021; *End of Season Questionnaire*

Note: The responses are rated on the following 4-point scale: 0 (None), 1 (Some), 2 (More), or 3 (Heaps).

*Multiple modes exist

The first question discussed here, "competency at farming," has both a high median and high mode. Both the median and mode for "competency at faming" are ratings of 3 (Heaps); the highest possible rating in the *End of Season Questionnaire*. The data indicates that participants perceive that they develop, grow, or learn "heaps" of "competency at farming" during their time at Youth Harvest. Increased "competency at farming" is a boon for both participants and Youth Harvest, because farm skills are marketable. Put differently, participants are more employable because they have developed "competency at farming."

The open-ended data supports the argument that Youth Harvest is successful at improving participants' employability. For example, when asked what they are most proud of from their time at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "Commitment. Showing up. Working even when upset." This participant suggests that they are committed to work even when facing unfavorable conditions. The participant suggests that they are dedicated to the program and that they are physically present during work hours. "Showing up" may also indicate that they are mentally and emotionally available to work. This participant's commitment to work and willingness to "show up" suggests they are employable.

When asked about changes they made while at Youth Harvest one participant writes, "More direction in what I want to do in life - more ideas and experience and confidence in finding a job I'd like." The participant's newfound sense of direction may lead them to suitable work during adulthood. They have acquired work experience and are more confident that they will find employment. Employers will often not hire people who lack experience; therefore, the work experience participants acquire at Youth Harvest is essential. It is also important that this participant has confidence that they will find work. The participant's response is hand-written, but their tone suggests positivity and confidence. The participant chose positive words, such as

more, direction, ideas, experience, and confidence. Their writing suggests a positive outlook on the future.

The second question from Table 4 discussed here is "self-confidence." Table 4 indicates that participants do not perceive that they develop, grow, or learn in "self-confidence" during their time with Youth Harvest. Both the median and mode for "self-confidence" are low at 1 (Some). "Self-confidence" is associated with positive outcomes, such as having a sense of self-worth and a belief in one's ability to successfully complete tasks (Owens 1993). Thus, "self-confidence" is an essential part of participants' self-development.

It is noteworthy that participants perceive "some" development, growth, or learning in "self-confidence" during their time at Youth Harvest. Despite a low median and mode, the word "some" suggests that participants gain "self-confidence" as a result of the program, even if it is limited. Many Youth Harvest participants are at-risk youth, and as such they may have a substantial deficit in "self-confidence" upon entering the program (Youth Harvest 2021d). Participants may have suffered emotional or other abuses (Youth Harvest 2021d). If so, these participants will likely enter Youth Harvest with very low "self-confidence" and self-esteem (Youth Harvest 2021d).

Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) found a correlation between abuse and low self-esteem. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994:42) write, "The present investigation found that battered women experience lower self-esteem than nonbattered women." Oates, Forrest, and Peacock (1985) find that abuse has long-term effects on children, including their employability. Oates et al. (1985:162) write, "The self-esteem of the abused children was such that they were less likely than the comparison children to want, or to feel that they would be able to obtain, jobs in the

higher socioeconomic groups." Thus, development, growth, and learning are important to participants "self-confidence" and self-esteem even if only "some" occurs.

The open-ended data suggests that participants make progress in their self-development at Youth Harvest. For example, participants are asked about "skills, strengths, and understandings" that they acquire at Youth Harvest. One participant writes, "Confidence, help in general, especially speaking for self, sharing voice." The participant perceives that they are more "self-confident" and are more comfortable with self-advocacy following their time in Youth Harvest. In other words, they are comfortable with themself and are better suited to speak in their own interest.

When asked how they changed during the Youth Harvest season another participant writes "I have more self-motivation, am more engaged in the program, and I have more self-awareness." This participant suggests that they are able to work without being prompted and are more conscious of their inner self than they were before joining Youth Harvest. Self-motivation is a skill that youth will use in their domestic and professional lives. Furthermore, the participant reports being more aware of their self; how they think or operate. This suggests that they are more aware of their feelings and thoughts after participating in Youth Harvest.

The final question from Table 4 discussed here is "sense of belonging/community connection." Specifically, participants are asked how much they develop, grow, or learn in "sense of belonging/community connection." This question has a mode of 3 (Heaps). This indicates that more participants respond that they perceive development, growth, or learning in their "sense of belonging/community connection" and this response is given more than other responses to this question. Furthermore, a mode of 3 (Heaps) in "sense of belonging/community connection" suggests that participants experience improved community connection following

Youth Harvest participation. The median response for this question is "more," indicating that more than half the respondents perceived that they developed, grew, and learned in their "sense of belonging/community connection."

This is important because a "sense of belonging/community connection" is central to individuals' well-being. Jakubec, Olfert, Choi, Dawe, and Sheehan (2018:46) describe the link between belonging and well-being as "a sensation or an attitude, for example feeling attached, comforted, accepted, and appreciated/respected." Additionally, Quinn, Adger, Butler, and Walker-Springett (2020:586) find "a significant relationship between active belonging, relational capital, and well-being." Put differently, active engagement with others improves individuals' sense of well-being.

The open-ended data on "sense of belonging/community connection" offers further insight about participants' community connection. For example, in response to a question about what their favorite lesson at Youth Harvest is, one participant responds, "Community coming together to help people get food." This response suggests that the participant places value on community, and are aware of the community's ability to help its most vulnerable people. The participant's understanding of Youth Harvest as an important agent of help in the community, casts the organization in a positive light.

When asked what they valued most about Youth Harvest, a second participant writes, being "close with my coworkers, and working hard for my money and to make our community a better place." This participant values their connection with their peer-community at Youth Harvest. The participant then expresses that they value helping others in the larger Missoula community, making them a benefit to the greater Missoula community. The participant's

uplifting language, such as "close," "working hard," and "better place," casts a positive light on both the individual and on Youth Harvest.

When asked how they changed while at Youth Harvest and how the program facilitated those changes, a third participant writes, "Team building and groups have helped with community engagement and connection." Their use of "engagement" suggests that the participants is more involved with fellow community members than they were before they participated in Youth Harvest. Community connection is important for at-risk youth because it can lead to employment, access to community resources, and a sense of belonging. The above discussion indicates that participants develop, grow, and learn while at Youth Harvest. The next question measures if participants value the characteristics included in the *End of Season Questionnaire*.

Areas of Greatest Value

Table 5 is similar to Table 4. Table 5 includes the same sub-questions in the left-hand column as Table 4, and also uses median and mode. The key difference between the two tables is the questions participants are asked. The questionnaire for Table 5 asks participants, "How much do you value this [characteristic]?"

Table 5: Median and Mode: How much do you value this?

Variables			
How much do you value this?	**Median**	**Mode**	**N**
COMMUNICATION			
Ability to Express Self Openly and Honestly	2.0	3.0	31
Positive Communication	2.0	3.0	32
Giving/Receiving Feedback	2.0	2.0/3.0*	31
Skill in Conflict-Resolution	2.0	2.0	32
General Social Skills	3.0	3.0	32
Public Speaking Skills	2.0	2.0	32
JOB/LIFE SKILLS			
Ability to Problem Solve	3.0	3.0	32
Ability to Set and Achieve Goals	2.0	3.0	32
Leadership Skills	2.0	3.0	31
Teamwork Skills	2.5	3.0	32
Work Ethic	3.0	3.0	32
Ability to Take Direction	3.0	3.0	30
Reliability	3.0	3.0	32
Willingness to do What Needs Done	3.0	3.0	31
Competency at Farming	3.0	3.0	31
Confidence in Getting a Job	3.0	3.0	32
SELF			
Self-Confidence	3.0	3.0	32
Self-Awareness/Identity	3.0	3.0	31
Self-Advocacy	3.0	3.0	31
Self-Responsibility	3.0	3.0	32
Self-Motivation	3.0	3.0	31
Coping Strategies (Ability to Manage Anxiety, Depression, Anger)	3.0	3.0	31
Sense of Independence	3.0	3.0	31
COMMUNITY			
Willingness to Help Others	3.0	3.0	32
Concern for Wellbeing of Others	3.0	3.0	32
Value of Community Service	3.0	3.0	32
Sense of Belonging/Community Connection	2.0	3.0	31
Network of Support	3.0	3.0	31
HEALTH			
Physical Health	3.0	3.0	32
Mental Health	3.0	3.0	32
Self-Care Practices	3.0	3.0	32

Source: Spring and Summer Sessions, 2018 and 2019; and Spring Session, 2021; *End of Season Questionnaire*

Note: The responses are rated on the following 4-point scale: 0 (None), 1 (Some), 2 (More), or 3 (Heaps).

