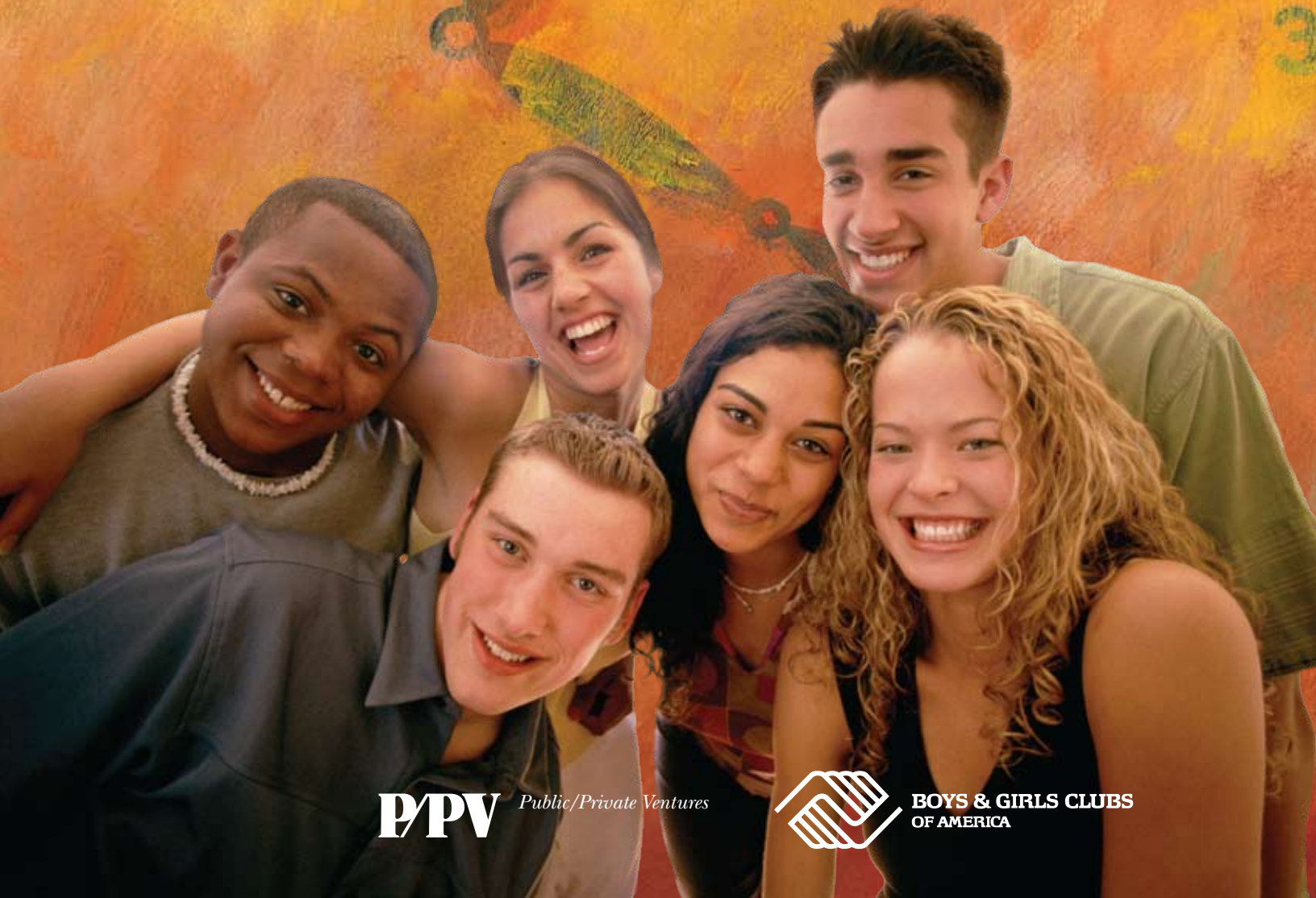


More Time For Teens:

Understanding Teen Participation—Frequency, Intensity and Duration—
In Boys & Girls Clubs

Amy Arbretton
Molly Bradshaw
Rachel Metz
Jessica Sheldon
with Sarah Pepper

Early results and lessons from
a national longitudinal evaluation
examining the role
Boys & Girls Clubs play in the lives of
the youth they serve



More Time For Teens:

Understanding Teen Participation—Frequency, Intensity and Duration—
In Boys & Girls Clubs

Amy Arbreton
Molly Bradshaw
Rachel Metz
Jessica Sheldon
with Sarah Pepper

Early results and lessons from
a national longitudinal evaluation
examining the role
Boys & Girls Clubs play in the lives of
the youth they serve



Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

Board of Directors

Matthew McGuire, Chair
Vice President
Ariel Capital Management, Inc.

Frederick A. Davie
President
Public/Private Ventures

Yvonne Chan
Principal
Vaughn Learning Center

Jed Emerson
Advisor on Blended Value Investing and Management

The Honorable Renée Cardwell Hughes
Judge, Court of Common Pleas
The First Judicial District,
Philadelphia, PA

Christine L. James-Brown
President and CEO
Child Welfare League of America

Robert J. LaLonde
Professor
The University of Chicago

John A. Mayer, Jr.
Retired, Chief Financial Officer
J.P. Morgan & Co.

Anne Hodges Morgan
Consultant to Foundations

Siobhan Nicolau, Chair Emeritus
President
Hispanic Policy Development Project

Marion Pines
Senior Fellow
Institute for Policy Studies
Johns Hopkins University

Clayton S. Rose
Retired, Head of Investment Banking
J.P. Morgan & Co.

Cay Stratton
Director
National Employment Panel
London, U.K.

Sudhir Venkatesh
Associate Professor
Columbia University

William Julius Wilson
Lewis P. and Linda L. Geyser University
Professor
Harvard University

Research Advisory Committee

Jacquelynne S. Eccles, Chair
University of Michigan

Ronald Ferguson
Kennedy School of Government

Robinson Hollister
Swarthmore College

Alan Krueger
Princeton University

Reed Larson
University of Illinois

Milbrey McLaughlin
Stanford University

Katherine S. Newman
Kennedy School of Government

Laurence Steinberg
Temple University

Thomas Weisner
UCLA

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the many people who contributed their time, support and expertise to make this report possible.

We are very grateful to the staff and teens at the 10 Boys & Girls Clubs across the country that are part of this two-and-a-half-year evaluation. The Clubs are:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Charlestown Boys & Girls Club
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Marti Huizenga Boys & Girls Club
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Martin Branch
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Panther Branch
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, Linda Vista Club
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Omaha, South Omaha Boys & Girls Club
- Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Columbia Park
- Colonel Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club, Dorchester
- West End House Boys & Girls Club of Allston/Brighton

Club staff took the time to recruit teens for the study, to survey them, and to coordinate and send attendance information to Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). The many teens who participated in the study also made invaluable contributions—we appreciate their willingness to complete surveys and talk with us about their experiences at the Club.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) provided the funding for the research and this report, and numerous BGCA staff reviewed and commented on early drafts. In particular, we appreciate the helpful suggestions of Karen MacDonald and John Arigoni, who coordinated the feedback from other BGCA staff and communicated it to us.

The project benefited from the involvement of Population Research Systems. Lisa Wasserman and her staff managed the follow-up survey data collection, and their hard work tracking the study participants yielded strong response rates for the survey.

We would also like to thank the P/PV staff whose contributions to the report were significant. Chelsea Farley provided important suggestions for framing the report and insightful comments that honed its content and structure. Tina Kauh helped conceptualize the framework for the data analysis. Laurie Kotloff and Carla Herrera reviewed drafts of the report and provided excellent feedback that helped structure the final text. Edward Moran provided copyediting for early versions of the report. Malish & Pagonis designed the report, and Chelsea Farley and Laura Johnson oversaw the final copyediting, proofreading and production of the report.

Contents

Executive Summary	i
Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: The Teens Involved in the Study	5
Chapter III: Teens’ Experiences at the Clubs	11
Chapter IV: Factors that Contribute to Teen Participation	19
Chapter V: Conclusions and Next Steps	25
Endnotes.....	28
References	29
Appendices	31
Appendix A.....	32
Appendix B.....	36
Appendix C	37
Appendix D.....	39
Tables	
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants	7
Table 2: Youth Attitudes and Beliefs.....	7
Table 3: Youth’s Drug and Alcohol Use	8
Table 4: Youth’s Proximity to Boys & Girls Clubs	9
Table 5: Tenure at the Clubs Prior to the Study	9
Table 6: Sample of Activities Offered at the Clubs for Teens	13
Table 7: Participation in Activities at the Clubs During the Past Four Weeks	13
Table 8: Leadership Opportunities at the Clubs	14
Table 9: Types of Activities Teens Participated in at the Clubs During the Past Four Weeks	14
Table 10: Attendance at the Clubs and Other After-School Programs During the Past Four Weeks	15
Table 11: Club Supports and Opportunities	17
Table 12: Proportion of Friends Who Attend Clubs	17
Table 13: Attendance at the Boys & Girls Clubs.....	21
Figures	
Figure 1: Race and Ethnicity of Study Participants	6
Figure 2: Report-Card Grades Received by Sample, as Reported by Youth	7



Executive Summary

Researchers believe that the teen years are a critical time for providing services to youth because it is then that young people are adopting behavior patterns that can have lifelong consequences. Indeed, teens' participation in out-of-school-time (OST) programs has been found to relate to positive outcomes, but studies have also shown that as children enter the teen years their participation in OST programs drops off—due to a shortage of programs and the fact that most existing programs lack the ability to attract or sustain the participation of older youth.

To extend our understanding of programs that successfully engage teens, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) is conducting a national longitudinal evaluation examining the role Boys & Girls Clubs play in the lives of the youth they serve, particularly as youth transition from middle school to high school. The evaluation investigates whether participation in Clubs is related to positive outcomes for teens in three areas: school success, positive health behaviors and positive character development.

Relying on data captured to the mid-point of the evaluation, the current report documents findings related to a key question of increasing interest to funders, policymakers, parents and programs: *What does it take to involve teens in out-of-school-time programs?* Involving teens over time is important if programs expect them to gain measurable benefits from their participation.

The Study

The longitudinal study follows 432 youth from 10 Clubs across the country¹ who completed surveys at their Clubs in Winter 2006, when they were in seventh and eighth grades. These youth completed a follow-up survey in Winter 2007 and will complete a last round of surveys in Spring 2008, when they are in ninth and tenth grades—roughly two and a half years after the study began. In addition, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted in Spring

2007 with the sample of youth who were in ninth grade at that time. Finally, club staff are collecting daily attendance information over the 29-month study period for all participating youth. The study follows the teens regardless of their levels of continued involvement in Clubs during the study period.

The current report is based primarily on data gathered from the first wave of surveys, the interviews with ninth graders, and approximately 17 months of attendance data, which captures the cohort's attendance at the Clubs as they move into eighth and ninth grades.

Findings

The following pages summarize the findings and conclusions of the full report, available at www.ppv.org.

The Teens

The surveys of seventh and eighth graders reveal the following picture: The teens in the sample are ethnically diverse and primarily low-income, similar to the overall population served by Clubs nationwide. The youth, a majority of whom had been involved in the Club for more than two years at the time the study began, typically lived relatively close to the Club and tended to report performing fairly well in school and having engaged in few risk behaviors.

The Clubs' Approach to Serving Teens

The Boys & Girls Clubs strive to provide a safe place for youth to enjoy ongoing relationships with peers and adults and life-enhancing programs that offer character development, hope and opportunity. The Clubs provide an array of activities across broad program areas; the goal is to attract youth with a variety of interests and expose them to new and diverse activities that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. The Clubs serve youth ages 6 to 18, but use a modified approach with their teen participants, providing supports and opportu-

nities that are tailored to the needs of this older age group. The Clubs usually provide a special place for their teen participants, flexibility in terms of what activities youth participate in, more time to socialize with peers, and an increased emphasis on leadership and role modeling.

