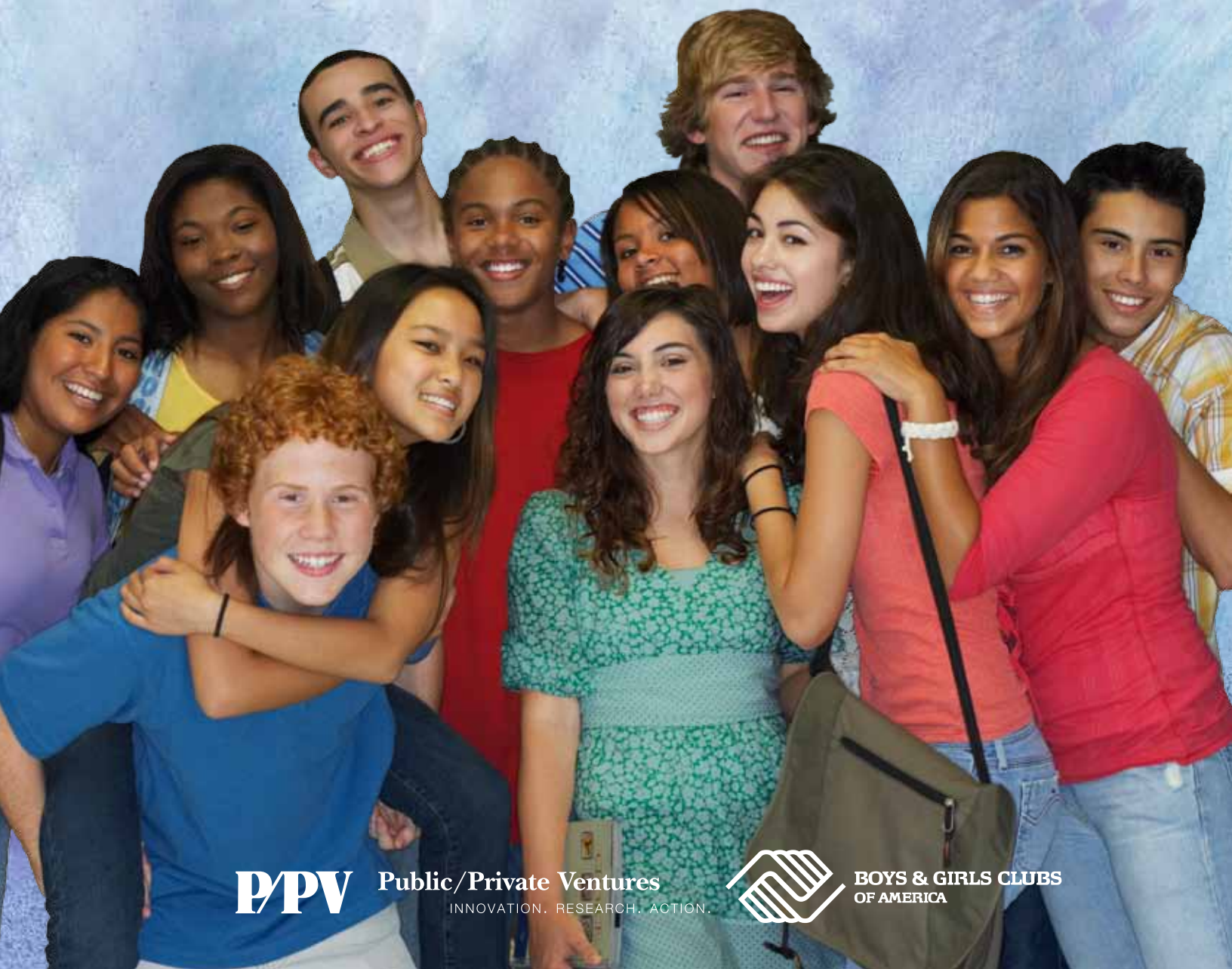


Making Every Day Count:

Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens

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Executive Summary



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

In 2005, at the request of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) launched a national longitudinal study of Club participants to test the degree to which teens' overall experiences there might prove to be more than the sum of Clubs' programmatic parts. Because many of the prior evaluations of Clubs had focused on studying the targeted outcomes of discrete Club programs, it seemed possible that they had missed the bigger picture of experiences that the Clubs offer their members and their potential for influencing a larger and broader array of outcomes than had previously been explored.

Thus, the goal of P/PV's evaluation was to take that broader look at "the whole club experience" in order to more fully document its potential. In particular, we set out to examine how Club participation is related to youth's positive and healthy development in the three outcome areas Boys & Girls Clubs of America has established as core to meeting its mission: good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles. The final report, the third in a series of reports from the evaluation,¹ and the subject of this executive summary, examines how the youth in the study changed over time in these three outcome areas, and the relationship between levels of participation and outcomes.

The Clubs' Approach to Serving Teens

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 that is designed to be tailored for teens' needs and interests. The Clubs' approach to serving teens is based on:

- **A strong grounding in how to effectively work with teens.** Club staff recognize that teens want and need more flexibility and different offerings than the younger youth that Clubs serve, and they build their programming to reflect their understanding of these differences.
- **A breadth of activities.** Clubs offer formal programs and activities across broad program areas, with the intention of drawing in teens with different interests and exposing them to new activities that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience.
- **An emphasis on leadership.** This includes both specific leadership workshops and opportunities for teens to get involved in leadership roles, such as serving as role models to younger youth, helping to make decisions about Club offerings and serving on teen councils.
- **A focus on having staff develop relationships with the teens.** Because of the emphasis on relationship-building, the Clubs provide staff with many opportunities to talk and interact with youth, including informal interactions where staff can take advantage of "teachable moments."
- **Time for teens to just "hang out" with peers.** Teens come to the Club with friends and to be with friends, and they want and need time to socialize. The structure of the Clubs allows for youth to hang out, to participate in activities and to socialize within and between activities.
- **A space of their own, in which teens can relax and socialize.** These teen-only areas, apart from the younger children, range from a single room with televisions, computers and couches to large facilities (separate from the main Clubs) that have computer areas, dance studios and other multipurpose rooms.

Given the increasing demands on teens' time, Clubs also try to make these opportunities as accessible as possible by being open during afternoons and evenings during the school year (and at some Clubs, on weekends) and offering extended hours during school vacations. Enrollment is open to all youth; there are no mandates on the number of days or hours a teen must participate; and there is typically a low yearly membership fee, ranging from about \$2 to about \$10 per year.

Study Design

Seventh- and eighth-grade Club participants from 10 Clubs across the country were recruited to be in the study.² Focusing on youth in these grades allowed us to follow them during the critical period of their transition to high school, when even those students who have done relatively well in middle school face challenges that can derail them. As preteens gain independence, they have more discretionary time and more choices about risks, from crime to drugs and alcohol to sexual activity. The path they take affects every aspect of their development—including their academic achievement and physical and emotional health—and frequently carries consequences well into adulthood.³ We hypothesized that the Clubs may provide important continuity during this transition, as well as supports that may help keep youth engaged in both school and positive out-of-school-time activities.

The 10 Clubs were selected based on a set of criteria that included their prior success in reaching and serving relatively large numbers of teens,⁴ location in an urban setting, and utilization of an electronic enrollment and attendance tracking system. The Clubs in the study all had strong and dedicated programming for teens, represented by separate teen space and staff who worked exclusively or primarily with teens; the participation trends and outcomes found in this study are likely representative of all Clubs that have similar programming.

The study used multiple data collection strategies:

- To learn about teens' experiences in the Clubs and how teens changed over time in the three outcome areas, *youth surveys* were conducted, starting with seventh and eighth graders (the Winter 2006 survey) and following the same

teens over a 30-month period (the Spring 2008 survey) into the ninth and tenth grades. The follow-up surveys, completed with a total of 332 youth, were conducted with youth whether or not they were still participating in Clubs.

- Researchers also collected Clubs' *attendance records* for these youth over a 30-month period, in order to track their levels of participation.
- In addition, to understand more about the Clubs' approach to serving teens, researchers conducted *interviews* with staff from each of the Clubs (a total of 86 staff) and with 56 of the surveyed youth, when they were in ninth grade, to capture their perceptions of the Club after they had transitioned to high school.

To address the evaluation's overarching question, "What role do the Boys & Girls Clubs play in influencing change in teens' outcomes?" the study examines: 1) the quantitative data from surveys and attendance records to analyze the extent to which participation in the Clubs is associated with significant change over time on a series of specific outcomes in each of the three broad outcome areas, and 2) the qualitative data from interviews with ninth graders and staff from each of the 10 Clubs to document how staff work with youth to achieve the outcomes and how youth perceive those practices.

As with all research studies, this evaluation has limitations. An important characteristic of the Clubs is that they welcome all young people who wish to attend; therefore, Clubs do not have waiting lists. In addition, on the assumption that young people need safe places where they can come as needed, Clubs have not traditionally required youth to arrive at particular times or attend particular activities. Attendance in almost all activities is voluntary: Youth can participate in some activities and not in others, at their discretion. As a result, every youth has a different experience. Given these characteristics of the Clubs, we were unable to implement the most rigorous kind of impact study—an experimental study that randomly assigns young people to either a group that attends the programs in the Clubs or a control group that does not participate, and then examines differences between the groups at the end of the study period. Doing so would have changed the very character and mission of the Clubs.⁵

Despite these challenges, there are several reasons why the positive findings from this study build a strong case for the role Boys & Girls Clubs play in teens' lives and add to our knowledge about the importance of the type of support Clubs provide at such critical junctures as the transition from middle to high school:

- The study followed a large sample of youth (422) and gathered survey data from them whether or not they continued as regular participants in the Club—or even participated at all.⁶ The response rate was 76.3 percent on the follow-up survey, which was administered approximately 30 months after baseline data were collected. Therefore, the outcomes are based on 322 youth, including those who were not involved in the Clubs after the beginning of the study. Prior studies of outcomes that have drawn conclusions based solely on youth who remain in the Clubs and are present on the day of the follow-up survey offer a more biased and narrower perspective of experiences.
- The study is able to link attendance data with survey data to examine the relationship between participation and outcomes and compare outcomes for youth with greater and less participation.⁷
- The in-depth qualitative interviews with ninth graders and staff provide data that allow for more detailed and nuanced exploration of how the Clubs achieve their goals, as well as the challenges they face.

Thus, the findings from this study provide important information about how these young people changed over time, the relationship between participation in the Clubs and the outcomes being examined, and the youth's and staff's perceptions of how the Clubs influence teens' lives.

Findings

The results of the evaluation are informative for funders and policymakers interested in supporting programs that effectively garner the types of outcomes described in this study. They are also helpful for practitioners who are interested in developing strong programs that can attract teens and engage them in positive experiences that promote healthy

development. The findings address the question, “Do Boys & Girls Clubs ‘work’?”—and suggest that, on many levels, the approach that Clubs take with teens is working. The following pages summarize the findings and conclusions of the full report, which is available at www.ppv.org.

The Teens

The 322 teens followed over the two-and-a-half-year time frame of the evaluation reflect a group of youth faced with economic challenges and potentially significant life stressors that place them at risk of not achieving healthy outcomes. The teens in the sample are ethnically and racially 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 where they participated. On the baseline survey in Winter 2006, they tended to report performing fairly well in school and having engaged in few risk behaviors. Thus, the study illuminates the extent to which the Clubs support these youth in maintaining a positive trajectory and keep them out of many of the troubles that begin to surface as youth move into high school.

Teens' Participation and Engagement

Survey and attendance data reveal a picture of teens who go to Clubs relatively frequently, even as they transition from middle to high school; who feel safer at the Clubs than they do in other places where they spend time; and who feel engaged by the Clubs' activities, opportunities and interpersonal relationships. These elements come together to support the outcomes Clubs strive to achieve.

Attendance data indicate a relatively regular group of Club attendees; these data also show that attendance lessens as youth move from middle school to high school. Importantly, even those who attend other out-of-school-time activities feel connected to the Club. Over the 30 months of the study, approximately half the youth (52 percent) attended more than 122 days (roughly once a week), with almost a third (30 percent) attending 244 or more days (roughly two to three times a week) and close to 13 percent attending 366 or more days (roughly 3 to 4 days per week). Although the frequency of attendance was significantly lower, on average, for

the youth when they reached the ninth and tenth grades (11.8 days from January to March 2008, compared to 25.1 days from January to March 2006—when these youth were in the seventh and eighth grades), older youth were still attending about one day a week on average, compared with about two days per week when they were younger. About two thirds (67 percent) reported having been to a Club in the four months prior to the final survey, with 86 percent indicating they plan to go back to a Club, even if they have not been in a while.

Different teens reported using the Club in different ways: For some youth, their only out-of-school activities were at the Club, while many combined their Club activities with other pastimes. A common theme described by participants was that, regardless of how much they used the Club, they felt connected to the Club and felt that even if they were not using it right now, they could go back.

Four factors seemed most significant in contributing to sustained teen attendance. Our findings indicate that teens were likely to participate with greater frequency during the transition from middle to high school if: 1) the Clubs fully engaged them in a variety of activities; 2) their friends came to the Club; 3) they were involved in leadership roles there; and 4) they had first become involved in the Clubs as preteens or even younger.

Clubs use an intentional approach to working with teens and keeping them involved. The Clubs engaged teens by offering a broad array of programming and other opportunities, along with time and a place to hang out with friends, other positive peers and supportive adults. All of the Clubs in the study have a separate space for teens, either in the form of a teen-only room or a larger teen-only center. And the Clubs are open long hours after school and over the summer months, allowing the teens to attend at the times that are best for them.

Clubs are also staffed in a way that provides positive adult supports for youth. Almost all of the Clubs in our study had at least one staff person whose time was devoted specifically to working with teens, and all of the Clubs had several staff who interacted with teens on a regular basis. In addition, Clubs' array of programming is intended 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.

Teens rated the Club safer in comparison to other places where they spend time. Among youth who completed the final survey, 79 percent rated the level of safety at the Club as 8 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the most favorable. By comparison, only 54 percent rated the safety of their school this favorably, and only 38 percent had a rating that high for the neighborhood surrounding the Club. Teens describe the Clubs as providing an important space for them, where they can comfortably hang out and stay away from unhealthy choices and negative peer pressure.

Teens reported participating in a wide range of activities at the Clubs and getting involved in leadership roles. Among those who had been to the Club in the past four months, over half (56 percent) reported participating in either four or five different categories of activities (informal activities, athletic programs, academic programs, other formal activities, and paid and volunteer work). Among their activities, about three quarters reported using technology such as computers, video or digital music for fun (74 percent) or for schoolwork (71 percent); about two thirds reported playing sports (68 percent); 46 percent reported doing arts and crafts activities; a third (33 percent) attended a class in drama, dance or performing arts; and about a third (36 percent) reported participating in specific leadership programming. In addition, 82 percent of those who had been to the Club in the past year reported participating in at least one leadership role at the Club (such as helping in the office, serving on a youth council or leading an activity) during that time, and half participated in three or more such roles.

Teens also reported receiving positive opportunities at the Club and high levels of support from their peers. Almost all of the youth said there was at least one supportive peer (93 percent) at the Club, and that the Club was a place where there was peer cooperation (95 percent). The youth also reported that the Club was a place where there were opportunities to develop skills (90 percent), where they had fun (91 percent) and where they felt a sense of belonging (91 percent).

Youth and staff agreed that the positive adult/youth relationships at the Club were crucial for involving teens and imparting the important messages the Club strives to distill for youth. Almost all of the teens (96 percent) said there was at least one supportive adult at the Club and that at least one adult there was setting high expectations for them (96 percent). Staff and youth described the Club as a place where the staff build relationships, and said that those individual relationships create the bridge to programming; to conversations about character, school and healthy lifestyles; and to opportunities for staff to serve as role models. In our interviews, Club staff described how they support youth's positive development in the three outcome areas by paying attention to youth, being there to support them, and providing both formal and informal opportunities for activities and interactions with peers and other staff. Teens similarly described the importance of the relationships with staff for learning and positive development at the Club. And both staff and youth perceived the staff as accessible and approachable.

The Benefits of Participation: More Than the Sum of Clubs' Programmatic Parts

P/PV's 2005 review of evaluations of discrete programs at the Boys & Girls Club suggested that Clubs' implementation of focused programming has shown promising results in different areas, such as career development, delinquency prevention and academic success.⁸ Most of the prior evaluations of Clubs were limited to understanding the outcomes of those discrete programs, however, and did not take into account the larger way in which the Club experiences—the staff, the place to hang out and the multitude of opportunities—might influence a positive trajectory for youth. Thus, at the heart of this study was the effort to look at participation in the Club as a whole and learn more about the ways in which teens' experiences and exposure to the range of Club activities, staff supports and opportunities might promote healthy development, particularly during the transition from middle to high school—when many youth, particularly minorities, disengage from school and positive activities.

Analyses of the relationships between participation and outcomes indicate that “more is better.” The first goal of our analyses was to understand whether

teens who were more highly engaged in the Clubs, in terms of their frequency of attendance, fared better than their counterparts who did not participate as much. The results of the analyses show that more time spent going to the Clubs over the 30-month evaluation period was linked to positive change in each of the three broad outcome areas tracked by the longitudinal evaluation.⁹ These include good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles:

1. Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes. We examined eight outcomes and found significant relationships between participation and change in four of them. Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency were more likely to report:

- Higher levels of *community service* involvement,
- Increased levels of *integrity* (knowing right from wrong),
- Decreased levels of *shyness*, and
- Decreased levels of *aggression*.

2. Academic Success Outcomes. In this area, we also examined eight outcomes¹⁰ and found significant relationships between participation and change in three. Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency were more likely to report:

- Decreased number of times *skipping school*,
- Increased *academic confidence*, and
- Increased *school effort*.

3. Healthy Lifestyles Outcomes. We examined 15 outcomes in this area and found significant relationships between participation and change in 8 of them. Youth who came to the Club more frequently reported:

- Increased levels of *future connectedness* (how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them prepare for the future),
- Decreased numbers of *negative peers* as friends,
- Decreased number of times *stopped by the police*, and
- Lower likelihood of starting to *carry a weapon, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, smoke marijuana* and have *sexual intercourse*.

The qualitative data bolster these findings by providing insights from youth and staff about the practices and strategies that support the influence of the Club, as a whole, on the youth in each of these outcome areas. Interviewed staff and the teens spoke about the importance of the Club environment, the safe place it provides and the role of interactions with supportive adults and peers as crucial—and, in their view, more important than programming—in helping promote teens' positive development.

The Clubs also serve as a stable, familiar environment for teens, a role that may be particularly crucial as they transition to new schools and have to adjust to a new set of teachers, coaches and other adults in their school lives. The youth in this study who went to the Clubs with more frequency tended to show improvements in many of the areas in which teens typically decline as they transition from middle to high school. The increases in positive attitudes toward school that are related to participation in Clubs come at a particularly vulnerable time for adolescents when commitment to school and sense of academic competence typically decline steeply, especially for young people in resource-poor neighborhoods.¹¹

Additional exploration of the data suggest that setting minimum participation goals of roughly between 52 and 104 days per year for teens, over a period of two years, may help Clubs achieve the positive results found in this study. In addition to learning whether more is better, we wanted to understand whether certain minimum levels of attendance were most highly related to significant positive outcomes. This information could be useful in establishing benchmarks for teen participation—a topic of particular interest to Club staff—and is also useful for other researchers and practitioners concerned with understanding how out-of-school-time programs can best support healthy development for teens.

Boys & Girls Clubs seek to provide expectations in terms of days attended per year, so we tracked outcomes in relation to frequency of days attended. We looked at 52, 122, 244 and 366 days attended over the 30-month period, which translates roughly to every other week, once a week, twice a week and three or more times a week. Table 1 on the next page summarizes our analyses comparing changes

on outcomes between the baseline (Winter 2006) and final (Spring 2008) surveys for youth whose attendance levels in the Clubs varied accordingly.

These findings suggest that setting a target of 122 to 244 days of attendance over a 30-month period fosters a level of engagement that may be most likely to promote positive outcomes, particularly in the healthy lifestyles area. These rates over 30 months translate roughly to a participation level of 52 to 104 days per year. It is important to note that attending the Clubs more frequently than the established minimum can—and in most cases does—continue to correspond to greater change on outcomes; these were the minimum levels that we both tested and found significant.¹²

Implications for Serving Teens in Out-Of-School-Time Programs

In addition to the specific findings in this evaluation about the strategies and achievements of Boys & Girls Clubs, several important lessons about serving teens effectively during the out-of-school-time hours emerged from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the study. These lessons apply to Clubs as well as to other organizations that are striving to fill the needs of teens in low-income communities.

Providing a safe, supportive and engaging environment matters for all ages in out-of-school-time programs. But it matters more for keeping teens—who “vote with their feet”—involved. Funders, policymakers and practitioners are all interested in successful strategies for recruiting and retaining older youth in positive activities during the out-of-school-time hours. The findings from this evaluation 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.¹³

Programs, such as Clubs, that are successfully providing crucial supports and opportunities to older youth need to carefully construct their approach for teens. Interesting programming is important, but it must be developed in a way that corresponds

Executive Summary Table 1
Minimum Level of Club Attendance Over 30-Month Period Associated with Significant Positive Change in Outcomes

Outcome	Level of Club Attendance			
	Attend 52 Days	Attend 122 Days	Attend 244 Days	Attend 366 Days
Increased levels of <i>school effort</i>	X			
Increased levels of <i>academic confidence</i>	X			
Increased levels of <i>integrity</i>	X			
Higher levels of <i>community service involvement</i>	X			
Increased levels of <i>future connectedness</i>	X			
Lower likelihood of starting to <i>smoke marijuana</i>	X			
Decreased levels of <i>aggression</i>		X		
Decreased levels of <i>shyness</i>		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to <i>carry a weapon</i>		X		
Decreased number of times <i>stopped by the police</i>		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to <i>drink alcohol</i>		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to <i>smoke cigarettes</i>		X		
Decreased number of times <i>skipping school</i>			X	
Lower likelihood of starting to <i>have sexual intercourse</i>			X	
Decreased number of <i>negative peers</i> as friends				X

Note: Results presented in the table are from a series of analyses with the number of days attended from October 2005 through March 2008 as predictor, controlling for demographics, Winter 2006 level on the specified outcome, academic risk, delinquency risk, five variables that were predictors of participation and dummy variables for each Club. The X in the box indicates the lowest level of participation tested at which we saw a statistically significant difference on the outcome variable of interest. n = 322.

to the specific and changing interests and needs of the teen population served. Strong adult/youth relationships are also essential, but gaining the trust of teens takes time and attention on the part of staff before they are in a position to be able to really help and support teens. Teens also are more willing to engage in programs where their friends are, where they have time to hang out and where there are opportunities for them to engage in meaningful activities, such as leadership roles. In this study, teens who found these supports and opportunities at their Clubs participated with the most frequency. The teens and staff we interviewed discussed the importance of these strategies for supporting their positive and healthy development.