*Multiple modes exist

One of the most striking results shown in Table 5 is low medians and modes in the "communication" category. Five of six medians and two of five modes in "communication" are ratings of 2 (More).[3] In total, 7 of 11 (63.6%) medians and modes in the "communication" category are ratings of 2 (More). A rating of 2 (More) is relatively high, but is low when compared to other categories in Table 5. The majority of medians and modes in other categories are ratings of 3 (Heaps) so it appears that respondents do not feel as strongly in valuing "communication."

The other four categories in Table 5 have higher medians and modes than "communication." For example, in the "job/life skills" category only 3 of 20 (15.0%) medians and modes are ratings below 3 (Heaps) of value, compared to 63.6% in "communication." In the category "self," 0 of 14 (0.0%) medians and modes are ratings below 3 (Heaps) of value. In the "community" category 1 of 10 (10.0%) are ratings below 3 (Heaps) of value. In the "health" category 0 of 6 (0.0%) are ratings below 3 (Heaps) of value. This is important because "communication" is a central part of employability, self-development, and community connection.

The open-ended data does not align with the close-ended data in Table 5. Much of the open-ended data suggests that participants value "communication." For example, when asked about "skills, strengths, and understandings" that they developed at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "Positive communication skills with personal relationships and gentle and positive with self." The participant suggests that they have improved "communication" skills, especially with people they know well. Their use of uplifting words, such as "positive" and

---

[3] One mode is not included because it is mixed. Giving/Receiving Feedback has a dual mode of 2 (More) and 3 (Heaps).

"gentle," suggests that the participant has positive feelings about their participation in the Youth Harvest program.

When asked the same question (i.e., "skills, strengths, and understandings" they developed at Youth Harvest) another participant writes, "I can communicate clearly with my peers." This participant suggests that they have improved "communication" skills as a result of Youth Harvest participation. An additional participant writes, "More comfortable talking to strangers." Like the previous participant, this individual perceives improved "communication" skills following Youth Harvest participation. The participant indicates that they are now able to step outside of their comfort zone and are capable of communicating with unfamiliar people. The above participants use phrases, such as "communicate clearly" and "more comfortable," Those words suggest that they are more adept at communication and are more self-assured after Youth Harvest participation.

"Communication" skills and self-confidence development can improve participants' employability, self-development, and community connection. The above discussion indicates that participants largely value the attributes included in the *End of Season Questionnaire*, including communication. The next section will consider if participants experience challenge in specific areas.

Challenging Characteristics

Table 6 is similar to Tables 4 and 5. Table 6 includes the same sub-questions and shows medians and modes like the other two tables. However, the questions in Table 6 ask participants, "How much were you challenged in this area?" Participants use the same rating scale as the one used in the other two tables

Table 6: Median and Mode: How much were you challenged in this area?

Variables			
How much were you challenged in this area?	**Median**	**Mode**	**N**
COMMUNICATION			
Ability to Express Self Openly and Honestly	2.0	2.0	13
Positive Communication	1.0	1.0	13
Giving/Receiving Feedback	1.0	1.0	30
Skill in Conflict-Resolution	1.0	1.0	13
General Social Skills	2.0	2.0	13
Public Speaking Skills	2.0	3.0	12
JOB/LIFE SKILLS			
Ability to Problem Solve	2.0	2.0	13
Ability to Set and Achieve Goals	2.0	2.0	13
Leadership Skills	2.0	2.0	13
Teamwork Skills	2.0	1.0/2.0*	13
Work Ethic	1.0	1.0	13
Ability to Take Direction	1.5	.00/3.0*	12
Reliability	2.0	2.0	12
Willingness to do What Needs Done	1.0	.00/3.0*	13
Competency at Farming	2.0	1.0/3.0*	13
Confidence in Getting a Job	2.0	2.0	13
SELF			
Self-Confidence	2.0	3.0	13
Self-Awareness/Identity	2.0	2.0	13
Self-Advocacy	1.0	1.0	13
Self-Responsibility	2.0	2.0	13
Self-Motivation	2.0	3.0	13
Coping Strategies (Ability to Manage Anxiety, Depression, Anger)	2.0	2.0	12
Sense of Independence	1.0	1.0	12
COMMUNITY			
Willingness to Help Others	1.0	.00/1.0*	13
Concern for Wellbeing of Others	1.0	1.0	13
Value of Community Service	1.0	1.0/2.0*	13
Sense of Belonging/Community Connection	2.0	.00/2.0*	13
Network of Support	1.5	2.0	12
HEALTH			
Physical Health	2.0	2.0	13
Mental Health	2.0	3.0	13
Self-Care Practices	2.0	2.0	13

Source: Spring and Summer Sessions, 2018 and 2019; and Spring Session, 2021; *End of Season Questionnaire*
Note: The responses are rated on the following 4-point scale: 0 (None), 1 (Some), 2 (More), or 3 (Heaps).
*Multiple modes exist

Table 6 includes several interesting results. "Self-confidence" has a mode of 3 (Heaps), the highest possible rating and the most common answer. This suggests that participants' "self-confidence" is challenged at Youth Harvest because participants are asked, "How much were you challenged in this area?" There is ambiguity in this question and how it is worded so the responses may be interpreted in several different ways. One argument is that the program intentionally challenges participants' "self-confidence." Participants are made to step outside their comfort zone. As a result, participants learn to be more self-confident as they experience success.

A second argument is that participants are challenged because the program is not adequately addressing "self-confidence." Put differently, participants experience challenge in "self-confidence" because Youth Harvest is not helping them improve in that area. It is unclear which of the above interpretations are accurate because of the wording of the question. This analysis suggests that Youth Harvest be clearer on what challenging youth's "self-confidence" means. This is important because of Youth Harvest's focus on participants' self-development.

In the open-ended data, at least one participant indicates that "self-confidence" is a challenge. That is similar to what is seen in the close-ended data. Participants are asked what areas they struggle with or areas where they could improve. One participant writes, "self-confidence, reaching out, making conversation." The participant indicates that they are challenged by "self-confidence," and suggests that they have a difficult time connecting with others. This suggests that they lack social skills and "self-confidence."

Other participants write about experiencing positive outcomes in "self-confidence" after participating in Youth Harvest. For example, participants are asked how they are different after Youth Harvest participation. One participant writes that they are "less critical of self, finding

success in challenging self, confidence." This participant suggests that they have experienced

success as a result of the challenges they encountered at Youth Harvest, and are also less self-

critical and more confident. Again, improved "self-confidence" can improve at-risk youth's

employability, self-development, and community connection.

Perceived Competence in Skills

Table 7 includes a substantial amount of data that benefits this analysis. The table began

as two separate questionnaires, but they are combined for the purposes of this analysis. Those

two questionnaires are the Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire* and the Summer

2017, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire.* The original questionnaires include both pre-tests

and post-tests. Participants are asked, "How well do you perform the following skills?"

Table 7: Numbers of Answers (N) and Percentages of Total Responses in Highest 3 Ranks (%) How well do you perform the following skills?