Teens' Experiences at the Club

The survey findings suggest that teens use the Club in different ways; for some youth, their only out-of-school activities are at the Club, while others combine their Club activities with other pastimes. A common theme described by participants is that, regardless of how much they use the Club, they feel connected to the Club and feel that even if they are not using it right now, they could go back. The teens reported participating in a wide range of activities at the Clubs and getting involved in leadership roles. They also reported receiving high levels of support and opportunity at the Clubs, enjoying the time to “hang out” at the Club and valuing the friendships they have there. Teens also rated the Club as safer in comparison to other places where they spend time. On average, teens rated the Clubs 8.62 on a scale ranging from 1 (very dangerous) to 10 (very safe). In comparison, the teens rated how safe they feel at their schools as 7.19 and the neighborhood around the Club as 6.66.

Participation Rates and the Factors that Explained Higher Rates of Ongoing Participation

Teen participation in out-of-school-time programs can be sporadic and difficult to examine, particularly in drop-in programs like the Clubs where teens can leave for months at a time—and still be welcomed back. Thus, to account for some of this complexity in participation (particularly in considering retention, given that youth can return at any time), the study examines participation along three “dimensions”:

- **Frequency:** How many days the teens attended the Club over a 17-month period.
- **Duration:** How many months they attended the Club at least one day during the 17-month period.
- **Retention:** Whether they have attended the Club in the last 6 of the 17 months during which attendance data were collected.

Categorizing teen participation in this way shows relatively high levels of attendance. Just under half (45.1%) of the teens came at least once in each of the 13 or more months during the 17-month study period, with about one quarter (24.6%) coming 172 or more days (roughly two to three days per week or more, on average). Over three quarters (76.2%) had attended the Club in one of the last six months of the 17-month data collection period.

Further analyses were conducted to test the associations between Club practices as experienced by the teens at the start of the study (when they were in seventh and eighth grades) and their attendance and retention rates over the study period.² The findings indicate that the most significant factors (measured at the start of the study) in relation to ongoing and sustained teen attendance were:

- The number of years the youth had been involved in the Club prior to the start of the study;
- The proportion of their friends who also go to the Club;
- The number of leadership opportunities in which they were involved;
- The variety of activities in which they engaged at the Club;
- The time to just “hang out” and socialize with peers;
- Their perception that the Club was a physically safe place to be; and
- Whether the youth had easy access (via self transportation) to the Club.

Lessons Learned

A number of important lessons about attracting and sustaining teen participation emerged from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the study:

1. Building strong ties when youth are young is likely a key strategy for keeping them connected to the program as they become teenagers.
2. Flexible attendance policies and special programming for teens may be crucial to keeping a wide range of teens involved.
3. A special teen space that offers the opportunity for an “unprogrammed” social dynamic is a main attraction for teens.
4. For teens, many of whom are making their own choices about how they spend their time after school, having interesting activities available when they arrive is particularly important.
5. Outreach and programming for teens must take into account the importance they place on friendships.

Early Indications of the Value of Participation

Although we will follow the teens for one more year to assess the role Clubs play as all the teens in the study move into high school, analyses of the degree to which one year of participation is related to changes in outcomes suggest that keeping teens involved in Clubs may be beneficial. Specifically, a higher level of attendance in Clubs over a one-year period was linked to positive change in each of the three outcome areas the longitudinal evaluation is tracking:³

- Character development (change measured in integrity, social competence and positive approaches to resolving conflicts),
- School-related outcomes (change in school liking and school effort), and
- Health and risk behaviors (change in delayed initiation of sexual intercourse).

Next Steps

A final report will address the larger question of the evaluation: What role do Clubs play in youth’s lives? It will examine how attendance in the Clubs over 29 months is related to outcomes and, to the extent possible, explore whether there are thresholds of participation—frequency, duration, retention—that are more likely to achieve those outcomes. In addition, as the study progresses, we will explore the variety of attendance patterns that emerge—in terms of involvement in activities inside and outside the Club—and the degree to which they are associated with key outcomes.

Out-of-school time can be ripe with positive opportunities for teens. The key is creating settings and options that are attractive to teens and that sustain their participation in ways that make a difference in their healthy development. With their diversity of programs and opportunities, and the wide range of ages served, Boys & Girls Clubs provide a powerful setting for learning more about how to effectively serve teens and, ultimately, what threshold levels of attendance may be necessary to promote positive outcomes.

Endnotes

- 1 The Clubs are: Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Charlestown Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Marti Huizenga Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Martin Branch; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Panther Branch; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, Linda Vista Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Omaha, South Omaha Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Columbia Park; Colonel Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club, Dorchester; West End House Boys & Girls Club of Allston/Brighton.
- 2 The number of possible months an individual youth could attend the Club following his or her completion of the first survey ranged from 12 to 17 months.
- 3 The analyses we conducted control for confounding variables that were also related to higher levels of attendance. Absent a control group, the findings are suggestive of the benefits of Club participation, but not conclusive. For additional information, please see Appendix D.



Introduction

Chapter I

The teen years are a critical time for providing services for youth; however, there is a dearth of programming, particularly age-appropriate activities, available for teens. Thus, identifying and understanding successful strategies to attract and retain teens is of increasing interest to programs and funders. This report uses data collected as part of a longitudinal study of Boys & Girls Clubs across the country to explore the aspects of specific Club programming—and the overarching Club approach—that are associated with sustained teen participation.

Teen Engagement in Out-of-School-Time Programs

Researchers believe that in early adolescence young people begin to adopt behavior patterns that can have lifelong consequences; therefore, out-of-school-time (OST) programs that provide positive supports and opportunities at this point in young people's lives could help them develop enduring healthy behaviors (Eccles et al. 1993; Eccles and Gootman 2002; Walker and Arbreton 2004). However, the majority of such programs are geared toward younger children and are not developmentally appropriate for older youth.

Studies have found that as children enter the teen years, their participation in out-of-school-time programs drops off, and they spend more time in unsupervised settings (Sipe and Ma 1997; American Youth Policy Forum 2006). Reasons for the decline in participation are twofold: First, there is a “shortage” of programs designed for teens; second, even programs that seek to attract older youth often lack the ability to do so. Thus, it is important both to create additional programs for teens and also to ensure that new and existing teen programs are attractive to them and can sustain their participation.

It is generally more difficult to attract and retain teens than younger children because older youth have greater say over how they will spend their time; more competition for their time, including new responsibilities (e.g., homework, caring for

younger siblings); and an increased interest in hanging out and socializing with friends (HFRP 2004). Whereas younger children may go to (and stay in) programs because their parents send them and expect them to be there, parents do not typically exert the same level of control over what teens do in the non-school hours.

Studies have shown that it is not enough simply to offer a program and expect teens to attend or to stay involved. Programs are more likely to gain traction if they are particularly tailored to teens' interests and needs. Existing research on OST programs has found that teens tend to try—and stay in—programs that provide them with opportunities to make decisions, interact with peers and engage in meaningful activities (HFRP 2004; American Youth Policy Forum 2006); however, much remains to be learned about what attracts and retains teens and how they benefit from participation. The findings to date from the evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs across the country provide an opportunity to add to our understanding of this important issue.

Mission and Approach to Serving Youth

The mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America is to “enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.” Open to children and youth aged 6 to 18, the Clubs aim to provide a safe place for enjoying ongoing relationships and life-enhancing programs that offer character development, hope and opportunity.

Clubs attempt to provide the same supports and opportunities to their teen participants as to younger youth, albeit through a modified approach designed to be more tailored to teens' needs and interests. The Clubs' approach is based on:

- A strong grounding in research on adolescent development;
- An emphasis on flexibility in terms of what activities teens participate in;

- Giving youth more time to just “hang out” with peers;
- An increased emphasis on leadership and role modeling for younger youth; and
- A space apart from the younger children, in which teens can relax and socialize.

Unlike many other after-school programs (such as those funded by the 21st Century Learning Center dollars), there are no mandates on the number of days or hours a teen must participate. Enrollment is open to all youth, and no youth are turned away from Clubs; because all teens are accepted, there are no wait lists. There is typically a low yearly membership fee for teens (ranging from about \$2 to about \$10 per year, with ample opportunities for scholarships).

Despite their interest in serving teens, Clubs report attendance patterns that reflect the patterns seen in OST programs across the country: Most Clubs see a significant decline in numbers of youth enrolled and in participation rates for teens (aged 13 to 18) compared to younger children (aged 6 to 12). Thus, achieving a better understanding of which youth stay—and why—is informative for Clubs and other programs striving to improve young people’s lives.

The Evaluation

Like other programs that want to effectively serve youth during out-of-school time, Boys & Girls Clubs are interested in what they can do to attract and engage them and, ultimately, what effect Club participation has on the teens they serve. At the request of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) launched a national longitudinal study of Club participants in 2005 to test the degree to which the overall experience might prove to be “more than the sum of its programmatic parts.” That is, much of the prior evaluations of Clubs had focused on studying discrete Club programs, possibly missing the bigger picture of experiences that the Clubs offer their members and the potential for influencing a broader array of outcomes than had previously been explored.¹

The goal of this longitudinal evaluation is to explore the role that Clubs play in youth’s lives and their effectiveness in promoting positive outcomes for their participants in three primary

areas: school success, positive health behaviors and positive character development.

At this juncture—midway through the two-and-a-half-year evaluation—the data gathered for the larger study offer the opportunity to explore, in this report, a question of particular interest in the out-of-school-time field (see HFRP 2004): *What does it take to involve teens in out-of-school-time programs?*

At the conclusion of the study (after the third wave of data collection in Spring 2008), P/PV will prepare a final report that tracks changes in teens’ attitudes and behaviors in the outcome areas of interest, focusing particularly on the transition to high school and the degree to which participation in Clubs may contribute to any observed changes.

Research Methodology

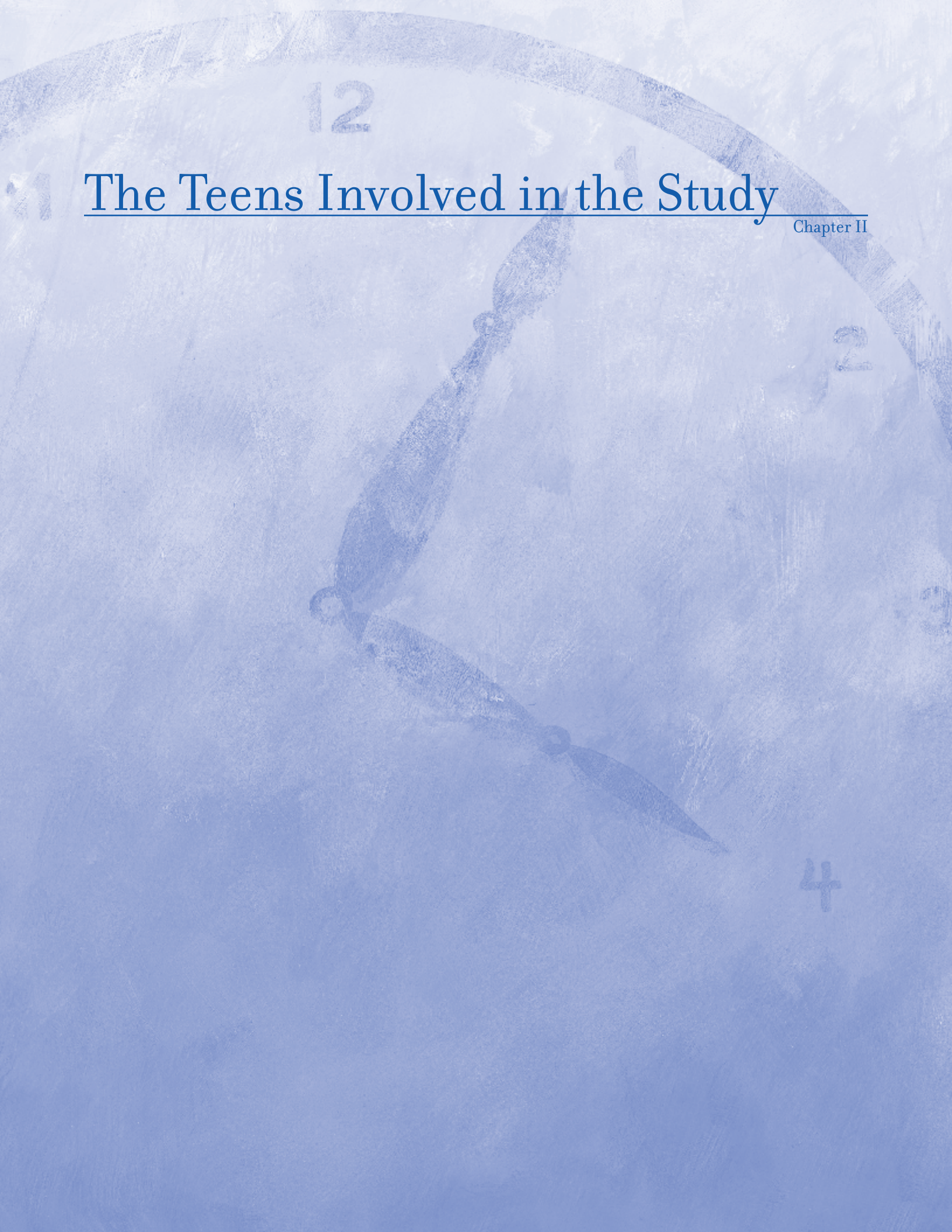
Seventh- and eighth-grade Club participants from 10 Clubs across the country were recruited to be in the study.² The overall study includes:

