

THE BENEFITS OF YOUTH PHILANTHROPY PROGRAMS IN SAN FRANCISCO
BAY AREA JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study identified the benefits of youth philanthropy as perceived by student participants ranging from 13 to 22 years of age. Youth Philanthropy is a relatively new concept in the United States but a growing trend in San Francisco Bay Area communities. It moves philanthropy from the boardroom to the classroom, providing students an opportunity to apply academic objectives to the real world. This study surveyed 62 alumni of a youth philanthropy project occurring in two San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools. Alumni answered a series of questions about their project involvement and were given opportunities to reflect upon their philanthropic experience. This study found that the youth philanthropy project enhanced academic, social, and life skills while providing students an opportunity to explore their passions and learn about community needs. The youth philanthropy project left a lasting impression on students and motivated them to continue giving back to their community.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As a seventh-grade teacher at a private Jewish Day School in the San Francisco Bay Area, I have the unique opportunity to lead my students in a yearlong integrated philanthropy project in which students are challenged to use academic research skills to learn more about social justice issues facing their community. Through the projects, my middle schoolers have found themselves researching the roots of homelessness in San Mateo County or the impacts of civil unrest on third-world health care. The philanthropy projects also require students to engage themselves with organizations working to address difficult societal issues, often interviewing executive directors and board members of nationally recognized non-profit organizations. The projects include an extensive research paper and oral presentations and culminate in a community celebration during which students award non-profit organizations with donations on behalf of the entire seventh-grade class. These meaningful projects affect each student differently, but I am often not made aware of their impact until long after we finish.

Recently, I was asked to help a former student, Noah, now an eighth grader, with his organizational skills. One day after school, we sat down together and set out to clean his binder. We began pulling out his papers, the good, the bad, and the ugly, and I noticed a large packet in the last section of the binder. I was shocked to realize it was his research paper from the previous year's philanthropy project! Looking further, I saw it was not only his research paper but also his oral presentation notes, reflection speech, and final grade sheet. How uncommon for a middle-school boy to keep any type of academic work longer than necessary! When I asked Noah why he still had the packet, he simply told

me, “I like to have it in here because it reminds me that I can be a good writer and get good grades.” After wiping the mist from my eyes, I helped Noah put the packet in a special pocket where it would not get disturbed.

This brief exchange has not escaped my memory. In fact, it has only made me think more about meaningful projects taking place in schools. Schools all over the country are emphasizing the importance of community engagement among students. They invest time, energy, and money planning community-service opportunities and integrating service learning into the curriculum. Such programs are well researched and have proven to have a positive impact on students’ academic achievement and character development (Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2007). And while most of these programs are present in religious or independent schools, they are also finding a place in the public sector. For example, “In March 1999, the Los Angeles Unified School District School Board approved a change in graduation requirements to include service learning for the Class of 2007” (Scruggs, 2004).

My school has gone beyond organizing basic community-service opportunities by integrating youth philanthropy into the language-arts and religious-studies curricula. The philanthropy project gives seventh graders an opportunity to become philanthropists as they research and advocate for a cause and learn how to become smart donors. It is a highlight of our middle school, supported by students, parents, and staff, yet it has never been formally evaluated. For Noah, the project helped him gain confidence as a writer. But what did others take from their philanthropy experience? What are the benefits of youth philanthropy programs in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools?

My school is one of three Bay Area Jewish Day Schools integrating this particular youth philanthropy program at the middle-school level. There is also a well-developed high-school program based upon the same model. As youth philanthropy expands throughout the Bay Area, it has become necessary to evaluate the programs' impact upon youth. With that in mind, this study identifies and examines the benefits of this particular youth philanthropy program, as perceived by student participants. In addition, this study determines the short and long-term impact of the program, as alumni range in age from thirteen to twenty-two years. This research also includes a history of youth philanthropy and reviews related programs taking place across the nation.