Participant Skills Questionnaire, Summer 2017					
Categories	**Pre-Test**		**Post-Test**		
	N (90)	**%**	**N (77)**	**%**	**% Change**
Teamwork	4	4.4	6	7.8	3.4
Community Service	3	3.3	4	5.2	1.9
Building Sense of Self and Self-Esteem	5	5.6	2	2.6	-3.0
Learning to Farm	6	6.7	5	6.5	-0.2
Making Money	6	6.7	6	7.8	1.1
Meeting New People	2	2.2	4	5.2	3.0
Learning About Social Justice and Food Justice	2	2.2	2	2.6	0.4
Building Job and Life Skills	4	4.4	4	5.2	0.8
Growing My Network of Community and Support	3	3.3	2	2.6	-0.7
Meaningful Work	5	5.6	3	3.9	-1.7
Total Very Good/Outstanding Responses	40	44.4	38	49.4	5.0
Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire, Summer 2017					
Categories	**Pre-Test**		**Post-Test**		
	N (128)	**%**	**N (110)**	**%**	**% Change**
Level of Maturity	6	4.7	7	6.4	1.7

Leadership	2	1.6	3	2.7	1.1
Integrity	3	2.3	4	3.6	1.3
Concern for Others	5	3.9	6	5.5	1.6
Confidence	3	2.3	6	5.5	3.2
Mental Health	3	2.3	5	4.5	2.2
Working as a Team	5	3.9	5	4.5	0.6
Accepting Directions from Adults	8	6.3	6	5.5	-0.8
Feeling of Community Connection	2	1.6	6	5.5	3.9
Physical Health	3	2.3	4	3.6	1.3
Cooking Skills	6	4.7	7	6.4	1.7
Confidence in Getting a Job	3	2.3	5	4.5	2.2
Communication Skills	2	1.6	6	5.5	3.9
Sense of Responsibility	5	3.9	6	5.5	1.6
Public Speaking Skills	1	0.8	2	1.8	1.0
Money Handling	3	2.3	6	5.5	3.2
Total Very Good/Outstanding Responses	60	46.8	84	76.5	29.7

Source : Summer 2017 Session, *Participant Skills Questionnaire ;* and Summer 2017 Session, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*

Note: The responses for the first 10 questions are the highest 3 categories; rated 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point scale. The responses for second 16 questions are the highest 2 categories, rated 3 (Very Good) or 4 (Outstanding) on a 4-point scale.

The first ten questions in Table 7 are from the Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire*. When investigating that portion of Table 7 it is apparent that "teamwork" exhibits substantial change. During the pre-test phase 4.4% of participants assign "teamwork" a rating of eight, nine, or ten, but at the end of the season the percentage of eight, nine, and ten responses rise to 7.8% (+3.4%). This suggests that participants' perceptions that they perform "teamwork" more satisfactorily are higher at the conclusion of the season than at the beginning. This aligns with Youth Harvest's goal of providing youth with an opportunity to participate in "teamwork." "Teamwork" is a central component of participants' employability.

The open-ended data on "teamwork" provides additional insights about participants' experiences at Youth Harvest. The open-ended data largely confirms the close-ended data. When asked what skills they learned at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "Being part of a team to

see how others think and handle things." This participant perceives value in "being a part of a team." They also suggest that work relationships provide them insights about how to accomplish workplace goals. This suggests that they are open to other's ideas and ways of doing things; an important component of "teamwork."

When another participant is asked the same question (i.e., what skills they learned at Youth Harvest) they write, "Communication/socialization and 'teamwork' especially." The participant perceives that they have acquired communication, social, and "teamwork" skills while at Youth Harvest. This is vital because communication, social skills, and "teamwork" are central to components of the Youth Harvest program.

"Meeting new people" is another question that exhibits notable change between the beginning and end of the season. At the beginning of the season, 2 of 90 (2.2%) responses are ratings of 8, 9, or 10 in "meeting new people." At the conclusion of the season that number increases to 4 of 77 (5.2%). That is an increase of +3.0%, which indicates that a higher percentage of participants perceive that they are more adept at "meeting new people" at the end of the season than at the beginning. "Meeting new people" can enhance Youth Harvest participants' "feeling of community connection," which can then enhance their sense of belonging.

The open-ended data provides further insight into "meeting new people." When asked what their goals are for the next six months, two years, and five years, one participant writes that they plan to "go somewhere new and meet new people." The participant indicates that they perceive value in "meeting new people." When asked what they most valued or enjoyed while at Youth Harvest, one participant writes that they appreciated "meeting college students," referencing the college students who work at the farm. The above participants' appreciation for

"meeting new people" can improve their "feeling of community connection," which benefits them and their community.

The "feeling of community connection" question, from the *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire,* Summer 2017, also exhibits substantial change between the pre-test and post-test phases. At the beginning of the season, 2 of 90 (1.6%) of responses are rated 3 (Very Good) or 4 (Outstanding) in "feeling of community connection." At the conclusion of the season, 6 of 77 (5.5%) of responses are rated 3 (Very Good) or 4 (Outstanding). This represents a change of +3.9%. More respondents perceive that they have a greater "feeling of community connection" at the end of the season than at the beginning.

The open-ended data also addresses participants' views about "feeling of community connection." When asked what they are most proud of from their time at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "I honestly can't choose one thing, but if I had to recap, I would say just waking up in the morning and coming, doing hard work and socializing with everyone. Making new friends and socializing with everyone." This participant enthusiastically describes social connections with their Youth Harvest peers. They are proud of the connections they have made in the program and place great emphasis on communication. This participant's enthusiasm suggests that they enjoy Youth Harvest participation and embrace "feeling of community connection." The participant is also proud of getting up early, going to work, and working hard.

Participants mostly indicate that they perform well in the *Participant Skills* and *Self-Evaluation of Skills* questionnaires. The next section will consider how much participants value an additional set of skills.

Valued Skills

Table 8 began as two questionnaires, but the two are combined for the purposes of this analysis. Those two questionnaires are the Spring 2018 and Winter 2019, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*s. Both questionnaires ask participants, "How much do you value the following skills?" For example, participants are asked, "How much do you value teamwork?" Participants then rate each skill. The two highest participant ratings are included in the table. High ratings indicate the skills that are most valued by participants.

Table 8: Numbers of Answers (N) and Percentages (%) of what kind of Answers to the Question: How much do you value the following skills?

Spring 2018					
Skills	Pre-Test		Post-Test		
	N (70)	%	N (71)	%	% Change
Teamwork	6	8.6	5	7.0	-1.6
Community Service	6	8.6	6	8.5	-0.1
Building Identity and Self-Confidence	6	8.6	5	7.0	-1.6
Learning to Farm	5	7.1	5	7.0	-0.1
Making Money	6	8.6	5	7.0	-1.6
Meeting New People	6	8.6	5	7.0	-1.6
Learning About Food Justice and Security	5	7.1	3	4.2	-2.9
Building Job and Life Skills	6	8.6	5	7.0	-1.6
Growing my Network of Community and Support	6	8.6	4	5.6	-3.0
Meaningful Work	6	8.6	6	8.5	-0.1
Becoming More Self-Reliant	6	8.6	6	8.5	-0.1
Getting Healthier	5	7.1	4	5.6	-1.5
Total Very Good/Outstanding Responses	69	98.7	59	82.9	-15.8
Winter 2019					
Skills	Pre-Test		Post-Test		
	N (47)	%	N (47)	%	% Change
Teamwork	2	4.3	2	4.3	0.0
Community Service	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Building Identity	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Building Self-Confidence	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Learning to Cook	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0

Cooking for Others	3	6.4	2	4.3	-2.1
Making Money	3	6.4	1	2.1	-4.3
Meeting New People	2	4.3	2	4.3	0.0
Building Job Skills	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Building Life Skills	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Learning About Food Security	3	6.4	2	4.3	-2.1
Growing my Community and Support System	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Meaningful Work	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Becoming More Self-reliant	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Living Healthier	3	6.4	3	6.4	0.0
Exploring Career Opportunities	3	6.4	2	4.3	-2.1
Total Very Good/Outstanding Responses	46	98.2	41	87.6	-10.6

Source: Spring 2018 and Winter 2019 Sessions, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*
 Note: The responses for all questions are the highest 2 categories, rated 2 (Value a Lot) or 3 (Value the Most) on a 4-point scale.