Funders and out-of-school-time programs should recognize that changes in outcomes take time to develop. Thus, they should be cautious when establishing goals for teen participation levels that may be too low, particularly when trying to achieve the type of broad outcomes examined in this study.

Studies of out-of-school-time programs have found that outcomes take time, and often do not become evident until a youth has participated for more than 12 months, or even over several years.¹⁴ Our findings echo these results.

In this evaluation, though we were able to make suggestions based on positive associations found between various levels of attendance and outcomes, the strongest finding was that “more is better.” It is important to note that, among the outcomes we assessed, it is possible that even more time in Clubs would have been related to additional positive change. The outcomes that showed positive change at the lower level of attendance are primarily self-perceptions of attitudes, while the outcomes associated with change at the higher level of participation tend to be reports of less risky behaviors, changes that typically take more time to achieve. Finally, an important driver of positive outcomes for teens, one that is not captured wholly by frequency, may be the teens’ continued connection to positive places and relationships. Even when they are not physically showing up on a regular basis, teens feel connected to Clubs and believe they can go back.

Thus, the field should be cautious in setting attendance benchmarks that may be too low, or setting benchmarks without considering the bigger picture

of what programs are offering teens. The levels of attendance and their associations with positive change in outcomes are offered in this study as a starting point for Clubs and other programs to take into account as they examine what outcomes they hope to achieve and how.

As important as Clubs are in teens’ lives, it is also clear that Clubs may be most appropriately one piece of teens’ extended learning environment, offering a foundation of support amidst the other things that youth do. As reported by many of the teens, Clubs were not the sole out-of-school-time activity they were involved in. The Clubs’ flexible attendance policies and the fact that they are open well into the evenings allowed teens to do other things and still go to the Clubs as they needed and wanted. This meant that teens could expand their opportunities outside of the Clubs, and yet they could find safe places and supportive staff that welcomed them when they returned. Many youth who did other activities still felt connected to Clubs, indicating that the Club was their “main thing.”

Creating this type of welcoming environment may be one of the ways that the Clubs become and stay such an important part of youth’s lives. The youth, as they become teens, want to and should begin to engage in other out-of-school-time activities. Yet, they also want to return and connect and keep the Clubs and their staff as a support, particularly as they are transitioning to new schools and going through other changes in their lives. The flexibility the Clubs offer teens provides a crucial support the youth need to stay connected and healthy. This is an important part of Club culture that appears to attract and retain teens and that others should consider as they attempt to build programs that are successful for teens.

Final Thoughts

P/PV’s earlier review of 20 years of research on Clubs found positive outcomes related to career development, delinquency prevention and academic achievement that resulted from implementation of specific discrete programs at the Clubs.¹⁵ At the same time, the review indicated that the potential for Clubs to make a difference in youth’s lives had not been fully tested by those evaluations of Clubs’ myriad discrete programs. Targeted

programs have their own mechanisms for improving youth outcomes. However, the Clubs' overall approach to working with young people and connecting them to the Clubs and staff was revealed as also critically important. In essence, the discrete programs are not happening in a vacuum; they are part of the larger fabric of the whole Club experience, and the findings from those discrete programs' evaluations did not necessarily tell the whole Club story.

The data gathered for this longitudinal evaluation have added to what was learned from these past studies. The findings help explain the ways in which the Club "as a whole," including its overall environment and the supportive adult staff, promotes engagement and positive outcomes for teens. Beyond its formal program offerings—designed to promote good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles—the Club's larger approach to serving teens is crucial in helping youth make positive choices in all three of these areas.

Endnotes

- 1 The first report describes findings and themes from across prior studies of Clubs—primarily studies of discrete programs provided by Clubs. See Arbretton, Amy, Jessica Sheldon and Carla Herrera. 2005. *Beyond Safe Havens: A Review and Synthesis of 20 Years of Research on Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures. The second report examines factors that help explain higher rates of teen participation in Clubs over a 17-month period. See Arbretton, Amy, Molly Bradshaw, Rachel Metz and Jessica Sheldon, with Sarah Pepper. 2008. *More Time for Teens: Understanding Teen Participation—Frequency, Intensity and Duration—In Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures. Both reports are available at www.ppv.org.
- 2 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; Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester; West End House Boys & Girls Clubs of Allston/Brighton. At each of the Clubs, staff were asked to recruit 50 seventh- and eighth-grade 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 Clubs. Club staff identified and surveyed youth who participated regularly as well as those who attended less frequently. After the Spring 2008 survey, 10 youth who had been surveyed at baseline were dropped from the evaluation when new data determined they had been in sixth grade at the start of the study.
- 3 See National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. 1999. *Risks and Opportunities: Synthesis of Studies on Adolescence*. Michele D. Kikpke (ed.). Forum on Adolescence. Board on Children, Youth and Families. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. See also Horwitz, Amanda and Jason Snipes. 2008. *Supporting Successful Transitions to High School: Research Brief, the Council of the Great City Schools*. Washington, DC: Council of the Great City Schools. See also Grossman, Jean Baldwin and Siobhan M. Cooney. 2009. *Paving the Way for Success in High School and Beyond: The Importance of Preparing Middle School Students for the Transition to Ninth Grade*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- 4 The teen populations in each of these Clubs ranged from about 30 to about 140 teens served daily. This represented from 18 to 44 percent of the total population reported served daily at the 10 study Clubs, with an average of 26 percent. Across all Clubs nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America reports that 32 percent of participants are teens ages 13 to 18 (see www.bgca.org), a slightly higher figure than reported by the 10 Clubs in this study.
- 5 Two additional factors worked against the possibility of implementing an experimental research design. As of the start date of the evaluation (2005), Clubs were operating in most low-income communities and neighborhoods in the country, creating a challenge to finding comparison cities or communities where there are not Clubs and where the communities are similar to those with Clubs. In addition, the purpose of the study is to examine the role of the whole Club experience; thus, although studies of particular programs within the Club might provide opportunities for comparison groups of other Club youth who do not take part in a specific activity, that was not feasible for this study.

- 6 Respondents were all contacted by telephone and asked to complete the survey over the phone.
- 7 Our analyses controlled for confounding variables that were also related to higher levels of attendance. For additional information, please see Appendix E of the full report.
- 8 See Arbreton et al., *Beyond Safe Havens*, for details of this review.
- 9 The findings summarized here and presented in detail in the full report—that the Clubs are keeping teens involved and that teens are experiencing the types of meaningful supports and opportunities at the Clubs that research has shown are important for healthy development—suggest that Clubs have had some bearing on the teens’ positive trajectory. However, because it was not possible for our study to include a comparison group, given that Clubs serve all youth, it cannot be firmly concluded that the positive changes for youth who participated with greater frequency are any different from what might be expected had they not been going to the Clubs.
- 10 A ninth outcome of interest, on-time grade progression, could not be examined in relationship to participation due to the small number of youth (12 youth, or 4 percent) who reported that they were held back a grade over the study period.
- 11 Halpern, Robert. 2005. *Confronting the Big Lie: The Need to Reframe Expectations of Afterschool Programs*. Partnership for After-School Education.
- 12 In 11 of the 15 cases where the relationship between participation and the outcome was found to be significant, the relationship between frequency of attendance and the outcome appears to be linear. That is, each increase in days of attendance was associated with greater change on the outcome (the more a teen attended, the more he/she benefited). For four outcomes—confident in ability in school, aggression, number of times initiating sex and negative peers—no linear relationship was found between days attended and the outcome; however, there was a threshold, or cut-point, below which no association was evident. That is, if a youth did not attend enough days, he or she did not show positive change in that outcome.
- 13 Lauver, Sherry, Priscilla M.D. Little and Heather B. Weiss. 2004. *Moving Beyond the Barriers: Attracting and Sustaining Youth Participation in Out-of-School-Time Programs*. Harvard Family Research Project. Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation, 6, July.
- 14 See Huang, D. et al. 2000. *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the L.A.’s BEST After-School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. See also 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.
- 15 See Arbreton et al., *Beyond Safe Havens*, for details of this review.

Introduction

Chapter I



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

Boys Clubs of America was founded a century ago to respond to the needs of boys in impoverished urban areas. Expanding its mission to include girls, the organization changed its name to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) in 1990. Over the years, BGCA has maintained its commitment to provide fun, safe places for youth, where they can be involved in caring relationships with adults and peers and feel a sense of membership and connectedness—all things that research has shown are important for healthy development and that are frequently lacking in impoverished, resource-poor communities.¹

Over the Clubs' long history, the nature of out-of-school-time programs and their roles have shifted as policymakers and funders have become interested in particular groups of disadvantaged young people and specific outcomes for these youth. While still adhering to their primary goals and mission, Clubs have devised targeted programs that reflect changes in the policy world and public opinion about what services and experiences young people need to be successful and which young people most need those services.

To understand whether and how these targeted programs succeed, BGCA and others have funded a variety of evaluations that similarly reflect contemporary concerns about youth. Early studies (from the late 1980s and early 1990s) tended to examine Club programs that emphasized delinquency prevention (e.g., prevention of substance use, sexual activity or gang involvement). Those conducted from the late 1990s to the present reflect the burgeoning role of Clubs in promoting learning and

academic benefits (e.g., homework help, academic support, Internet and computer access and skills). Evaluations have also examined Clubs' responses to the call for youth programs to be involved in providing job training and career preparation. In the late 1980s, the Clubs took a broad approach to promoting job skill development among their members. Revisiting this approach beginning in 1998, Clubs again provided job skills training to teens.²

These evaluations of the Clubs' targeted and discrete programs have typically examined specific outcomes of concern to the program's funders, who are most interested in quickly knowing the effectiveness of the dollars they are investing to achieve those outcomes. These discrete programs, however, operate within the larger Club context, which includes all the other opportunities and experiences Clubs offer. Few evaluations of the Clubs have looked at the overall impact of Club membership or the diverse range of developmental experiences that members are exposed to at the Clubs. More than the sum of their programmatic parts, Clubs' success at drawing in youth and helping them foster positive relationships with staff and peers while encouraging fun and exploration may be critical factors in and of themselves, but they have not been closely examined in previous evaluations.

The Clubs' Approach to Serving Teens

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 for teens' needs and interests. The Clubs' approach to serving teens is based on:

- **A strong grounding in how to work effectively with teens.** Club staff recognize that teens want and need more flexibility and different offerings than the younger youth Clubs serve. They build

their programming to reflect their understanding of these differences, offering even more voice and choice and increasingly individualized support as youth move from younger-age programming (typically grouped for ages 6 to 9 and 10 to 12) to teen programming.

- **A breadth of activities.** Clubs offer formal programs and activities across broad program areas, with the intention of drawing in teens with different interests and exposing them to new activities that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. Although some are limited by their size and levels of staffing, the Clubs generally have a large and diverse offering of classes, workshops, drop-in activities, events and field trips. Programming options often include physical activities and organized sports, educational supports, art instruction, computer and other technology workshops (for example, video- and music-making) and community-based project learning.
- **An emphasis on leadership.** This approach includes both specific leadership programs and opportunities for teens to get involved in leadership roles, such as serving as role models to younger youth, helping to make decisions about Club offerings and serving on teen councils.
- **A focus on having staff develop relationships with the teens.** Because of the emphasis on relationship-building, the Clubs provide staff with many opportunities to talk and interact with youth, including informal interactions where staff can take advantage of “teachable moments.” Time to talk also enables staff to focus on the specific concerns and needs of individual teens.
- **Time for teens to just “hang out” with peers.** Teens come to the Club with friends and to be with friends, and they want and need time to socialize. The structure of the Clubs allows for youth to drop in at the times that work for them, to hang out, to participate in activities, and to socialize within and between activities.
- **A space of their own, where teens can relax and socialize.** These teen-only areas, apart from the younger children, range from a single room with televisions, computers and couches to large facilities (separate from the main Clubs) that have computer areas, dance studios and other multi-purpose rooms.

- **Opportunities that are accessible to teens, given the increasing demands on their time.** During the school year, Clubs are generally open on weekdays from about two in the afternoon to nine at night, and some Clubs also have weekend hours available. During winter and summer vacations, they often expand their hours. Unlike many other after-school programs (such as those funded by 21st Century Learning Center grants), there are no mandates for the number of days or hours a teen must participate. Enrollment is open to all youth, and there is typically a low annual membership fee, ranging from about \$2 to about \$10 per year, with ample opportunities for scholarships.

(For a more detailed description of the Clubs included in the study, their programming, space for teens, staffing and hours, please see Appendix A.)

This 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 BGCA, 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. Because many of the prior evaluations of Clubs had focused on studying discrete programs, it seemed possible that they had missed the bigger picture of experiences that the Clubs offer their members and their potential for influencing a larger and broader array of outcomes than had previously been explored. The goal of P/PV’s longitudinal evaluation was to take that broader look at “the whole club experience” in order to more fully document its potential. In particular, we examined how Club participation is related to youth’s positive and healthy development in the three outcome areas BGCA has established as core to meeting its mission: good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles.

P/PV completed the evaluation in Spring 2008. An interim report explored an issue of concern to both BGCA and other out-of-school-time programs across

the country: What does it take to involve teens in these programs? What factors help explain higher rates of ongoing participation?³ The report highlighted links found between accessible, safe places that provide a variety of informal and formal activities of interest to teens and higher levels of participation. It also distilled lessons for programs interested in boosting teen participation. These include establishing relationships with children when they are younger because these relationships often endure through the teen years, taking into account the importance teens place on friendships, and working with teens to establish flexibility in attendance policies as they enter their high school years.

This final report examines how youth in the study changed over time, in relation to their levels of participation, in the three outcome areas of interest, and explores the Clubs' approaches and strategies that may contribute to these outcomes.

Study Design and Rationale

Seventh- and eighth-grade participants from 10 Clubs across the country were recruited to be in the study.⁴ Focusing on youth in these grades allowed us to follow them during the critical period of their transition to high school, when even those students who have done relatively well in middle school face challenges that can derail them. As preteens gain independence, they have more discretionary time and more choices about risks, from crime to drugs and alcohol to sexual activity. The path they take affects every aspect of their development—including their academic achievement and physical and emotional health—and frequently carries consequences well into adulthood.⁵ We hypothesized that the Clubs may provide important continuity during this transition, as well as supports that may help keep youth engaged in both school and positive out-of-school-time activities.

The 10 Clubs were selected based on a set of criteria that included their prior success in reaching and serving relatively large numbers of teens,⁶ location in an urban setting, and utilization of an electronic enrollment and attendance tracking system. The Clubs in the study all had strong and dedicated programming for teens, represented by separate teen space and staff who worked exclusively or primarily

with teens; the participation trends and outcomes found in this study are likely representative of all Clubs that have similar programming.

The study used multiple data collection strategies, including:

- Surveys of the same group of teens in Winter 2006 and Spring 2008⁷ to understand how they use their out-of-school time; what activities they participate in both in and out of the Club; their experiences in the Club; and, ultimately, how their attitudes and behaviors change. Follow-up surveys were conducted with youth whether or not they were still participating in Clubs. At baseline, surveys were conducted with 422 eligible youth; 322 of these youth (76.3 percent) completed surveys in Spring 2008.
- Enrollment information on the selected youth and daily attendance data gathered from the Clubs over the entire 30-month study period.
- Interviews with Club staff who work directly with teens to understand staff's perspectives on the teen programming provided at the Clubs. We completed interviews with a total of 86 staff, including staff (such as Club and program directors) who work with all ages of youth as well as staff (such as teen directors or teen advocates) who work solely or primarily with teens.
- Interviews with 56 ninth-grade youth, conducted in Spring 2007, to gain a richer and more nuanced understanding of teens' perceptions of how the Club fits into 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. We chose to interview ninth graders in order to capture their perceptions and activities at this crucial age, when they have just made the transition to high school.⁸

The study examined the quantitative data from surveys and attendance records to analyze the extent to which participation in the Clubs is associated with significant change over time on a series of outcomes in each of the three outcome areas (good character and citizenship, academic success, and healthy lifestyles). It also examined the qualitative data from interviews with ninth graders and staff

from each of the 10 Clubs to document how staff work with youth to achieve the outcomes and how youth perceive those practices.

As with all research studies, this evaluation has limitations. An important characteristic of the Clubs is that they welcome all young people who wish to attend; therefore, Clubs do not have waiting lists. In addition, on the assumption that young people need safe places where they can come as needed, Clubs have not traditionally required youth to arrive at particular times or attend particular activities. Attendance in almost all activities is voluntary: Youth can participate in some activities and not in others, at their discretion. As a result, every youth has a different experience. Given these characteristics of the Clubs, we were unable to implement the most rigorous kind of impact study—an experimental study that randomly assigns young people to either a group that attends the programs in the Clubs or a control group that does not, and then examines differences between the groups at the end of the study period. Doing so would have changed the very character and mission of the Clubs.

There are two other reasons why it was not possible for the study to include a comparison group. When the evaluation began in 2005, Clubs were already operating in most low-income communities and neighborhoods around the country, making it challenging to find comparison cities or communities where there were not Clubs but where the communities were similar to those with Clubs. In addition, the purpose of the study was to examine the role of the whole Club experience; thus, although studies of particular programs might provide opportunities for comparison groups of other Club youth who do not take part in a specific activity, that was not feasible for this study.⁹

Despite these challenges, there are several reasons why the positive findings from this study build a case for the role Boys & Girls Clubs play in teens' lives and add to our knowledge about the importance of the type of support Clubs provide, particularly during the critical transition from middle to high school:

- The study followed youth prospectively, rather than relying solely on recall. While several alumni studies have identified strong patterns of positive memories of the role the Club played, this

study started with youth in seventh and eighth grades and followed their progression, longitudinally, to track change over time on outcomes.

- The study followed a large sample of youth (422) and gathered survey data from them whether or not they continued as a regular participant in the Club—or even participated at all.¹⁰ The response rate was 76.3 percent at the follow-up survey administration, approximately 30 months after baseline data were collected. Therefore, the outcomes are based on 322 youth, including those who were not involved in the Clubs after the beginning of the study. Gathering data from youth, regardless of their level of participation, allows for a better understanding of the youth's Club experiences and what else they were exposed to. Prior studies of outcomes that have drawn conclusions based solely on youth who remain in the Clubs and are present on the day of the follow-up survey offer a more biased and narrower perspective of experiences.
- The study followed youth over a full two-and-a-half-year evaluation period (30 months), as they moved from seventh and eighth to ninth and tenth grades, offering an opportunity to learn about changes in out-of-school-time participation and track changes in beliefs, behaviors and attitudes at a critical point when youth are moving from middle school to high school.
- The study is able to link attendance data with survey data to examine the relationship between participation and outcomes and to compare outcomes for youth with greater and less participation.
- In-depth qualitative interviews with 56 ninth graders and 86 staff provide data that allow for more detailed and nuanced exploration of how the Clubs achieve their goals, as well as the challenges they face.

Thus, the findings from this study provide important information about how these young people changed over time, the relationship between participation in the Clubs and the outcomes being examined, and the youth's and staff's perceptions of how the Clubs influence teens' lives.

Structure of the Report

The next chapter, Chapter II, describes the teens in the study. Chapter III then examines their levels of participation and engagement at the Clubs, and provides an overview of other ways they spend their out-of-school time. Chapter IV focuses on the overarching question of how Clubs make a difference in the lives of the youth they serve. It explores the findings in each of the three outcome areas (good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles), the relationship between participation and outcomes, and teens' and staff's perceptions about practices at the Clubs that support these outcomes. A final chapter summarizes key findings and discusses their implications for policymakers, funders and practitioners.

The Teens in the Study

Chapter II

This evaluation provides an opportunity to gain new insight into the out-of-school-time experiences of a previously understudied group of youth. While much of the national research on out-of-school time has examined the benefits of activity involvement among suburban and working class youth,¹¹ this study examines a sample of teens from low-income, primarily urban communities, and does so at a national level.

This chapter introduces the teens by addressing two major questions:

- What are their demographics?
- What are their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors at the start of the study?

In addition, the chapter describes how long the teens had been coming to the Clubs at the start of this evaluation.

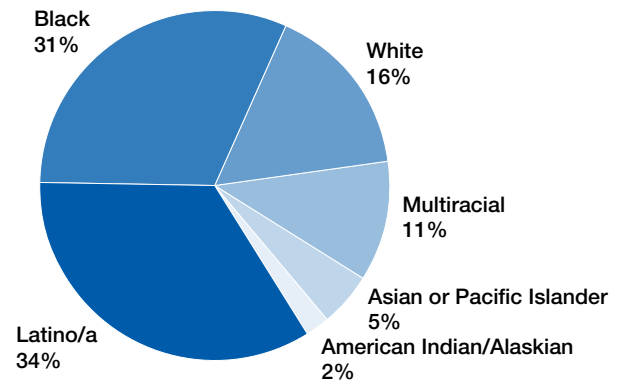
The Club Participants

To understand the role Clubs play in teens' lives, we chose to follow a sample of Club members as they transitioned from middle school (seventh and eighth grades) to high school (ninth and tenth grades). The youth who participated in the study were drawn from the Club as a whole, not from any specific program within the Club. In order to have a large enough sample to detect differences in youth's outcomes, each Club was asked to recruit 50 of its seventh- and eighth-grade members for the study.

Demographics

The final study sample includes 322 youth (those completing both the baseline and follow-up survey) who were in seventh and eighth grades¹² at the start of the study, from 10 Clubs across the country.¹³

Figure 1
Race and Ethnicity^a of Study Participants



Source: Winter 2006 survey of 322 seventh and eighth graders.

^a Youth 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" indicates that the youth checked more than one box.

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. Latino/a youth are most prevalent, representing 34 percent of those surveyed, followed by 31 percent of youth who identify as black and 16 percent as white (see Figure 1).¹⁴
- Fifty-two percent of youth in the study are male, and 48 percent are female.¹⁵
- Almost three quarters of the study population (71 percent) reported that they receive free or reduced-price lunch at school.
- Less than one half of the youth (47 percent) live with two parents (see Table 1).