- Surveys of the same group of 432 teens in Winter 2006, Winter 2007 and Spring 2008 to understand how the teens use their out-of-school time, what activities they are participating in (both in and out of the Club), their experiences in the Club, and ultimately how their attitudes and behaviors change over time in relation to their participation in the Clubs.
- Daily attendance data gathered from the Clubs over the entire 29-month study period.
- Interviews of Club staff who work directly with teens to understand staff’s perspectives on the teen programming provided at the Clubs.
- In-depth qualitative interviews with ninth-grade youth, conducted in Spring 2007, to gain a rich and more nuanced understanding of teens’ perceptions of how the Club fits in their lives, what the teens do when they are at the Club and what they have gained and believe they have to gain from participating in its programs.

The data used for the current report consist primarily of information from the first survey of teens, administered in Winter 2006, plus 17 months of Club attendance data, interviews with the Club staff and in-depth interviews with ninth graders in Spring 2007.

Structure of the Report

Chapters II and III set the context for the findings: Chapter II describes the teens in the study; Chapter III describes how the teens experience the Club in terms of the space, the activities, and the supports and opportunities offered. Chapter IV presents the main findings related to the overarching question of how Clubs retain teens in their programs. It does so by examining information about who the kids are, their experiences at the Club, and other aspects of the Club atmosphere and environment, and linking these data to their attendance and retention in the Clubs. Chapter V offers lessons learned and discusses the next steps of the study.



The Teens Involved in the Study

Chapter II

This chapter provides a picture of the teens served by the Clubs participating in the study. It provides information on their: general demographic characteristics; attitudes and behaviors; proximity to the Club; and tenure at the Club prior to the start of the study. In general, the teens in the study appear to reflect the same diversity that is seen in data reported by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America on their total membership. The information provided in this chapter is based on the survey of 432 seventh and eighth graders in Winter 2006.

Demographics

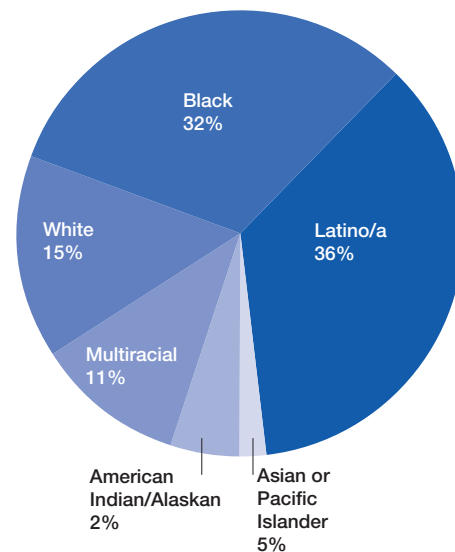
The study sample includes 432 youth, who were in seventh and eighth³ grades at the start of the study, from 10⁴ Clubs across the country. **The teens in the sample are ethnically diverse and primarily low-income, similar to the overall population served by Clubs nationwide.**

- The majority of youth in the study self-identify as a member of an ethnic or racial minority group. Hispanic youth are most prevalent, representing 36 percent of those surveyed, followed by 32 percent of youth who identify as black and 15 percent as white (see Figure 1).⁵
- Fifty-four percent of youth in the study are male, and 46 percent are female.⁶
- Almost three quarters of the study population (72.8%) report they receive free or reduced-price lunch at school.
- Less than one half of the youth (44%) live with two parents (see Table 1).

Attitudes and Beliefs

To get a better picture of the teens served by the Clubs, surveyed youth were asked about: 1) their grades on their last report card and attitudes toward and behaviors in school; 2) their character strengths; and 3) their involvement in health and risk behaviors. (Please see appendix A for more information about the specific items and measures.) These are also the areas the longitudinal study is

Figure 1
Race and Ethnicity^a of Study Participants



Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

^aYouth were asked to check all that apply from the following: Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, White, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Multiracial means that the youth checked more than one box. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

following to document changes that may be associated with involvement in the Clubs over time.

Results from the survey at the start of the study, summarized in Figure 2 and Tables 2 and 3, reveal that **the youth tended to report performing fairly well in school, having relatively positive character strengths and having engaged in few risk behaviors.** Overall, 70 percent of youth reported receiving mostly As and Bs on their report cards (see Figure 2). Although few youth reported skipping school (12.9%), about one third (33.9%) reported having been suspended from school in the past year. In addition, youth reported high levels of social competence, belief in the importance of school, academic confidence, feeling connected to teachers at their schools and expectations for the future.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

	Overall
Gender	
Male	54.1%
Female	45.9%
Grade	
Grade 7	53.2%
Grade 8	46.8%
Living Situation	
Lives with Both Parents	44.3%
Lives with Mother	43.6%
Lives with Father	6.7%
Lives with Other Relative	4.1%
Lives with Foster Parent	1.4%
Receives Free/Reduced Price Lunch	
Yes	72.8%
No	27.2%
Sample Size	432

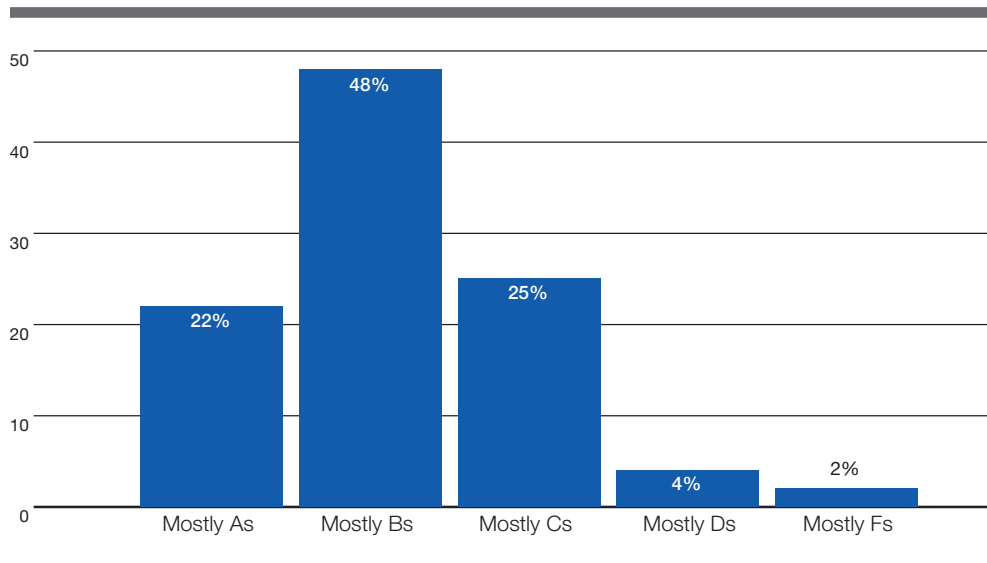
Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 2
Youth Attitudes and Beliefs

	Average Rating
Social Competence	3.15
Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution	2.58
Fairness	2.89
Integrity	2.81
Open-Mindedness	3.02
Importance of School	3.36
Academic Confidence	3.30
School Liking	2.79
School Effort	2.63
Connection to Teachers	3.22
Future Expectations	3.40

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders. Details about the items that were used to measure each of these attitudes and beliefs are provided in Appendix A. Survey responses ranged from 1-not at all true, to 4-very true.

Figure 2
Report-Card Grades Received by Sample, as Reported by Youth



Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

Table 3
Youth's Drug And Alcohol Use

	7th and 8th Graders in Clubs Winter 2006	8th Graders Only in Clubs Winter 2006	National Data for 8th Graders 2006
Drug and Alcohol Use			
<i>Cigarette Use</i>			
Ever Tried	20.9%	22.4%	24.6%
Used in Past 30 days	6.9%	6.1%	8.7%
<i>Alcohol Use</i>			
Ever Tried	33.4%	38.6%	40.5%
Used in Past 30 days	11.3%	14.0%	17.2%
<i>Marijuana Use</i>			
Ever Tried	9.0%	9.0%	15.7%
Used in Past 30 days	3.9%	3.5%	6.5%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

National data are from *Monitoring the Future* study; see endnote 7.

Table 3 shows the proportion of the seventh and eighth graders in the study who reported using cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana. Although no national data are available for seventh graders, we were able to compare the data for the eighth graders in the study with those eighth graders participating in the national study, *Monitoring the Future*; those national data are also included in Table 3.⁷ The eighth graders in the Clubs who are part of the current study report levels similar to, and slightly lower than, those reported in the national survey of teens across the country. At this point in the study, we are unable to detect whether the rates for teens in the Club may be lower than expected due to Club participation; these data are presented only as a reference point.

Proximity to the Club

The youth tend to report easy access to the Club and live in relatively close proximity to the Club they attend. Fifty-four percent of teens report walking, biking or skateboarding to the Club and over half (53.7%) report that it takes them less than 10 minutes to get home from the Club (see Table 4). Proximity may be a particularly important factor for teens who are choosing their own activities and getting there themselves. Unlike when they were younger and an adult made the decision that the youth would go to the Club after school (often for childcare), teens typically make their own decisions as to whether to “drop in” or not each day, and ease of access may contribute to regular attendance.

Table 4
Youth's Proximity to Boys & Girls Clubs

How Youth Get to the Club	
Walking/Biking/Skateboarding	53.7%
Family Member Drives	22.0%
Public Transportation	11.6%
School Bus	6.9%
Club Bus or Van	4.0%
Neighbor/Family Friend Drives	1.9%
How Long It Takes Youth to Get Home	
Less than 10 Minutes	57.9%
11 to 20 Minutes	23.4%
21 to 30 Minutes	8.4%
More than 30 Minutes	10.4%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 5
Tenure at the Clubs Prior to the Study

1 Month or Less	11.2%
2–3 Months	6.7%
More than 3 Months, but Less than 1 Year	6.0%
1–2 Years	18.9%
More than 2 Years, but Less than 5 Years	26.8%
5 Years or More	30.4%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

Tenure

As displayed in Table 5, **most teens in the study had a long tenure at the Club prior to the start of the evaluation.** More than half of the teens reported that they had already been coming to the Club for more than two years at the time of the Winter 2006 survey, with almost one third (30.4%) reporting they had been coming to the Club for five years or more. These statistics are in line with statistics from Boys & Girls Clubs of America more generally. A 2007 national alumni study of 1,014 former Club members found that, “on average, alumni reported participation in BGCA [Clubs] for 5 years, from just before their 10th birthday to just before their 15th birthday.” This level of tenure among the seventh and eighth graders at the Club is important because it indicates that a main attraction for the teens might be that they have already been involved in and know the Club. On the other hand, it is also an indication of the challenge Clubs face in attracting new teens.