The first twelve questions in the table are derived from Spring 2018, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire.* Unlike other questionnaires in this analysis, the data here largely trends downward between the beginning and conclusion of the season. The first category, "teamwork," exhibits that downward trend. At the beginning of the season, 8.6% of the responses are value "teamwork" as a positive, based on responses of 2 (Value a Lot) and 3 (Value the Most). At the end of the season that number declines to 7.0% (-1.6%). The close-ended data suggests that participants value "teamwork" less at the conclusion of the season than at the beginning. This is noteworthy because "teamwork" and employability are key foci of Youth Harvest's program.

The aggregated data from the upper portion of Table 8 also indicates that participants value Youth Harvest goals more at the beginning of the season than at the end. During the pre-test phase, 69 of 70 (98.7%) responses across 12 questions are responses of 2 (Value a Lot) and 3 (Value the Most). In the post-test phase, only 59 of 71 (82.9%) of responses across 12 questions are responses of 2 (Value a Lot) or 3 (Value the Most). It is notable that this downward statistical trend (-15.8%) is mostly confined to this one season. This analysis cannot definitively state the

cause of this phenomenon. It could be that individual participants were dissatisfied that season or that something simply "did not click." Whatever the case, that season participants value skills less at the conclusion of the season than at the beginning.

In some cases, the open-ended data on "teamwork" supports the close-ended data, and in other cases it does not. For example, when asked what they would change about the Youth Harvest program if they came back for another season, a participant writes, "More group activities-build stronger teamwork. Build more early on." That statement suggests that there is room for improvement in team-building among participants. The participant believes that group activities could be used to build "teamwork," especially early in the season. They perceive a need for "more group activities" because that "build(s) stronger teamwork." This suggests that working together during group activities can carry over into work. The ability to work together is central to employability. The participant also suggests that this is not occurring now, but other participants' opinions differ.

When asked how they have changed through the course of the season and how Youth Harvest facilitated that change, another participant writes, "Building teamwork and community. Hearing others talk through needs helps identify own. Building communication." This participant suggests that they perceive value in "teamwork," community, and communication. Since the question asks how they changed during the season and what part Youth Harvest played in that change, it follows that they might have acquired their appreciation for "teamwork" and community while at Youth Harvest.

The question "growing my network of community and support" exhibits the largest downward movement between the beginning of the season and its conclusion. At the beginning of the season participants assign "growing my network of community and support" a rating of

8.6%. At the end of the season that number decreases to 5.6% (-3.0%). This indicates that a smaller percentage of participants value "growing my network of community and support" at the season's conclusion than at its beginning. However, the questionnaire's small sample size affects the statistics. The 'N' is similar in the pre-tests (70) and post-test (71). The number of high responses (2-Value a Lot and 3-Value the Most) are also similar in the pre-tests (6) and post-tests (4). While the percentages indicate a substantial change through the course of the season, the 'N' and responses fail to support a claim of sizeable change.

In most cases the open-ended data in "growing my network of community and support" contradicts the downward trend, between the beginning and end of the season, exhibited in the close-ended data. For example, when asked what they are most proud of from their time at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "Pride in PEAS Farm and community-bringing people together." This participant suggests that they are proud of the farm and the people they know there. The participant also suggests that they have a greater feeling of community connection following their involvement with Youth Harvest.

When asked the same question, a different participant writes, "Happier. Coming to work for sense of belonging and having people to talk to." This participant suggests that they value the community at Youth Harvest, and that that connection makes them feel that they belong. A sense of belonging and happiness is important, because it helps individuals find fulfillment.

The lower portion of Table 8 contains many of the same questions that appear in the upper portion of the table. The data in the latter part of the Table 8 is derived from the Winter 2019, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*. In that questionnaire, participants are asked, "How much do you value the following skills?" This questionnaire is also limited by its small sample size; during the winter of 2019 there were only three youth who participated in Youth Harvest.

Twelve of the sixteen questions in this questionnaire include identical percentages in the pre-test and post-test phases. For example, "teamwork" received a 4.3% rating in both pre-tests and post-tests. This suggests that there is no change through the course of the season. The four areas that are not the same at the beginning and conclusion of the season are "cooking for others," "making money," "learning about food security," and "exploring career opportunities." "Making money" exhibits the greatest change of any question in the table.

At the beginning of the season, 3 of 47 (6.4%) of the responses to the "making money" are rated 2 (Value a Lot) or 3 (Heaps of Value). At the end of the season, 1 of 47 (2.1%) of the responses are rated 2 (Value a Lot) or 3 (Heaps of Value). The data indicate that participants' responses are lower at the conclusion of the season than at the beginning (-4.3%). However, the small sample size has a significant impact on the percentages in this questionnaire. That change appears large at first glance, but in truth only two fewer people rate "making money" higher at the end of the season than at the beginning. For that reason, this analysis will not go into depth on this table.

Perceived Self-Performance

Table 9 is derived from the Spring 2021, *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*. That questionnaire's design is similar to others, but the questions are markedly different. The questionnaire includes eight questions and is distributed at both the beginning and end of the season. Participants are asked, "How well do perform in the following categories?" There are numerous questions that were left unanswered or that received multiple answers from single individuals in this questionnaire. Those responses are not included in the table.

Table 9: Numbers of Answers (N) and Percentages (%) of what kind of Answers to the Question: How well do perform in the following categories?

Values/Characteristics	Pre-Test		Post-Test		
	N (35)	%	N (38)	%	% Change
Personal Core (Happiness, Growth, Mind, Soul, Values, Integrity)	4	11.4	4	10.5	-0.9
Friends Social Relationships (Level of Openness, Trust, Commitment, Positive Communication)	1	2.9	4	10.5	7.6
Work Professional (Responsibility, Ownership, Purpose, Work Ethic, Problem Solving, Teamwork)	5	14.3	5	13.2	-1.1
Learning Education (General Curiosity, Commitment to Learning, Confidence in Academic Ability, Initiative)	2	5.7	4	10.5	4.8
Community Service (Community Engagement, Service, Sense Feeling of Belonging, Knowledge of Community Resources)	3	8.6	5	13.2	4.6
Health Fitness (Exercise, Diet, Sleep, Energy Level, Mental Health, Stress, Self-Care)	2	5.7	3	7.9	2.2
Self-awareness (Values, Self-Check-Ins, Setting and Achieving Goals, Meeting Personal Needs)	4	11.4	5	13.2	1.8
Other (Finances, Seeking Challenges, Personal Safety, Planning and Organization, Family Relationships)	3	8.6	4	10.5	1.9
Total Positive Responses	24	68.6	34	89.5	20.9

Source: Spring 2021 Session, *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*
Note: The responses are the highest 2 categories, rated 3 (Doing Well) or 4 (Doing Very Well) on a 4-point scale.

Participants' responses to the questions in this table are generally higher at the end of the season than at the beginning. This analysis focuses on "friends and social relationships" because that question exhibits the greatest change between the beginning and end of the season. "Friends and social relationship" receive a 2.9% rating in the pre-test phase. That number increases dramatically by the season's conclusion, ending with a rating of 10.5% (+7.6%). That figure (+7.6%) indicates that participants perceive growth in "friends and social relationships" between the beginning and end of the Youth Harvest season. Put differently, participants perceive that they have greater community connection at the conclusion of the Youth Harvest season.

The open-ended data provides additional insights about participants "friends and social relationships." For example, when asked what they are most proud of from their time at Youth Harvest, one participant writes, "Group-helped get better sense of community; got to know community quickly." The participant expresses that they were able to connect with community members at Youth Harvest, and that this community connection is a result of involvement in group activities. Learning to connect to their Youth Harvest community can then advance their connections with the larger Missoula community, which could improve the participant's sense of belonging.