In addition to the economic stress these teens face living in low-income, poorly resourced communities, they reported experiencing other significant stressors in the year prior to the start of the study. For example, half of them reported that someone they know well was seriously hurt or became very ill, and 41 percent reported that someone they knew well had died.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants at Baseline

Gender	
Male	52.3%
Female	47.7%
Grade	
Grade 7	52.5%
Grade 8	47.5%
Living situation	
Lives with both parents	47.2%
Lives with mother	40.9%
Lives with father	5.9%
Lives with other relative	4.7%
Lives with foster parent	1.2%
Receives free/reduced-price lunch	
Yes	71.1%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of 322 seventh and eighth graders.

Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviors

Our survey also included a series of questions designed to elicit information about teens' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors within the three broad outcome areas that the Clubs are striving to impact:

1. Good character and citizenship (e.g., sense of integrity, fairness and open-mindedness, positive conflict-resolution skills, social competence);
2. Academic success (e.g., grades on their last report card, attitudes toward and behaviors in school, importance of school); and
3. Healthy lifestyles (e.g., involvement in health and risk behaviors, such as contact with law enforcement and alcohol and drug use).

(Please see Appendix C for more information about the specific items and measures.)

Assessing youth at the beginning of the study allowed us to present a picture of these youth when they were in seventh and eighth grades. By conducting follow-up surveys at a later point in time, we were able to track how these attitudes and beliefs changed. Table 2 summarizes the youth's responses on the baseline survey to questions about their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

As Table 2 indicates, results from the survey at the start of the study reveal that the youth tended to report performing fairly well in school, having relatively positive character strengths and engaging in few risk behaviors. Overall, 70 percent of youth reported receiving mostly As or Bs on their report cards.¹⁶ Although few youth reported skipping school (12 percent), about one third (30 percent) 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 future expectations.

Youth's Tenure at the Clubs

As displayed in Table 3, most teens in the study had a long tenure at the Club prior to the start of the evaluation. Almost 60 percent 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 (32 percent) reporting they had been attending the Club for five years or more.¹⁷

This level of tenure among the seventh and eighth graders 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. At the same time, it is also an indication of the challenge Clubs face in attracting new teens who have never been to the Club before.

Proximity to the Clubs

The Clubs are located in the neighborhoods where youth live, thus addressing the challenge that youth (and their parents) often face of getting to and from out-of-school-time programs. In general, the teens reported easy access to the Clubs and lived in relatively close proximity to the Club they attended. As seventh and eighth graders, 54 percent said they walked, biked or skateboarded to the Club, and almost two thirds (60 percent) reported that it took

Table 2
Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviors at Baseline

	Average at Baseline Survey Winter 2006
Good Character and Citizenship (scale from 1=low to 4=high unless otherwise specified)	
Fairness (treats others fairly)	2.92
Integrity (knows right from wrong)	2.81
Open-mindedness (thinks about different views before making decisions)	3.06
Social competence (gets along with peers)	3.36
Negative problem solving and conflict resolution (1=not negative and 4=negative)	2.44
Aggression (1=not aggressive and 4=aggressive)	2.21
Shyness (1=not shy and 4=shy)	2.22
Academic Success (scale from 1=low to 4=high unless otherwise specified)	
School liking	2.76
School effort	3.10
Importance of school	3.39
Teacher connectedness (gets along with teachers)	3.26
Academic confidence	3.34
Report card grades (1=As and 5= Fs)	2.14
Number of times skipping school in past 12 months (0=not at all and 4=4 or more times)	0.21
Number of times being suspended in past 12 months (0=not at all and 4=4 or more times)	0.35
Healthy Lifestyles	
Future connectedness (how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them prepare for the future) (1=low and 4=high)	3.39
Positive peers (1=none and 5=all)	3.22
Negative peers (1=none and 5=all)	1.51
Days of vigorous aerobic exercise for 20 minutes in last week (0=none and 7=all 7 days)	4.55
Contact with Law Enforcement in Last 12 Months	
Number of times stopped by police (0=not at all and 4=4 or more times)	0.24
<i>Arrested^a</i>	4%
<i>Put on probation</i>	3%
Risk Behaviors	
<i>Ever had a physical fight resulting in injuries requiring medical attention</i>	14%
<i>Ever carried a weapon</i>	13%
<i>Ever smoked cigarettes</i>	20%
<i>Ever drank alcohol</i>	36%
<i>Ever smoked marijuana</i>	8%
<i>Ever used other drugs^b</i>	23%
<i>Ever had sexual intercourse</i>	14%
<i>Used a condom at last sex^c</i>	86%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of 322 seventh and eighth graders.

^a For items that are italicized, the response set was yes/no, and the numbers are the percentage of youth who reported they had been in that situation or engaged in that behavior.

^b Other drugs include OxyContin, ecstasy, steroids and inhalants.

^c This represents 86 percent of the 14 percent who reported they had ever had sexual intercourse.

them less than 10 minutes to get home from the Club (see Table 4). This ease of access, combined with the long hours Clubs are open and the fact that teens can “drop in” when they choose, may contribute to regular attendance.

Summary

The 322 teens followed over the two and a half years of the evaluation reflect a group of youth faced with economic challenges (over 70 percent reported receiving free- or reduced-price lunch) and potentially significant life stressors that place them at risk of not achieving healthy outcomes. In other areas, however, these youth, as a group, started the evaluation period faring relatively well. Academically, 70 percent reported getting As or Bs in school. In addition, as seventh and eighth graders, youth’s reported rates of involvement in risk behaviors were not particularly high for this age group: 36 percent had ever drunk alcohol (11 percent in the past 30 days); 8 percent had ever tried marijuana; and 3 percent had been on probation. Thus, as we examine in the following chapters, the study is able to illuminate the extent to which Clubs support youth in maintaining a positive trajectory and keep them out of many of the troubles that begin to surface as youth move into high school.

Table 3
Tenure at the Clubs Prior to the Study

1 month or less	10.0%
2 to 3 months	6.1%
More than 3 months, but less than 1 year	5.8%
1 to 2 years	19.0%
More than 2 years, but less than 5 years	27.1%
5 years or more	31.9%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of 322 seventh and eighth graders.

Table 4
Youth’s Proximity to Boys & Girls Clubs

How Youth Usually Get to the Club	
Walking/biking/skateboarding	54.5%
Family member drives	21.9%
Public transportation	12.6%
School bus	6.1%
Club bus or van	2.6%
Neighbor/family friend drives	2.3%
How Long It Takes Youth to Get Home	
Less than 10 minutes	59.9%
11 to 20 minutes	22.6%
21 to 30 minutes	7.7%
More than 30 minutes	9.8%

Source: Winter 2006 survey of 322 seventh and eighth graders.

Participation and Engagement in the Clubs

Chapter III

Past studies of out-of-school time have suggested that low levels of participation may impede programs' ability to have sufficient contact and continuity with youth to make a difference in their lives;¹⁸ getting and keeping teens involved over time has emerged as a particular challenge. For this reason, an important part of this study was to document whether teens are attending Clubs frequently enough and are engaged at a level that might lead to positive outcomes.

Researchers exploring the concept of participation in out-of-school-time activities describe it as multidimensional, including whom the programs are able to reach and enroll, attendance and engagement.¹⁹ In this study, we examined participation along each of these dimensions, using the Clubs' daily attendance records and the surveys we administered to youth. Because we administered the follow-up surveys to youth regardless of how recently they had been to a Club and asked questions about other out-of-school-time programs and activities they were engaged in, the data are informative for understanding older youth's participation in out-of-school-time programs beyond just Clubs. The surveys also allow us to describe why teens choose to continue or end their participation in Clubs as they get older.

Thus, this chapter addresses four major questions:

- What level of participation do the Clubs achieve?
- How else do the teens spend their out-of-school time?
- To what extent do teens feel attached to, and supported by, the Clubs?
- What factors help explain teens' levels of participation?

As this chapter describes, Clubs are successfully reaching and retaining teens and providing them with the kinds of supports and opportunities that research has deemed critical for positive development. The next chapter will then explore the relationship between participation and outcomes,

and offer additional information drawn from staff and youth's perceptions about how these outcomes are achieved.

Participation

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. To account for some of this complexity (particularly in considering retention, since youth can return at any time), the study examined participation along four “dimensions”:

- **Frequency:** How many days teens attended the Club during the 30-month period.
- **Duration:** How many months they attended the Club at least one day during the 30-month period.
- **Breadth:** How many different types of activities teens attended.
- **Retention:** Whether teens have attended a Club in the last 4 or 6 of the 30 months during which attendance data were collected.

Each of these dimensions of participation offers important insights into how programs are serving youth. The measure of frequency of attendance reflects the amount of exposure to the Clubs that the teens are getting. “Duration” provides a picture of youth's connection to the Club, even if they are not coming on a regular basis, and offers a measure of Clubs as a potential “safe haven” opportunity for teens. The breadth of activities in which youth participate at the Clubs provides an indication of the degree to which Clubs are exposing youth to new, different and challenging activities that perhaps expand their interests and skills. Finally, the measure of retention provides a gauge of the degree to which the Clubs remain a part of the youth's lives.

Frequency and Duration

To document the frequency of attendance, we used daily attendance records from the Clubs' database to examine the number of days each youth in the survey sample attended the Club over the 30-month evaluation period. To correspond roughly to the categories of once or twice a month, once a week,

Table 5
Attendance at the Boys & Girls Clubs

**Frequency: Number of Days Attended
Between October 2005 and March 2008**

0 to 11 days	10.2%
12 to 51 days	16.5%
52 to 121 days	21.1%
122 to 243 days	22.1%
244 to 365 days	17.4%
366 to 576 days	12.7%

**Duration: Months with at Least One Day
of Attendance Between October 2005
and March 2008**

0 months	1.9%
1 to 4 months	7.4%
5 to 7 months	10.9%
8 to 12 months	16.5%
13 to 17 months	14.6%
18 to 26 months	27.0%
27 to 30 months	21.7%

Source: Clubs' daily attendance records.

Note: These percentages are for the 322 youth who completed baseline and follow-up surveys; the proportions are similar for the full 422 who completed the baseline survey, as displayed in Table D.1, Appendix D.

twice a week and three to four times a week over the 30-month study period, we examined the proportion of youth who attended the Clubs at least 52, 122, 244 and 366 days over 30 months. As Table 5 displays, slightly under three quarters (73 percent) attended 52 or more days; just over half (52 percent) attended 122 or more; almost a third (30 percent) attended 244 or more; and close to 13 percent attended 366 or more.²⁰ On average, youth attended 169 days during the study period.

To examine whether frequency of attendance changed once youth reached high school, we selected two corresponding three-month periods (January to March 2006 and January to March

2008) and compared attendance of the same youth for each time period. Although the frequency of attendance dropped by about 50 percent, on average, for the youth in ninth and tenth grades (11.8 days from January to March 2008, compared with 25.1 days from January to March 2006, when the youth were in seventh and eighth grades), older youth were still attending about one day a week on average, compared with about two days per week when they were younger.²¹

Table 5 also displays duration. Almost half the youth attended 18 or more months, with the top 10 percent attending 29 or 30 months. We found that frequency (the number of days) and duration (the number of months with at least one day of participation) were highly correlated for the youth in this study. That is, youth who tended to come over a greater number of months tended to be the same youth who came to the Club a lot each week.

Breadth of Activities

Teens reported participating in a wide range of activities at the Clubs and getting involved in leadership roles. Asked about their participation in a variety of Club activities during the past four months, more than half the youth who had been to the Clubs in that time period (56 percent) reported participating in either four or five different categories of activities (informal activities, athletic programs, academic programs, other formal activities, and paid and volunteer work).²² As Table 6 illustrates, about three quarters of the teens reported using technology such as computers, video or digital music for fun (74 percent) or for schoolwork (71 percent); about two thirds reported playing sports (68 percent); 46 percent reported doing arts and crafts activities; a third (33 percent) attended a class in drama, dance or performing arts; and a third (36 percent) reported participating in specific leadership programming (such as Torch Club).

In addition to participation in specific leadership programs, 82 percent of teens who had been to the Club in the past year reported participating in at least one leadership role there (such as helping in the office, serving on a youth council or leading an activity) during that time, and half participated in three or more such roles.

Table 6
Participation in Activities at the Clubs During the Past Four Months

Activity	Percentage of Youth Who Report They Participated
Hang out or play with friends	91.9%
Use technology such as computers, video or digital music for fun	73.7%
Use technology for school or academics, such as doing homework or research on a computer	70.8%
Read a book, magazine or newspaper	55.0%
Play sports on a team or participate in a fitness program	67.5%
Spend time talking one-on-one with an adult	61.2%
Participate in activities or discussions about making good choices in life	55.5%
Go to a program to get homework help or tutoring	52.1%
Attend a class or activity in math, science or another academic subject	31.2%
Attend a class or activity in art or crafts	46.4%
Attend a class or activity in music, drama, dance or performing arts	33.0%
Participate in leadership programs	35.9%
Attend health or nutrition programs	23.4%
Work at the Club for pay	10.5%
Volunteer or do community service	38.3%

Source: Spring 2008 survey of 322 ninth and tenth graders.

Retention

The attendance data from the Clubs suggest that more than half the youth in the original sample (58 percent) were retained by that particular Club, attending at least once in the six months prior to the end of the 30-month evaluation period. Youth's reports of the last time they had been to their Club or another Club are a bit higher, with about two thirds (67 percent) reporting they had been to a Club (either their original Club or another Club) in the past four months. A large majority of youth (86 percent) also reported that they planned to go back to the Club, even if they had not been in a while. The data from the Clubs' attendance records suggest that this is often the case—youth may not go for a time because they are busy with something else and then decide to go back and reengage.

Data gathered on the final survey suggest a few potential barriers to participation when youth reach the ninth and tenth grades. Relative to those who had been to a Club in the past four months, a significantly higher percentage of those who had not attended reported on the final survey that they were spending time caring for siblings or working for pay. In contrast, both groups of youth reported spending similar amounts of time doing their homework. (Table D.2 in Appendix D provides a detailed table of these results.)

Of those who said they did not plan to go back to the Clubs, the most common reasons reported were that they had too much else to do (29 percent), that they moved (18 percent), that they got a job (13 percent) and that they were not interested in the activities (13 percent).

Time Spent Outside the Clubs

The Clubs were not the only available resource for the teens: Eighty-six percent of the ninth and tenth graders reported that there were a lot of available activities for youth their ages in the community. Thus, it may not be surprising that, while youth in the study spent less time at the Clubs as they got older, more of them were attending other out-of-school activities (such as religious groups, school activities or other after-school programs) when they reached ninth and tenth grade.

As Figure 2 shows, among seventh and eighth graders in the four weeks prior to the Winter 2006 survey:

- 18 percent regularly participated only in the Club,
- 68 percent participated in both Club and non-Club programs,
- 12 percent regularly participated only in non-Club programs, and
- 2 percent were not involved in any out-of-school-time programs.²³

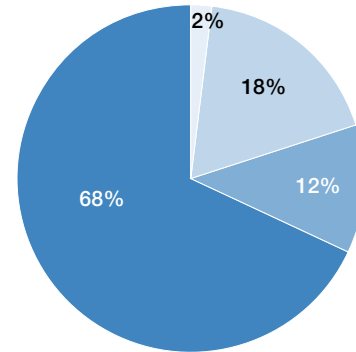
By ninth and tenth grades, the corresponding percentages were:

- 9 percent involved in the Club only,
- 46 percent involved in both types of programs,
- 39 percent involved in only non-Club programs, and
- 6 percent not involved in any out-of-school-time programs.

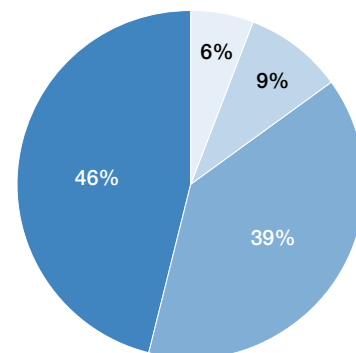
These findings make sense in light of the research suggesting that programs for middle school youth are often scarce and that more opportunities, through school in particular, may be available for older, high school teens. The Clubs' hours—open daily during the school year until eight or nine in the evenings, with summer hours extended through the entire day—allow the flexibility for teens to participate in both the Club and in other activities.

Figure 2
Youth's Out-of-School Involvement Over Time

Youth Reported Activities at Baseline



Youth Reported Activities at Final Survey



■ None
■ Only Club
■ Only Non-Club
■ Both Club and Non-Club

We were also interested in knowing whether teens who had been to a Club recently (in the past four months) were more likely to participate in various activities (i.e., each of the activities listed in Table 6) than teens who had not been to a Club, and whether they engaged in those activities at the Club, outside of the Club, or both. (In fact, staff noted that they encourage teens to engage in activities in other venues, along with participating in Clubs.) We examined the proportion of teens who had been to the Club in the past four months and what activities they did both inside and outside of the Club, in comparison with teens who had not been

to the Clubs and their activities. Generally, youth who had been to a Club were more likely to have participated in each type of activity (e.g., playing sports, using technology for fun, academics) during that timeframe—whether they did the activity at the Club, outside of the Club, or both. There were two exceptions: A larger proportion of youth who had not been to Clubs in the past four months reported having attended an academic class in math or science and working for pay. (Please see Table D.3 in Appendix D for more details.)

Parents' Role in How Teens Spend Their Time

Research makes clear that parents of younger children frequently use after-school programs for childcare, and participation rates may be higher for these younger youth, even if they do not feel engaged in the programs. With teens, the role that a parent plays in selecting what their children do when they are not in school is more complicated. Consistent with other research,²⁴ this study found that parents were still involved in helping their teens with their decisions. When the ninth and tenth graders were asked how they decide what they will do in the after-school hours, most (63 percent) indicated that they talk it over with a parent or guardian and decide together. Only 7 percent said that a parent or guardian told them what to do, while just under a third (30 percent) indicated they make the decision on their own.

Engagement in the Clubs

As described in the introduction to this report, the Clubs strive to provide an atmosphere that goes beyond the array of activities offered and creates a sum that is bigger than its programmatic parts. Clubs intentionally offer time for youth to develop relationships with staff and also provide a positive setting for developing peer relationships. The overall environment that Clubs strive to create matters particularly for teens, because they need a place where they want to go, not just where a parent sends them for childcare.

To assess the teens' engagement in the Clubs, we asked a series of questions on the final survey to understand ways in which they feel attached to

and supported by their Club. These included questions about their sense of belonging to the Club, the extent to which they feel safe there (and elsewhere), the degree to which they find supportive adults and peers there and feel recognized and valued, how much “fun” they find the Club and their involvement in leadership roles there.

Teens' Spring 2008 ratings on these dimensions are summarized in Table 7. They reported high levels of the kinds of positive experiences at the Clubs cited as important for healthy development, including a 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.

Importantly, the teens reported a strong sense of belonging to the Club. On the final survey, youth were asked how much they agreed with a series of seven statements, such as, “At the Club, I feel like I belong,” and “At the Club, people really listen to me.” Across the seven items, the average score for sense of belonging was 3.61 on a scale from 1 to 4 (not at all, not very, sort of, very true), and 91 percent of youth's ratings were 3 and above. Teens also saw the Club as a place where there were opportunities to develop skills (90 percent) and where they had fun (91 percent).

Teens rated the Club safer than they rated other places where they spend time: A total of 79 percent rated the level of safety at the Club as 8 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the most favorable. By comparison, only 54 percent rated the safety of their school this favorably, and only 38 percent had a rating that high for the neighborhood surrounding the Club.

Teens also reported receiving high levels of support and opportunity at the Clubs. Almost all of the youth said that there was at least one supportive adult (96 percent) and peer (93 percent) at the Club, that at least one adult at the Club was setting high expectations for them (96 percent) and that the Club was a place where there was peer cooperation (95 percent). In addition, 87 percent reported that at least one adult at the Club knew how they were doing in

Table 7
Youth Experiences of Supports and Opportunities at the Club

Support and Opportunity (scale from 1=low to 4=high unless otherwise specified)	Average from Final Survey	Average for Teens Who Came to the Club During Past Four Months ^a	Average for Teens Who Did Not Come to the Club During Past Four Months ^a	Percent Who Gave Rating of 3 or Higher (unless otherwise specified)
Validation and recognition	3.58			89.9%
High expectations	3.77			96.2%
Opportunity for skill development	3.52			90.3%
Opportunity to influence the Club	3.45			88.5%
Peer cooperation	3.63			94.8%
Belonging	3.61	3.65	3.51	91.4%
Fun	3.59			91.0%
Safe (1=very dangerous to 10=very safe)	8.5			79% rate 8 or above
Number of supportive adults (0=none to 4=4 or more)	2.64			96% report one or more adults is supportive
Number of supportive peers (0=none to 4=4 or more)	2.79	2.88	2.51	93% report one or more peers is supportive
Number of leadership experiences ^b (0=0 leadership experiences to 7=7)	3.22	3.43	2.55	82% experienced one or more leadership opportunities in the previous year

Source: Spring 2008 survey of 322 ninth and tenth graders.

Note: With the exception of the youth's ratings of how safe they feel at the Club, which was a single item, all the other measures were created by averaging across a set of items that comprise a "construct" or scale. The items that make up each measure are presented in Appendix C.

^a Averages are only included in this column if there is a statistically significant difference in the value for youth who came in the past four months compared with youth who did not

^b Only youth who had attended the Club in the prior 12 months were asked if they had done each of seven leadership activities.

school. As the next chapter will describe, these relationships with supportive staff and the expectations communicated by them are central to the Clubs' achieving their goals with teens.

It is important to keep in mind that these reports of positive experiences at the Club include surveyed teens who had been to the Club in the past year but who had not necessarily been to the Club recently. In the areas of peer support, sense of belonging

and leadership, those who had been to the Club in the past four months gave higher ratings than those who had not attended as recently. (These differences are noted in Table 7.) However, in other areas, teens had similar ratings of the Club whether they had attended recently or not. Thus, although there were differences for those youth who had not been to the Club as recently, their sense of the Club as a place that provides important opportunities and supports remained high.²⁶

Factors That Help Explain Teens' Participation in Clubs

Similar to our findings from the first 18 months of the study (published in the interim report *More Time for Teens*),²⁷ four key factors about youth's experiences with the Club, assessed when they were in seventh and eighth grades, help explain the likelihood of higher frequency of participation over the course of the full 30-month evaluation period. Participation in a greater range of activities, participation in more leadership opportunities at the Club, the number of friends who also go to the Club and how long youth had already been coming to the Club prior to the start of the evaluation were all related to more frequent attendance. In addition, when we explored whether youth with particular attitudes, beliefs and behaviors from the three impact areas—good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles—were more likely to come more frequently, we found two items that were related to levels of participation. Youth with a higher sense of “fairness” at baseline (i.e., those who reported they are fair in their actions) attended with greater frequency than those with a lower sense of fairness, and youth who were doing better in school (in terms of grades, skipping school and suspensions) attended more frequently than those doing less well.