Teens' Experiences at the Clubs

Chapter III

To better understand the Clubs' approach to working with teens and how the teens experience the Club, this chapter describes the space provided for teens, the activities offered at the Club, teen participation in activities in and outside of the Club, and the supports and opportunities youth experience while there. Chapter IV then builds on the findings presented in this chapter, describing the degree to which each of the factors presented help to explain teens' ongoing participation in Clubs.

The data presented in this chapter are drawn from the first time youth were surveyed, in Winter 2006. Information gleaned from the qualitative interviews conducted with ninth graders (in Spring 2007) and from interviews with program staff is also incorporated in several sections to help explicate the findings.

Space

The Club intentionally offers a safe place for youth to hang out with their peers and informal time for youth to interact and build relationships with staff. According to the survey, youth do feel that the Clubs are safe. On average, teens rated the Clubs 8.62 on a scale ranging from 1 (very dangerous) to 10 (very safe). In comparison, the teens rated how safe they feel at their schools as 7.19 and how safe they felt in the neighborhood around the Club as 6.66.

Often the Clubs create special rooms or separate areas for teen participants, frequently called Teen Centers. Clubs typically allow access to these areas only after youth turn 13, and on special occasions some of the younger youth are invited into the area. These teen-only areas range from a single room with TVs, computers and couches to large facilities (separate from the main Clubs) that have computer areas, dance studios and other multipurpose rooms. Many have comfortable and inviting atmospheres that have been decorated by the teen members. In addition to these special spaces, most Clubs also have dedicated resources for the teen population, such as budgets and staffing.

Activities at the Clubs

In addition to recognizing the importance of a safe place for teens to hang out, Club staff strive to provide an array of activities across broad program areas with the intention of drawing in teens with different interests and exposing them to new and varied activities that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Clubs do so by offering formal programs and activities on a regular basis, as well as by creating opportunities for informal interaction and club-wide leadership roles.

Formal Activities Offered at the Clubs

The Clubs in the study offer an array of formal activities. Some were developed and disseminated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America office; others were developed locally. Offering a variety of formal activities is an intentional strategy used by the Clubs to draw a diverse set of youth.

Table 6 provides a sample of activities that were described as part of the Club offerings during our site visits. Programs for teens that were mentioned by all Clubs include Power Hour (an hour of homework-help time), Keystone and Torch Club (leadership programming for younger and older teens) and SMART Moves (a delinquency-prevention curriculum).

Activities Teens Participated in at the Clubs

The Winter 2006 survey asked teens how often they participated over the four weeks prior to the survey in various activities at the Club; the results, displayed in Table 7, suggest that a significant proportion of the teens take advantage of the formal and informal activities the Clubs offer—with at least 25 percent represented in each category. As Table 7 shows, hanging out was the most prevalent activity (88.5%), followed by using technology (75.7%), reading a book or magazine (67.8%), playing sports (65.9%) and spending time talking one-on-one with an adult (58.1%).

Table 6
Sample of Activities Offered at the Clubs for Teens

Category of Activity	Program or Activity Title
The Arts	Digital Media, Making Movies, Fine Arts, Dance, Teen Art, Teen Girl African Dance, Theater, DJ Club
Sports, Fitness and Recreation	Triple Play, Safe Summer Streets, Organized Club Sports (football, soccer, basketball, baseball, swimming, field hockey, volleyball, etc.)
Health and Life Skills	NetSmartz, SMART Moves, Passport to Manhood, Lady Panthers, Sister Pride, Baby Think it Over, Hot Topics, Young Miss, Cooking Club, Munch & Mingle, Gentlemen in Training, Smart Girls, Club Possible, Smart Talk
Education and Career	Power Hour, Money Matters, Career Launch, SAT Prep, College Club, College Readiness 21, Job Club, Miracles, Achievement Matters, College Tours, Credit Union, College Bound, Youth Build, Upward Bound, Page Turners, Education Talent Search
Character and Leadership	Keystone Club, Torch Club, Club Remix, Teen Talk, Council for Unity, Teen Society, Teen Tech Team, Community Action Group

Source: Interviews with Club staff and review of program schedules.

Table 7
Participation in Activities at the Clubs During the Past Four Weeks

Hang out or play with friends	88.5 %
Use technology such as computers, video or digital music	75.7 %
Read a book, magazine or newspaper	67.8 %
Play sports on a team or participate in a fitness program	65.9 %
Spend time talking one-on-one with an adult	58.1 %
Participate in activities or discussions about making good choices in life	52.8 %
Go to a program to get homework help or tutoring	42.1 %
Attend a class or activity in math, science or some other academic subject	41.4 %
Attend a class or activity in art or crafts	39.2 %
Attend a class or activity in music, drama, dance or performing	34.4 %
Participate in leadership programs	28.4 %
Attend health or nutrition programs	27.1 %

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

Table 8
Leadership Opportunities at the Clubs

Activity	Percent of Youth Engaged in Activity
Helped Plan Special Activities	59.6%
Helped Out in the Club Office	50.8%
Been a Leader (Team Captain, Clean-Up Leader, Club President)	50.7%
Volunteered or Been Chosen to Lead an Activity at the Club	48.9%
Been Paid to Work	41.1%
Been Elected or Voted to a Leadership Position	37.1%
Been on Student Council at the Club	26.3%
Average Number of Leadership Opportunities (of Seven above) that Youth Engaged in During the Last 12 Months at the Club	3.09

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

Leadership Opportunities at the Clubs

According to staff and teens, leadership activities are offered in all Clubs as a way to develop character. Staff reported and teens commented that they are expected to serve as role models for the younger youth, taking on leadership roles and responsibilities. Table 7 indicates that 28.4 percent of the teens had participated in a leadership “program” at the Club during the four weeks prior to the survey. In addition to formal programs, the Clubs strive to encourage the teens to take on club-wide leadership roles and responsibilities, such as those described in Table 8, which reflects some of the variety of leadership opportunities available.

As displayed in Table 8, half or more of the teens reported that they helped plan Club activities; helped out in the Club office; and acted in a leadership role such as team captain, clean-up leader or Club president during the last 12 months. Teens reported participating in an average of just over three (3.09) leadership opportunities, with 80 percent reporting they had participated in at least one leadership opportunity over the past 12 months.

Table 9
Types of Activities Teens Participated in at the Clubs During the Past Four Weeks

Number of Different Activity Types in the Past Four Weeks	Percent
No Activity Type	6.5%
1 Activity Type	9.5%
2 Activity Types	21.0%
3 Activity Types	22.0%
4 Activity Types	41.0%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders.

Table 10
Attendance at the Clubs and Other After-School Programs
During the Past Four Weeks

Attendance in Past Four Weeks	At Club	At Another Program
None	13.8%	21.3%
1-2 Times in Month	13.8%	19.1%
1 Time per Week	3.1%	11.1%
2 Times per Week	6.3%	10.6%
3-4 Times per Week	18.1%	16.4%
5+ Times per Week	44.9%	21.5%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders. Youth were asked about participation at the Club during the past four weeks and about participation elsewhere in after-school programs, activities or organized sports, including participation in a religious organization.

Breadth of Activities

Teens appear to take advantage of the variety of formal and informal activities offered by the Clubs. To capture information on the breadth of teens' participation, we sorted the activities into four categories: sports and nutrition; academics and academic support; the arts; and hanging out and social interaction. Doing so, we found that almost two thirds of the teens were involved in three or more different types of activities, with very few (9.5%) participating in only one type of activity in the past four weeks at the Club (see Table 9).

Activities Outside of the Club

Boys & Girls Clubs provide a flexible drop-in program for teens, with no mandates on numbers of days they must attend, that allows youth to use the Club in different ways. Results from the survey of seventh and eighth graders suggest that teens, in fact, couple their Club involvement with involvement in other non-Club programs to varying degrees, reflecting (as the previous section did) the diverse interests of the group of teens served by the Club. As Table 10 displays, over three quarters (78.7%) of the seventh and eighth graders reported participating in non-Club programs or activities at

least once in the four weeks prior to the Winter 2006 survey, with almost half (48.5%) reporting participating at least two or more times per week in a non-Club activity.

Table 10 also summarizes the teens' reports of their participation at the Club in the four weeks prior to the survey, indicating high rates of frequent attendance (with just over two thirds, 69.3 percent, reporting they participated at least two times per week).

Because we hope to understand how the Club fits into the teens' lives in relation to what else they do in their out-of-school time, we conducted several additional analyses. One set of results revealed that, for 20 percent of the teens, their involvement in the Club in the past four weeks was the only out-of-school-time activity they reported participating in. Another analysis was conducted to determine whether the teens who came to the Club a lot might also be those who go to other activities a lot (i.e., be considered "joiners") or whether there was greater variation in profiles of participation. Setting a bar of two days per week or more as a high rate of participation for teens (inside and outside of the Club), we found that the teens fell in the following proportions into the four groups we constructed:

- High Club Only (35%)
- High Both Club and Non-Club (34%)
- High Non-Club Only (14%)
- Low Both Club and Non-Club (16%)

It is not surprising—given that the study sample was drawn from Club members—that a large percentage of teens (just over one third) are those who report they attended the Club in the past four weeks and engaged in very few other out-of-school-time activities. However, it is interesting that almost half of the youth have high involvement in other activities and that about one sixth report low involvement in any out-of-school-time activities.

Teens' descriptions during the qualitative interviews of how much time they spent at the Club, whether it was a main activity for them, and what else they did with their out-of-school time added important information that helped draw out the complexity of how they perceive their involvement at the Clubs. Whereas one group of teens described coming to the club "24/7," another group of teens described how the Club was their "main thing" but that they might also do other activities after school before they come to the Club in the evening hours.

In the next chapter, we examine the degree to which teens' non-Club activity involvement is related to future Club participation. Gaining an understanding of how this diversity of participation in and out of Clubs affects teens' outcomes over time will be an important part of the larger evaluation and will be explored in its final report.

Supports and Opportunities at the Clubs

The Clubs strive to provide an atmosphere that goes beyond the array of activities and programming offered. The Clubs intentionally offer time for youth to develop relationships with staff—time that is critical to achieving their mission of enabling young people to "reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens." The Clubs also work to provide a positive environment for developing peer relationships.

The surveyed teens reported high levels of the kinds of positive experiences at the Clubs that have been cited as important for healthy development (Eccles and Gootman 2002), including the chance to voice their opinions, forge relationships with supportive adults and peers, and enjoy a place where they feel physically and emotionally safe, where staff have high expectations for them and where they are recognized for their achievements. Teens' Winter 2006 ratings on all of these dimensions are summarized in Table 11.

Teens' relationships with peers or friends at the Club were important to them. As Table 12 portrays, 90 percent of teens reported that at least a few of their friends go to the Boys & Girls Club. Teens also reported that the Club provides an opportunity to interact with peers they do not meet at school.

Youth who felt that their "best friends" were at the Club or felt close to their Club peers discussed several reasons why the Club provided an optimal setting for interacting with peers and getting along with friends:

- They felt safer hanging out with friends at the Club or felt as if Club peers were more "mature."

"Like here there's usually not really any fights or anything or not any arguments or anything. And then if there is like an argument or a conflict or something, usually people will either talk to one of the staff about it, or they just won't talk to the other person. Nothing really big happens. But in school it's different. Like in school people just, sometimes [people] just get into random fights about stupid things. But here people just seem more calmed down."

- You can "be yourself" with friends at the Club in a way you can't at school.
- They've known their friends at the Club for so long (whereas they might have just met their school peers when they began high school).

"We went through the little kids' camp [at the Club] and everything, so once we realized that we went through all these camps together, [we're] like, 'Oh, why don't we be friends?'"