When a second participant is asked how they changed during the season and how Youth Harvest facilitated that change, they write, "Team building and groups have helped with community engagement and connection." This participant perceives that they have become more connected to the community. Furthermore, this participant indicates that group activities are an important part of community connection (i.e., "friends and social relationships"). Like the above participant, the connections they make at Youth Harvest can help this participant become more connected to the larger Missoula community. It is also notable that this participant writes about

team building. Assigning value to team building suggests that the participant has learned to work with others, which indicates that they have become more employable. Both participants indicate that their feeling of community connection has improved while at Youth Harvest, and both use words that suggest a positive perception of Youth Harvest, such as "helped," "better," "building," and "engagement and connection."

Numerous questions in this table are rated higher at the end of the season than at the beginning. This statistical trend is evident when examining the collective data from the table. In the pre-test phase, 24 of 35 (68.6%) responses across eight categories are scores of 3 (Doing Well) or 4 (Doing Very Well). In the post-test phase, 34 of 38 (89.5%) responses across the collective categories are scores of 3 (Doing Well) or 4 (Doing Very Well). This represents an increase of 20.9% and suggests that participants perceive that they perform well in the values and personal characteristics listed in Table 9.

Confidence

Table 10 is different from the other tables in this analysis. In Table 10 participants are asked to rate how confident they are in achieving six goals, and choose a confidence rating of 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% for each question. Table 10 is not as useful as other tables in the context of this analysis because the limited sample size distorts the meaning of the statistics in the table. Still, Table 10 provides important and interesting data. However, the questionnaire's small sample size is a limitation.

Table 10: Numbers of Answers (N) and Percentages (%) of what kind of Answers to the Question: What is your confidence level in each of the following categories?

Goals	Pre-Test		Post-Test		
	N (34)	%	N (36)	%	% Change
Graduate High School	5	14.7	6	16.7	2.0
Go to College	0	0.0	2	5.6	5.6
Get and Hold a Job After YHP	4	11.8	5	13.9	2.1
Achieve Personal Goals	2	5.9	5	13.9	8.0
Coping with Challenge	3	8.8	4	11.1	2.3
Self-Reliance	4	11.8	4	11.1	-0.7
Total High Confidence Responses	18	53.0	26	72.3	19.3

Source: Spring 2021 Session, *Confidence in Achieving Goals Questionnaire*
Note: The responses are the highest 2 categories, rated 75% (confidence level) or 100% (confidence level) on a 5-point scale.

"Achieve personal goals" illustrates the limitation seen in Table 10. At first glance, the question exhibits substantial change between the beginning and end of the season. In the pre-test phase, 2 of 34 (5.9%) responses are 75% or 100% confidence ratings. In the post test phase, 5 of 36 (13.9%) responses are 75% or 100% confidence ratings. That represents a change of +8.0% between the beginning and the conclusion of the season. However, the total number of responses are similar (pre-tests 34, post-tests 36). The number of 75% and 100% ratings in the pre-tests (2) and post-tests (5) are also similar. There were only six participants in the spring of 2021, which makes the change between the beginning and end of the season appear more substantial than it is.

Despite the questionnaire's limitation (small sample size) the table is still of interest. For example, Table 10 suggests that participants are more confident in every category, except "self-reliance," at the conclusion of the season than at the beginning. That is an important finding. After completing a season at Youth Harvest, participants are more confident they will "graduate high school," "go to college," "get and hold a job," "achieve personal goals," and "cope with

challenge." Those high confidence ratings can be ascribed to participants' experiences at Youth Harvest.

<div align="center">LIMITATIONS</div>

There are a few limitations in this analysis. The most substantial limitation is small sample sizes. It is beneficial to participants that there are few people in the program. Limited participation creates opportunities for individualized, one-on-one attention. Participants are able to work directly with Youth Harvest staff. Participants also get to know staff members personally, which streamlines communication. The Youth Harvest program is personal, as it should be. However, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the data and the ability to conduct statistical analyses which often relies on larger sample sizes. In the close-ended data, a small change sometimes appears to be statistically large because of the limited number of participants. Additionally, the open-ended data is not as robust as preferred. The lack of robustness is also a result of the small number of responses. In addition to a small sample size, some youth wrote very little in response to the open-ended questions. This analysis is limited by the low number of Youth Harvest responses.

Another limitation is seen in the Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire*. When they completed that questionnaire, some participants interpreted the instructions differently from the others. In total, eight people completed the close-ended questionnaire. Five participants rated ten questions on a scale of one to ten and used each number only once. Three participants rated ten questions on a scale of one to ten, but used single numbers multiple times. The inconsistency complicated the analysis of the Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire* and muddied the data's meaning. This analysis recommends that the initial question ("What do you value most

about the Youth Harvest Project; rank from 1-10") be clarified. Clarification can eliminate the variation in methods of response.

Lack of clarity creates further limitations. First, it is not clear what Youth Harvest is measuring when participants are asked if their "self-confidence" is challenged. Challenging participants "self-confidence" can mean that they are asked to step outside of their comfort zone. By stepping outside of their comfort zone, youth may become more "self-confident"; a direct result of them experiencing success. Conversely, measuring participants' "self-confidence" can point to the program's success at enhancing youths' "self-confidence." On one hand, challenge is good; the result of challenge is growth. On the other hand, challenge is bad; youth continue to experience low "self-confidence" following Youth Harvest participation. The lack of clarity on what is being measured is a limitation.

Next, it is unclear what the "making money" question is measuring. "Making money" can be understood to be an important part of life. While at Youth Harvest, participants learn job skills they will use to make money. That money can help participants avoid issues as adults, such as food and housing insecurity. Conversely, individuals who value "making money" are often understood to be greedy and greed may indicate a lack of personal growth. As a result, "making money" can be understood to be both positive and negative. Again, the lack of clarity on what is being measured is a limitation.

In addition to the above limitations, there are issues with Youth Harvest's data collection process. Edits to questionnaires are sometimes necessary. It is important that edits take place and that questions are added or eliminated when necessary. However, the lack of consistent questions across questionnaires makes it difficult to compare data from multiple seasons. Participants from one season are sometimes asked different questions than participants from another season. That

inconsistency limits analysis to a single season, rather than a broad, multi-seasonal assessment. Therefore, it is advisable that alterations to questionnaires be minimal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a few recommendations that are appropriate at this time. The results suggest programming recommendations and ways Youth Harvest can make conclusions be more robust. Programming and research recommendations are discussed below.

Programming Recommendations

To begin, Youth Harvest staff can increase their focus on participants' "self-confidence." The *End of Season Questionnaires* indicate that participants perceive only some development, growth, or learning in "self-confidence." Both the median and mode for "self-confidence" are 1 (Some) development, growth, or learning. That is the second lowest possible median and mode. This analysis suggests that "self-confidence" is an area where Youth Harvest staff can increase focus.

Self-efficacy is a key factor in improving participants' self-confidence. As stated earlier (page 5)*,* Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that an individual's ability to complete tasks is linked to their belief that they are capable of success (Sachs and Miller 1992). Therefore, promoting a belief that individuals will be successful in improving their self-confidence is essential. Additionally, Sachs and Miller (1992) suggest that youth development programs intentionally challenge participants with new experiences. "These types of experiences are designed to provide opportunities for the individuals to engage successfully in activities that they perceive as beyond their level of abilities" (Sachs and Miller 1992:90). The intended result is that participants become more adept in specific areas of development, including self-confidence, following successful engagement in program activities. Thus, I recommend that Youth Harvest

promotes a belief among participants that they will become more self-confident when they believe in themselves even when challenged.

Self-determination is also a key part of participants' self-confidence. As stated earlier (page 6), Self-Determination Theory assumes that humans are naturally inclined to intellectual and emotional growth, and social connection (Broaddus et al. 2015). Additionally, humans are "active, growth-oriented organisms" who strive for "effectiveness, connectedness, and coherence" (Deci and Ryan 2000, as cited by Broaddus et al. 2015:25). If this is true, participants are motivated to grow, including in self-confidence. Thus, I suggest that Youth Harvest focus on self-confidence because participants' outcomes in that area can be improved by appealing to their natural inclination for growth and connection.