Interestingly, the extent to which teens reported they were involved in other, non-Club programs was not related to their attendance at the Clubs. That is, our analyses of the survey and participation data revealed no significant association between the number of days the teens reported participating in non-Club programs or activities (on the baseline 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.

The interviews also suggested that, after leadership opportunities, one of the most common reasons teens came to the Club as ninth graders was their appreciation of the space or programming designated specifically for teens; many described the Club as “more fun” as a result of these offerings.

Summary

Although teens' participation decreased between middle and high school, many youth still continued to attend Clubs on a somewhat regular basis. There, they were exposed to many different types of programming, as well as to an overall environment that promoted positive relationships with adults and peers. When youth reached the ninth and tenth grades, they reported high levels of exposure to positive supports and opportunities and feeling safe at the Clubs, whether or not they had attended recently. Youth's participation and engagement in the Clubs, and the support and opportunities they experienced there, lay the overall foundation for the Clubs to achieve their intended outcomes. The next chapter explores these outcomes and the strategies Clubs used to achieve them.

Club Participation and Teens' Outcomes

Chapter IV

As noted in the introduction to this report, P/PV's prior review of evaluations of discrete programs at the Boys & Girls Clubs suggested that Clubs' implementation of focused programming has shown promising results in different areas, such as career development, delinquency prevention and academic success. Most prior evaluations of Clubs were limited to understanding the outcomes of those discrete programs, however, and did not take into account the larger ways in which the Club experience—the staff, the place to hang out, the multitude of opportunities—might influence a positive trajectory for youth. Thus, at the heart of this study was the effort to look at participation in the Club as a whole and learn more about how exposure to the range of Club activities, staff supports and opportunities might promote healthy development at a time of transition in youth's lives—as they move from middle school to high school—when many youth, particularly minorities, disengage from school and positive activities.²⁸

In this chapter, we address the question “What role do the Boys & Girls Clubs play in influencing change in teens' outcomes?” For each of the three outcome areas that the Boys & Girls Clubs has established as central to its mission—good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles—we use quantitative data from baseline and follow-up surveys and Club attendance records to examine the relationship between youth's frequency of attendance in the Club and changes in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors over the course of the 30-month evaluation period. To illuminate ways in which the Clubs' overall approach may influence these outcomes, the chapter also uses qualitative data from interviews with teens and staff to explore the strategies—some of them formal; some, informal—that Clubs use to support and engage youth and to promote positive changes in each of the three areas.

More specifically, this chapter highlights our findings in relation to three central questions:

- In each of the three broad outcome areas, do teens who attend more frequently experience more positive changes than those who attend less frequently?²⁹
- What practices do staff report and youth perceive as supporting positive outcomes in each of the three areas?
- Can we suggest a target minimum level of attendance, based on the data that we have?

The study cannot determine with certainty that the associations we found are causal. There may be other factors that we have not been able to take into account that lead youth to both participate many days and do well on the outcomes. However, the additional findings presented throughout the report—that the Clubs are keeping teens involved and that they are experiencing the types of meaningful supports and opportunities at the Clubs that research has shown are important for healthy development—suggest that Clubs had some bearing on the teens' positive trajectory. (Please see Appendix E for more details on the analyses described in this chapter.)

Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes

To assess the degree to which youth participation may be related to more positive outcomes in each of the three broad areas, we explored whether youth who participated more also showed better outcomes over time.

In the area of good character and citizenship, we examined eight outcomes and found significant relationships between participation and change in four of them. Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency reported:

- Higher levels of *community service* involvement,
- Increased levels of *integrity* (knowing right from wrong),
- Decreased levels of *shyness*, and
- Decreased levels of *aggression*.

Table 8
The Relationship Between Club Attendance and Changes in Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes

Outcome (scale from 1=low to 4=high unless otherwise specified)	Average at Baseline Survey Winter 2006	Change by Level of Club Attendance				Significance
		Attend 52 Days	Attend 122 Days	Attend 244 Days	Attend 366 Days	
Fairness	2.92	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.06	Not significant
Integrity	2.81	0.02	0.05	0.11	0.16	+
Open-mindedness	3.06	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.06	Not significant
Social competence	3.36	-0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	Not significant
Negative problem solving and conflict resolution (1=not negative to 4=negative)	2.44	-0.01	-0.03	-0.06	-0.08	Not significant
Aggression ^a (1=not aggressive to 4=aggressive)	2.21	0.00	-0.22	-0.22	-0.22	+ (at 122 or more days)
Shyness (1=not shy to 4=shy)	2.22	-0.07	-0.16	-0.32	-0.48	*
Community service ^b (0=low to 5=high)	—	0.77	0.88	1.08	1.34	***

Note: Results presented in the table are from a series of Ordinary Least Squares and Poisson regression analyses with number of days attended from October 2005 through March 2008 as predictor, controlling for demographics, Winter 2006 level on the specified outcome, academic risk, delinquency risk, five variables that were predictors of participation, and the Club youth attended. The changes presented for each level of attendance are averages after adjustments for the other variables in the regression. n = 322.

+ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

^a No linear relationship was found between days attended and aggression; however, there was a threshold, or cut-point, below which no association was evident. If a youth did not come enough days, he or she did not experience a relative decrease in aggression.

^b Community service was measured only on the final survey, so change data are not available. Instead, the table presents the average value on the community service measure for youth with each level of Club attendance after adjustments for the other variables in the regression.

No significant relationships were found between participation and four other outcomes: fairness, open-mindedness, social competence and negative conflict resolution.

In three of the four cases where the relationship between participation and the outcome was found to be significant—community service, integrity and shyness—the relationship appears to be linear. That is, each increase in days of attendance was associated with greater change on the outcome (the more a teen attended, the more he or she benefited). For

one outcome, aggression, no linear relationship was found between days attended and the outcome; however, there was a threshold, or cut-point, below which no association was evident. That is, if a youth did not attend enough days (in this case, at least 122 days), he or she did not experience relative decreases in aggression.

Table 8 summarizes the results of the analyses we conducted and displays the linear relationships between participation and outcomes by showing how much greater the change in the outcome is

for a youth who attends the Club 52, 122, 244 and 366 days. (We use these numbers of days to display the relationship because over the 30-month period they correspond roughly to every other week, once a week, twice a week, and three or more times a week.) For aggression, the table shows the expected change for youth who attend 122 days or more—the level we tested and found significant—compared with those who come less frequently.

Club Practices

In our interviews, Club staff described how they try to contribute to youth's positive development in all three outcome areas by paying attention to youth, being there to support them and providing both formal and informal opportunities for activities and interactions with peers and other staff. Teens, like the staff, described the importance of relationships with Club staff for learning and positive development. Teens also noted specific Club programming and informal interactions with staff and peers as helpful in supporting them over time.

Among the outcome areas, helping Club members develop into young adults with good character and values was a priority for most Club staff—more important than perhaps any other goal—and they worked to achieve this goal primarily through informal, unstructured approaches. Staff's main strategy was to develop strong relationships with youth and use the opportunities provided by those relationships to focus on values and character. "We don't do all those character development programs," explained one Club director. "I think they're not effective, but that's not why we don't do them. Character development is built into the fabric of the Club. When kids do a good job, we tell them. All of our programs have that component."

Formal Programming

Only one Club described formal programming aimed explicitly at developing strong character: a workshop that meets at the Club and also goes on retreats to discuss issues of character. However, other programs have character development as an important secondary goal. Leadership groups like Keystone include elements of character development, as do risk-prevention programs such as Smart Moves. Staff and teens also noted that other activities, particularly sports, include discussions of character, such as discussing fairness in the context

of a game. For teens who used the Club primarily for sports, this was often their primary source of character development there. As one teen said, "At the beginning of the year we have a meeting, you know, [going over] what they expect from you throughout the season, like being on time and... being a respectful person, a loyal person, someone who, if the little kids need you, you're there to talk to. Before a big meet [the coach] will say to the older kids, 'I expect you to help the little kids if they don't know where to go or where to line up on the block. If they're nervous, can you help them?' Stuff like that."

Informal Approaches

Across all of the Clubs in the study, both staff and teens reported that the values Clubs try to instill most frequently deal with how one should treat other people: Respect others, try to collaborate and demonstrate sportsmanship, listen to others and be open-minded. Clubs also give teens character messages about taking responsibility for oneself, being true to oneself and having self-confidence.

In interviews, the teens clearly understood the importance of character development at the Clubs, noting that expectations about being good citizens and having good character were evident throughout the Clubs, from the activities offered, to conversations with staff, to staff's own behavior. Many suggested that it was impossible *not* to hear the message of the importance of good character. A few noted that they hear the same themes repeatedly and occasionally feel like the staff go overboard with their messages. In general, though, they appreciated these efforts because they recognized that many staff themselves had gone through similar experiences (perhaps more so than other adults in their lives, such as teachers), because staff tended to address them personally and consider their individual experience, and because, overall, the rules and messages seemed to be reasonable.

The teens noted that staff would discuss character traits in the context of conversations about other subjects or in response to a particular problem the teen was having, such as a lack of self-confidence. In addition, teens pointed out that they observed staff behavior and learned from it. One teen described a certain staff member who always listened to both sides of an argument when he had to mediate; this

teen noted how he observed traits such as open-mindedness, fairness and conflict resolution by watching the staff.

Youth and staff appeared to agree that the Club was full of opportunities, within and outside of the activities, to be exposed to making good choices, learning about respect and honesty and, in turn, serving as role models for others in the Club. This area is one in particular that previous studies of Clubs have not explored to its fullest. As staff noted, the Clubs do not tend to have programs that target character development as one of the specific outcomes of interest. While the current evaluation has begun to learn about the effectiveness of Club strategies for promoting citizenship and character development, this is an area that deserves further examination.

Academic Success Outcomes

In this outcome area, we also examined eight outcomes³⁰ and found significant relationships between participation and change in three of them. Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency were more likely to report:

- A decrease in the number of times *skipping school*,
- An increase in *academic confidence*, and
- An increase in *school effort*.

We found no significant relationship between participation and five other outcomes: grade-point average, school liking, importance of school, teacher connectedness and number of school suspensions.

Table 9 summarizes the results and displays the level of change associated with varying levels of participation. On two outcomes, school effort and skipping school, we found significant linear relationships between participation and change. On a third outcome, academic confidence, youth who attended 52 days or more had more of an increase in academic confidence than youth who attended less frequently.

Club Practices

These findings—that youth who attended the Clubs with greater frequency also showed positive changes in their effort and confidence in school, as well as being less likely to skip school—are important, particularly given that they are occurring as youth transition from middle to high school, when many teens start to disengage from school (even those who had been doing relatively well academically).³¹ To some extent, the Clubs' emphasis on strong relationships, flexibility and a range of opportunities may make it more challenging for them to reach specific academic outcomes across many teens (in contrast to discrete, targeted programs aimed at a few narrow academic outcomes). However, the Clubs' approach may also help create an interpersonal environment that is consistent with, and supports, the goals of working hard and staying in school.

Formal Programming

At all 10 Clubs in the study, teens are invited to do their homework and staff are available to answer questions, but only two Clubs have a formal, structured homework time for teens. Most Clubs also provide tutoring services on a regular basis for youth who request them, either through their own education staff or through partnerships with local universities. Eight of the 10 Clubs described programming related to preparing for and applying to college, ranging from weekly sessions (such as College Club or College Bound) to one-time college fairs. A few Clubs also have other academically oriented offerings, like computer classes and test preparation courses; and three Clubs offer formal programming through partnerships with external organizations, such as Upward Bound, that are based in the Clubs.

Staff, however, reported that teens were generally hesitant or unwilling to participate in academically oriented programs. One staff member explained: "I think it's once we get them in an [educational] program, like the documentary film program, they like it. But getting them in there is hard." The physical structure of many Clubs can also make it more challenging to engage teens academically. Whereas Clubs may have multiple rooms that younger members feel comfortable in, like a game room and a homework room, there is usually only one designated teen room, and its focus is on providing an informal and relaxing environment. Staff reported

Table 9
The Relationship Between Club Attendance and Changes in Academic Outcomes

Outcome (scale from 1=low to 4=high unless otherwise specified)	Average at Baseline Survey Winter 2006	Change by Level of Club Attendance				Significance
		Attend 52 Days	Attend 122 Days	Attend 244 Days	Attend 366 Days	
School liking	2.76	0.02	0.05	0.10	0.15	Not significant
School effort	3.10	0.03	0.06	0.12	0.18	+
Importance of school	3.39	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.08	Not significant
Teacher connectedness	3.26	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.07	Not significant
Academic confidence ^a	3.34	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	* (at 52 or more days)
Report card grades (1=As and 5=Fs)	2.14	-0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	Not significant
Number of times skipping school in past 12 months (0 =not at all and 4=4 or more times)	0.21	-0.09	-0.22	-0.44	-0.66	*
Number of times being sus- pended in past 12 months (0 =not at all and 4=4 or more times)	0.35	-0.03	-0.06	-0.12	-0.18	Not significant

Note: Results presented in the table are from a series of Ordinary Least Squares and Poisson regression analyses with number of days attended from October 2005 through March 2008 as predictor, controlling for demographics, Winter 2006 level on the specified outcome, academic risk, delinquency risk, five variables that were predictors of participation and the Club youth attended. The changes presented for each level of attendance are averages after adjustments for the other variables in the regression. n = 322.

+ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

^a For academic confidence, no linear relationship was found between days attended and the outcome; however, there was a threshold, or cut-point, below which no association was evident. If a youth did not come at least 52 days, he or she did not benefit.

that teens resist working in the homework room, which is viewed as a “childish” area of the Club or, in some cases, is in a different part of the building rarely visited by teens.

As one way to create an environment that set academic expectations for teens, all Clubs indicated an expectation that Club staff would review—and, to a lesser extent, track—members’ report cards. However, in most cases, this strategy has been implemented just for a subset of members; for example, five Clubs require youth to submit their report cards as a prerequisite for participation in

certain activities, such as sports leagues. Only one Club reported that all youth are expected to submit their grades.

Youth echoed staff reports that participation in academic programming at Clubs was inconsistent. The most common academic activity they participated in was homework. More than half of the interviewed youth reported doing homework at the Club at least occasionally, the vast majority indicating that they generally worked on their own and might sometimes ask staff for help if they were stuck on a question. About 10 percent of interviewed youth said they participated in formal homework or tutoring programs. Even youth who mostly worked on their

own, without a tutor, said it was useful to study at the Club in case they had a question or needed to use a Club resource, such as a computer.

Informal Approaches

Club staff felt that, particularly as youth move into middle school and high school, specific, structured programming was often less effective than individual staff/youth relationships because it was hard to get teens to participate in the structured academic programming. When asked about specific strategies for supporting academic success, staff identified positive relationships as the crux of what they do to help teens. "I think the main thing is they have relationships with us," explained one staff member. "We're asking, 'What are you doing today?' We're in their face, so they know people are paying attention."

Staff often used these one-on-one relationships to take a more active role in helping youth with school. They mentioned examples such as exploring high school options with middle schoolers, meeting with guidance counselors, finding outside programs for struggling students and helping them choose classes. However, while these experiences might play significant roles in the lives of certain youth, they were not implemented consistently for all Club members. Staff generally responded enthusiastically and helpfully to youth who reached out for support, but found it more challenging to actively monitor and provide similar support to all members.

Teens, like staff, pointed to the importance of Club relationships in helping them in school and academic pursuits. The majority of youth reported that staff asked them about school, but did so in an informal, sporadic manner. More than offering specific advice, youth said that staff frequently encouraged them to succeed in school, to set high expectations and to aim for college. As one teen said, "They're always saying, 'Oh, make sure you set goals for yourself and try and accomplish one of those goals each day or one of the goals each week.' And so that's what I've been trying to do." Teens also pointed to their relationships with Club peers as a type of academic support. They mentioned that the older teens helped them with homework (since they had taken the same classes in the past), gave

them advice about classes or teachers, or just made them feel more comfortable about transitioning to a new school with older students.

This is an area to which Clubs hope to devote more attention. One Club recently created the position of a teen-specific education coordinator, and two are beginning to adopt a grade-tracking system for teens. However, as one Club director explained, setting policies does not always translate into practice. "We were so disappointed [with last year's graduates' lack of college or career plans]," she explained. "We have a requirement that teen staff [teens who work with younger youth at the Club] must have a 2.0 [grade point average] to work here, but we never checked up on that. We didn't reward [them] or suspend their jobs to help motivate them to raise their grades. Just little things like that so they have more expectations for themselves.... Maybe we can start helping with finding schools or jobs. We are taking little steps towards this; it's important to do the little things."

In contrast to staff's overwhelming emphasis on relationship building and their across-the-board belief that developing good character and citizenship skills is woven into the fabric of the activities and interactions with youth, the message from staff and youth about academic development is not as dominant. In general, formal academic development is not done as consistently across Clubs or with large numbers of teens. In addition, while informal opportunities for supporting character development are frequent, academic support does not fit as seamlessly into informal conversations. There are not as many teachable moments. The areas where we did see outcomes—confidence, effort, not skipping school—are areas that Club staff can influence through praise, recognition and talking about the importance of going to school. In fact, the relationship between participation and outcomes in these areas may be the best way Clubs can support academic success among teens. Other research on Clubs has found that discrete programs can be beneficial for specific academic outcomes;³² this study suggests that overall participation in the Clubs may make a meaningful difference for teens on at least some academic outcomes—those that may keep them going to, and connected to, schools.

Healthy Lifestyles Outcomes

We examined 15 outcomes in this area and found significant relationships between participation and change in 8 of them. Youth who came to the Club more frequently reported:

- Increased levels of *future connectedness* (how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them prepare for the future),
- A decreased number of *negative peers* as friends,
- A decreased number of times *stopped by the police*, and
- A lower likelihood of starting to *carry a weapon*, *smoke cigarettes*, *drink alcohol*, *smoke marijuana* and *have sexual intercourse*.

No significant relationships were found between participation and seven other outcomes: days exercised 20 minutes or more; likelihood of being arrested, put on probation or involved in a physical fight; initiation of use of “other” drugs;³³ use of condom during last sexual intercourse; and number of positive peers.³⁴

Table 10 summarizes the results and displays the level of change associated with varying levels of participation. We found significant linear relationships between participation and change on five outcomes—future connectedness; number of times stopped by the police; and initiation of carrying a weapon, smoking cigarettes and smoking marijuana. On three additional outcomes—initiation of drinking alcohol, initiation of sex and number of negative peers—the linear relationship was not significant; however, youth who attended 122, 244 and 366 days, respectively, had greater positive change on these outcomes over time than did those who attended less frequently.

Club Practices

In conversations with staff, four strategies emerged as the primary ways Clubs help keep teens safe and healthy and avoid pressures to join in risky behaviors. These strategies include offering formal programming, providing a safe space for teens to spend time away from negative influences, provid-

ing steady relationships with adult staff, and presenting opportunities for sports and other physical activities.

Formal Programming

At all 10 Clubs, teens participated in discussion groups—such as Young Women’s Collective, Boys Group and SMART Moves—that focus on healthy behaviors. The youth were excited to participate in this programming, in part because it was available only to teens, in contrast to other Club offerings, such as academic or art activities, and thus felt new, adult and targeted specifically to them. In these groups, teens and the staff member typically agreed on a list of topics (such as dating, self-confidence, and drugs) and then addressed one per session.

Encouraging members’ physical health was another important goal for many Club staff; and, in fact, for many teens, the opportunity to participate in sports and other physical activities was their primary reason for attending the Clubs. Most Clubs offer some form of organized sports leagues or classes, and about 40 percent of the teens interviewed indicated they participate in these activities, including dance, basketball, hockey and baseball teams, among others. Many youth also joined physical activities less formally, dropping into the gym and taking part in whatever was going on. Overall, more than 75 percent said they did some type of physical activity at the Club, ranging from serious participation on the swim team to occasionally joining a pick-up basketball game. However, girls were less likely than boys to report participating in physical activities, with 71 percent of girls and 88 percent of boys saying they took part.

In addition, about half the Clubs had specific strategies to address teens’ health through nutrition, either by offering cooking classes or providing a healthy snack.

Informal Approaches

While the teens enjoyed the programming, they indicated in their interviews that the overall environment of the Club had more of an impact in this area than specific activities. They noted that just having a space to go to, away from any pressure, helped keep them healthy. More than half of the interviewed youth felt like peer pressure was greater once they reached high school. At the same time, they were nearly unanimous in reporting that there

Table 10
The Relationship Between Club Attendance and Changes in Healthy Lifestyles Outcomes

Outcome	Average at Baseline Survey Winter 2006	Change by Level of Club Attendance				Significance
		Attend 52 Days	Attend 122 Days	Attend 244 Days	Attend 366 Days	
Future connectedness (1=low and 4=high)	3.39	0.02	0.05	0.11	0.16	*
Positive peers (1=none and 5=all)	3.22	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	Not significant
Negative peers (1=none and 5=all) ^a	1.51	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.18	+ (at 366 days or more)
Days of vigorous aerobic exercise for 20 minutes in last week (0=none and 7=all 7 days)	4.55	0.06	0.15	0.29	0.44	Not significant
Contact with law enforcement Number of times stopped by police in past 12 months (0=none and 4=4 or more times)	0.24	-0.16	-0.38	-0.76	-1.13	*
<i>Initiation of being arrested^b</i>	—	5.2%	4.4%	3.3%	2.4%	Not significant
<i>Initiation of probation</i>	—	8.1%	6.7%	4.7%	3.3%	Not significant
Risk behaviors <i>Initiation of having a physical fight resulting in injuries requiring medical attention</i>	—	8.6%	8.1%	7.3%	6.5%	Not significant
<i>Initiation of carrying a weapon</i>	—	20.8%	16.5%	10.7%	6.7%	*
<i>Initiation of smoking cigarettes</i>	—	25.1%	19.9%	12.9%	8.1%	*
<i>Initiation of drinking alcohol</i>	—	46.2%	25.7%	25.7%	25.7%	* (at 122 or more days)
<i>Initiation of smoking marijuana</i>	—	19.6%	16.4%	11.8%	8.4%	+
<i>Initiation of other drug use^c</i>	—	10.0%	9.0%	7.6%	6.3%	Not significant
<i>Initiation of sexual intercourse</i>	—	32.1%	32.1%	17.8%	17.8%	* (at 244 or more days)
<i>Used a condom at last sexual intercourse</i>	—	97.9%	97.6%	97.1%	96.5%	Not significant

Note: Results presented in the table are from a series of Ordinary Least Squares, Poisson and Logit analyses with number of days attended from October 2005 through March 2008 as predictor, controlling for demographics, Winter 2006 level on the specified outcome, academic risk, delinquency risk, five variables that were predictors of participation and the Club that youth attended. The changes presented for each level of attendance are averages after adjustments for the other variables in the regression. n = 322.

+ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

^a For number of negative peers, initiation of drinking alcohol and initiation of sexual intercourse, no linear relationship was found between days attended and the outcome; however, there was a threshold, or cut-point, below which no association was evident. For those three outcomes, if a youth did not come enough days, he or she did not benefit.

^b For items in italics, the analyses examine the likelihood of initiating the behavior between baseline and follow-up. Thus, the analyses include only those youth who had not done that behavior at the baseline, so the value at baseline is represented as “—.”

^c Other drugs include OxyContin, ecstasy, steroids and inhalants.

was no negative peer pressure at the Clubs. “You make your own decisions at the Club,” explained one teen. “Don’t nobody peer pressure you into doing anything.” Another teen said, “That’s basically why I like coming here. It’s just like a way to hang out and be involved in something so you’re not like doing something stupid outside, like smoking or drinking or doing whatever you’re doing somewhere else.”

About half the teens mentioned that staff talked to them about avoiding risky behaviors, through either one-on-one conversations or informal group discussions. They observed that these discussions generally came up if staff noticed that someone was acting differently or seemed to be upset, or if there seemed to be general issues among teens at the Club. In other words, the conversations were not planned, but rather resulted from staff’s attentiveness to teens’ needs.

Working toward increasing healthy lifestyles has been a staple of the Boys & Girls Club since its inception. The way Clubs have created and implemented their formal programming and activities for teens—taking into account their developmental needs and interests, and shaping the programming to fit the teens—appears to support the outcomes that the survey data analysis revealed. In addition, the safe space provided by the Clubs appears to be particularly relevant for keeping teens away from bad choices and helping them make good decisions about behaviors.

How Much Participation Is “Enough” to Make a Difference?

The first goal of our analyses was to understand whether teens who were more highly engaged in the Clubs, in terms of their frequency of attendance, fared better than their counterparts who did not participate as much. For the majority of the cases where there was a significant relationship between participation and outcomes, the results of the analyses presented in the previous sections suggest a “more is better” finding: With each increase in attendance, there was a greater change over time in the outcome of interest.

In addition to learning whether more is better, we also wanted to learn whether certain levels of attendance were most highly related to significant positive outcomes. This information could be useful in helping Clubs establish benchmarks for teen participation—a topic of particular interest to Club staff—and is also useful for other researchers and practitioners concerned with understanding how out-of-school-time programs can best support healthy development for teens.

Boys & Girls Clubs seek to provide expectations in terms of days attended per year, so we tracked outcomes in relation to frequency of days attended. We looked at 52, 122, 244 and 366 days attended over the 30-month period, which translates roughly to every other week, once a week, twice a week, and three or more times a week. By looking at changes on outcomes between the baseline (Winter 2006) and final (Spring 2008) surveys, and comparing results for youth whose attendance levels in the Clubs varied according to the following different numbers of days of attendance, we found:

- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 52 times or more over 30 months had better results on six outcomes that we tested: put more effort into school, greater confidence in ability to do well in school, higher levels of integrity, more community service, less likely to initiate marijuana use, and greater feeling of connection to the future.
- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 122 times or more over 30 months had better results on six additional outcomes: lower aggression, less shy, less likely to start using alcohol, less likely to start smoking cigarettes, less likely to be stopped by the police, and less likely to start carrying a weapon.
- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 244 times or more over 30 months had better results on an additional two outcomes: skipped fewer days of school and less likely to start having sex.
- Finally, compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 366 times or more over 30 months had better results on one additional outcome: decreased number of negative peers.

Table 11
Minimum Level of Club Attendance Over 30-Month Period Associated with Significant Positive Change in Outcomes

Outcome	Level of Club Attendance			
	Attend 52 Days	Attend 122 Days	Attend 244 Days	Attend 366 Days
Increased levels of school effort	X			
Increased levels of academic confidence	X			
Increased levels of integrity	X			
Higher levels of community service involvement	X			
Increased levels of future connectedness	X			
Lower likelihood of starting to smoke marijuana	X			
Decreased levels of aggression		X		
Decreased levels of shyness		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to carry a weapon		X		
Decreased number of times stopped by the police		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to drink alcohol		X		
Lower likelihood of starting to smoke cigarettes		X		
Decrease in the number of times skipping school			X	
Lower likelihood of starting to have sexual intercourse			X	
Decreased number of negative peers as friends				X

Note: Results presented in the table are from a series of analyses with number of days attended from October 2005 through March 2008 as predictor, controlling for demographics, Winter 2006 level on the specified outcome, academic risk, delinquency risk, five variables that were predictors of participation and dummy variables for each Club. The X in the box indicates the lowest level of participation tested at which we saw a significant difference on the outcome variable of interest. n = 322.

These results are summarized in Table 11.

Taking these findings together, we suggest that setting a target of 122 to 244 visits over a 30-month period may foster a level of engagement that is most likely to promote positive outcomes, particularly in the healthy lifestyles area. In general, the outcomes that showed positive change at the lower level of attendance are primarily self-perceptions of attitudes, while the outcomes associated with change at the higher level of participation tend to be reports of less risky behaviors.

These rates over 30 months translate roughly to an engagement level of 52 to 104 days attended per year. It is important to note that attending the Clubs more frequently than the minimum established could continue to correspond to more positive outcomes for youth; these were the minimum levels that we both tested and found significant.

Summary

In addressing the question “What role do the Boys & Girls Clubs play in influencing change in teens’ outcomes?” we used quantitative data from the baseline and final surveys and Club daily attendance records to analyze the extent to which various levels of attendance at Clubs are related to changes in 31 outcomes, spread across the three broad Club-designated areas: good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles.

Results across the areas assessed indicate a positive picture. Teens who had higher levels of participation in the Clubs showed greater positive change over the course of the 30-month evaluation (from the baseline survey in Winter 2006 to the final survey in Spring 2008). On average, youth who attended the Clubs at least 122 to 244 days during that period appeared to be more likely to show positive changes on the outcomes of interest, compared with participants who attended less frequently. The qualitative data bolster these findings by providing insights from youth and staff about the practices and strategies that support the influence of the Club, as a whole, on youth in each of these outcome areas. Interviewed staff and teens spoke about the importance of the Club environment, the safe place it provides and the role of interactions with supportive adults and peers as crucial—and, in their view, more important than programming—in helping promote teens’ positive development. The Clubs also serve as a stable, familiar environment for teens, a role that may be particularly crucial as they transition to new schools and have to adjust to a new set of teachers, coaches and other adults in their school lives. The youth in this study who went to the Clubs with more frequency tended to show improvements in many of the areas in which teens typically decline as they transition from middle to high school.

In the next chapter, we summarize the key findings from the evaluation and offer lessons from these findings for Clubs and the broader field of practitioners, researchers and funders interested in supporting positive opportunities for teens during their out-of-school time.

Conclusion and Implications

Chapter V

The findings from this longitudinal evaluation of Clubs across the country offer a promising picture of the role Clubs can play in teens' lives. The data suggest that there is a confluence of things the Clubs are doing right to serve teens and sustain their influence as the teens transition from middle school to high school. Our analyses of qualitative and quantitative data indicate the Clubs are supporting and engaging teens and offering benefits to them across the areas Clubs strive to promote—good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles. The findings also provide lessons for the larger out-of-school-time field, where there is increasing interest in how to effectively serve teens—a population that has been critically underserved in low-income communities.

The preceding chapters of this report documented the ways in which teens participate in Clubs and how Clubs fit into their lives, and the positive relationships between frequency of participation and outcomes. This concluding chapter presents the main findings from the evaluation and summarizes implications for policy, programs and research.

Key Findings

The findings described in this report are drawn from data collection spanning a 30-month period in the lives of youth, from their middle school (seventh and eighth grades) to high school (ninth and tenth grades) years, allowing the evaluation to document change during an important transition period in teens' lives. The data include surveys of youth at baseline and follow-up, Club attendance records, and in-depth qualitative interviews with youth and staff, allowing the evaluation to offer a rich picture of the linkages between participation and outcomes and to delve into the nuances of how Clubs provide positive supports and meaningful opportunities for teens.

The results of the evaluation are informative for funders and policymakers interested in supporting programs that effectively garner the types of broad outcomes described in this study. They are

also helpful for practitioners who are interested in developing strong programs that can attract teens and engage them in positive experiences that promote their healthy development. Thus, in this concluding section, we use the findings summarized throughout this report to address the question “Do Boys & Girls Clubs ‘work’?” On many levels, the findings suggest that the approach they take with teens is working.

Participation in Clubs proved valuable for supporting positive development for teens in the broad areas explored in this study: good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles.

More time spent going to the Clubs over the 30-month evaluation period was linked to positive change in each of the three outcome areas tracked by the longitudinal evaluation:

1. Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes.

Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency reported:

- Higher levels of *community service* involvement,
- Increased levels of *integrity* (knowing right from wrong),
- Decreased levels of *shyness*, and
- Decreased levels of *aggression*.

2. Academic Success Outcomes. Youth who came to the Club with greater frequency were also more likely to report:

- A decrease in the number of times *skipping school*,
- Increased *academic confidence*, and
- Increased *school effort*.

3. Healthy Lifestyles Outcomes. Youth who came to the Club more frequently also reported:

- Increased levels of *future connectedness* (how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them prepare for the future),
- A decreased number of *negative peers* as friends,
- A decreased number of times *stopped by the police*, and

- A lower likelihood of starting to *carry a weapon, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, smoke marijuana* and *have sexual intercourse*.

There were no significant changes on the remaining 16 outcomes tested across the three areas.

The evaluation design did not include a comparison group; therefore, it cannot be firmly concluded that the positive changes for youth who participated with greater frequency are any different from what might be expected had they not been going to the Clubs. However, the additional findings presented throughout the report—that the Clubs are keeping teens involved and that they are experiencing the types of meaningful supports and opportunities at the Clubs that research has shown are important for healthy development—suggest that Clubs had some bearing on the teens' positive trajectory. The increases in positive attitudes toward school that are related to participation in Clubs come at a particularly vulnerable time for adolescents—the transition to high school—when commitment to school and sense of academic competence typically decline steeply, especially for young people growing up in resource-poor neighborhoods.³⁵

Analyses suggest “more is better” and establish a minimum target of roughly between 52 and 104 days per year over two years for teens to be most likely to garner benefits from participation in Clubs.

A question of interest in the out-of-school-time field is exactly what participation for older youth should look like. Given other external factors in teens' lives—such as responsibilities for younger siblings, jobs to earn money and larger amounts of schoolwork—what kind of expectation might programs such as the Boys & Girls Clubs place on their teens in terms of attendance, in order for them to be able to benefit from their participation? The findings from this evaluation provide some early indications of what these levels might be.

Boys & Girls Clubs seek to provide expectations in terms of days of attendance per year, so the evaluation tracked outcomes in relation to 52, 122, 244 and 366 visits over the 30-month period (which translates roughly to every other week, once a week, twice a week and three or more times a week).

Comparing results for youth whose attendance levels varied according to these numbers of days of attendance, we found:

- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 52 times or more over 30 months had better results on six outcomes that we tested: put more effort into school, greater confidence in ability to do well in school, higher levels of integrity, more community service, less likely to initiate marijuana use and greater feeling of connection to the future.
- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 122 times or more over 30 months had better results on six additional outcomes: lower aggression, less shy, less likely to start using alcohol, less likely to start smoking cigarettes, less likely to be stopped by the police and less likely to start carrying a weapon.
- Compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 244 times or more over 30 months had better results on an additional two outcomes: skipped fewer days of school and less likely to start having sex.
- Finally, compared with those who came fewer times, youth who came 366 times or more over 30 months had better results on one additional outcome: decreased number of negative peers.

These overall findings suggest that “more is better” in terms of attendance, and additional analyses further suggest that setting minimum participation goals of roughly between 52 and 104 days of attendance per year (corresponding to 122 and 244 visits over 30 months) for teens may help Clubs achieve the positive results found in this study. At the lower end, the results suggest positive changes on attitudes, with the higher end associated more strongly with reductions in initiation of risk behaviors. It is important to note that attending the Clubs more frequently than the established minimum can—and in most cases does—continue to correspond to greater changes on the outcomes for youth; these were the minimum levels that we both tested and found significant.

Survey and attendance data reveal a picture of teens who go to Clubs relatively frequently, even as they transition from middle to high school. Importantly, even those who attend other out-of-school-time activities feel connected to the Club.

Attendance data indicate a relatively regular group of Club attendees, though these data also show that attendance lessens as youth move from middle to high school. Over the course of the study, just over half the youth (52 percent) attended more than 122 days (roughly once a week), with almost a third (30 percent) attending 244 or more days (roughly two to three times a week) and close to 13 percent attending 366 or more days (roughly three to four days per week).

Although the frequency of attendance was significantly lower, on average, for the youth when they reached the ninth and tenth grades (11.8 days over January to March 2008) compared with the frequency of attendance over parallel months when these youth were in seventh and eighth grades (25.1 days over January to March 2006), older youth were still attending about one day a week on average (compared with about two days per week when they were younger). Two thirds (67 percent) reported having been to a Club in the four months prior to the final survey, with 86 percent indicating they plan to go back, even if they have not been in a while.

Different teens reported using the Club in different ways. For some youth, their only out-of-school activities were at the Club, while many combined their Club activities with other pastimes. A common theme described by participants was that, regardless of how much they used the Club, they felt connected to the Club and felt that even if they were not using it right now, they could go back.

Teens feel engaged by the Clubs' activities, interpersonal relationships and opportunities, and they feel safe there. These are all aspects of the Club that come together to support the outcomes Clubs strive to achieve.

Teens reported high levels of engagement in the Clubs—as measured by their involvement in activities and leadership roles; their sense of belonging;

and their view of the Clubs as fun places, with staff and youth on whom they feel they can rely and where they feel safer than in other places they spend time. These are markers of Clubs' success at providing a place where teens participate, and return to again and again.

Teens reported participating in a wide range of activities at the Clubs and getting involved in leadership roles there. Among those who had been to the Club in the past four months, over half (56 percent) reported participating in either four or five different categories of activities (informal activities, athletic programs, academic programs, other formal activities, and paid and volunteer work). About a third (36 percent) reported participating in specific leadership programming (such as Torch Club). In addition, 82 percent of those who had been to the Club in the past year reported participating in at least one leadership role at the Club (such as helping in the office, serving on a youth council or leading an activity) over that time, and half participated in at least three or more such roles.

Teens 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. Almost all youth reported that there was at least one supportive adult (96 percent) and peer (93 percent) at the Club; that at least one adult at the Club was setting high expectations for them (96 percent); and that the Club was a place where there was peer cooperation (95 percent), where there were opportunities to develop skills (90 percent), where they had fun (91 percent) and where they felt a sense of belonging (91 percent).

Teens rated the Club safer in comparison to other places where they spend time. Among youth who completed the final survey, 79 percent rated the level of safety at the Club as 8 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the most favorable. By comparison, only 54 percent rated the safety of their school this favorably, and only 38 percent had a rating that high for the neighborhood surrounding the Club.

Four factors seemed most significant in contributing to sustained teen attendance.

The findings indicate that the most significant factors (as measured at the start of the study) in relation to ongoing and sustained teen attendance were:

- The number of years that 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, and
- The variety of activities in which they engaged at the Club.

Our findings suggest that the longer they have been involved in the Club, the more frequently teens attend. While many programs struggle to attract older youth, the Clubs are able to retain members who have been involved from a young age. This suggests that building a connection with youth when they are younger is an important strategy for getting them to attend as teens.

Whether they come with friends or build friendships at the Club, the relationships they have with their peers at the Club is critical for engaging teens. Although our data do not indicate whether the teens in our study brought their friends or made their friends at the Club, creating a place that allows teens to interact in positive ways and develop and enhance friendships in a safe environment appears very important for out-of-school-time programs. The teen space Clubs provide 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 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.

Providing an array of interesting programming and getting teens involved in that variety of activities also appears to be important for keeping them

coming to the Clubs over time. 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.

Clubs use an intentional approach to working with teens.

The Clubs serve youth ages 6 to 18, but use a modified approach with their teen participants, providing supports and opportunities 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 the youth participate in, more time to socialize with peers, and an increased emphasis on leadership and role modeling.

The Clubs offer a crucial commodity for teens: a place where they feel safe, with time and space to hang out with friends and positive peers, and where there are supportive adults. All of the Clubs in the study have separate spaces for teens, either in the form of a teen-only room or a teen-only center that is separate from the rest of the Club. Clubs are open long hours after school (typically from 3 p.m. to 8 or 9 p.m.) and over the summer months. These hours allow the teens to come to the Clubs at the time that works for them.

They also offer 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.

Clubs are staffed in a way that provides positive adult support for youth. Almost all the Clubs in the study had at least one staff person whose time was devoted specifically to working with teens, and all of the Clubs had several staff who interacted with teens on a regular basis. Nearly every youth, whether they had been to a Club recently or not, felt there were adults at the Club who were supportive.

Time spent at the Clubs offered more to teens than the “sum of its programmatic parts.”

P/PV’s prior review of evaluations of discrete programs at the Boys & Girls Club suggested that Clubs’ implementation of focused programming has shown promising results in different areas, such as career development, delinquency prevention and academic success. Most of the previous evaluations of Clubs were limited to understanding the outcomes of those discrete programs, however, and did not take into account the larger ways in which the Club experiences—the staff, the place to hang out and the multitude of opportunities—might influence a positive trajectory for youth. Thus, at the heart of this study was the effort to look at participation in the Club as a whole and learn more about the ways in which teens’ experiences and exposure to the range of Club activities, staff supports, and opportunities might promote healthy development at a time of transition in youth’s lives—as they are moving from middle to high school—when many youth, particularly minorities, disengage from school and positive activities.

In addition to examining the relationship between Club participation and changes in outcomes over time, the evaluation provides insights into how Clubs work for teens. The perceptions of staff and youth are that the experiences and exposure to what the Clubs have to offer is bigger than what takes place within any one or two activities at the Clubs. It involves the relationships that teens develop and the opportunities they are exposed to more broadly, as well as the formal programming.

Teens noted specific Club programming and informal interactions with staff and peers as helpful in supporting them over time. The Clubs provide formal, discrete programs that are designed to help youth build character, achieve academically and make healthy choices. The number of activities in each of these outcome areas ranged from Club to Club, with more formal opportunities in the healthy lifestyles area, fewer in the academic area and the fewest in the citizenship and character development area. Informal programming includes the leadership opportunities that abound at the Club (beyond specific leadership programs such as Torch Club and Keystone), where teens have opportunities to provide input and serve as leaders, and where there

is the expectation that they will be role models for younger youth. The teen rooms or teen centers that all of these Clubs offer provide a space for informal discussions and “teachable moments.”

More importantly, staff and youth described the Club as a place where the staff build relationships, and said that those individual relationships create the bridge to programming; to conversations about character, school and healthy lifestyles; and to opportunities for staff to serve as role models. In our interviews, staff described how they support youth’s positive development in the three outcome areas by paying attention to youth, being there to support them, and providing both formal and informal opportunities for activities and interactions with peers and other staff. Teens similarly described the importance of the relationships with staff for learning and positive development at the Clubs. And both staff and youth perceived the staff as accessible and approachable. The teens also found supportive peers at the Club; and they described the Clubs as a place where peer pressure was not an issue, the way it could be for them at school.

Implications for Serving Teens in Out-of-School-Time Programs

In addition to this evaluation’s specific findings about the strategies and achievements of Boys & Girls Clubs, several important lessons about serving teens effectively during the out-of-school hours emerged from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the study. These lessons apply to Clubs as well as to other organizations that are striving to fill the needs of teens in low-income communities.

Providing a safe, supportive and engaging environment matters for all ages in out-of-school-time programs. But it matters more for keeping teens—who “vote with their feet”—involved.

Funders, policymakers and practitioners are all interested in successful strategies for recruiting and retaining older youth in positive out-of-school-time activities. The findings from this evaluation 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.³⁶

Programs, such as Clubs, that are successfully providing crucial supports and opportunities to older youth need to carefully construct their approach for teens. Interesting programming is important, but it must be developed in a way that corresponds to the specific and changing interests and needs of the teen population served. Adult/youth relationships are also important, but gaining the trust of teens takes time and attention on the part of staff before they are in a position to be able to really help and support teens. Teens also are more willing to engage in programs where their friends are, where they have time to hang out and where there are opportunities for them to engage in meaningful activities, such as leadership roles. In this study, teens who found these supports and opportunities at their Clubs participated with the most frequency. Teens and staff also pointed to the importance of these strategies for supporting positive and healthy development.

Funders and out-of-school-time programs should recognize that changes in outcomes take time to develop. Thus, they should be cautious when establishing goals for teen participation levels that may be too low, particularly when trying to achieve the type of broad outcomes examined in this study.

Studies of out-of-school-time programs have found that outcomes take time, and often do not become evident until a youth has participated for over 12 months, or even several years.³⁷ The findings from this evaluation echo these results.

In this evaluation, though we were able to make suggestions based on positive associations found between various levels of attendance and outcomes, the strongest finding was that “more is better.” It is important to note that, among the outcomes we assessed, it is possible that even more time in Clubs would have been related to additional positive change. The outcomes that showed positive change at the lower level of attendance are primarily self-perceptions of attitudes, while the outcomes associated with change at the higher level of participation tend to be reports of less risky behaviors, changes that typically take more time to achieve. Finally, an

important driver of positive outcomes for teens, one that is not captured wholly by frequency, may be the teens’ continued connection to positive places and relationships. Even when they are not physically showing up on a regular basis, teens feel connected to Clubs and believe they can go back.

Thus, the field should be cautious in setting attendance benchmarks that may be too low, or setting benchmarks without considering the bigger picture of what programs are offering teens. The levels of attendance associated with positive change in outcomes are offered in this study as a starting point for Clubs and other programs as they examine what outcomes they hope to achieve and how.