Since community engagement programs are on the rise in schools, it is important to assess the short and long-term effects of such programs. The results of this study provide current schools and program funders with evidence of program success, as well as identify areas in need of improvement. The study reveals a snapshot of program alumni at various ages. Finally, in offering this information to potential schools and funders, stakeholders can make a well-informed decision when considering the inclusion of youth philanthropy in school.

Rationale for the Research

The United States is in a transitional state. Our country is faced with new challenges and new leaders. The government is calling on citizens to do their civic duty and lend a hand, idea, or dollar in the rebuilding of their communities. During his presidential campaign, President Barack Obama spoke often about the importance of service: "Generations of Americans have connected their stories to the larger American story through service and helped move our country forward. We need that service now.

We face determined enemies and definitive challenges at home. This moment is too important for America's greatest resource--our people--to sit on the sidelines. So as President, I will ask for the active citizenship of Americans of all ages and walks of life (Obama, 2008).”

Congress is sending the same message to Americans. In July 2008, *Time* magazine reported Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts and Senator Hatch of Utah were working together on a national service bill, the Serve America Act. The bill would provide incentives for service programs, thus allowing more people to devote time to service (Hatch & Kennedy, 2008). While this call to action is inspiring, it is difficult to integrate into the already impacted school day. However, teachers can carry this message to their students by implementing academic projects that connect students to the needs of their community. Policy makers are pushing the idea of service for the sake of community improvement, but service is also beneficial for those seeking self-improvement (Schmidt, Shumow, & Kackar, 2007).

Recent studies show that today's youth experience extended adolescence and suffer a failure to launch (Jayson, 2004). Young people live at home longer, lack motivation, and feel incapable of shifting into adulthood. Bill Damon, Director of Stanford Center on Adolescence, explores this issue in his new book, *The Path to Purpose*. Through his research, Damon discovered that one-half to three-fourths of today's youth lack a clear sense of purpose. Damon writes that it is this sense of purpose that makes a difference in young people's lives. A clear sense of purpose builds confidence, provides direction, and motivates young people to move forward. It is the job of parents, educators, and community members to help young people find their purpose

(Damon, 2008). Educators can help their students do this by integrating meaningful projects into the curriculum, projects that engage students with their community and inspire them to be active agents of change.

Social Justice and Equity

When establishing Notre Dame de Namur University, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur had a clear mission. They pictured a liberal arts program “in which community engagement and the values of social justice and global peace are integral to the learning experience.” The sisters wanted students to “consciously apply values and ethics in his or her personal, professional, and public life” (2006). Youth philanthropy may fulfill the sisters’ vision. By bringing issues of social justice into the classroom, students are provided an opportunity to apply academic skills to the real world, thus making their learning more relevant. Youth philanthropy can empower students to be agents of change for the future and live out the sisters’ core values of community, diversity, excellence, integrity, justice, learning, and service.

Definition of Terms

When referring to *service learning*, I am referring to programs in which student learning is enhanced through service to their community. Service learning requires planning, community action, student reflection, and student demonstration of newly acquired knowledge. Service-learning programs fall into one of four categories: direct service, indirect service, advocacy, and research (Kaye, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, *youth philanthropy* is defined as a program in which school-aged children are given an opportunity to distribute money to well-researched

organizations or programs they deem worthy of financial support. Funds are either raised by students or provided by local foundations. Youth philanthropy involves planning, research, collaboration, and decision-making.

While service learning and youth philanthropy are sometimes used synonymously, they are quite different. A helpful analogy is that of service learning as an umbrella. Youth philanthropy is one very specific type of program beneath the service-learning umbrella, one that combines advocacy, research, indirect service, and financial involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Over the past two decades, in the wake of the United States' economic growth and information age, the face of philanthropy has changed. Philanthropy, an act once reserved for the wealthy and privileged elite, is now an option for everyday men, women, and even children. In fact, many feel that children and young adults are among the most important new faces of philanthropy, arguing that young people given philanthropic opportunities today become adult philanthropists of tomorrow. In 1999, syndicated columnist Neal Peirce wrote, "Philanthropy is no longer the exclusive province of the blue-blooded and blue-haired. Teen-agers are moving into the nonprofit world's boardrooms as grant makers, making difficult decisions, often asking tougher questions than their adult counterparts" (Peirce, 1999, para. 1). With this in mind, many foundations, organizations, religious groups, and schools are creating philanthropy programs for their youth (Reis & Clohesy, 2001; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