Research Recommendations

Another recommendation is based on data collection issues seen in Table 9, derived from the Spring 2021, *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*. The examples that Youth Harvest provides participants in that questionnaire may influence participants' answers. Those examples appear in parentheses following each question. Participants may be influenced by the examples, rather than focusing on their own experiences. I recommend that Youth Harvest not provide participants examples when the *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire* is utilized.

I also suggest that Youth Harvest staff ask youth to share their demographic information. This can determine if young people's gender, race, or other characteristics are somehow affecting their experiences at Youth Harvest. For example, if Indigenous youth are not experiencing outcomes equal to those of their non-Indigenous peers, those circumstances can be addressed by Youth Harvest staff moving forward. This also applies to other demographic

groups, such as African American and Latinx participants, young women, and LGBTQ youth. Therefore, it is important that demographic information be included in future Youth Harvest data. This is especially true when considering the funding (and other) issues highlighted in this document's literature review; development programs aimed at people of color and young women do not receive funding equal to those aimed at young white men. It is, however, important to note that race and gender information can reveal the identity of the participant who provided an answer. The importance of confidentiality for participants' information should be emphasized.

It is also important that participants answer all questions themselves. In some instances, staff members interview participants and then record participants' responses in the questionnaires. This is an issue because participants may view staff members as authority figures. Even when participants have a rapport with a staff member, staff members are still adults. The dynamics of the relationship are such that participants may not be comfortable providing honest responses when an adult is present. I recommended that participants at Youth Harvest complete questionnaires and reflections themselves and that they do so without an adult or staff member present. If writing is a concern, responses can be recorded and transcribed later.

Finally, I suggest that Youth Harvest utilize ethnographic methods in addition to *End of Season Reflections* when collecting data, which will enhance the robustness of open-ended responses. Ethnographic methods include interviews and observations, both of which can be conducted by University of Montana students. Youth Harvest can form a partnership with the University, requiring no financial investment on the behalf of Youth Harvest. That partnership can involve several departments at the University, including Sociology, Communication Studies, Anthropology, Environmental Studies, and others.

The potential benefits of ethnographic methods are great. In addition to yielding more robust data, the use of ethnographic methods can decrease participants' perceptions that interviewers are authority figures; interviewers would be university students independent from Youth Harvest. Utilizing ethnographic methods can also ensure participants' anonymity; participants would not be interviewed by people that they know from Youth Harvest. Furthermore, participants may be more open in their responses because university students are close to participants' ages. The result of greater openness may be more robust data. Lastly, collecting ethnographic data for Youth Harvest is an excellent educational opportunity for university students. Graduate students or high-achieving undergraduates are best suited to undertake data collection.

The above are areas where Youth Harvest staff can apply more focus. Ultimately, I suggest that Youth Harvest not change too much about their program. The majority of young participants at Youth Harvest report satisfaction, and in some cases enthusiasm for the program. Additionally, participants perceive that they are more competent at the end of the Youth Harvest season. Overall, Youth Harvest is doing an excellent job of mentoring the youth who participate in the program.

<center>CONCLUSION</center>

Participants at Youth Harvest primarily report positive outcomes after taking part in the program. There are exceptions, but the data mostly cast Youth Harvest in a positive light. One of the primary concerns of this analysis is young people's food security. Youth Harvest has done an excellent job of enhancing youth's "competency at farming," "confidence in getting a job," and "teamwork" skills. Participants also learn about growing food for personal use, nutrition, and preparation of healthful foods. The above skills can help youth relieve food insecurity as adults.

<center>43</center>

Many of the skills that participants learn at Youth Harvest can also be used to assist fellow community members.

In addition to food security, three themes are discussed in this assessment. One of those themes is employability. Increased employability is evident in several areas, including "work ethic," "competency at farming," and "confidence in getting a job." Participants perceive that their job skills improve through their Youth Harvest involvement. Improved job skills can be equated with improved employability. Improved employability can help Youth Harvest alumni secure work as adults. Paid work can then help Youth Harvest alumni address issues, such as food insecurity and low-income status.

Self-development is another theme examined in this analysis. Numerous participants perceive substantial improvement in self-development. That improvement is evident in participants' responses to questions on "self-advocacy," "self-motivation," "self-awareness," and other questions. Those responses suggest improvement between the beginning of the season and the conclusion, which indicates that participants' self-development improves as a result of Youth Harvest participation.

The third theme examined in this analysis is community connection. Again, we see evidence that Youth Harvest participants make progress on their community connection through the course of the season. This may be a direct result of their volunteer work at the Mobile Market and Missoula Food Bank and Community Center. Donating food to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is another area where youth have an opportunity to enhance their community connection. In addition to valuing community service, young participants suggest that they feel deeply connected to their Youth Harvest and Missoula communities. Youth Harvest's goal of increasing participants' community connections is largely successful.

Youth Harvest has done an outstanding job of advancing youth's skills in employability, self-development, community connection. As is the case with any program, there is room for improvement. Still, the majority of Youth Harvest participants perceive that they experience positive outcomes as a result of program participation. Furthermore, Youth Harvest benefits the greater Missoula community by providing much needed food to food-insecure individuals and families. Youth Harvest is beneficial to both participants and the Missoula community as a whole.

REFERENCES

Aguilar, Rudy J., and Narina Nunez Nightingale. 1994. "The Impact of Specific Battering
    Experiences on the Self-Esteem of Abused Women." Journal of Family Violence 9(1):35-
    45.

Broaddus, Elena T., Liana S. Przygocki, and Peter J. Winch. 2015. "Engaging City Youth in
    Urban Agriculture: Examining a Farm-Based High School Internship Program through
    the Lens of Self-Determination Theory." *Children, Youth, and Environments* 25(3):22-
    39.

Brown, Lionel H., and Kelvin S. Beckett. 2007. "Building Community in an Alternative School:
    The Perspective of an African American Principal." Counterpoints 309(1):17-33

Burris, Mecca, Sarah Bradley, Kayla Rykiel, and David Himmelgreen. 2020. "Teen Food
    Insecurity: Finding Solutions Through the Voices of Teens." *Human Organization*
    79(1):13-23.

Garden City Harvest. 2021a. "Mission & History." Retrieved February 13, 2021
    (https://www.gardencityharvest.org/mission-and-history).

Garden City Harvest. 2021b. "Youth Development." Retrieved March 24, 2021
    (https://www.gardencityharvest.org/youth-development).

Garrow, Eve E. 2012. "Does Race Matter in Government Funding of Nonprofit Human Service
    Organizations? The Interaction of Neighborhood Poverty and Race." *Journal of Public
    Administration Research and Theory* 24(2):381-405.

Horning, Melissa L., Gunnar Liden, and Barbara J. McMorris. 2017. "Sprouting Seeds of
    Connectedness: Associations between Gardening and Cooking Skills and Youth

Connections to Peers, Adults, and Community." *Children, Youth, and Environments* 27(1):1-16.

Hung, Yvonne. 2004. "East New York Farms: Youth Participation in Community Development and Urban Agriculture." *Children, Youth, and Environments* 14(1):56-85.

Jakubec, Sonya L., Marg Olfert, Liza L.S. Choi, Nicole Dawe, and Dwayne Sheehan. 2018. "Understanding Belonging and Community Connection for Seniors Living in the Suburbs." Urban Planning 4(2):43-52.

Johnston-Nicholson, Heather, Faedra Lazar Weiss, and Mary F. Maschino. 1992. "Gender Issues in Youth Development Programs." Retrieved March 9, 2021 (https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED362439).

Lawson, Laura and Marcia McNally.1995. "Putting Teens at the Center: Maximizing Public Utility of Urban Space Through Youth Involvement in Planning and Employment." *Children's Environments* 12(2): 209-221.

Oates, R. Kim, Douglas Forrest, and Anthony Peacock. 1985. "Self-Esteem of Abused Children." Child Abuse and Neglect 9(1):159-163.

Owens, Timothy J. 1993. "Accentuate the Positive and the Negative: Rethinking the Use of Self-Esteem, Self-Deprecation, and Self-Confidence." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 56(4):288-289.