Table 11
Club Supports and Opportunities

		Scale
Emotional Safety at the Club	3.34	Range 1–4 1 = not at all true 2 = not very true 3 = sort of true 4 = very true
Supportive Relationships		Percent of youth who report having one or more supportive individual(s) in each category
One or More Adults at the Club are Supportive	85.6%	
One or More Peers at the Club are Supportive	87.9%	
Club Opportunities		Range 1–4 1 = not at all true 2 = not very true 3 = sort of true 4 = very true
Staff Provide Structure and Clear Limits	3.41	
Staff Provide Validation and Recognition	3.08	
Staff Have High Expectations	3.37	
There are Opportunities for New Skill Development	3.17	
There are Opportunities to Influence the Club	2.89	
Staff Encourage Peer Cooperation	3.26	
Sense of Belonging to the Club	3.29	
The Club is Fun	3.26	

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders. See Appendix A for details on the measures used.

Table 12
Proportion of Friends Who Attend Clubs

	Percent
None	9.9 %
A Few	40.5 %
Half of Them	17.2 %
Most	19.1 %
All of Them	13.4 %

Source: Winter 2006 survey of seventh and eighth graders. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

These interviews offer an informative picture of how peer relationships at the Club offer a safe arena for positive interaction, allow the teens to “be themselves,” and provide an opportunity to meet and interact with a different set of peers than they might know from school or their neighborhood. Friendships at the Club emerge as particularly important, as will be seen in the next chapter, which offers an examination of how different aspects of the Clubs’ overall programming serve to engage and retain teens over time.



Factors that Contribute to Teen Participation

Chapter IV

4

Because attendance at the Clubs is voluntary, it is critical that Clubs create space, an atmosphere and programming that are inviting for teens. The ultimate test of the Clubs' appeal rests on their ability to attract, involve and retain teens long enough for them to reap benefits from their involvement.

This chapter first presents data on the teens' rates of participation in the Clubs over the 17 months for which we have attendance data. It then summarizes what factors (of those that have been described in Chapters II and III—demographics and youth characteristics, Club programming, youth's experiences of supports and opportunities at the Clubs, and involvement in activities inside and outside of the Club) help understand future participation patterns—frequency, duration and retention.⁸

In brief, the findings indicate that **the number of years that the youth has been involved in the Club prior to the start of the study, the proportion of the youth's friends who also go to the Club, the leadership opportunities in which they were involved, the variety of activities in which they engaged, their perceptions that the Club is safe, and whether the youth had easy access to the Club (via self-transportation) were the most significant factors in maintaining teen attendance over time.**

Participation Rates

Teen participation in out-of-school-time programs can be sporadic and difficult to examine, particularly in drop-in programs such as Clubs, where teens can come any time, leave for months if they choose—and still be welcomed back. Thus, to account for some of this complexity in participation (particularly in considering retention, since youth can return at any time), the study examines participation along three “dimensions”:

- **Frequency:** How many days the teens attended the Club over a 17-month period;
- **Duration:** How many months they attended the Club at least one day during the 17-month period;
- **Retention:** Whether they have attended the Club in the last 6 of the 17 months during which attendance data were collected.

Categorizing participation in this way shows relatively high levels of attendance by teens. Table 13 shows the proportion of teens who attended with varying levels of duration and frequency and also shows retention over the 17-month period of attendance-data collection. Just under half (45.1%) of the teens came at least once in each of 13 or more months of the 17-month study period, with about one quarter (24.6%) coming 172 or more days (roughly two to three days per week or more, on average).⁹ Over three quarters (76.2 percent) had attended the Club in one of the last six months.

Significant Factors Related to Participation

To better understand teen involvement in the Clubs, we examined links between the teen's characteristics, programmatic features, youth's reported experiences in the Club and their relationship to the three dimensions of participation. In some cases, we were able to conduct statistical tests to link variation in one factor with variation in another. In other cases, however, our data are qualitative in nature, and we have identified trends and patterns that explain teens' involvement. The remainder of this section describes each of those factors and the degree to which they help to understand teens' subsequent participation. (Table C.1. in Appendix C provides a summary of the results of the statistical analyses linking factors from the survey that we examined and the degree to which they were related to the three measures of participation: frequency, duration and retention.)

Table 13
Attendance at the Boys & Girls Clubs

Duration: Total Number of Months with at Least One Day of Attendance between October 2005 and February 2007

0 Months	2.8 %
1–3 Months	8.2 %
4–6 Months	11.5 %
7–9 Months	17.7 %
10–12 Months	14.6 %
13–15 Months	24.6 %
16–17 Months	20.5 %

Frequency: Number of Days Attended between October 2005 and February 2007

0–6 Days	10.0 %
7–29 Days	15.1 %
30–84 Days	24.9 %
85–171 Days	25.4 %
172–231 Days	14.6 %
232–340 Days	10.0 %

Retention: Attended Club in Last Six Months of Attendance-Data Collection (i.e., between August 2006 and February 2007)

Yes	76.2 %
No	23.8 %

Source: Data are drawn from 17 months of Club attendance from 9 out of 10 clubs; one Club's data are omitted because their attendance data were incomplete. N=390.

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Demographics

Teens of various demographic backgrounds tended to participate over time to the same degree; however, the analyses pointed to a few exceptions.

- **Males tended to attend the Club more frequently than did females;** however, levels of duration and retention were similar for males and females.
- **Youth who reported they received free lunch at school attended the Club more frequently than those who did not.**
- **Frequency and duration of attendance dipped with age.** Youth going from seventh to eighth grade attended significantly more frequently and tended to participate over more months than those going from eighth to ninth grade; however, retention rates were similar.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Most youth who attend the Clubs had positive attitudes toward school and the future and rated themselves as having strong character, with only one item tied to subsequent attendance: **Teens who rated themselves as putting more effort into school had higher rates of attendance (both frequency and duration).**

Risk Behaviors

The teens in the study reported engaging in risk behaviors at rates similar to those reported nationally. **Teens who reported engaging in risk behaviors (either delinquency- or academically-related) at the start of the study maintained similar rates of participation in the Clubs to those who did not report risk behaviors,** an important finding if Clubs hope to support teens who have already displayed risk behaviors as well as prevent teens from engaging in unhealthy behaviors. These findings suggest that teens with risk factors are no more likely to stop coming to the Club than those without risk factors.

Accessibility

One measure of accessibility is whether teens can get to the Club on their own; another is how long it takes them to get to or from the Club. **Youth who reported they got to the club using some form of self-transportation (walking, skateboard, biking) had higher rates of attendance, specifically in terms of the duration of attendance.** The positive relationship between self

transportation and attendance may reflect the growing independence of teens and their desire and ability to get places on their own. If they cannot do it themselves, they may not do it. How long it takes them to get to or from the Club, however, was not related to any measure of participation.

Strong Connection to Club Already in Place

The longer teens reported they had been involved in the Club (prior to the start of the study), the more likely they were to still be attending with regularity. **Past tenure was related to future frequency, duration and retention.**

Most of the teens in the study had already been involved in the Club for a number of years. Club staff reported using various outreach strategies to bring in new teens, but an important implication of the data here is that bringing youth in early helps cultivate ties to the Club that help sustain their involvement as they go through their teen years.

As noted earlier, however, if Clubs do bring in youth as teens, it is likely that they will need to work particularly hard with those newer youth to help them develop the close friendships and ties to the Clubs that appear to be important for continued participation.

Activities at the Club

Not surprisingly, teens who got involved in a greater variety of activities at the Club stayed more involved over time. **The variety of activities in which they reported participating at the start of the study was related to all the participation variables examined: greater frequency, duration and retention.**

Taking a broader view of the activities the Club has to offer and their importance for teen involvement, one teen described the range of experiences the Club has exposed him to for the first time:

“Some of the experiences I’ve had [are the best part of the Club]. I’d never been to a Red Sox game—I’ve been to 12 of them since I’ve been up here. Never been to a Patriot’s game—I’ve been there, done that. Just going camping, I had never done that. Next year I’ll most likely be going to California—I’ve never been out of Massachusetts. Just stuff like that, just meeting new people and going new places.”

The relationship between a variety or breadth of activity offerings and participation over time is a pattern that has been found in other studies (Walker and Arbreton 2004) and has drawn the attention of researchers interested in the multifaceted aspects of engagement in out-of-school-time programs (Feister et al. 2005). As others have suggested (American Youth Policy Forum 2006), it may be that the Clubs’ ability to provide a comprehensive set of varied offerings is an important piece for teens, particularly since one of the activity options includes being able to come to the Club and “hang out” with their peers and friends in a safe and comfortable environment.

Looking more closely at the leadership opportunities the Clubs afford many of their teens, analyses revealed that these leadership opportunities were strongly related to all three dimensions of attendance. **The teens who, at the start of the study, reported greater involvement in leadership roles at the Clubs attended over the next 12 to 17 months with greater frequency, over more months, and had higher rates of retention.** The ninth graders’ responses in interviews echoed the importance of the leadership experiences the Club offers. When asked how their attendance had changed since entering high school, the interview sample was split fairly evenly between those who said they attend more this year, attend less this year and attend about the same this year as last (30 percent, 41 percent and 25 percent, respectively, with 4 percent unknown). Those who said they came more frequently most consistently cited reasons having to do with opportunities for leadership.

“Last year I had, like, really nothing to do. I’d come for my Teen Society classes, but if I didn’t have nothing to do in Teen Society I would just sit home and just be, like, ‘okay, I’m really not gonna come, there’s nothing else for me to do.’ But now I just feel like there’s actually something for me to do—I can hang out with everybody at Keystone...”

Offering leadership opportunities and having teens take on these roles is one way that Clubs connect the teens to more teens, younger youth and staff at the Club.

Activities Outside the Club

Interestingly, **the extent to which teens reported they were involved in other, non-Club programs was not related to their attendance in the Clubs.** That is, our analyses of the survey and participation data revealed no significant association between the number of days the teen reported participating in non-Club programs or activities (on the first survey) and their continued involvement at the Clubs. This was reflected in the interviews with teens, many of whom said that even when they go to other activities, the Club was still their “main” activity, as one teen describes:

“Well, out of the main things that I’m involved in, I’ll say the club is one of the biggest main things. And then I’m involved in other little things... Basically after school I either have ROTC practice, Equal Teen or I have just a whole bunch of homework. So usually when I don’t have those things I just stay after school, finish my homework and then just come straight here [the Club] whenever I’m done.”

Space

When we examined how safe teens felt at the Club, 80 percent reported 8 or above on a scale from 1=very dangerous to 10=very safe, compared to just 54 percent reporting an 8 or above for school. The safe place the Club provides is, in turn, related to the teens continued involvement: **The teens who reported that they felt more safe (physically) at the Club attended over more months.** The fact that youth’s sense of the Club as a safe place is a predictor of their continued involvement echoes findings from other studies of teens and out-of-school time (Walker and Arbreton 2004; HFRP 2004).

The “teen-only” space was both attractive and important to the teens who were interviewed. After leadership opportunities, one of the most common reasons teens reported they came to the Club more frequently as ninth graders than they had when they were younger was their appreciation of the teen areas, space or programming. Many of them described the Club as “more fun” as a result of these offerings. Youth in two cities where there were recent remodelings mentioned that the Club was more fun thanks to those changes; they also mentioned they had more fun in the teen center

than they did in other areas of the Club or that they liked the independence they had in the teen area.

Flexibility

Analysis of Club attendance data revealed that, although a group of teens came with regularity over the course of the data collection period, other teens came in spurts and took breaks. The Clubs’ lack of attendance requirements and their flexible policy allowing teens to take breaks and then return with no repercussions was an important factor in their return, in combination with the activities, leadership opportunities and relationships with staff.

One teen who had been attending the Club since she was five years old said that in eighth grade she became bored with the activities, that “it was the same activities like before,” so she stopped attending for two months. But, as she explained:

“I love the staff and all the people here so I had to come back and visit. And when I came back, they’re like, ‘Oh, hi, [name]’ and I was like oh, I need to start coming back and seeing them more.”

A similar instance occurred with another teen who had stopped attending for a while and spent her time hanging out with friends outside of the Club. Then the Club director called her and offered her a job during the summer before ninth grade. She was excited to have an opportunity to work; when the school year started, she continued attending the Club even though she was no longer employed.