As important as Clubs are in teens’ lives, it is also clear that Clubs may be most appropriately one piece of teens’ extended learning environment, offering a foundation of support amidst the other things that youth do.

As reported by many of the teens, Clubs were not the sole out-of-school-time activity they were involved in. Youth reported going to other out-of-school-time activities as well. The Clubs’ flexible attendance policies and the fact that they are open well into the evenings allowed the teens to do other things and still go to the Club as they needed and wanted. This meant that teens could expand their opportunities outside of the Club, and yet they could find safe places and supportive staff that welcomed them when they returned. Many youth who did other activities still felt connected to Clubs, indicating that the Club was their “main thing.”

Creating this type of welcoming environment may be one of the ways that Clubs become and stay such an important part of youth’s lives. The youth, as they become teens, want to and should begin to engage in other activities. Yet they also want to return and connect and keep the Clubs and their staff as a support, particularly as they are transitioning to new schools and going through other changes in their lives. The flexibility the Clubs offer teens provides the crucial support they need to stay connected and healthy. This is an important part of Club culture that appears to attract and retain teens and that others should consider as they attempt to build programs that are successful for this age group.

Final Thoughts

P/PV's review of 20 years of research on Clubs, summarized in *Beyond Safe Havens*, found positive outcomes related to career development, delinquency prevention and academic achievement that resulted from the implementation of discrete programs at the Clubs. At the same time, the review suggested that the potential for Clubs to make a difference in youth's lives had not been fully tested by those evaluations of Clubs' myriad discrete programs. Targeted programs have their own mechanisms for improving youth outcomes; however, the Clubs' overall approach to working with young people and connecting them to the Clubs and staff were revealed as also critically important. Thus, the results found by studies of discrete programs with narrowly defined outcomes were not deemed indicative of the larger potential for Clubs to play a role in youth's lives. In essence, the discrete programs are not happening in a vacuum; they are part of the larger fabric of the whole Club experience, and the findings from those discrete program evaluations did not necessarily tell the whole Club story.

The data gathered for this evaluation have added to what was learned from these past studies. The findings help explain the ways in which the Club "as a whole"—including its overall environment and the supportive adult staff—promotes engagement and positive outcomes for teens, and does so across a set of outcomes that are broader than the specific targets of those many discrete programs. Beyond these discrete program offerings—designed to promote good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles—the Club's larger approach to serving teens is crucial in helping youth make positive choices in all three of these areas.

Endnotes

- 1 Eccles, Jacquelynne and Jennifer Appleton Gootman (eds.). 2002. *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; Halpern, Robert. 2005. *Confronting the Big Lie: The Need to Reframe Expectations of Afterschool Programs*. New York City: Partnership for After School Education.
- 2 For a review of the findings from studies involving Boys & Girls Clubs, see Arbreton, Amy, Jessica Sheldon and Carla Herrera. 2005. *Beyond Safe Havens: A Review and Synthesis of 20 Years of Research on Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- 3 Arbreton, Amy J.A., Molly Bradshaw, Rachel Metz and Jessica Sheldon with Sarah Pepper. 2008. *More Time for Teens: Understanding Teen Participation—Frequency, Intensity and Duration—In Boys & Girls Clubs*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- 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 Milwaukee, Panther Branch; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, 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; Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester; West End House Boys & Girls Clubs of Allston/Brighton. At each of the Clubs, staff were asked to recruit 50 seventh- and eighth-grade 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 Clubs. Club staff identified and surveyed youth who participated regularly as well as those who attended less frequently. After the Spring 2008 survey, 10 youth who had been surveyed at baseline were dropped from the evaluation when new data determined they had been in sixth grade at the start of the study.
- 5 See National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. 1999. *Risks and Opportunities: Synthesis of Studies on Adolescence*. Forum on Adolescence. Michele D. Kikpke (ed.). Washington, DC: National Academies Press. See also Horwitz, Amanda and Jason Snipes. 2008. *Supporting Successful Transitions to High School: Research Brief, Council of the Great City Schools*. Washington, DC: Council of the Great City Schools. See also Grossman, Jean Baldwin and Siobhan M. Cooney. 2009. *Paving the Way for Success in High School and Beyond: The Importance of Preparing Middle School Students for the Transition to Ninth Grade*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- 6 Table A.2 in Appendix A indicates that the teen populations in each of these Clubs ranged from about 30 to about 140 teens served daily. This represented from 18 to 44 percent of the total population reported served daily at the 10 study Clubs, with an average of 26 percent. Across all Clubs nationally, BGCA reports that 32 percent of participants are teens ages 13 to 18 (see www.bgca.org), a slightly higher figure than reported by the 10 Clubs in this study.
- 7 The baseline survey was administered between September 2005 and February 2006; the follow-up survey was administered approximately 30 months later, between February and April 2008.
- 8 We interviewed a total of 56 ninth graders, ranging from one to eight interviews per Club. These ninth graders talked with us about how they initially got involved with the Clubs, what they do at the Clubs, what they learn from staff at the Clubs and how they feel about their first year of high school. The 56 youth represent 31 percent of the total number of ninth graders in our cohort (that is, ninth graders who completed a follow-up survey). The interviewed group is representative of this larger group in terms of gender, race, academic achievement and participation in risk behaviors. Our interview sample was somewhat more likely than the overall cohort to have attended the Club for a longer period of time and to have attended more frequently in the past four weeks prior to the baseline survey. (Table B.1 in Appendix B provides more detail about the background characteristics of the interviewed youth and how they compare with the total sample.)
- 9 Because of the nature of the study, we also did not evaluate the individual programs within the Clubs. In other words, the data collection did not allow us to explicitly examine the on-the-ground quality of the activities in which the participants engaged. We expect that the quality is good because the teens are choosing to participate; however, the study does not allow for an in-depth analysis of either the Clubs or their specific programming.
- 10 Respondents were all contacted by telephone and asked to complete the survey over the phone.
- 11 Pedersen, S. and E. Seidman. 2005. "Contexts and Correlates of Out-of-School Activity Participation Among Low-Income Urban Adolescents." In J. Mahoney, R. Larson and J. Eccles (eds.), *Organized Activities as Contexts of Development: Extracurricular Activities, After-School and Community Programs*, 85–109. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- 12 The average age of youth at the time of the first survey was 13.
- 13 Table B.2 in Appendix B displays the demographics and other characteristics for the 422 youth who completed only the baseline survey in comparison to the 322 who completed both the baseline and follow-up surveys. The two groups were found to have similar characteristics on the measures assessed, with two exceptions: Those who did not complete the follow-up started the study with more stressors in the year prior to the baseline and had had a shorter tenure at the Club.
- 14 National data on BGCA membership show that 64 percent of those served by Clubs are minorities (see www.bgca.org). Because of high rates of high school dropout among Latino/a youth, we were particularly interested in including Clubs in the study that served large numbers of Latino/a youth so we could explore whether the role of Clubs was as strong for this population of youth as for others. Ultimately, we found that youth who identified themselves as Latino/a felt as engaged as those who

- did not, and that results on outcomes were similar for Latino/a and non-Latino/a youth, with frequency of participation being related to the same outcomes for both groups.
- 15 A survey of the overall BGCA population found that 55 percent of members are male and 45 percent female. See www.bgca.org/whoweare/facts.asp.
 - 16 Overall, 23 percent of youth reported receiving “mostly As,” 47 percent “mostly Bs,” 25 percent “mostly Cs,” 4 percent “mostly Ds” and 1 percent “mostly Fs.”
 - 17 These statistics are in line with statistics from BGCA 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.” Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. 1999. *Report on the 1999 National Survey of Boys & Girls Clubs Alumni (Presentation to the 93rd Annual Conference)*. New York: Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.
 - 18 Granger, Robert C. and Thomas Kane. 2004. “Improving the Quality of After-School Programs.” *Education Week*, XXIII (23).
 - 19 Weiss, Heather B., Priscilla M. D. Little and Suzanne M. Bouffard (eds.). 2005. “Participation in Youth Programs: Enrollment, Attendance, and Engagement.” In Gil G. Noam (ed.) *New Directions for Youth Development*, No. 105, 2005.
 - 20 A survey research firm conducted the follow-up surveys by telephone, not at the Clubs. This strategy was used to get high response rates and include youth even if they were not regularly attending the Club. A comparison of the 422 youth at baseline with those 322 who also completed the follow-up survey (presented in Appendix D, Table D.1) shows very similar rates, suggesting that the sample who were followed include youth with a wide range of participation rates, not only those who were high participators.
 - 21 These numbers include youth who did not come to the Club at all during that time period. If we compare only those youth who came at least one day in both periods, the numbers are 34.43 from January to March 2006 and 23.2 from January to March 2008. These changes in participation over time were similar for boys and girls and for youth who were seventh and eighth graders at the start of the study.
 - 22 Appendix D, Table D.4. provides a summary of these data.
 - 23 Each survey asked how often in the past four weeks youth had participated in a Club and other out-of-school-time programs. Staff recruited teen members to come to the Club to be part of the study to represent both high and low Club participants; thus, there were youth who reported on the baseline survey that they had not been to a Club at all in the four weeks prior to the survey.
 - 24 Harvard Family Research Project. 2008. “Thinking Big: A New Framework for Family Involvement Policy, Practice and Research.” *The Evaluation Exchange*, XIV (1, 2).
 - 25 Eccles and Gootman 2002.
 - 26 Because we were interested in the role Clubs play in keeping all youth involved, we also explored whether youth who identified themselves as Latino/a felt as engaged as those who did not. The results indicated that there were no differences.
 - 27 Arbreton et al. 2008.
 - 28 See Miller, Beth M. 2003. *Critical Hours: Afterschool Programs and Educational Success*. Brookline, MA: Miller Midzik Research Associates for the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. See also Quinn, Jane. 1999. “Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens.” *The Future of Children, When School Is Out*, 9 (2). Los Angeles: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. See also Bridgeland, John M., John J. DiIulio, Karen B. Morison. 2006. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises. See also Pedersen and Seidman 2005.
 - 29 We also explored whether duration (number of months of attendance) or retention (whether a youth had been to the Club in the past six months) was related to changes in outcomes. We found that they both were related to a smaller subset (6) of the same 15 outcomes that frequency was related to. Because frequency explained a greater number, this report focuses on the relationships between frequency and outcomes.
 - 30 A ninth outcome of interest, on-time grade progression, could not be examined in relationship to participation due to the small number of youth (12 youth, or 4 percent) who reported they were held back a grade over the study period.
 - 31 See Horwitz, Amanda and Jason Snipes. 2008. *Supporting Successful Transitions to High School: Research Brief, the Council of the Great City Schools*. Washington, DC: Council of the Great City Schools. See also Grossman and Cooney 2009. *Paving the Way for Success in High School and Beyond: The Importance of Preparing Middle School Students for the Transition to Ninth Grade*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
 - 32 Schinke, Steven P., Kristin C. Cole and Stephen R. Poulin. 2000. “Enhancing the Educational Achievement of At-Risk Youth.” *Prevention Science*, 1 (1), 51–60.
 - 33 The “other” drug use variable was created by combining across reports of use of four “other” drugs (not marijuana), because the incidence of use for each different drug was very low at the final survey (28.7 percent reported sniffing glue, sprays or inhalants; 5.3 percent reported use of steroids; 5.3 percent reported use of OxyContin; and 6.2 percent reported use of ecstasy), and thus it was not possible to separately analyze the use of each in relation to participation.

- 34 Three additional outcomes—frequency of marijuana use, frequency of alcohol use and frequency of cigarette use—were not examined because of the low frequency at both the Winter 2006 and Spring 2008 surveys.
- 35 Halpern 2005.
- 36 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*, 6.
- 37 See Huang, Denise, Barry Gibbons, Kyung Sung Kim, Charlotte Lee and Eva L. Baker. 2000. *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the L.A.'s BEST After-School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. See also Walker, Karen E. and Amy J. A. Arbreton. 2000. *After-School Pursuits: An Evaluation of Outcomes in the San Francisco Beacon Initiative*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Club Programming, Staffing And Numbers

The Clubs

The 10 Clubs in the study all had a track record of attracting and serving teens. Drawing from interviews with Club staff and a brief survey of Club directors, this appendix provides an overview of Clubs' programming, layout, hours of operation, daily usage numbers and staffing.

Programming

In addition to creating opportunities for informal interaction and Club-wide leadership roles for teens, Clubs offer formal programs and activities on a regular basis. The Clubs generally have a large and diverse offering of classes, workshops, drop-in activities, events and field trips. Programming options often include physical activities and organized sports, educational supports, art instruction, computer and other technology workshops (for example, video and music production), along with leadership programs, such as Torch and Keystone Club. Table A.1 provides examples of some specific programming offered across the Clubs in the study.

Club Layout

The Clubs differed in how their physical space was set up. Some had separate rooms for different types of activities, such as stand-alone art rooms, computer rooms or game rooms. All of the Clubs had teen-specific elements, like their own space set apart from the rest of the Club and dedicated staff just for teens, and teen-only activities. The separate teen areas often incorporated many elements of the larger Club within this one specialized area. For example, parts of the

teen space were for tutoring, doing art, working on computers or playing games. Teen centers more often than not were a multipurpose room and refuge from the larger club. The teen-only spaces were often decorated by the teens, with their own interests represented in murals or their art hanging on the walls.

Table A.2 shows which Clubs had teen rooms and which had a separate teen building that housed a teen center. The size of the space varied from large multipurpose rooms to an entire building of more than 7,500 square feet.

Staffing

On the survey of Club directors, eight Clubs provided information about their staff size. Seven of eight had staff specifically assigned to work with their teen population. Six of the eight had at least two staff assigned to work solely with teens. Seven clubs provided their staff-to-youth ratio, which ranged from 1 staff to 8 youth up to 1 to 35. The median was 1 to 15.

Daily Usage: Total and Teen

As Table A.2 also shows, the total of children and youth served by the Clubs (in 2005) during the school year ranged from 120 to 350 a day. (In the summer, the overall number served ranged from 250 to 550.) Among the numbers served during the school year, the teen population ranged from 30 to 140 a day. As a proportion of the overall population, teens ranged from less than 20 percent to a high of nearly 44 percent.

Table A.1
Examples of Programming at Boys & Girls Clubs

The Arts	Digital Media, Making Movies, Fine Arts, Dance, Teen Art, Teen Girl African Dance, Theater
Sports, Fitness & Recreation	Triple Play, Specialized Initiatives, Safe Summer Streets, Organized Club Sports (football, soccer, basketball, baseball, etc.)
Health & Life Skills	NetSmartz, SMART Moves, Passport to Manhood, Lady Panthers, Sister Pride, Teen Society, Baby Think It Over, Hot Topics, Young Miss, Cooking Club, Munch & Mingle, Gentlemen in Training, Smart Girls, Club Possible
Education & 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 & Leadership	Keystone Club, Torch Club, Club Remix, Teen Talk, Council for Unity, Teen Society, Teen Tech Team

Source: Interviews with Club staff.

Table A.2
Number of Teens Served at Boys & Girls Clubs

	Total Number Served Daily During School Year	Total Number of Teens Served Daily During School Year	Total Number of Teens Club Is Capable of Serving	% of Total That Are Teens	How Close to Reaching Max. Capacity for Teen Pop.	Teen Space
Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Marti Huizenga Boys & Girls Club	319	140	550	44%	25%	Room
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Martin Branch	300	55	100	18%	55%	Room
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Panther Branch	130	35	70	27%	50%	Room
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, Linda Vista Club	120	30	100	25%	30%	Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Omaha, South Omaha Boys & Girls Club	178	50	100	28%	50%	Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Columbia Park	220	40	60	18%	67%	Room
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club	130	50	120	38%	42%	Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester	350	100	150	29%	67%	Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Charlestown Boys & Girls Club	225	60	n/a	27%	—	Center
West End House Boys & Girls Club of Allston/Brighton	—	—	—	—	—	Room

Source: Winter 2006 survey of Club directors.

Note: A dash (—) indicates that data were not available.

Hours of Operation

Table A.3 displays the Clubs' hours of operation. During the school year, the Clubs were open after the regular school-day hours, ranging from one in the afternoon to nine at night. Three Clubs operated a little under six hours a day, five operated six hours a day and two operated seven hours a day.

Half of the Clubs in the study had weekend hours available. There were some Clubs that offered special hours for teens: For example, one Club offered Saturday hours for just their teen members, and another offered activities until

11 at night on Fridays. In addition, many Clubs created special activities that extended their hours; for example, field trips and dances were sometimes planned for weekends or later-than-normal evening hours. Staff also noted that Clubs occasionally opened earlier on days that school closed early, certain holidays and vacations. Specifically during winter and summer vacations, the Clubs modified their scheduled hours dramatically, with most Clubs operating from 9 to as many as 14 hours a day.

Table A.3
Hours of Operation

	School Year Hours	Total # Hours Open During School Year	Teen Hours	Total # Hours for Teens	Weekend Hours	Total # Weekend Hours	Summer/Vacation Hours	Total # Hours Open During Summer/Vacation
Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Marti Huizenga Boys & Girls Club	2 pm - 9 pm	7 hours	2:30 pm - 9 pm	6.5 hours	Sat Only 11 am - 5 pm	6 hours	8 am - 6 pm	10 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Panther Branch	2:15 pm - 8 pm	5.75 hours	2:15 pm - 8 pm	5.75 hours	Sat Only 10 am - 5 pm	7 hours	9 am - 6 pm	9 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth, Martin Branch	2:30 pm - 8 pm	5.5 hours	2:30 pm - 8 pm	5.5 hours	Sat Only 10 am - 5 pm	7 hours	9 am - 6 pm	9 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of Omaha, South Omaha Boys & Girls Club	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	N/A	N/A	Summer only: 7 am - 6 pm (special teen summer hours of 3 pm to 8 pm)	11 hours (5 hours)
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego, Linda Vista Club	2:30 pm - 7 pm	4.5 hours	3 pm - 8 pm	5 hours	Teen Center Only Sat Hours: 12 pm - 4 pm	4 hours	7 am - 7 pm	12 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco, Columbia Park	2 pm - 8 pm	6 hours	2 pm - 8 pm (Friday - 3 pm - 11 pm)	6 hours (8 hours)	N/A	N/A	8 am - 6 pm	10 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	Sat Only 9 am - 5 pm	8 hours	9 am - 11 pm (9 am - 5 pm for younger members and 5 pm - 11 pm for teens)	14 hours
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, Mary Ryan Boys & Girls Club	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	3 pm - 9 pm	6 hours	N/A	N/A	9 am - 5 pm for holidays and 7:30 am - 6 pm for summer	8 hours (10.5 hours)
Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Charlestown Boys & Girls Club	1 pm - 8 pm	7 hours	1 pm - 8 pm	7 hours	N/A	N/A	9 am - 5:30 pm (ages 6-12) 12 - 6 pm (ages 13-18)	8.5 hours (6 hours)
West End House Boys & Girls Club of Aliston/Brighton	1:30 pm - 8:30 pm	7 hours	1:30 pm - 8:30 pm	7 hours	N/A	N/A	Monday 8:30 am - 5:30 pm, Tuesday & Wednesday 8:30 am - 8:30 pm*, Thursday & Friday 8:30 am - Midnight* (*open past 5:30 pm on these evenings for teens ages 13 to 18)	9 hours (12 hours and 15.5 hours)

Source: Winter 2006 survey of Club directors.

Appendix B: Youth Interview and Survey Sample

In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of ninth graders in Spring 2007 (i.e., eighth graders from the originally surveyed seventh- and eighth-grade cohort). Table B.1 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.

We chose to focus our teen interviews on ninth graders so that we could hear about their transition to high school. We interviewed a total of 56 ninth graders, ranging from one to eight interviews per Club. These ninth graders talked with us about how they initially got involved with the Clubs, what they do at the Clubs, what they learn from staff at the Clubs and how they feel about their first year of high school.

The 56 youth we interviewed represent 31 percent of the total number of ninth graders in our cohort (that is, ninth graders who completed a follow-up survey). The interviewed group is representative of this larger group of ninth graders in terms of gender, race, academic achievement and participation in risk behaviors. Our interview sample was somewhat more likely than the overall ninth-grade cohort to have attended the Club for a longer period of time and to have attended more frequently in the past four weeks.

Table B.2 displays the characteristics of the baseline sample of youth along with the characteristics of the youth who completed the follow-up survey. The samples are similar on all the measures compared, with two exceptions. Mean number of stressors reported at baseline where followed (4.41) was significantly lower ($p=.08$) than the mean number of stressors where not followed (4.92). Also, how long youth had been coming to the Club at baseline where followed was significantly ($p=.016$) higher than the mean where not followed.

As the table illustrates, the subset of youth who completed the final survey is similar to those who completed only the baseline survey, indicating that the follow-up sample is representative of the baseline sample (that is, no subgroups of youth were less likely to have been reached at the follow-up period of the study).

Table B.1
Comparison of Interviewed and Non-Interviewed Ninth Graders

	Interview Group (n = 56)	Year 2 Non-Interviewed Ninth Graders (n = 124)	Is the Difference Significant? Y/N
Gender			
% Male	44.6%	47.2%	N
% Female	55.4%	52.8%	
Race			
% White	14.3%	14.6%	N
% Asian or Pacific Islander	7.1%	4.9%	
% Latino/a	25.0%	39.8%	
% American Indian/Alaskan	0.0%	3.3%	
% Black	35.7%	28.5%	
% Multiracial	17.9%	8.9%	
Free Lunch			
% Yes	83.0%	70.8%	Y: p<.10
Grades			
% Mostly As	23.2%	16.1%	N
% Mostly Bs	50.0%	52.4%	
% Mostly Cs	21.4%	22.6%	
% Mostly Ds	1.8%	3.2%	
% Mostly Fs	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%	N
% Ever Used Marijuana	8.9%	11.4%	N
% Ever Used Other Drugs	1.8%	6.5%	N
% Who Have Had Sex	12.5%	10.6%	N

Source: Winter 2006 survey of youth.