Quinn, Tara, W. Neil Adger, Catherine Butler, and Kate Walker-Springett. 2020. "Community Resilience and Well-Being: An Exploration of Relationality and Belonging after Disasters." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 111(2):577-590.

Sachs, John J. and Sidney R. Miller. 1992. "The Impact of a Wilderness Experience on the

    Social Interactions and Social Expectations of Behaviorally Disordered Adolescents."

    Behavioral Disorders 17(2):89-98.

Shaw, Hillary J. 2006. "Food Deserts: Towards the Development of a Classification." *Human*

    Geography 88(2):231-247.

United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau). 2017. "American Indian and Alaska Native

    Heritage Month: November 2017." Retrieved November 15, 2021

    (https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/aian-month.html).

United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau). 2019a. "Poverty Rates for Blacks and

    Hispanics Reached Historic Lows in 2019." Retrieved February 23, 2021

    (https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/poverty-rates-for-blacks-and-

    hispanics-reached-historic-lows-in-2019.html).

United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau). 2019b "Quick Facts: Montana." Retrieved

    November 19, 2021 (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MT).

United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau). 2021. "Quick Facts: Missoula, MT"

    Retrieved February 23, 2021

    (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/missoulacountymontana/AGE295219).

United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.). 2021. "Measurement." Retrieved

    November 14, 2021 (https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-

    security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx).

Werum, Regina. 2002. "Gender Dynamics in New Deal Job Training Programs." *Oxford*

    University Press 81(2):473-503.

Youth Harvest. 2021a. "Youth Harvest Project." Retrieved

February 13, 2021 (https://www.gardencityharvest.org/youth-harvest-project).

Youth Harvest. 2021b. "PEAS for Lunch." Retrieved

March 8, 2021 (https://www.gardencityharvest.org/the-real-dirt-garden-city-harvest-

blog/2016/07/10/peas-for-lunch?rq=cook).

Youth Harvest. 2021c. "Meet the Youth Harvest Project." Retrieved March 9, 2021

(https://www.gardencityharvest.org/the-real-dirt-garden-city-harvest-

blog/2013/06/26/the-youth-harvest-project-begins?rq=self-esteem).

Youth Harvest. 2021d. *Youth Harvest Project Orientation Manual*. Missoula, MT: Youth

Harvest.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Spring and Summer Sessions, 2018 and 2019; and Spring Session, 2021; *End of Season Questionnaire*

For each of the following categories, answer the question on a scale of 0-3 (0 None – 3 Heaps). Circle the number. Please, use the space provided to offer written feedback and help us further understand and make meaning of your rated responses.

COMMUNICATION						
		none	some	more	heaps
Ability to Express Self Openly and Honestly	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Positive Communication	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet titled, "What Made the Difference" and list the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Giving/Receiving Feedback	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Skill in Conflict-Resolution	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
General Social Skills	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3

	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Public Speaking Skills	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Comments and Feedback:					

JOB / LIFE SKILLS					
		none	some	more	heaps
Ability to Problem Solve	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Ability to Set and Achieve Goals	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Leadership Skills	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Teamwork Skills	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Work Ethic	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3

		none	some	more	heaps
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Ability to Take Direction	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Reliability	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Willingness to do what needs done	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Competency at Farming	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Confidence in Getting a Job	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Comments and Feedback:					

SELF					
		none	some	more	heaps
Self-Confidence	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3

		0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Self-Awareness/ Identity	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Self-Advocacy	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Self-Responsibility	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Self-Motivation	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Coping Strategies (Ability to Manage Anxiety, Depression, Anger)	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Sense of Independence	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Comments and Feedback:					

COMMUNITY		none	some	more	heaps
Willingness to Help Others	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Concern for Wellbeing of Others	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Value of Community Service	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Sense of Belonging / Community Connection	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Network of Support	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Comments and Feedback:					

HEALTH		none	some	more	heaps
Physical Health	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3

		0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Mental Health	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Self-Care Practices	How much did you develop, grow, learn?	0	1	2	3
	How much do you value this?	0	1	2	3
	How much were you challenged in this area?	0	1	2	3
	Use the sheet, "What Made the Difference." List the numbers of all program elements that helped.				
Comments and Feedback:					

Note: The three questions discussed in the Results section are applied to this single questionnaire. Those three questions follow. How much did you develop, grow, or learn? How much do you value this? How much were you challenged in this area? The latter question was not asked following every seasons.

Appendix B

Summer 2017, *Participant Skills Questionnaire*

What do you value most about the Youth Harvest Project; rank from 1-10 (1=value least, 10=value most):

PRE	POST	
		Teamwork
		Community Service
		Building Sense of Self and Self-Esteem
		Learning to Farm
		Making Money
		Meeting New People
		Learning About Social Justice and Food Justice
		Building Job and Life Skills
		Growing my Network of Community and Support
		Meaningful Work

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Appendix C

Summer 2017, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*

To ensure our youth development programs (the Youth Farm and the Youth Harvest Project) are operating effectively we need your input. To help us with this goal, please fill out the survey below. You will again fill out the survey at the end of the season. Your information will be anonymous and will help us see if we are supporting you all in the way we hope.

	Below Average (1)	Average (2)	Very Good (3)	Outstanding (4)	No Basis (0)
Level of Maturity					
Leadership					
Integrity					
Concern for Others					
Confidence					
Mental Health					
Working as a Team					
Accepting Directions from Adults					
Feeling of Community Connection					
Physical Health					
Cooking Skills					
Confidence in Getting a Job					
Communication Skills					
Sense of Responsibility					
Public Speaking Skills					
Money Handling					

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Appendix D

Spring 2018, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*

Please, let us know how much you value what the Youth Harvest Project has to offer. Rank by circling the appropriate value. (0-don't value, 1-value a little, 2-value a lot, 3-value the most):

Teamwork	0	1	2	3
Community Service	0	1	2	3
Building Identity and Self-Confidence	0	1	2	3
Learning to Farm	0	1	2	3
Making Money	0	1	2	3
Meeting New People	0	1	2	3
Learning About Food Justice and Security	0	1	2	3
Building Job and Life Skills	0	1	2	3
Growing My Network of Community and Support	0	1	2	3
Meaningful Work	0	1	2	3
Becoming More Self-Reliant	0	1	2	3
Getting Healthier	0	1	2	3

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Appendix E

Winter 2019, *Self-Evaluation of Skills Questionnaire*

Please let us know how much you value what Squirrel Project (winter season) has to offer. Rank each of the following by circling the appropriate value. (0-don't value, 1-value a little, 2-value a lot, 3-heaps of value):

Teamwork	0	1	2	3
Community Service	0	1	2	3
Building Identity	0	1	2	3
Building Self-Confidence	0	1	2	3
Learning to Cook	0	1	2	3
Cooking for Others	0	1	2	3
Making Money	0	1	2	3
Meeting New People	0	1	2	3
Building Job Skills	0	1	2	3
Building Life Skills	0	1	2	3
Learning About Food Security	0	1	2	3
Growing My Community and Support Systems	0	1	2	3
Meaningful Work	0	1	2	3
Becoming More Self-Reliant	0	1	2	3
Living Healthier	0	1	2	3
Exploring Career Opportunities	0	1	2	3

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Spring 2021, *Values and Personal Characteristics Questionnaire*

Review the list and give yourself a score (scale of 1-4) that reflects where you are at this moment in time. (1-needs a lot of work, 2-needs some work, 3-doing well, 4-doing very well):

Personal Core (Happiness, Growth, Mind, Soul, Values, Integrity)	1	2	3	4
Friends and Social Relationships (Level of Openness, Trust, Commitment, Positive Communication)	1	2	3	4
Work and Professional (Responsibility, Ownership, Purpose, Work Ethic, Problem Solving, Teamwork)	1	2	3	4
Learning and Education (General Curiosity, Commitment to Learning, Confidence in Academic Ability, Initiative)	1	2	3	4
Community Service (Community Engagement, Service, Sense Feeling of Belonging, Knowledge of Community Resources)	1	2	3	4
Health and Fitness (Exercise, Diet, Sleep, Energy Level, Mental Health, Stress, Self-Care)	1	2	3	4
Self-Awareness (Values, Self-Check-Ins, Setting and Achieving	1	2	3	4

Goals, Meeting Personal Needs)				
Other (Finances, Seeking Challenges, Personal Safety, Planning and Organization, Family Relationships)	1	2	3	4

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Appendix G

Spring 2021, *Confidence in Achieving Personal Goals Questionnaire*

How confident are you? Circle the percentage that most closely matches your current level of confidence in the following:

Graduate High School	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Go to College	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Get and Hold a Job After YHP	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Achieve Personal Goals	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Coping With Challenge	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Self-Reliance	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

Note: This questionnaire was distributed at the beginning and conclusion of the season.