This chapter reviews the history of youth philanthropy and explores the various places where youth philanthropy programs exist, focusing on specific programs taking place across the United States. It also examines the foundation model being used to create new programs and effective practices within the field of youth philanthropy. Youth philanthropy is an opportunity most often provided to children in middle and high schools; therefore, this chapter analyzes the relationship between youth philanthropy and adolescent development. Lastly, it discusses recommendations for the future of youth philanthropy.

History of Youth Philanthropy

Youth philanthropy is a relatively new concept in the United States, not appearing until the 1980s, a time during which individual wealth soared and foundations thrived. In the late 1980s, formal youth philanthropy programs, funded by community foundations, began to take shape. Foundation partnerships appeared in different parts of the country, from the District of Columbia to California's Marin County. In 1988, two foundation giants, Kellogg Foundation and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, joined with the Council of Michigan Foundations to create the Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project (MCFYP). MCFYP provided an opportunity for youth to be involved in foundation work through the creation of Youth Advisory Committees (YAC). Participating foundations were given endowment funding with the condition that they establish a YAC, a board of young people to serve as a "youth resource" (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001). YAC members were called upon to identify and prioritize community needs, help develop funds, and make grant recommendations regarding youth programs. YAC was a highly successful program and continues today, having reached over 2,000 teens. In Michigan alone, participating foundations "have received more than \$47.6 million to create 86 permanently endowed youth funds" (Youth Grantmakers, 2007).

In the early 1990s, a different type of youth philanthropy program appeared in New York City. The Surdna Foundation, paired with the New York City Board of Education, funded a yearlong high school course during which students could develop leadership skills and experience philanthropy. Students worked together to create a mini-foundation through which they could fund service projects. The program, Student Service and Philanthropy Project (SSPP), was deemed successful and worthy of expansion. In

four years, the SSPP expanded from three to thirty-six New York City high schools (Frank, 1994). These large-scale, largely funded programs, some of which are still successful today, paved the way for smaller, more local, initiatives to take root across the country. Youth philanthropy programs, small-scale, large-scale, local, and national, can be found in over 30 states and have steadily spread to other parts of the world (Garza & Stevens, 2002; Tice, 2002).

While adolescents have been provided with philanthropic opportunities, there are also philanthropy initiatives occurring in higher education. The non-profit sector has grown dramatically over the past twenty years, as has the interest in philanthropy. As a result, colleges and universities are finding ways to weave philanthropy into existing academic programs. The American Humanics (AH) program offers colleges and universities a structured way to integrate philanthropy into the non-profit management curriculum. Founded in 1948, AH has grown and developed rapidly over the past twenty years, equipping students with a deeper understanding of philanthropy and the necessary skills for success in the non-profit world. Close to 2,000 students are enrolled in AH each year, and graduates now hold leadership positions at non-profit organizations across the country (Ashcraft, 2002).

Rather than weaving philanthropic studies into the existing curriculum, some schools have created new, innovative programs. The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University was established in 1987 but has grown substantially over the past two decades. In 2004, the center established a Ph.D. program in Philanthropic Studies, the first of its kind in the United States. The Center on Philanthropy, recognizing youth as a resource, has also made strides to promote youth philanthropy through their addition of

the Third Millennium Philanthropy and Leadership Initiative. The initiative strives to create new generations of philanthropic leaders by exposing youth to philanthropic principles and practices at an early age (Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, 2007). Duke University is another educational institution providing opportunities for philanthropic studies. Duke's Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society was created in 2008, as part of the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy. The center's mission is to help philanthropy extend its reach in the community and have a bigger role in solving societal problems. In addition, one of the center's long-term goals is "to nourish philanthropy as a field of academic inquiry" (Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University, 2008).