Table B.2
Comparison of Initial and Follow-Up Cohorts of Youth

	Initial Sample (n = 422)	Subset with Year Three Follow-Up Data (n = 322)	Subset with No Year Three Follow-Up Data (n = 100)
Gender			
Male	53.3%	52.3%	56.6%
Female	46.7%	47.7%	43.4%
Grade at Baseline^a			
Grade 7	51.3%	52.5%	47.5%
Grade 8	48.7%	47.5%	52.5%
Race/Ethnicity^b			
Latino/a	35.3%	34.1%	39.4%
Black	32.2%	31.3%	35.4%
White	15.0%	16.3%	11.1%
Multiracial	11.2%	11.3%	11.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.5%	5.0%	3.0%
American Indian/Alaskan	1.7%	2.2%	0.0%
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	73.0%	71.1%	79.6%
Grades			
Mostly As	22.5%	22.5%	22.2%
Mostly Bs	48.1%	47.2%	51.1%
Mostly Cs	24.3%	25.0%	22.2%
Mostly Ds	3.7%	3.9%	3.3%
Mostly Fs	1.3%	1.4%	1.1%
School-Risk Scale^c			
Average score	0.48	0.45	0.57
Delinquency-Risk Scale^d			
Average score	1.21	1.19	1.29
Number of Stressors in 12 Months^e			
Average score	4.53	4.41	4.92
Club Attendance			
Last four weeks at baseline ^f	4.33	4.26	4.54
How long coming to Club at baseline ^g	4.32	4.43	3.97

Source: Winter 2006 survey of youth.

Note: The first column presents information for all 422 youth surveyed at baseline; the second column presents the same information for the subset of 322 youth who were also surveyed at the final follow-up, in Spring 2008. The bolded means are significantly different for youth followed versus not followed.

a The mean age of youth at the baseline is just under 13 years old (12.9), with ages ranging from 10 to 15.

b Youth 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.

c This is a scale we developed to capture participants' overall school-related risk behaviors, including whether they have been suspended from school, have skipped school, or have grades of mostly Ds and Fs. "Zero" on the scale indicates they have none of these experiences, while "3" indicates they have all of them.

d This is a scale we developed to capture participation in risky, delinquency-related behaviors, including using alcohol, marijuana or other drugs; having sex; being in legal trouble; being hurt in a fight; or carrying a weapon. "Zero" on the scale indicates they have never been involved in these behaviors, while "7" indicates they have done all of them.

e Youth were asked whether they experienced any of the following 12 stressful experiences in the previous 12 months, listed in order of prevalence: friends going to different school, parent starts working, someone hurt badly, break up with boy/girlfriend, someone died, close friend moved away, youth moved, youth changed schools, someone moved into house, parents separated, parent stopped working and youth was bullied.

f Youth were asked how often they came to the Club over the last four weeks and were given the following categorical options (the numbers in parentheses following the options indicate the numerical score later assigned to each option): not at all (0); 1 or 2 times (1); 1 day per week (2); 2 days per week (3); 3-4 days per week (4); or 5 or more days per week (5).

g Youth were asked about how long they have been coming to the Club and were given the following categorical options (the numbers in parentheses following the options indicate the numerical score later assigned to each option): 1 month or less (1); 2-3 months (2); more than 3 months, but less than 1 year (3); between 1-2 years (4); more than 2 years but less than 5 (5); 5 years or more (6).

Appendix C: Outcome Measures

A total of 422 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 relationships with peers, their character strengths and their experiences at the Clubs. Related questions on the survey were compiled into six measures, called "constructs." Examples of items that comprise each of the constructs are presented in this appendix. Items used to assess risk behaviors were constructed to mirror the questions asked on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).¹

Engagement²

The degree to which youth feel engaged in and supported by the Club is an important aspect of youth participation, particularly for teens who are making choices about where they will spend their out-of-school time. Youth's feelings of engagement at the Club, and their experiences of supportive relationships and positive developmental opportunities, were measured through a series of questions on each survey. Related questions were compiled into 11 constructs. The following is a list of the constructs we measured in this area, with a sample of the type of questions or statements to which youth responded within each construct.

- **Adult support at Club**—Five questions about the number of adult staff at the Club who are available to the youth, such as "How many adult staff at the Club pay attention to what's going on in your life?"
- **Peer support at Club**—Five questions about the number of peers at the Club who are available to the youth, such as "How many youth at the Club could you talk to about personal problems?"
- **Validation and recognition**—Seven statements about whether staff are noting youth accomplishments, such as "Staff let others know when I do a good job."
- **High expectations**—Six statements about whether there is an adult at the Club who has high expectations for the youth, such as "There is an adult who always wants me to do my best."
- **Opportunity for skill development**—Six statements about whether youth are learning new things at the Club, such as "Staff encourage me to try new things."
- **Opportunity to influence the Club**—Six statements about whether staff involve youth in structuring the Club experience, such as "At the Club, staff let us help plan what we do."

- **Peer cooperation**—Five statements about how youth work together at the Club, such as "We are encouraged to help each other."
- **Belonging**—Seven statements that assess whether the youth feels that he or she belongs, such as "At the Club, I feel like my ideas count."
- **Fun at the Club**—Eight statements that assess whether youth have fun at the Club, such as "I have a good time at the Club."
- **Leadership**—Seven questions about how often the youth have been able to take on leadership roles at the Club in the last year, such as "How often have you helped plan special activities?"

Youth were also asked to rate on a 10-point scale—from 1=very dangerous to 10=very safe—how safe the Club, their school and the neighborhood surrounding the Club are.

The adult and peer support constructs ranged from 0 to 4, where 4 is the most favorable. The leadership item was a count ranging from 0 to 7, and all other constructs ranged from 1 to 4. The average for each construct, together with the percent of youth who agree or strongly agree with each (where applicable), are presented in Chapter III, Table 7. Youth rated Club supports and opportunities very favorably.

Good Character and Citizenship³

The following is a list of the six good character and citizenship constructs we measured on both surveys, with a sample of the type of statements to which youth responded within each construct. Each construct has a possible value from 1=not at all true to 4=very true.

- **Fairness**—Nine statements about whether youth behave fairly, such as "Even when my team is losing, I play fair."
- **Integrity**—Eight statements about whether youth know right from wrong, such as "I tell the truth, even if it gets me in trouble."
- **Open-mindedness**—Six 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**—Five statements about how youth get along with peers, such as "Other people my age like me."
- **Negative problem solving and conflict resolution**—Three statements about whether youth yell or hit when faced with conflict, such as "When I have problems with other people my age, I yell at them."

- **Aggression**—Three statements about whether youth talk back to adults, argue and have a bad temper, such as “Other people my age think I have a bad temper.”

In addition to the constructs, we looked at two outcomes that were measured through individual items on the survey.

- **Shyness**—One statement: “I am shy.”
- **Community service**—One question: “How often have you participated in community service in the past four months?” (Asked only on the follow-up survey in Spring 2008.)

Academic Success⁴

Youth’s academic success outcomes were measured through a series of questions on the baseline and final surveys. Eight outcomes were measured in this area. The following is a list of the five academic success constructs we measured, with a sample of the type of statements to which youth responded within each construct. Each construct has a possible value from 1=not very true to 4=very true, with 4 being the most favorable.

- **School liking**—Three statements that focus on how youth feel about school, such as “I look forward to going to school every day.”
- **School effort**—Four statements that focus on how hard youth work in school, such as “I work very hard on my schoolwork.”
- **Importance of school**—Seven statements regarding how important school is to the youth, such as “Being a good student is important to me.”
- **Teacher connectedness**—Five statements that focus on how the youth get along with teachers, such as “I usually like my teachers.”
- **Academic confidence**—Five statements about how comfortable youth are with their ability to do schoolwork, such as “I’m certain I can master the skills taught in school this year.”

Youth also reported on three academic success outcomes that we measured through single questions on the survey: report card grades, times skipping school and times being suspended.

Healthy Lifestyles⁵

Youth’s healthy lifestyle outcomes were measured through a series of questions on each of the youth surveys. Three of the healthy lifestyle outcomes were measured by asking youth a series of questions that formed healthy lifestyle constructs. The first construct has a possible value from 1 to 4, with 1=not very true to 4=very true, while the second and third each has a possible value from 1 to 5, with 1=none of them to 5=all of them.

- **Future connectedness**—Five statements about how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them get prepared for the future, such as “I do things outside of school to prepare for my future.”
- **Positive peers**—Eight statements about how many of their friends did certain favorable things (for example, being involved in school clubs, activities or sports, or thinking it is important to work hard in school), such as “Number of friends who think it is important to work hard on school work.”
- **Negative peers**—Eight statements about how many of their friends did certain unfavorable things (for example, cheating on school tests or pressuring youth to drink alcohol), such as “Number of friends who have broken into a car or building to steal something.”

In addition to these constructs, we asked youth about health-related behaviors, measured with single items:

- On each survey, youth were asked how many days in the previous week they had participated in vigorous aerobic **exercise for at least 20 minutes**, from 0=0 days to 7=7 days.
- They were also asked about contact they may have had with law enforcement in the 12 months before each survey. Youth were asked how many times they had been **stopped by the police, how many times they had been arrested and how many times they had been put on probation**. In addition, youth were asked if they had ever had a **physical fight** resulting in injuries that required medical attention, and if they had ever **carried a weapon**.
- We also asked youth about their level of involvement with specific risk behaviors: **smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana**, taking OxyContin, taking ecstasy, taking steroids, sniffing inhalants and having **sexual intercourse**. For those who’d ever had sex, we asked whether they’d **used a condom** at most recent intercourse. Involvement of surveyed youth was particularly low on the last four drug-use items. For analysis, these items were combined into a single item labeled **other drugs**.

Appendix D: Participation and Engagement

Chapter III describes the youth's participation in the Clubs over the 30-month evaluation period and presents a description of what else the teens do with their time, including programs and activities they do both within and outside of the Clubs. The tables presented in this appendix offer additional detail to the findings discussed in Chapter III.

Table D.1 displays the frequency and duration of attendance for the 322 youth who completed both baseline and follow-up surveys in comparison to the frequency and duration of the 422 youth who completed only the baseline survey. The table shows that the rates are very similar, suggesting that the sample that was followed represents a broader range of participants than just those who attend regularly.

Barriers to Club Attendance

We considered the possibility that the youth who have limited involvement in Clubs may have their time dominated by competing responsibilities, such as homework and caring for younger siblings, or by passive pursuits such as watching television. Table D.2 shows a comparison of how much time youth who have been to the Clubs in the past four months spend on these responsibilities and activities versus those who have not been to the Clubs.

Relative to those who had been to a Club in the past four months, a significantly higher percentage of youth who had not attended reported on the final survey that they were spending time caring for siblings or working for pay. In contrast, both groups of youth reported spending similar amounts of time doing their homework and watching TV.

Table D.1
Comparison of Attendance Patterns at Boys & Girls Clubs for Youth With and Without a Spring 2008 Survey

	322 Youth Surveyed at Baseline and Follow Up	422 Youth Surveyed at Baseline
Frequency:		
Number of days attended between October 2005 and March 2008		
0–11 days	10.2%	11.1%
12–51 days	16.5%	16.6%
52–121 days	21.1%	21.1%
122–243 days	22.1%	22.3%
244–365 days	17.4%	16.1%
366–576 days	12.7%	12.8%
Duration:		
Months with at least one day of attendance between October 2005 and March 2008		
0 months	1.9%	1.9%
1–4 months	7.4%	9.0%
5–7 months	10.9%	11.6%
8–12 months	16.5%	19.0%
13–17 months	14.6%	14.7%
18–26 months	27.0%	24.2%
27–30 months	21.7%	19.7%

Source: Clubs' attendance data over 30-month evaluation period.

Table D.2**Comparison of Time Spent on Homework, Watching Television and Caring for Siblings for Those Who Attended the Club in the Last Four Months of the Study Versus Those Who Did Not**

Time Spent in Competing Activities	Attended Club in Four Months Prior to Survey (n = 217)	Did Not Attend Club in Four Months Prior to Survey (n = 105)
Time Spent on Homework		
None	3.7%	6.7%
Less than 1 hour per day	8.8%	11.5%
1 hour per day	29.6%	36.5%
2 hours per day	36.1%	26.0%
3 hours per day	16.7%	10.6%
4+ hours per day	5.1%	8.7%
Time Watching Television		
None	5.6%	16.5%
Less than 1 hour per day	10.2%	9.7%
1 hour per day	25.0%	13.6%
2 hours per day	30.1%	23.3%
3 hours per day	17.6%	18.4%
4+ hours per day	11.6%	18.4%
Time Caring for Siblings		
None	31.5%	24.8%
1–2 times/month	6.0%	7.6%
1–2 times/week	11.1%	19.0%
3–4 times/week	13.4%	21.9%
5 +/week	38.0%	26.7%
Worked at a Job for Pay		
Yes	28.7%	39.4%

Source: Spring 2008 follow-up survey.

Participation in Types of Activities In and Out of the Clubs

The study was also designed to understand what types of activities teens are involved in while they are at the Clubs and whether those differ from their activities outside of the Club. To learn about the specific activities they do in programs, youth who attended the Boys & Girls Club in the four months prior to the final survey were asked whether or not they did each of 15 types of activities at the Club. All youth (whether or not they had attended the Club in the previous four months) were also asked whether they did those same activities outside of the Club during that same time period. These activities were grouped into five categories: informal

activities, athletic programs, academic programs, other programs, and paid and volunteer work.

Table D.3 presents the proportion of youth who had been to the Club in the past four months who did each of these activities—whether inside the Club, outside the Club, or both. For comparison, it also presents the proportion of youth who had not been to the Club in the past four months who did each of these activities outside of the Club. As described in Chapter III of the report, a greater proportion of youth who had been to the Club in the past four months tended to have done each of the activities—whether inside or outside of the Club. The two exceptions were: working at a job for pay and participation in a class in math, science or another academic subject.

Table D.3
Participation in Activities In and Out of the Club in Past Four Months

	Attended Club in Four Months Prior to Survey (n = 217)				Did Not Attend Club in Four Months Prior to Survey (n = 105)	
	At Club Only	Outside Club Only	Both In and Out of Club	Did Not Do	Outside Club Only	Did Not Do
Informal Activities						
Hang out or play with friends	2.4%	6.2%	89.5%	1.9%	89.4%	10.6%
Use technology for fun or pleasure	8.6%	14.8%	65.1%	11.5%	76.9%	23.1%
Read a book, magazine or newspaper	4.3%	25.4%	50.7%	19.6%	78.8%	21.2%
Spend time talking one-on-one with an adult	5.8%	13.9%	55.3%	25.0%	66.4%	33.6%
Athletic Programs						
Play sports on a team or participate in a fitness program	10.0%	6.7%	57.4%	25.8%	56.7%	43.3%
Attend health or nutrition programs	7.2%	12.0%	16.3%	64.6%	19.2%	80.8%
Academic Programs						
Use technology for school or academics	9.6%	17.7%	61.2%	11.5%	85.6%	14.4%
Go to a program where you got homework help or tutoring	17.7%	11.5%	34.4%	36.4%	39.4%	60.6%
Attend a class or activity in math, science or some other academic subject	13.5%	24.5%	17.8%	44.2%	61.5%	38.5%
Other Programs						
Participate in activities or discussions about making good choices in life	15.3%	9.1%	40.2%	35.4%	45.2%	54.8%
Participate in leadership programs	18.2%	4.3%	17.7%	59.8%	15.5%	84.5%
Attend a class or activity in art or crafts	23.9%	6.7%	22.5%	46.9%	38.1%	61.9%
Attend a class or activity in music, drama, dance or performing arts	13.9%	12.0%	19.1%	55.0%	39.4%	60.6%
Paid and Volunteer Work						
Work for pay	4.8%	18.2%	5.7%	71.3%	39.4%	60.6%
Volunteer to do community service	9.6%	9.6%	28.7%	52.2%	26.0%	74.0%

Source: Spring 2008 follow-up survey.

Table D.4
Participation in Activity Categories In and Out of the Club in Last Four Months

Number of Activity Categories Youth Participated in During Last Four Months	Attended Club (n = 217)		Did Not Attend Club (n = 105)
	At Club	In and Out of Club	Outside of Club
No activities	6.4%	0.9%	1.9%
1 category of activities	1.8%	0.5%	4.8%
2 categories of activities	12.0%	4.2%	4.8%
3 categories of activities	23.5%	18.0%	25.7%
4 categories of activities	26.3%	30.9%	31.4%
5 categories of activities	30.0%	45.6%	31.4%

Source: Spring 2008 follow-up survey.

Table D.4 presents the degree to which youth participate across the range of these categories of activities, inside and outside of a Club. As Table D.3. displays, teens participated in a wide range of activities at the Clubs. Among those who had been to the Club in the past four months, more than half (56 percent) reported participating in four or five different categories of activities. Only 8 percent reported participating in one or no activity types at the Club in the prior months. When non-Club activities are considered as well, 99 percent of Club youth participated in multiple types of activities in the prior four months. In addition, youth who were not currently active at the Club continued to be active outside of the Club. Among youth who did not attend the Club in the prior four months, 93 percent had engaged in multiple activity types during those months.

Appendix E: Outcomes Analyses

In addressing the question, “What role do the Boys & Girls Clubs play in influencing change in teens’ school outcomes?” we used quantitative data from the baseline and final surveys and Club attendance records to analyze the extent to which various levels of attendance at Clubs are related to change in 31 outcomes, spread across each of the three broad Club-designated outcome areas: good character and citizenship, academic success and healthy lifestyles.

For each outcome of interest, we looked at whether the amount of attendance at the Boys & Girls Club was related to change in the outcome from the baseline survey (Winter 2006) to the final survey (Spring 2008). It is important to note, however, that, absent a control group, the findings are suggestive of the benefits of Club participation, but not conclusive. This is because the design of the study does not allow us to account for motivational factors that may have affected the outcomes and also the likelihood of participating more over time. For example, a positive relationship between participation and improved performance may not necessarily mean that high rates of participation lead to bigger improvements in youth; instead, these improvements may have resulted from the same youth characteristics that led the youth to participate more. In this example, there may be an unmeasured variable, such as positive goal orientation, that would lead a youth to do better over time and also lead a youth to be more likely to participate.

The analyses conducted were Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) where outcomes were continuous, Logistic Regression where outcomes were dichotomous and Poisson Regression where outcomes were counts with clustering at zero. In each case, 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 at baseline. From the baseline survey, the youth’s participation in leadership opportunities, 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 in the four weeks prior to the survey are included as control variables, as these variables were significant predictors of participation. The youth’s Winter 2006 rating of each outcome of interest (i.e., their baseline rating) was also included in the regression so that we could explore the relationship of attendance to change on that outcome. To counter as much bias toward participation as we could, we examined which factors that were measured at baseline were significantly related to participation and took account of those factors in the outcomes analyses that we conducted.

A dummy variable for each Club was also included in the analyses as a control variable. 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.

We first examined the linear relationship between number of days attended and change in each outcome. By linear relationship, we mean that each additional day attended results in a change in the outcome. We also tested for a threshold effect, using two days per month or more, one day per week or more, two days per week or more, and three days per week or more as “threshold” points to compare to lower levels of attendance. Because the time period of interest is 30 months, this translates as follows: Two days per month is estimated at 52 days; once per week is estimated at 122 days; twice per week is 244 days; and three times per week is 366 days. When a threshold effect was found, it means that only youth that met or exceeded that level of attendance showed significant change compared to their lower-attending counterparts.

Significant relationships between the attendance variable and the outcome of interest are noted as follows: + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. These numbers (called levels of significance or p-values) are the probability that the averages on the outcomes for youth who attend at different levels of participation are the same. We call the finding “statistically significant” if the likelihood that the effect is really zero is less than 10 percent ($p < 0.10$). This 10 percent level is selected (as opposed to the 5 percent level used in many fields) to increase our power to detect a legitimately effective program.

The results of the analyses presented in the following tables were used as the basis for reporting the findings in Chapter IV. These tables present the analyses conducted to test the significance of frequency as a linear variable. The analyses testing each of the threshold levels are available from the author by request.