Appendix H

Spring Session, 2017; *End of Season Reflection*

1. What were you most proud of and what would you have changed (personally)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? The same? Think of someone new to YH--what would you want to be different for them?
3. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be successful, what would it be?
4. Working within our group, what asset(s) did you bring to the group? What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
5. What part of the program was easiest for you? What part was most challenging? (Identify both hard and soft skills)
6. Was there a skill that you wish that we would have helped you gain/acquire that we did not touch upon
7. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, when you started YHP. How are different now than you were then? (Does not have to have anything to do with YHP, but what are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?)
8. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?

Summer Session, 2017; *End of Season Reflection*

1. What were you most proud of in your work with YHP?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please, give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. Which element of YHP did you most value or enjoy? What would you leave the same?
4. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be successful, what would it be?
5. Working within our group, what asset(s) did you bring to the group?
6. What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
7. Was there a skill that you wish we that we would have helped you gain/acquire that we did not touch upon?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started YHP. How are different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what ways do you feel YHP helped (if any)? Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think your experience with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed that will serve you as you move forward?
11. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?

Spring Session, 2018; *End of Season Reflection*

1. Which elements of YHP did you most value or enjoy (farm work, visits to other organizations, group check-ins, one-on-ones, team-building activities, etcetera)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. What were your favorite lessons from our educational activities (ecosystem crafting, biodiversity, food justice, soils, companion plants, integrated pest management)?
4. What social-emotional workshops, topics, and/or activities did you most value or enjoy?
5. Is there a skill you would like to develop or a topic you are interested in that you wish we touched upon further? What else do you think YHP participants want to learn about or gain from this experience? Feel free to think outside of the box.
6. What were you most proud of in your work with YHP?
7. What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started YHP. How are you different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what ways do you feel YHP helped (if any)? B.) Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think your experiences with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed that will serve you as you move forward?
11. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?
12. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be a successful YHP employee, what would it be?
13. If you are continuing on with YHP, what advice would you give yourself? What are the areas you want to focus on for your future growth?

Appendix K

Summer Session, 2018; *End of Season Reflection*

1. Which element of YHP did you most value or enjoy (farm work, food bank, Mobile Market, group check-ins, one-on-ones, team-building activities, etcetera)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please, give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. What were your favorite lessons from our educational activities (sustainable versus industrial food systems, PEAS Farm scavenger hunt, smoothie, GMO debate)?
4. What social-emotional workshops, topics, and/or activities did you most value or enjoy (communication, conflict resolution, happy/upset and needs, empowerment and river crossing, relationship and love languages, etcetera)?
5. Is there a special skill you would like to develop or a topic you are interested in that you wish we had touched upon further? What else do you think YHP participants want to learn about or gain from this experience? Feel free to think outside the box.
6. What were most proud of in your work with YHP?
7. What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started YHP. How are you different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what ways do you feel YHP helped (if any)? b.) Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think your experience with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed that will serve you as you move forward?
11. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?
12. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be a successful YHP employee, what would it be?
13. If you are continuing on with YHP, what advice would you give yourself? What are the areas you want to focus on for future growth?

Appendix L

Spring Session, 2019; *End of Season Reflection*

1. Which elements of YHP did you most value or enjoy (farm work, food bank, MUD, group check-ins, one-on-ones, team-building activities, journal time, etcetera)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. What were your favorite lessons from our educational activities (issues of food security, intro to ecology/relationships in nature, biodiversity and the tragedy of the commons, compost, soils, integrated pest management, plant families and companions, botany)?
4. What social-emotional workshops, topics, and/or activities did you most value or enjoy (positive communication, community goal setting, happy/upset-needs, strengths/struggles nature sculptures, community relay, masks, family sculptures, vision collages, perseverance obstacle course, feedback circle, etcetera)?
5. Is there a skill you would like to develop or topic you are interested in that you wish we had touched upon further? What else do you think YHP participants want to learn about or gain from this experience? Feel free to think outside the box.
6. What were you most proud of in your work with YHP?
7. What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started at YHP. How are you different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what ways do you feel YHP helped (if any)? b.) Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think your experience with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed that will serve you as you forward?
11. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?
12. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be a successful YHP employee, what would it be?
13. If you are continuing with YHP, what advice would you give yourself? What are the areas you want to focus on for your future growth?

Appendix M

Summer Session, 2019; *End of Season Reflection*

1. Which elements of YHP did you most value or enjoy (farm work, food bank, group check-ins, one-on-ones, team-building activities, Mobile Market, Food Bank Fridays, etcetera)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please, give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. What were your favorite lessons from our educational activities (sustainable versus industrial food systems, sustainable farm practices (bees and scavenger hunt), packaging and waste, exploring different approaches to sustainable farming, food as medicine (smoothie lesson), farm game, decisions of a farmer)?
4. What social-emotional workshops, topics, and/or activities did you most value or enjoy (favorite word/values, positive communication, community goal setting, happy/upset-needs, EmpowerMT workshops (lenses/boundaries, leadership styles/communication), money management, conflict resolution ("I" statements and the VOEW method), empowerment and river crossing, mindfulness, relationships and love languages
5. Is there a skill you would like to develop or a topic you are interested in that you wish we had touched upon further? What else do you think YHP participants want to learn about or gain from this experience? Feel free to think outside the box.
6. What were you most proud of in your work with YHP?
7. What did you struggle with most (area that you can improve upon)?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started YHP. How are you different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what ways do you feel YHP helped? b.) Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think your experience with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed what will serve you as you move forward?
11. What are some goals/plans that you have for the next 6 months? 2 years? 5 years?
12. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be a successful YHP employee, what would it be?
13. If you are continuing on with YHP, what advice would you give yourself? What are the areas you want to focus on for future growth?

Appendix N

Summer Session, 2021; *End of Season Reflection*

1. Which elements of YHP did you most value or enjoy (farm work, food bank, group, walk-and-talks, team-building activities, educational activities, etcetera)?
2. If you came back next year, what would you want to be different? Please, give concrete examples of how we could make positive change.
3. What were your favorite lessons from our educational activities (issues of food security, introduction to ecology/biodiversity, Oxbow field trip, plant families and companions, garden planning)?
4. What social-emotional workshops, topics and/or activities did you most value or enjoy (positive communication, favorite word-values, community goal setting, job services and emotional intelligences, happy/upset-needs, community challenge, strengths/struggles, nature sculptures, playfulness and humor, loving kindness)?
5. Is there a skill you would have liked to develop or a topic you are interested in that you wish we touched upon further? What else do you think YHP participants want to learn about or gain from this experience? Feel free to think outside the box.
6. What were you most proud of in your work with YHP?
7. What did you struggle with most (area that you could improve upon)?
8. Look back at yourself at the beginning of the program, or when you started YHP. How are you different now than you were then? What are the changes you have made in yourself in the past few months?
9. Consider those changes- a.) In what way do you feel YHP helped (if any)? b.) Describe your personal role in your growth (own it)!
10. How do you think you experiences with YHP will benefit you in your future? What skills, strengths, understandings, have you developed that will serve you as you move forward?
11. If you could offer advice to a new participant to help them to be a successful YHP employee, what would it be?
12. If you are continuing on with YHP, what advice would you give yourself? What are the areas you want to focus on for future growth?