Domains of Youth Philanthropy

Youth philanthropy opportunities are made available through a variety of settings: religious communities, schools, corporations, non-profit organizations, government groups, and foundations. Each setting has its own unique approach to teaching youth the value of service. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam each have a tradition of giving back to the community. Because of this, many congregations offer service based opportunities for their youth. Youth groups can be found participating in community service activities or fundraising for a specific cause or organization. Many feel that when a religious community offers an opportunity to serve, participants not only learn the value of giving but also live it out through their actions. This opportunity often forges a stronger bond with their faith (Bentley, 2002; Dorfman, 2003).

Philanthropy can also be taught within the confines of a classroom. Schools that provide philanthropic opportunities for their students instill a value of service in their

students while also teaching them important academic and life skills along the way such as writing, presentation skills, and group decision-making. Learning to Give (LTG) is a website dedicated to promoting youth philanthropy in the classroom. Over 500 teachers and youth leaders have submitted tried and true lesson plans on philanthropy. LTG offers resources for teachers of all grades and is growing at a steady pace (Tice, 2002). Some schools have taken philanthropy to a new level by creating a mini-foundation within the classroom. This was seen in many New York Public Schools in the early 1990s when the Surdna Foundation partnered up with the New York City Board of Education. This is also a model currently used within San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools.

Corporations and non-profit organizations have created avenues through which youth can learn and practice service and philanthropy. General Mills developed the Box Top for Education program, allowing children to help their schools obtain educational materials and computers by collecting proofs of purchase from General Mills products. Some corporations promote service among youth by recognizing students and schools who give back to the community. State Farm presents the Service- Learning Practitioner Leadership Award to adults who work directly with youth to promote service and leadership. The Prudential Spirit of Community Award was created in 1995. Widely recognized, it honors students in grades 5- 12 who initiate and execute their own community service projects. It is the “largest youth volunteer recognition program in the U.S., with more than 75,000 recipients to date” (Nissan, 2007). Many non-profit organizations have created opportunities for youth service. Longstanding organizations such as the 4H and Girls Scouts of America create programs based upon founding beliefs of service to community. As new non-profit organizations appear, they bring with them

more innovative programs to involve youth. Youth as Resources (YAR) is a great example, allowing over 300,000 youth to serve on a board of grantmakers, in addition to planning and implementing their own volunteer projects (Tice, 2002).

The government has also been an advocate of youth service by providing funding and support. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into the law the National and Community Service Act, which provided grants to schools and organizations providing service learning opportunities for youth. Following President Bush's lead, President Bill Clinton signed the National Community and Service Trust Act in 1993. The act led to the creation of Learn and Serve America and Americorps. Learn and Serve America makes service learning resources available to educators, conducts research and offers training in the field, and awards grants to schools. Americorps is a program allowing youth and adults to receive educational awards in exchange for a period of service in America's most needy communities. So far, over 400,000 citizens have served as Americorps volunteers (Nissan, 2007). On a local level, city governments are finding ways to encourage youth participation and service through the creation of youth councils. City government calls on youth councils to help determine spending for local youth programs. The governor of Indiana used this model at the state level when appointing Youth Commissioners. In addition to serving as a resource to youth in their senate district, Youth Commissioners represent youth while engaged in fundraising, service, and advocacy (Tice, 2002).

Many youth philanthropy programs are established, supported, and sustained by family or community foundations. Foundations want to see the philanthropic principles from their boardrooms in action among youth in the community. For example, in 2003,

Atlanta philanthropist Dr. Thomas K. Glenn II enabled his alma mater, Westminster Schools, to incorporate service, philanthropy, and community engagement into the curriculum through the establishment of the Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Institute for Philanthropy and Service Learning. The Institute offers community service projects and opportunities beginning in fifth grade. High school students can participate in an elective course on the history of American philanthropy, and Westminster offers a summer course on the science of giving. Opportunities have also been made available for alumni and parents to expand their knowledge of philanthropy through an ongoing lecture series (Nissan, 2007).