Table E.1**Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes**

(Standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Fairness	Integrity	Open-mindedness	Social Competence
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	.23 *** (.26)	.25 *** (.27)	.05 (.07)	.10 *** (.20)
Days attended	1.51 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.05)	4.40 x 10 ⁻⁴ + (.13)	1.58 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.05)	-9.24 x 10 ⁻⁵ (-.04)
Male	-.13 ** (-.15)	-.11 * (.11)	-.10 + (-.11)	1.17 x 10 ⁻⁴ (1.80 x 10 ⁻⁴)
Black	.10 (.12)	-.02 (-.02)	.12 + (.13)	.04 (.07)
Other race	.06 (.06)	.01 (.01)	-.04 (-.04)	-.09 + (-.12)
Grade 7	-.06 (-.07)	-.04 (-.04)	-.05 (-.06)	-5.56 x 10 ⁻⁴ (-8.59 x 10 ⁻⁴)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	.01 (.06)	.01 (.04)	.02 (.08)	.01 (.06)
Baseline ratings of number of friends attend BGC	.02 (.07)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.07)	2.27 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	-.02 (-.05)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.06)
Receive free lunch	.04 (.04)	-.13 + (-.11)	.01 (.01)	-.04 (-.06)
Baseline rating of academic risk	-.06 (-.10)	-.06 (-.08)	.01 (.01)	-.09 ** (-.19)
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	.02 (.05)	.03 (.08)	-.01 (-.04)	2.12 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	-.02 (-.08)	-.02 (-.07)	-.04 * (-.13)	.01 (.07)
Baseline rating of self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	N/A	.07 (.07)	.17 ** (.18)	.07 (.10)
Broward County	.07 (.05)	.02 (.01)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Charlestown	-.08 (-.06)	.05 (.03)	.05 (.03)	.06 (.06)
Columbia Park	-.19 + (-.13)	-.21 + (-.13)	-.11 (-.07)	-.07 (-.06)
Dorchester	-.09 (-.07)	-.08 (-.06)	2.54 x 10 ⁻³ (1.89 x 10 ⁻³)	.07 (.08)
Mary Ryan	-.20 (-.12)	-.02 (-.01)	-.13 (-.07)	.03 (.02)
Panther	.10 (.06)	.04 (.02)	.12 (.06)	.05 (.04)
Martin	-.18 (-.11)	-.05 (-.03)	-.03 (-.02)	.07 (.06)
San Diego	-.08 (-.06)	-.09 (-.05)	-.07 (-.05)	.04 (.04)
West End House	-.02 (-.01)	.03 (.02)	.03 (.02)	-.07 (-.06)
Intercept	2.76 ***	2.39 ***	2.85 ***	3.17 ***
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.1447	.1151	.1035	.1000
Sample size	317	317	318	320

These are coefficients from OLS regressions (odds ratios from a Poisson regression for community service) where youth's outcomes are modeled as a function of their demographics (grade level, ethnicity, receipt of free lunch and gender), length of time youth attended the Club prior to the baseline survey, academic risk at baseline, delinquency risk at baseline, days attended Club between October 2005 and March 2008, value on the outcome variable at baseline, and Club. Youth's baseline rating of leadership experience, number of friends attending the Club, diversity of youth activities at Club, and self-rating of whether youth

Table E.1 continued**Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Good Character and Citizenship Outcomes**

(Standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Negative Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution	Aggression	Shyness	Community Service
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	.22 *** (.22)	.24 *** (.23)	.30 *** (.30)	N/A
Days attended	-2.31 x 10 ⁻⁴ (-.04)	-4.71 x 10 ⁻⁴ (-.08)	-1.32 x 10 ⁻³ * (-.17)	1.0017 *** (1.28)
Male	.12 (.08)	.04 (.03)	.08 (.03)	.96 (.98)
Black	.12 (.08)	.08 (.04)	-.07 (-.03)	1.27 (1.12)
Other race	-.23 + (-.13)	-.10 (-.05)	-.18 (-.07)	1.54 * (1.20)
Grade 7	.06 (.04)	.10 (.06)	-.13 (-.06)	.71 ** (.84)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	-.01 (-.02)	-.03 (-.09)	-.05 + (-.12)	1.02 (1.05)
Baseline ratings of number of friends attend BGC	-.02 (-.03)	-.01 (-.01)	-.07 (-.07)	1.08 (1.09)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	-.02 (.03)	.03 (.04)	.13 * (.14)	1.05 (1.07)
Receive free lunch	.01 (.01)	.03 (.02)	-.04 (-.02)	1.35 * (1.14)
Baseline rating of academic risk	.07 (.06)	.15 + (.12)	-.08 (-.05)	.87 (.91)
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	.04 (.07)	.01 (.02)	-.03 (-.03)	1.00 (1.00)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	-2.81 x 10 ⁻³ (-.01)	.04 (.07)	-.02 (-.02)	1.13 ** (1.22)
Baseline rating of self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	-.05 (-.03)	-.06 (-.04)	.11 (.05)	1.07 (1.04)
Broward County	-.28 (-.12)	-.33 + (-.13)	.87 *** (.25)	+ (1.12)
Charlestown	.33 + (.14)	.04 (.01)	.46 + (.14)	.81 (.93)
Columbia Park	.15 (.06)	.02 (.01)	.80 ** (.22)	.85 (.95)
Dorchester	-.14 (-.06)	-.18 (-.07)	.38 (.12)	.53 * (.80)
Mary Ryan	-.12 (-.04)	-.24 (-.07)	.48 (.11)	.56 + (.86)
Panther	-.26 (-.09)	-.33 (-.10)	.62 * (.14)	.83 (.95)
Martin	-.07 (-.02)	.06 (.02)	.99 ** (.24)	.30 *** (.73)
San Diego	-.08 (-.03)	-.29 (-.11)	.76 ** (.22)	.72 (.90)
West End House	-.21 (-.08)	-.41 + (-.15)	.55 * (.15)	.78 (.93)
Intercept	2.00 ***	1.65 ***	1.03 *	N/A
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.1166	.0910	.1444	.1094
Sample size	317	317	316	319

behaves fairly are included as control variables because they were predictors of attendance. Data derive from youth surveys and Club attendance information. Excluded categories are females, Latino/a youth, eighth graders, no free lunch, and Omaha. A separate regression was run for each outcome. The standardized coefficients from the Poisson regression are standardized odds ratios.

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

Table E.2
Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Academic Success Outcomes

(Standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	School Liking	School Effort	Importance of School	Teacher Connectedness
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	.17 *** (.21)	.22 *** (.26)	.09 ** (.17)	.17 *** (.24)
Days attended	4.18x10 ⁻⁴ (.08)	4.96 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.13)	2.17 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.09)	1.83 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.05)
Male	.14 + (.10)	-.07 (-.06)	.02 (.03)	-.03 (-.03)
Black	.17 (.11)	3.16 x 10 ⁻³ (2.84 x 10 ⁻³)	.06 (.09)	.06 (.06)
Other race	-.11 (-.07)	.11 (.09)	1.12 x 10 ⁻³ (1.42 x 10 ⁻³)	.07 (.06)
Grade 7	-.18 * (-.12)	-.07 (-.06)	-.05 (-.08)	-.11 + (-.10)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	-.01 (-.02)	-2.46 x 10 ⁻³ (-.01)	.01 (.08)	-.01 (-.06)
Baseline rating of number of friends attend BGC	-1.79x10 ⁻³ (-2.94 x 10 ⁻³)	.03 (.07)	.03 (.09)	.01 (.03)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	.03 (.06)	.01 (.02)	-.02 (-.08)	.05 * (.13)
Receive free lunch	-.21 * (-.13)	.04 (.04)	-.06 (-.07)	-7.53 x 10 ⁻⁴ (-6.45 x 10 ⁻⁴)
Baseline rating of academic risk	-.09 (-.09)	-.07 (-.09)	-.06 * (-.13)	-.16 *** (-.21)
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	.01 (.02)	-2.14 x 10 ⁻³ (-.01)	-.01 (-.05)	-.01 (-.04)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	-.03 (-.07)	-.04 * (-.12)	-6.15 x 10 ⁻³ (-.03)	-.02 (-.05)
Baseline self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	.17 * (.12)	-.01 (-.01)	.10 * (.15)	.09 (.08)
Broward County	.06 (.02)	.12 (.07)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.03)
Charlestown	-.12 (-.05)	-.06 (-.03)	.02 (.02)	.08 (.05)
Columbia Park	-.44 ** (-.18)	-.32 * (-.18)	-.17 * (-.16)	-.19 + (-.12)
Dorchester	-.26 (-.12)	-.07 (-.04)	-.15 + (-.16)	.02 (.01)
Mary Ryan	.25 (.09)	.10 (.05)	.07 (.06)	.04 (.02)
Panther	.09 (.03)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.15 (.07)
Martin	.23 (.08)	-.14 (-.07)	.04 (.03)	.18 (.09)
San Diego	-.20 (-.08)	-.04 (-.02)	-.01 (-.01)	-.06 (-.04)
West End House	-.32 + (-.12)	-.04 (-.02)	-.09 (-.07)	-.13 (-.07)
Intercept	2.43 ***	2.86 ***	3.13 ***	2.75 ***
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.1850	.1097	.1378	.2102
Sample size	314	314	317	314

Table E.2 continued
Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Academic Success Outcomes

(Standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Academic Confidence	Report Card Grades	Number of Times Skipping School in Past 12 Months	Number of Times Being Suspended in Past 12 Months
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	.07 * (.14)	0.37 *** (0.36)	1.31 *** (1.22)	1.22 *** (1.25)
Days attended	3.27 x 10 ⁻⁵ (.01)	-9.49x10 ⁻⁵ (-0.02)	.998 * (.77)	1.00 (.94)
Male	.06 (.09)	0.03 (0.02)	.93 (.97)	1.03 (1.01)
Black	-.05 (-.06)	-0.07 (-0.04)	.62 * (.79)	1.48 (1.21)
Other race	-.07 (-.08)	-0.15 (-0.07)	.53 ** (.76)	.60 (.80)
Grade 7	-.12 ** (-.17)	0.16 (0.09)	.96 (.98)	1.33 (1.15)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	2.01 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)	-0.03 (-0.09)	.93 * (.84)	.96 (.91)
Baseline rating of number of friends attend BGC	.02 (.06)	-0.06 (-0.07)	.93 (.91)	.99 (.99)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	-1.26 x 10 ⁻³ (-4.54 x 10 ⁻³)	-6.25x10 ⁻³ (-0.01)	1.07 (1.09)	1.05 (1.07)
Receive free lunch	-.03 (-.04)	0.11 (0.06)	2.04 *** (1.37)	1.58 (1.23)
Baseline rating of academic risk	-.06 + (-.11)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	-.03 (-.10)	0.09 * (0.14)	1.06 (1.08)	1.15 * (1.20)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	3.42 x 10 ⁻³ (.02)	0.03 (0.06)	1.05 (1.09)	1.02 (1.03)
Baseline self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	.06 (.08)	0.02 (0.01)	.58 *** (.76)	.91 (.95)
Broward County	.02 (.02)	-0.32 (-0.11)	.93 (.98)	.36 + (.73)
Charlestown	.02 (.02)	-0.16 (-0.06)	1.45 (1.13)	.58 (.83)
Columbia Park	-.07 (-.06)	0.12 (0.04)	1.37 (1.10)	1.05 (1.01)
Dorchester	.10 (.10)	0.21 (0.08)	2.09 * (1.30)	1.02 (1.01)
Mary Ryan	.15 (.11)	-0.12 (-0.03)	.60 (.88)	1.66 (1.14)
Panther	.07 (.05)	-0.31 (-0.09)	1.26 (1.06)	.57 (.87)
Martin	.12 (.09)	-0.29 (-0.09)	1.04 (1.01)	.21 + (.69)
San Diego	.06 (.06)	-0.35 (-0.12)	.78 (.93)	.46 (.79)
West End House	.02 (.01)	-0.36 (-0.12)	1.11 (1.03)	.42 (.78)
Intercept	3.35 ***	1.46 ***	N/A	N/A
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.0631	0.1817	.1356	.1648
Sample size	315	283	302	294

These are coefficients from OLS regressions (Poisson for number of times skipping school and number of times being suspended) where youth's outcomes are modeled as a function of their demographics (grade level, ethnicity, receipt of free lunch and gender), length of time youth attended the Club prior to the baseline survey, baseline academic risk, baseline delinquency risk, days attended BGC between October 2005 and March 2008, baseline value on the outcome variable, and Club. Youth's baseline rating of leadership experience, number of friends attending BGC, diversity of youth activities at Club, and self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly are included as control variables because they were predictors of attendance. Data derive from youth surveys and Club attendance information. Excluded categories are females, Latino/a youth, eighth graders, no free lunch, and Omaha. A separate regression was run for each outcome. The standardized coefficients from the Poisson regressions are standardized odds ratios.

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

Table E.3**Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Healthy Lifestyles Outcomes, Part I**

(Standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Future Connectedness	Positive Peers	Negative Peers	Days of Vigorous Aerobic Exercise for 20 Minutes in Last Week
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	.14 *** (.23)	.23 *** (.27)	.10 * (.13)	.25 *** (.25)
Days attended	4.31 x 10 ⁻⁴ * (.16)	1.34 x 10 ⁻⁴ (.03)	-2.97 x 10 ⁻⁴ (-.08)	1.19 x 10 ⁻³ (.07)
Male	-.02 (-.03)	-.02 (-.02)	.11 + (.11)	1.18 *** (.26)
Black	.01 (.02)	-.02 (-.01)	-.13 (-.12)	-.35 (-.08)
Other race	-.07 (-.08)	.15 (.09)	-.14 + (-.12)	-.04 (-.01)
Grade 7	-.12 ** (-.16)	-.07 (-.05)	-.04 (-.04)	-.15 (-.03)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	1.76 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)	1.33 x 10 ⁻³ (4.38 x 10 ⁻³)	-.01 (-.04)	.04 (.04)
Baseline rating of number of friends attend BGC	.02 (.07)	-.02 (-.03)	-.03 (-.06)	-.03 (-.01)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	.01 (.05)	-.01 (-.02)	2.62 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)	.10 (.06)
Receive free lunch	-.04 (-.04)	-.05 (-.03)	.11 (.09)	-.22 (-.04)
Baseline rating of academic risk	-.04 (-.07)	-.10 (-.09)	.02 (.02)	.13 (.04)
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	-.02 (-.07)	-.02 (-.03)	.02 (.05)	-.12 (-.07)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	.01 (.05)	.04 + (.09)	3.18 x 10 ⁻³ (.01)	-.05 (-.04)
Baseline self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	.07 (.09)	.16 + (.11)	-.05 (-.05)	.16 (.04)
Broward County	-.01 (-.01)	.10 (.04)	-.13 (-.08)	.22 (.03)
Charlestown	.11 (.09)	-.11 (-.05)	.10 (.06)	-.52 (-.07)
Columbia Park	-.06 (-.05)	-.35 * (-.15)	.17 (.11)	-.16 (-.02)
Dorchester	-.07 (-.06)	-.19 (-.09)	.07 (.05)	.15 (.02)
Mary Ryan	.13 (.09)	.03 (.01)	.06 (.03)	.51 (.06)
Panther	.04 (.03)	.51 * (.18)	.33 * (.17)	-.04 (-4.45 x 10 ⁻³)
Martin	-.04 (-.03)	-.08 (-.03)	.10 (.06)	.05 (.01)
San Diego	-.08 (-.06)	.11 (.05)	.04 (.02)	-1.22 * (-.17)
West End House	.02 (.02)	-.08 (-.03)	.11 (.07)	-.37 (-.05)
Intercept	2.93 ***	2.21 ***	1.47 ***	2.07 *
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.1568	.1876	.0461	.1073
Sample size	320	318	318	316

These are coefficients from OLS regressions where youth's outcomes are modeled as a function of their demographics (grade level, ethnicity, receipt of free lunch and gender), length of time youth attended BGC prior to the baseline survey, baseline academic risk, baseline delinquency risk, days attended BGC between October 2005 and March 2008, baseline value on the outcome variable, and Club. Youth's baseline rating of leadership experience, number of friends attending BGC, diversity of youth activities at Club, and self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly are included as control variables because they were predictors of attendance. Data derive from youth surveys and Club attendance information. Excluded categories are females, Latino/a youth, eighth graders, no free lunch, and Omaha. A separate regression was run for each outcome.

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

Table E.4
Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Healthy Lifestyles, Part II

(Odds ratios with standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Number of Times Stopped by Police in 12 Months	Ever Arrested in 12 Months	Ever on Probation in 12 Months	Initiation of Having a Physical Fight Resulting in Injuries Requiring Medical Attention	Initiation of Carrying a Weapon
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	** (1.28)	2.40 (.09)	* (.17)	N/A	N/A
Days attended	.997 * (.64)	1.00 (-.20)	1.00 (-.24)	1.00 (-.07)	.996 * (-.33)
Male	1.32 (1.15)	1.53 (.12)	1.21 (.05)	1.97 (.19)	*** (.38)
Black	.52 + (.73)	1.19 (.05)	1.16 (.04)	1.83 (.16)	.58 (-.14)
Other race	.35 *** (.64)	0.64 (-.11)	1.03 (6.37 x 10 ⁻³)	1.50 (.10)	.29 * (-.30)
Grade 7	1.52 + (1.23)	1.04 (.01)	1.36 (.08)	1.92 (.18)	* (.24)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	.93 (.84)	1.00 (2.84 x 10 ⁻³)	1.04 (.06)	.72 ** (-.43)	1.06 (.08)
Baseline rating of number of friends attend BGC	.90 (.88)	1.11 (.07)	0.97 (-.02)	.92 (-.06)	1.00 (3.32 x 10 ⁻³)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	1.07 (1.09)	1.16 (.11)	1.27 (.17)	.95 (-.04)	1.14 (.09)
Receive free lunch	.96 (.98)	2.67 (.24)	1.72 (.13)	1.34 (.07)	1.19 (.04)
Baseline rating of academic risk	1.24 (1.16)	2.31 * (.30)	2.34 ** (.31)	1.59 (.16)	+ (.16)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	1.07 (1.12)	.97 (-.03)	1.01 (.01)	1.25 (.20)	1.03 (.03)
Baseline self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	.89 (.94)	1.91 (.18)	.85 (-.04)	.71 (-.09)	.68 (-.11)
Broward County	.92 (.97)	N/A	N/A	1.10 (.02)	.27 + (-.22)
Charlestown	4.14 ** (1.58)	N/A	N/A	.59 (-.09)	1.64 (.09)
Columbia Park	2.75 + (1.35)	N/A	N/A	1.22 (.03)	.80 (-.04)
Dorchester	4.00 ** (1.63)	N/A	N/A	.35 (-.21)	.62 (-.10)
Mary Ryan	1.87 (1.18)	N/A	N/A	.77 (-.04)	.48 (-.10)
Panther	0.82 (0.95)	N/A	N/A	.44 (-.12)	.89 (-.02)
Martin	1.81 (1.17)	N/A	N/A	1.46 (.05)	1.14 (.02)
San Diego	3.02 + (1.41)	N/A	N/A	1.40 (.06)	1.28 (.04)
West End House	1.22 (1.06)	N/A	N/A	0.78 (-.04)	.96 (-.01)
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.1656	.1324	.1735	.1951	.2667
Sample size	314	313	312	279	287

These are odds ratios from logistic regressions (odds ratios for Poisson regressions for number of times stopped by police) where youth's outcomes are modeled as a function of their demographics (grade level, ethnicity, receipt of free lunch and gender), length of time youth attended BGC prior to the baseline survey, baseline academic risk, baseline delinquency risk, days attended BGC between October 2005 and March 2008, baseline value on the outcome variable, and Club. Youth's baseline rating of leadership experience, number of friends attending BGC, diversity of youth activities at Club, and self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly are included as control variables because they were predictors of attendance. Data derive from youth surveys and Club attendance information. Excluded categories are females, Latino/a youth, eighth graders, no free lunch and Omaha. A separate regression was run for each outcome. The standardized coefficients from the Poisson regressions are standardized odds ratios. The R² for the logistic regressions are max rescaled R².

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

Table E.5
Relationship Between Number of Days Attended BGC and Change in Healthy Lifestyles, Part III

(Odds ratios with standardized coefficients are in parentheses.)

Variable	Initiation of Smoking Cigarettes	Initiation of Drinking Alcohol	Initiation of Smoking Marijuana	Initiation of Other Drug Use	Initiation of Sexual Intercourse	Use of Condom at Last Sex
Baseline rating on outcome of interest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Days attended	.996 * (-.33)	1.00 (-.10)	.997 + (-.25)	1.00 (-.12)	1.00 (-.14)	1.00 (-.11)
Male	1.53 (.12)	1.25 (.06)	1.04 (.01)	.52 (-.18)	1.72 + (.15)	* (.83)
Black	1.28 (.07)	.53 (-.17)	.59 (-.14)	1.57 (.12)	1.68 (.13)	.10 + (-.64)
Other race	1.28 (.06)	.55 (-.15)	.83 (-.04)	1.20 (.04)	.81 (-.05)	.15 (-.38)
Grade 7	.91 (-.03)	.62 (-.13)	.66 (-.11)	1.67 (.14)	.69 (-.10)	1.30 (.07)
Baseline rating of leadership experience	1.01 (.01)	1.00 (-.01)	1.01 (.01)	1.17 (.21)	1.10 (.13)	1.08 (.10)
Baseline rating of number of friends attend BGC	.89 (-.08)	.95 (-.03)	1.19 (.12)	.70 (-.23)	1.03 (.02)	1.83 (.40)
Baseline rating of diversity of youth activities at Club	.94 (-.04)	.77 + (-.18)	.92 (-.06)	.75 (-.21)	.92 (-.06)	.68 (-.28)
Receive free lunch	1.53 (.10)	1.07 (.02)	* (.27)	1.94 (.16)	1.26 (.06)	2.90 (.24)
Baseline rating of academic risk	1.87 * (.21)	* (.21)	+ (.16)	+ (.20)	* (.20)	.22 * (-.60)
Baseline rating of delinquency risk	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	.76 (-.23)
Baseline rating of prior club tenure	1.14 (.13)	1.02 (.02)	1.17 (.13)	1.24 (.18)	.90 (-.09)	.71 (-.31)
Baseline self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly	.57 (-.16)	.55 + (-.17)	.54 + (-.17)	.73 (-.09)	.59 (-.15)	1.35 (.08)
Broward County	.22 + (-.27)	.27 + (-.22)	.10 ** (-.41)	1.37 (.05)	.32 (-.19)	N/A
Charlestown	1.75 (.10)	.99 (-2.82 x 10 ⁻³)	.79 (-.04)	1.77 (.09)	+ (.21)	N/A
Columbia Park	1.38 (.05)	.72 (-.06)	1.41 (.06)	4.64 (.26)	+ (.18)	N/A
Dorchester	.68 (-.07)	.39 (-.16)	1.24 (.04)	2.52 (.18)	1.55 (.08)	N/A
Mary Ryan	.17 + (-.22)	.30 (-.16)	.67 (-.05)	.25 (-.20)	1.74 (.06)	N/A
Panther	.61 (-.07)	.40 (-.14)	.32 (-.16)	1.05 (.01)	.85 (-.02)	N/A
Martin	.78 (-.04)	.80 (-.03)	1.06 (8.28 x 10 ⁻³)	1.07 (.01)	2.12 (.11)	N/A
San Diego	.68 (-.06)	.60 (-.09)	.24 + (-.23)	3.40 (.22)	1.39 (.06)	N/A
West End House	.20 + (-.27)	.38 (-.15)	.33 (-.19)	2.11 (.12)	1.61 (.07)	N/A
R ² or Pseudo R ²	.2282	.2295	.2505	.1468	.1982	.3700
Sample size	260	218	300	252	282	102

These are odds ratios from logistic regressions (odds ratios for Poisson regressions for frequency of cigarette smoking, frequency of drinking alcohol and frequency of smoking marijuana) where youth's outcomes are modeled as a function of their demographics (grade level, ethnicity, receipt of free lunch and gender), length of time youth attended BGC prior to the baseline survey, baseline academic risk, baseline delinquency risk, days attended BGC between October 2005 and March 2008, baseline value on the outcome variable, and Club. Youth's baseline rating of leadership experience, number of friends attending BGC, diversity of youth activities at Club and self-rating of whether youth behaves fairly are included as control variables because they were predictors of attendance. Data derive from youth surveys and Club attendance information. Excluded categories are females, Latino/a youth, eighth graders, no free lunch and Omaha. A separate regression was run for each outcome. The standardized coefficients from the Poisson regressions are standardized odds ratios. The R² for the logistic regressions are max rescaled R².

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

Appendices Endnotes

- 1 See http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/middleschool2005/pdf/YRBS_MS_05_narrative.pdf.
- 2 “Adult Support,” “Peer Support” and “Leadership Opportunities” scales are adapted from Herrera and Arbreton, 2003. “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.
- 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 URCA, Connell, Grossman and Resch, 1995.
- 4 “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 and Lindwall, 2003. “School Liking” was adapted from Herrera, 2004.
- 5 “Positive Peers” and “Negative Peers” scales are adapted from Eccles’ survey used for the MacArthur Pathways to Successful Transitions Project.



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