Staff are aware of the reasons behind fluctuations in youth’s participation. Many accept the changing role of the club in the lives of the youth. Often they express confidence that many will return if they need the support of the Club and its staff. One staff member welcomed the chance for Club youth to spread their wings and experience other after-school opportunities. In her opinion, participating in other activities often showed youth the uniqueness and quality of the Boys & Girls Club program, and she felt that many of them eventually returned to the Club for its familiarity, safety and structure.

Positive Relationships

As seen in Table 11 in Chapter III, most teens report that they have adults (85.6%) and peers (87.9%) at the Club who are supports for them. And 90 percent of the teens report that at least a few of their friends go to the Club.

The quantitative data analysis revealed no statistical link between number of adult supports at the Club and attendance, which is surprising given that previous studies have discussed its importance (Walker and Arbretton 2004). It may be that the proportion of teens who reported that there was an adult at the Club who was a support for them was so high that there may not have been enough variation to find a statistical link. On the other hand, one reason why adult supports may not have emerged more strongly is the issue of turnover among teen staff. Of the 10 clubs in the study there were approximately one to three teen-only staff members per club; however not all positions were filled at the time of our site visits to the Clubs.¹⁰ Some Clubs reported repeated turnover in these teen staff positions. Just one teen-only staff member at the time of the 2007 visit to the Clubs had been in that position for more than three years.

Importantly, however, in interviews with the youth, teens talked about the importance of the adults at the Club, either adults who were currently at the Club or adults who had been at the Club and with whom they had developed strong relationships. For example, a group of teens (10 of 52 interviewed) mentioned how important it was to them that the Club staff noticed them, listened to them and paid attention to their moods, as one teen described:

“She would kind of notice when I wasn’t upbeat, like if I wasn’t—so she’d ask me and she’d be like you don’t have to talk about it. But I always liked that she noticed.”

As other studies have found (HFRP 2004; Walker and Arbretton 2004), **having friends who go to the Club was a central factor in explaining teen attendance at the Clubs.** To the extent that teens reported more of their friends go to the Club, they were more likely to attend with greater frequency and duration and have higher rates of retention.

Other Positive Experiences at the Club

Although most of the youth report high levels of positive experiences at the Club, such as staff validation and recognition, opportunities to develop skills and to have fun, and a strong sense of belonging, we did not find an empirical relationship between any of the teens’ reports of these experiences and their attendance at the Clubs. In part, the lack of associations may be the result of little variation in teens’ ratings: Almost all youth reported high levels of these experiences at the Club.

Summary

A myriad of factors appear to contribute to teens’ involvement in out-of-school-time activities at the Clubs. For the most part, teens of both genders, and those of various risk factors and academic standings, remain involved to an equal degree.

An interesting finding is that attendance rates were strongest for teens who had been coming to the Club for some time, since before they were teenagers. Although Clubs will likely want to reach additional teens, it is important to recognize that the youth who have already been exposed to the Club atmosphere and its adult and peer relationships are most likely to continue as strong attendees.

The teens’ experience of the Club, primarily their involvement in leadership roles and their exposure to a variety of different activities, as well as their perceptions of safety, are strong contributors to their attendance in the Clubs.

Not surprisingly, given the intensifying focus on peer relationships as youth become teens, having friends who go to the Club is very important for attracting and involving teens. Teens with more friends who go to the Club are more likely to attend regularly and stay involved. The friendships they have and develop at the Clubs are likely important because they lead to the hanging out and learning from others in a comfort zone, which most teens reported was a very appealing aspect of the time they spend at the Clubs.



Conclusions and Next Steps

Chapter V

The findings from this phase of the longitudinal evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs echo and validate other research about what must be in place to attract and sustain teens' participation in out-of-school-time programs: a variety of meaningful activities to engage youth's interests; accessible places that are attractive and feel different for teens; and safe places where they can interact with their friends (HFRP 2004). In this chapter, we discuss some of the broader lessons we believe can be drawn from the strategies implemented by the Boys & Girls Clubs and the findings of the study, and we outline the next steps of the longitudinal evaluation of the Clubs.

Lessons

The Clubs in the study serve a largely minority, low-income group of teens. For this population of teens, the Clubs provide a safe place where they can interact with old friends, make new friends, connect with supportive adults and engage in a wide variety of activities. A number of different lessons about effective practices for attracting and sustaining teen participation emerged from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the study.

Building strong ties when youth are young is likely a key strategy for keeping teens connected to the Clubs. Our findings suggest that the longer youth have been involved in the Club, the more frequently they attend. While many programs struggle to attract older youth, the Clubs are able to keep youth that have been involved from a young age. This suggests that building a connection with youth at an early age is an important strategy for getting them to attend as teens.

Flexible attendance policies and special programming for teens may be important for keeping teens involved. We found that older youth attended less frequently and for fewer months than younger youth; however, the retention rates for older teens were similar to those of the younger teens in the study, suggesting that teens were still connected to

the Club but not attending as regularly. Teens see the Club as a place they can return to even if they haven't attended for a while, and this perception that the Club is there for them when they are ready or need it is important to them. Teens may get involved in other activities, but allowing them the flexibility to come and go according to their needs may be part of what leads to their attachment to the Club, even when they are not attending as often. In addition, providing programming that is designed specifically for teens appears to be important. The Clubs emphasize leadership opportunities for teens, and youth see this as something that makes participation at the Club "new" while still being comfortable and familiar. In addition, they have had the opportunity (in most cases) to see older youth as role models and then to be that role model, in turn, for the younger children in the Club.

The teen space offers the opportunity for a social dynamic that is attractive to teens—one that does not feel "programmed," which is crucial in their eyes. Almost all of the teens who came to the Clubs reported that they spent time "hanging out" and, further, that the time and space for hanging out was very important to them. They appreciated the opportunity to come to the Club and hang out in a teen room, teen center or gym where the younger children were not around. At the same time, teens revealed that they got involved in other, more structured programming and that being able to participate in interesting activities was important.

For teens, many of whom are making their own choices about how they spend their time after school, having interesting activities available when they arrive is likely essential. The variety in what teens do when they are at the Club and the degree to which teens view the Club as their main activity or one of many things they do speaks to the potential for comprehensive programs, such as Clubs, to attract and engage a diverse set of teens with different needs and interests. A variety of activities and sports as well as other types of programs can be a draw for teens. The teens in this study went to the

Clubs at many different times—right after school, after homework, after hockey practice—and hoped to participate in ways that were particularly meaningful for them.

Outreach and programming for teens must consider the importance of friendships. Whether they come with friends or build friendships at the Club, the relationships teens have with their peers at the Club are critical for attracting and engaging them in out-of-school-time programs. Although we do not know whether teens bring their friends or make their friends at the Club, building a place that allows teens to interact in positive ways and develop and enhance friendships in a safe environment may be very important. In addition, outreach strategies may be more successful if they target groups of friends.

Next Steps in the Longitudinal Evaluation

To date, the teens in this study have participated with relatively high rates of frequency and duration of attendance, with a high proportion of teens still participating in the Club in some way after 17 months of data collection—even if it is not their “main” activity. The final study will examine how their attendance in the Clubs over a 29-month period is related to outcomes and, to the extent possible with the data we gather, explore the necessary levels of attendance needed to yield positive outcomes. This will be particularly important given that some teens appear to attend sporadically but continue their involvement over time.

Although we will follow the teens for one more year to assess the role Clubs play as all the teens in the study move into high school, analyses of the degree to which one year of participation is related to changes in outcomes suggest that keeping teens involved in Clubs may be beneficial. Specifically, a higher level of attendance in Clubs over a one-year period was linked to positive change in each of the three outcome areas the longitudinal evaluation is tracking:¹¹

- Character development (integrity, social competence and positive approaches to resolving conflicts);

- School-related outcomes (school liking and school effort); and
- Health and risk behaviors (delayed initiation of sexual intercourse).

As the study progresses, it will be critical to examine the variety of attendance patterns that emerge and the degree to which these may differentially affect outcomes.

Final Thoughts

Out-of-school time can be ripe with positive opportunities for teens. The key is creating settings and options that are attractive to teens and that sustain their participation in ways that can make a difference in their healthy development. With their diversity of programs and opportunities, and the wide range of ages served, Boys & Girls Clubs provide a powerful setting for learning more about how to effectively serve teens and, ultimately, what the critical levels of attendance may be to promote positive outcomes.

Endnotes

- 1 See Arbretton, Herrera and Sheldon, 2005, *Beyond Safe Havens: A Review and Synthesis of 20 Years of Research on Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- 2 At each of the 10 participating Clubs, staff were asked to recruit 50 seventh- and eighth-grader club members to participate in the two-and-a-half-year study. In order to participate, a parent or guardian had to grant written permission and youth had to sign an assent form. Between 27 and 50 seventh- and eighth-grade youth completed the baseline survey at each Club for a total of 432 study participants across the 10 participating Clubs. Club staff identified and surveyed youth who participated regularly as well as those who attended less frequently.
- 3 The average age of youth at the time of the first survey was just under 13 years old (12.8).
- 4 The Clubs are: Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Charlestown Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Marti Huizenga Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Martin Branch; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Panther Branch; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, Linda Vista Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of Omaha, South Omaha Boys & Girls Club; Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Columbia Park; Colonel Daniel Marr Boys & Girls Club, Dorchester; West End House Boys & Girls Club of Allston/Brighton.
- 5 National data on Boys & Girls Clubs membership show that 64 percent of those served by Clubs are minorities:
<http://www.bgca.org>.
- 6 A survey of the overall BGCA population found that 55 percent of members are male and 45 percent are female:
<http://www.bgca.org/howeare/facts/asp>.
- 7 Retrieved October 7, 2007, from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/Newsroom/06/MTF2006Tobacco.pdf> and <http://www.drugabuse.gov/DrugPages/MTF.html>.
- 8 See Appendix C for details on the series of analysis conducted and the statistical results.
- 9 We calculated 73 calendar weeks across the period of attendance data collection. Thus, attending 73 times during the period approximates an attendance frequency of once per week. Attending 146 times is approximately equivalent to attending twice per week, and attending 219 times approximates attending three times per week.
- 10 Teen-only staff are staff whose responsibilities were solely dedicated to the teen population and not focused or split with the younger population of the club.
- 11 The analyses we conducted control for confounding variables that were related to higher levels of participation. Absent a control group, the findings are suggestive of the benefits of Club participation, but not conclusive. For additional information, please see Appendix D.

References

American Youth Policy Forum.

2006 *Helping Youth Succeed Through Out-of-School Time Programs*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.

Arbreton, Amy J.A., Jessica Sheldon and Carla Herrera.

2005 *Beyond Safe Havens: A Synthesis of 20 Years of Research on the Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Connell, James P., Jean Baldwin Grossman and Nancy L. Resch.

1995 *The Urban Corps Assessment Package (URCAP) Manual*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Eccles, Jacquelynne S., Carol Midgley, Allen Wigfield, C.

Buchanan, David Reuman, C. Flanagan and

Douglas MacIver.

1993 "Development During Adolescence: The Impact of Stage-Environment Fit on Young Adolescents' Experiences in Schools and in Families." *American Psychologist*, 48, 90–101.

Eccles, Jacquelynne and Jennifer Appleton Gootman, Eds.

2002 *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, National Academy Press, Washington, DC.

Fiestier, Leila M., Sandra D. Simpkins and Suzanne M. Bouffard.

2005 "Present and Accounted for: Measuring Attendance in Out-of-School-Time Programs." In *New Directions for Youth Development, Participation in Youth Programs Enrollment, Attendance and Engagement*. Edited by Heather B. Weiss, Priscilla M.D. Little and Suzanne M. Bouffard. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Harvard Family Research Project.

2004 "Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School Time Programs." *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation*, No. 6.

Herrera, Carla and Amy J. A. Arbreton.

2003 *Increasing Opportunities for Older Youth in After-School Programs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Herrera, Carla.

2004 *School-Based Mentoring: A Closer Look*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Midgley, Carol, Martin L. Maehr and Tim Urdan.