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has proven itself to be a leader in the growth of youth philanthropy. As mentioned previously, the Kellogg Foundation, in conjunction with the Council of Michigan Foundations, established the Michigan Community Foundations' project (MCFYP), allowing youth opportunities to become grantmakers. Subsequently, the foundations joined again to create Learning to Give, one of the largest collections of youth philanthropy resources to date. Learning to Give, a website containing more than 1,000 lessons and resources, provides educators and youth workers with tools for engaging youth in philanthropy (Nissan, 2007; Tice, 2002). In addition to funding active youth engagement, the Kellogg Foundation is dedicated to expanding the research of youth philanthropy. For instance, it granted 5 million dollars to the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. Among other things, this grant helped fund the first literature review of youth philanthropy, *The Roots of Giving and Serving*, which studied how "children and teens learn philanthropic behaviors" (Nissan, 2007). All in all, it is

very clear that youth philanthropy would not be where it is today without the ongoing support and dedication of family and community foundations.

The Youth Philanthropy Model

The majority of youth philanthropy programs across the nation have adopted a common model, that of a mini-foundation. The foundation model consists of a group of 10-25 youth members who meet monthly, semimonthly, or weekly to learn about philanthropy, the non-profit sector, and one another. Supervised and supported by an adult, youth members are trained at how to collaborate with one another, fundraise, lead projects, and participate in group decision-making, basic concepts found in a real foundation. Foundation models vary from program to program, but the common elements include teambuilding among youth members, education of philanthropy and foundation life, creation of grant proposals, development and implementation of a grant review process, and training in fundraising and leadership skills. The experience culminates in the granting of dollars to programs the participants have deemed worthy of support. Through this foundation model, youth experience the triumphs and tribulations of the philanthropic world. In 2000 alone, youth led groups using this foundation model granted between 5 and 10 million dollars (Frank, 1994; Garza & Stevens, 2002; Libby, Sedonaen, & Bliss, 2006; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

Research has identified common practices in successful youth philanthropy programs. Pam Garza and Pam Stevens identified and documented five effective practices in their study, *Best Practices of Youth Philanthropy*. To begin with, they state that youth programs need to have a strong organizational structure in place. Programs need to be supported by organizations and include a governing board and adult

supervision. In addition, the program must exist in a youth-friendly environment where attainable, realistic goals can be set. It is important that the community stakeholders work to set the participants up for success. Another effective practice identified by Garza and Stevens is the inclusion of a healthy youth-adult relationship. Youth participants need an opportunity to become decision makers, leading the way, and adult supervisors need to accept the role of partner, rather than teacher. As well as a strong partnership with adult supervisors, youth participants need to bond with one another and their communities. Successful youth philanthropy programs encourage participants to forge relationships with their peers through identity and teambuilding exercises. Participants are also urged to take an active leadership role in the community and connect with local organizations (Garza & Stevens, 2002).

Garza and Stevens identify training as another element needed for successful youth philanthropy programs. Youth and adults need ongoing training and support to develop the skills and confidence needed to move forward successfully. Youth, as well as most adults, are not knowledgeable about the philanthropic world, so in addition to learning leadership and supervisory skills, it is essential that they receive proper training in grantmaking. This helps guarantee a more meaningful and true-to-life philanthropic experience. The final effective practice for successful youth philanthropy programs is program sustainability. The most successful programs plan for and develop long-term funding, often involving youth participants in the process. Youth can help in program assessment and fundraising efforts. Youth can also assist in communicating the programs' highlights and successes to the greater community (Garza & Stevens, 2002). While youth philanthropy programs cannot develop best practices overnight, it is

essential that programs be aware of the practices and take steps towards attaining them. In doing so, youth philanthropy programs will grow stronger and become more meaningful for all involved.

Why is Youth Philanthropy Important?