1993 *Manual: Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Peterson, Christopher and Martin E. P. Seligman.

2004 *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sipe, Cynthia L. and Patricia Ma.

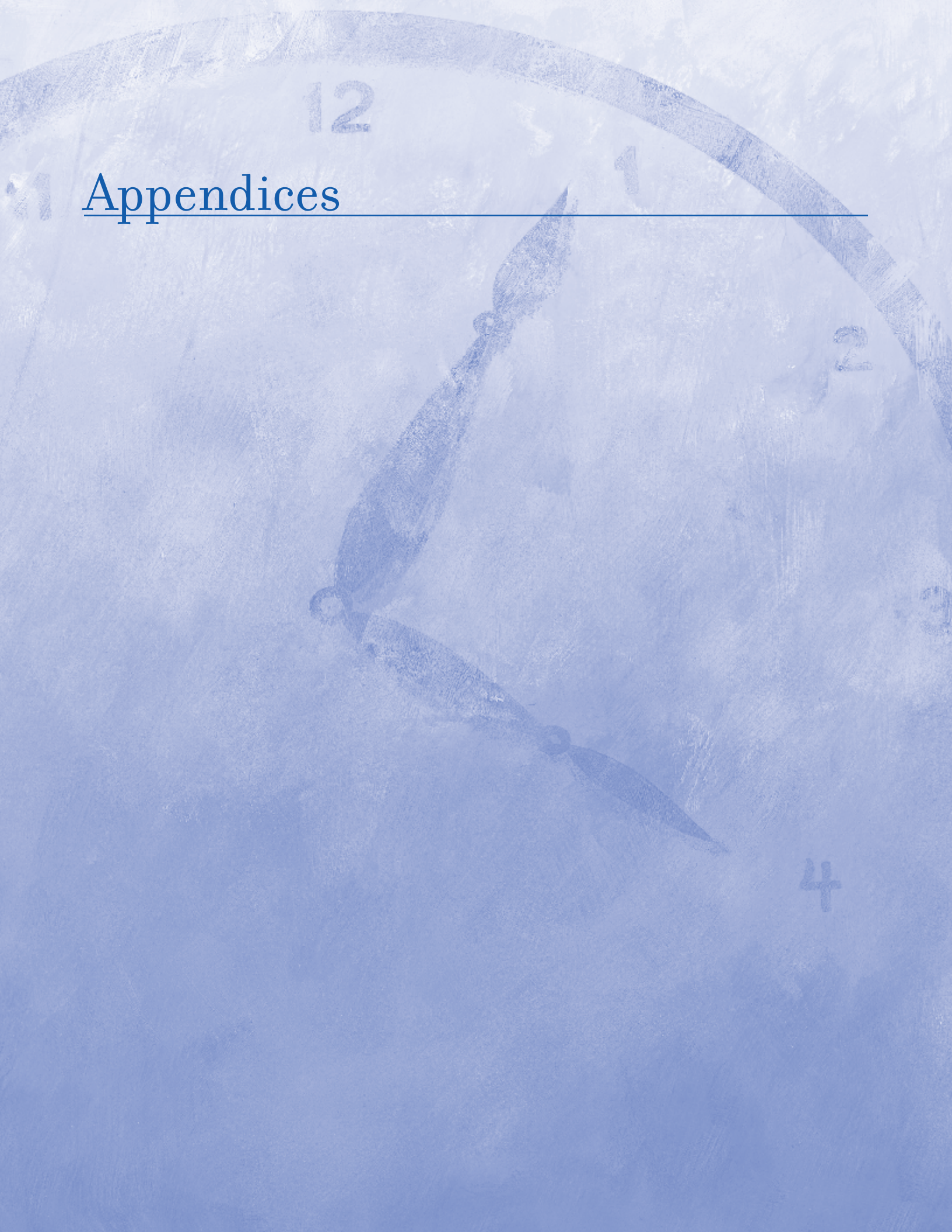
1998 *Support for Youth: A Profile of Three Communities*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Tierney, Joseph P. and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch.

1995 *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Walker, Karen E. and Amy J. A. Arbreton.

2004 *After-School Pursuits: An Evaluation of Outcomes in the San Francisco Beacon Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.



Appendices

Appendix A

A total of 432 youth completed surveys at the start of the evaluation. Youth's responses to questions on the survey were grouped together to assess their attitudes and beliefs (e.g., toward school and the future), their relationship with peers, their character strengths and their experiences at the Clubs. Related questions on the survey were compiled into six measures called constructs. The reliability of each construct, indicated by α , measures how closely the responses to the included questions are interrelated. Reliability values around 0.60 and above indicate identification of a cohesive construct. Examples of items that comprise each of the constructs are presented in this appendix, along with the reliability coefficients. Items used to assess risk behaviors were constructed to mirror the questions asked on the youth risk behavior survey (YRBS).¹

Table A.1 describes the six school- and future-related constructs measured. Each construct has a possible value from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most favorable.

Table A.1.
School and Future-Related Outcomes²

Importance of School – 7 Questions ($\alpha = .90$)

- It is important to me to get good grades.
- Being a good student is important to me.
- I would be upset if I got a low grade for one of my subjects.
- School is useful in helping me to make good decisions in my life.
- My education will be valuable in getting the job I want.
- What I learn in school is useful for the job I want to have as an adult.
- I am interested in the things I learn in school.

Academic Confidence – 5 Questions ($\alpha = .92$)

- I'm certain I can master the skills taught in school this year.
- I can do even the hardest work in my classes if I try.
- I can do almost all the work in school if I don't give up.
- Even if my schoolwork is hard, I can learn it.
- I'm certain I can figure out how to do even the most difficult schoolwork.

School Liking – 3 Questions ($\alpha = .85$)

- In general, I like school a lot.
- I look forward to going to school every day
- I often feel excited at school.

School Effort – 4 Questions ($\alpha = .59$)

- I don't try very hard in school.
- I often come to class unprepared.
- I work very hard on my schoolwork.
- I pay attention in class.

Teacher Connectedness – 5 Questions ($\alpha = .87$)

- I care what my teachers think of me.
- I want to be respected by my teachers.
- I try to get along with my teachers.
- I always try hard to earn my teachers' trust.
- I usually like my teachers.

Future Expectations – 6 Questions ($\alpha = .83$)

- I will have a good future.
 - Doing well in school will help me in the future.
 - I do lots of things to prepare for my future.
 - I do things outside of school to prepare for my future.
 - I will graduate from high school.
 - I think about my future often.
-

Table A.2. describes the five character strength and social skill constructs measured, with a sample of the type of statements to which youth responded within each construct. Each construct has a possible value from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most favorable.

Table A.2.
Character Strength and Social Skills Outcomes³

Fairness – 9 Questions ($\alpha = .66$)

- Statements about whether youth behave fairly, such as “Even when my team is losing, I play fair.”

Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution – 3 Questions ($\alpha = .63$)

- Statements about whether youth yell or hit when faced with conflict. For example, “When I have problems with other people my age, I yell at them.”

Open-Mindedness – 6 Questions ($\alpha = .85$)

- Statements about whether youth use all available information and think about different possibilities to make decisions, such as “When I make a decision, I consider the good and the bad in each option.”

Social Competence – 12 Questions ($\alpha = .65$)

- Statements about how youth get along with peers, such as “I like to hang out with other people my age.”

Integrity – 8 Questions ($\alpha = .70$)

- Statements about whether youth know right from wrong, such as “I tell the truth, even if it gets me in trouble.”
-

Youth were also asked a series of questions about their peers, displayed in Table A.3. The responses to these questions are combined into two constructs that measure the extent to which the youth’s peers might exert a positive influence or negative pressure on them.

Table A.3.
Peer Groups⁴

Positive Peers – 7 Questions ($\alpha = .80$)

- Number of friends who make you feel good about yourself.
- Number of friends who do well in school.
- Number of friends who plan to go to college.
- Number of friends who like to talk with you about new things they’ve learned in school.
- Number of friends who are involved in school clubs, activities or sports.
- Number of friends who think it is important to work hard on school work.
- Number of friends who go to church or religious services regularly.

Negative Peers – 7 Questions ($\alpha = .82$)

- Number of friends who skip school without an excuse.
 - Number of friends who put pressure on you to drink alcohol.
 - Number of friends who cheat on school tests.
 - Number of friends who have broken into a car or building to steal something.
 - Number of friends who think working hard for good grades is a waste of time.
 - Number of friends who put pressure on you to use drugs.
 - Number of friends who are gang members.
-

Table A.4. includes three series of questions youth were asked about the supports and opportunities they experience at the Club. The adult and peer support constructs have a possible value from 0 to 4, with 4 being the most favorable. The leadership measure is a count of the number of activities done by the youth with a range from 0 to 7.

Table A.4.
Supportive Adults and Peers at the Club; Leadership Experiences⁵

Adult Support at the Club – 5 Questions ($\alpha = .85$)

- Number of adults at the Club who pay attention to what's going on in your life.
- Number of adults at the Club who say something nice to you when you do something good.
- Number of adults at the Club who you could go to if you need some advice about personal problems.
- Number of adults at the Club who you could go to if you are really upset or mad about something.
- Number of adults at the Club who know how you are doing in school.

Peer Support at the Club – 4 Questions ($\alpha = .87$)

- Number of youth at the Club who you could talk to about personal problems.
- Number of youth at the Club who you could go to if you are really upset or mad about something.
- Number of youth at the Club who spend time with you outside of the Club or Club activities.
- Number of youth at the Club who care what happens to you.

Leadership Opportunities – 7 Questions⁶

- Paid to work at the Club in the last 12 months.
 - Helped out in the Club office in the last 12 months.
 - Helped plan special activities at the Club in the last 12 months.
 - Been on student council at the Club in the last 12 months.
 - Been a leader (team captain, clean-up leader, club president) at the Club in the last 12 months.
 - Been elected or voted to a leadership position at the Club in the last 12 months.
 - Volunteered or been chosen to lead an activity at the Club in the last 12 months.
-

Table A.5. provides descriptions of the measures used to assess youth's Club experiences. Each construct has a possible value from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most favorable.

Table A.5.
Club Experience⁷

Emotional Safety – 4 Questions ($\alpha = .76$)

- Had mean rumors or lies spread about you at the Club in the last 12 months.
- Had sexual jokes, comments or gestures made to you at the Club in the last 12 months.
- Been made fun of because of your looks or the way you talk at the Club in the last 12 months.
- Been bullied or picked on at the Club in the last 12 months.

Fun at the Club – 8 Questions ($\alpha = .89$)

- The activities are fun.
- The staff make me laugh.
- I have a good time.
- I can relax.
- Sometimes we do silly things, just for the fun of it.
- Staff make learning fun.
- I enjoy coming to the Club.
- I have more fun at the Club than other places I spend time.

Validation and Recognition – 7 Questions ($\alpha = .91$)

- Staff are proud of me.
- Staff see my strengths.
- Staff reward me when I do a good job.
- Staff let others know when I do a good job.
- Staff take me seriously.
- Staff listen to me when I have something to say.
- Staff notice when I try hard.

Skill Development – 6 Questions ($\alpha = .87$)

- I learn about things I'm not taught in school.
- I learn how to do things I've never done before.
- I get a chance to practice things I've learned.
- The activities challenge me to do my best.
- Staff encourage me to try new things.
- I create things I'm proud of.

Belonging – 7 Questions ($\alpha = .90$)

- I feel like I belong.
 - People really listen to me.
 - The Club is a comfortable place to hang out.
 - I feel like my ideas count.
 - I feel like I matter.
 - If I didn't show up, someone would notice I was not around.
 - I feel like I am successful.
-

Structure and Limits – 5 Questions ($\alpha = .76$)

- If some of us are acting up the staff will do something about it.
- When staff make a rule, they mean it.
- Staff explain what the rules are.
- We understand what will happen if we break a rule.
- Staff make a point of sticking to the rules.

Peer Cooperation – 5 Questions ($\alpha = .86$)

- We are encouraged to help each other.
- Staff encourage us all to cooperate.
- Staff let us work together.
- Staff encourage us to help each other.
- I cooperate with people at the Club more than I do with people at school.