Philanthropy has long been a part of American society. Americans have a history of reaching out to one another and giving their time, talents, and treasures. Without this community support, the basic needs of many citizens would not be met. Philanthropy helps alleviate suffering and solve problems, allowing families to have homes, children to be fed, and the environment and animals to be protected. If philanthropy is to remain a part of our culture, it must be passed down to our children. While home is most often thought to be the best place to learn the ethics of giving and service, these values are also being taught in schools, community organizations, and religious settings (Bjorhovde, 2002).

Ethics of generosity are being transferred to children of all ages, but many researchers and theorists state that adolescence is the best time for such lessons. For years, researchers and theorists have encouraged parents, teachers, and community members to provide adolescents with civic engagement and service opportunities. Such experiences meet the needs of adolescent development and set a foundation for a more responsible adult lifestyle. John Dewey, a famous theorist, wrote about this in his educational and social philosophies. Dewey called for experiential education; one that involved children in a process of experience, inquiry, and reflection. His social theories promoted ideas of democracy and community, topics that, he stated, can be reinforced in youth's community involvement. Service learning advocates believe service learning

touches on all of Dewey's recommendations. It engages children in meaningful experiences based on inquiry and calls for post-experience reflection. Service learning also allows students to become active in improving their communities. Because of this strong connection, Dewey is often noted as the "Father of Service Learning" (Giles & Eyster, 1994).

Adolescence, the bridge between childhood and adulthood, has long been a fascinating area of study among researchers and organizations. Many organizations have focused on examining the needs during adolescent development and identifying experiences and opportunities that are necessary for successful youth development. One of these organizations is the Youth Development Institute (YDI) in New York City. Through its research, YDI identified five experiences that promote healthy youth development. These experiences have guided their programs and initiatives since the organization's inception in 1991. The five identified experiences, most of which are present in youth philanthropy, include healthy relationships with adult role models, noble but attainable expectations, fun and interactive activities, opportunities to make a difference, and ongoing support. A program of the Tides Center, YDI also works with various government agencies, schools, and non-profit organizations to make these experiences more available to youth (Youth Development Institute, n.d.).

The Search Institute is another organization dedicated to fostering successful youth development. The Search Institute is a global leader in researching the needs of children and adolescents, conducting research, creating resources, and disseminating information to parents, schools, and communities. In 1990, the Search Institute created a "Framework of Developmental Assets," 40 qualities and/or experiences that positively

influence youth. The more qualities and/or experiences a child is exposed to, the less likely the child will engage in high-risk behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence, and poor school behavior. Among the 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents are service, equality, and social justice, interpersonal competence, sense of purpose, community values youth, and youth as resources, all of which are present in youth philanthropy programs (Search Institute, 2007).

While many organizations have identified adolescent development needs, one report has connected these needs to action. *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* is a report written by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. The report examines middle school education and makes recommendations for successful adolescent development in the 21st century. One recommendation involves exposing adolescents to service during this highly formative period. Early adolescence is a time during which significant growth can occur in the development of values, purpose, citizenship, and social responsibility. This study explicitly states that every middle school program should include a service activity in which youth can give back to the community (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989, p.45).

The James G. Irvine Foundation, a leader in philanthropy research, conducted research on youth philanthropy in its report, *Changing the Face of Giving: An Assessment on Youth Philanthropy*. One of the recommendations in the report calls for youth philanthropy to be used as a tool for youth development. The report suggests that youth philanthropy is a proven catalyst for successful youth development, providing adolescents positive experiences through which they can learn important adult skills.

While beneficial, this transfer of skills may only be a side effect of youth philanthropy. However, by encouraging programs to formalize the inclusion of such skills, youth philanthropy becomes a clearly identified tool for successful youth development. This inclusion not only ensures that all participants are exposed to similar social and academic growth, but it allows youth philanthropy programs to become eligible for more educational funding (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

Recommendations for Youth Philanthropy

Youth philanthropy has grown dramatically over the past twenty-five years, bringing with it many ideas for development. Researchers, supporters, and stakeholders have analyzed existing programs, anticipating changes and identifying needs. While the reports vary in focus, each includes a list of needs and/or recommendations for future success of youth philanthropy programs. Among the suggestions are non-profit career education, heightened community involvement, and program expansion into schools. More telling are the repeated recommendations in the studies: diversity of participants, collaboration, development, and documentation of effective practices, youth-adult partnerships, and program sustainability (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Reis & Clohesy, 2001; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001; Tice, 2002).