High Expectations – 6 Questions ($\alpha = .89$)

- There is an adult who tells me when I do a good job.
- There is an adult who always wants me to do my best.
- There is an adult who believes that I will be a success.
- There is an adult who expects me to follow the rules.
- There is an adult who expects me to do my best.
- There is an adult who would be disappointed if I did something bad.

Influence at the Club – 6 Questions ($\alpha = .88$)

- Staff ask for our suggestions about how or what we do.
- Staff let us decide what the rules are in the activities at the Club.
- Staff let us do things in a way we think is right for us.
- Staff let us help plan what we do.
- Staff let us help decide how we do things.
- Staff let us help decide how long we do things.

Appendix B

In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with ninth graders in Spring 2007 (i.e., eighth graders from the originally surveyed seventh- and eighth-grade cohort). The table below provides information comparing demographic characteristics, attendance patterns and behaviors between those interviewed and not interviewed. Interviewed youth had attended the Club longer than non-interviewed youth, prior to the current study. In addition, at the time of the interview, they attended more frequently and were more likely to receive free or reduced price lunch at school than non-interviewed youth.

Table B.1.

	Interview Group	Year 2 Non-interviewed 9th graders	Is the difference significant? Y/N
	N = 56	N = 124	
Gender			
% Male	44.6%	47.2%	N
Race			
% White	14.3%	14.6%	N
% Asian	7.1%	4.9%	
% Hispanic	25.0%	39.8%	
% Am. Indian	0.0%	3.3%	
% African American	35.7%	28.5%	
% Multiracial	17.9%	8.9%	
Free Lunch			
% Yes	83.0%	70.8%	Y: p<.10
Grades			
% Mostly A's	23.2%	16.1%	N
% Mostly B's	50.0%	52.4%	
% Mostly C's	21.4%	22.6%	
% Mostly D's	1.8%	3.2%	
% Mostly F's	1.8%	1.6%	
% Other	1.8%	4.0%	
Duration at Club Prior to Year 1 Survey			
% Less than 1 Year	12.7%	32.8%	Y: p<.05
% 1 - 2 Years	20.0%	21.8%	
% 2 - 5 Years	34.6%	19.3%	
% More than 5 Years	32.7%	26.1%	
Attendance at Any Club in Four Weeks Prior to Year 1 Survey			
% Not at All	14.3%	46.3%	Y: p<.0001
% 1 or 2 Times	7.1%	14.0%	
% 1 - 2 Days per Week	16.1%	16.5%	
% 3 or more Days per Week	62.5%	23.1%	
Risk Behaviors			
% Ever Smoked	12.5%	19.5%	N
% Ever Used Alcohol	26.8%	26.8%	
% Ever Used Marijuana	8.9%	11.4%	
% Ever Used Other Drugs	1.8%	6.5%	
% Who Have Had Sex	12.5%	10.6%	

Source: Winter 2006 survey results.

Appendix C

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was used to predict frequency and duration of attendance and Logit Analysis to predict retention. In each analysis, demographic characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, grade level, free/reduced price lunch), risk factors (academic and behavioral) and the length of prior participation are included as controls, along with dummy variables for the Club the youth attended. Controls are variables that are held constant in the regression model to “control” for their influence on the model. A dummy variable is a variable with two categories. A value of 1 is assigned when a characteristic is present, and a value of 0 is assigned when the characteristic is not present. With respect to Club dummies, youth who attend the Broward County Club would have a value of 1 on the Broward County dummy, while youth who attend any other Club would have a value of 0 on the Broward County dummy.

The results of the first set of analyses, reported in the top part of Table C.1, included just the demographic, risk and prior length of participation variables. Additional analyses were then conducted that included the set of control variables plus each variable of interest (e.g., school effort, how much time it takes to get home) to isolate that variable’s affect, over and above the contribution of the factors held constant.

The results of the analyses presented in Table C.1 were used as the basis for reporting the findings in Chapter 4.

Table C.1.
Predicting Teen Participation in Clubs Based on Winter 2006 Perceptions of the Clubs and Activity Involvement Prior to Survey Administration

	Participation Outcomes		
	Frequency (number of days attended)	Duration (number of months attended)	Retention (whether they have attended the Club in the last 6 months)
Males	14.35 +	0.75	0.31
Race/Ethnicity ^a	9.11	1.21 +	0.49
7th Graders (compared to 8th)	22.80 **	0.76 +	0.15
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Recipient	19.17 *	0.41	0.31
Engagement in School Risk Behaviors ^b	-9.85	-0.27	-0.17
Engagement in Behavioral Risk ^c	-3.38	-0.26	-0.08
Length of Club Participation Prior to Survey	9.86 ***	0.73 ***	0.36 ***
School Effort ^d	10.82 +	0.64 +	0.14
Walk/Bike/Skateboard to the Club	12.60	0.94 +	0.32
How Much Time it Takes to Get Home	5.86	-0.05	0.03
Participated in a Variety of Types of Club Activities During Past Four Weeks	15.98 ***	0.90 ***	0.25 *
Participated in Club Leadership Opportunities in Past 12 months	7.06 ***	0.25 *	0.11 +
Participated in Non-Club Program(s) in the Past Four Weeks	-2.06	-0.17	-0.03
Club is Safe (Physical Safety)	3.05	0.26 *	0.04
Emotional Safety at the Club	-5.51	-0.35	0.03
Adults at the Club are Supports	3.82	0.13	0.15
Peers at the Club are Supports	.97	0.12	0.07
Proportion of Friends who Go to the Club	12.22 ***	0.89 ***	0.42 ***
At the Club:			
Staff Provide Structure and Clear Limits	-5.25	0.08	0.01
Staff Provide Validation and Recognition	-1.12	0.03	0.29
Staff Have High Expectations	-3.41	-0.06	0.22
Opportunity for New Skill Development and Challenge	3.60	0.09	0.19
Opportunity to Influence the Club	-0.86	-0.06	0.13
Peer Cooperation is Encouraged	4.27	0.25	0.27
Feel Sense of Belonging	-1.26	0.16	0.31
The Club is Fun	-0.21	0.10	0.14

a The coefficients in the table compare African American to Latina/o youth. We also found that African American youth attended with greater frequency ($p < .001$) and duration ($p < .01$) than did White youth and that Latina/o youth attended with greater frequency ($p < .01$) than did White youth.

b School Risk was created by counting the presence of three school risk behaviors: skipping school, failing most classes and being suspended. On a scale that ranges from a low of 0 of these three behaviors to a high of 3 (or all of these behaviors), the average across all youth is 0.49 behaviors.

b Behavioral risk was created as a count of youth's reports of engagement in seven different delinquency-related behaviors. On a scale that ranges from a low of 0 to a high of 7 behaviors, the average across all youth is 1.2 behaviors.

d Of the attitudes and beliefs, character strengths, and school and future related constructs measured, only school effort was significantly associated with the participation outcomes.

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Appendix D

Regression analyses were conducted to predict the effect of Club attendance on select school, future, character development and risk-behavior outcomes. Club attendance is measured in three ways—frequency (number of days), duration (number of months) and retention (continued participation during the last 6 months). Because the correlation between frequency and duration was so high (.8), we examined the effect of each of the three attendance measures on each outcome of interest independently, through three separate regression analyses. In the tables below, the three attendance measures are listed in the first column. Each outcome of interest appears in the column headings across the top of the tables. The first table features the school- and future-related outcomes, followed by character development outcomes in the second table and risk-behaviors in the third.

Table D.1.
School and Future-Related Outcomes

	Importance of School	Academic Confidence	School Liking	School Effort	Teacher Connectedness	Future Expectations
Frequency	0.02	-0.05	0.12*	0.11+	-0.02	0.09
Duration	0.06	-0.02	0.01	0.18**	-0.05	0.05
Retention	0.02	-0.05	0.01	0.10+	0.00	-0.07

These are standardized coefficients from OLS where the outcomes are modeled as a function of the youth's demographics (grade, ethnicity and gender), free-lunch status, and stressors in life, including their behavior and school risk status. The youth's participation in leadership opportunities, their perception of club safety, their feelings and attitudes about the concept of fairness, number of friends who go to the club and their participation in a variety of types of activities four week prior to the survey are included as control variables. +p<0.10, *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table D.2.
Character Development Outcomes

	Negative Conflict Resolution Strategies	Fairness	Integrity	Open-Mindedness	Social Competence
Frequency	-0.18**	0.07	0.12*	0.06	0.06
Duration	-0.15*	0.09	0.13*	0.03	0.12*
Retention	0.01	0.03	0.09+	-0.07	0.05

These are standardized coefficients from OLS where the outcomes are modeled as a function of the youth's demographics (grade, ethnicity and gender), free-lunch status, and stressors in life, including their behavior and school risk status. The youth's participation in leadership opportunities, their perception of club safety, their feelings and attitudes about the concept of fairness, number of friends who go to the club and their participation in a variety of types of activities four week prior to the survey are included as control variables. +p<0.10, *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table D.3.
Peer and Risk Behavior Outcomes

	Positive Peers	Negative Peers	Initiation of Smoking	Initiation of Alcohol Use	Initiation of Use of Marijuana	Initiation of Use of Other Drugs	Initiation of Sexual Intercourse
Frequency	0.04	-0.10	0.08	-0.31	-0.10	-0.15	-0.21+
Duration	0.01	-0.02	0.15	-0.24	0.08	0.01	-0.12
Retention	0.01	-0.02	0.11	-0.11	0.07	0.24	-0.19*

For positive and negative peers, these are standardized coefficients from OLS where the outcomes are modeled as a function of the youth's demographics (grade, ethnicity and gender), free-lunch status, and stressors in life, including their behavior and school risk status. The youth's participation in leadership opportunities, their perception of club safety, their feelings and attitudes about the concept of fairness, number of friends who go to the club and their participation in a variety of types of activities four week prior to the survey are included as control variables. When predicting initiation of risk behaviors, so few youth initiate the risk behaviors in the period of observation, that it was not possible to estimate the regressions while including our full range of controls. When estimating initiation of smoking, marijuana use and use of other drugs, only gender, grade and free lunch are included as controls. When estimating use of alcohol and initiation of sexual intercourse, controls for race are also included.

+p<0.10, *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Appendices Endnotes

- 1 Questions were taken from the CDC's YRBSS: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System 2005 middle school survey, retrieved 5/2/2005 from <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdfs/2005middleschoolquestionnaire.pdf>.
- 2 School Value was adapted from Tierney and Grossman, 1995; Academic Confidence and Future Expectations were adapted from PALS, Midgley, Maehr and Urdan, 1995; Teacher Connectedness was adapted from Karcher, 2003; School Liking was adapted from Herrera, 2004.
- 3 Fairness, Open-Mindedness and Integrity are scales from Peterson and Seligman, 2004, used with permission by the Values in Action Institute (www.viastrengths.org); Problem solving and Conflict Resolution is adapted from URCAP, Connell, Grossman and Resch, 1995.
- 4 Positive and Negative Peers scales are adapted from Eccles' survey used for the MacArthur Pathways to Successful Transitions Project.
- 5 Adult Support, Peer Support and Leadership Opportunities scales are adapted from Herrera and Arbreton, 2003.
- 6 There is no alpha coefficient associated with the leadership measure because it is a count of the number of opportunities a youth engaged in, and not a scale that measures the underlying correlation between the component items.
- 7 Belonging is adapted from PALS, Midgley, Maehr and Urdan, 1995; Emotional Safety and High Expectations are adapted from the California Healthy Kids, Youth Resilience Modules; other scales were developed for this study.



Public/Private Ventures

2000 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 557-4400
Fax: (215) 557-4469

New York Office

The Chanin Building
122 East 42nd Street, 42nd Floor
New York, NY 10168
Tel: (212) 822-2400
Fax: (212) 949-0439

California Office

Lake Merritt Plaza, Suite 1550
1999 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel: (510) 273-4600
Fax: (510) 273-4619

www.ppv.org

March 2008