Increasing the diversity among youth philanthropy participants is important as the field moves forward. The majority of youth philanthropy participants are middle to upper-class Caucasian adolescents, many already involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Almost half of the participants can be described as high-achievers, already holding leadership positions in school clubs and organizations. Research suggests that future participants should include youth of color, youth from the poor or

working class families, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, as well as youth that are “unrecognized leaders,” those not already involved in other activities. Diversity among participants will help in providing multiple perspectives during the grant making process, and philanthropic decisions will better represent the needs and interests of the entire community (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001; Tice, 2002).

In addition to more diversity, many researchers believe youth philanthropy needs to develop and document effective practices. Though youth philanthropy programs vary in location, timeline, scope, and size, they do not have to differ in practice. Researchers suggest that organizations and program leaders start sharing their expertise and resources with one another, as seen among classroom educators. In doing so, common threads in youth philanthropy can be identified, shared, and modeled. This collaboration will keep parties from “reinventing the wheel” and help youth philanthropy have a more unified front. By sharing best practices, programs will be more consistent, ensuring a common experience for all young philanthropists (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Tice, 2002).

Experts also suggest collaboration be followed up with documentation. Effective practices should be documented and available for all interested parties. One way to do this is by creating a place where everyone can come together to share resources and new program ideas or a national group or network to which everyone belongs. In bringing information together to a common area, new youth leaders, foundations, teachers, and community members can create a youth philanthropy experience consistent with others. Such a place can also aid in the enhancement of existing programs and lead to a wider understanding and appreciation for youth philanthropy. The Learning to Give website

has taken the lead in this process by compiling and making lessons on service and philanthropy available to teachers and youth workers. Learning to Give is a wonderful start, but such a resource should be larger in scope and size, including all different types of lessons and programs from all different parts of the world (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Tice, 2002).

Some research suggests taking documentation a step further by recording the growth of youth philanthropy over the years. Learning about the various programs that have taken place over the years helps identify best practices and community resources (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Tice, 2002).

Successful youth philanthropy programs include a healthy youth-adult partnership. While this is good in theory, it can be difficult in practice. Researchers suggest that youth philanthropy needs stronger youth-adult partnerships. Adults and youth need to work equally throughout the philanthropy process and take time to learn from one another. Adults can teach youth important life skills and guide them in decision making, while youth can provide a new, fresh perspective on issues, perspectives that may have long escaped the adults. This exchange is just as much of a learning opportunity as the philanthropy itself. In order for the partnership to be strengthened, adults need to release some control, allowing youth participants to make difficult decisions. Letting go is difficult, so many adults may benefit from training to help prepare for their youth philanthropy experience (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Reis & Clohesy, 2001; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001; Tice, 2002).

The youth participants also need to work on strengthening the partnership by committing themselves to the task and assuming responsibility for the outcomes. For

youth who have no leadership experience, this can be difficult, and they will need the support of an adult. While strengthening the partnership won't happen overnight, once the two parties are in sync, the sky is the limit as to what can be accomplished (Nissan, 2007; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

Program sustainability is an additional recommendation for youth philanthropy. A successful program can easily be forgotten if there is nothing in place to ensure its future. For instance, youth philanthropy programs can be sustained if they are implemented through middle and/or high schools. If the program is embedded into the curriculum, there is a greater chance of its continued implementation. Endowments are another way to increase sustainability. Foundations and organizations often fund youth philanthropy programs in the beginning, but after the programs are deemed successful, long-term funding needs to be put in place. Research suggests the foundations and organizations provide endowments for youth philanthropy's future, thus securing an opportunity for future participants to practice the art of philanthropy. Linking participants to the sponsoring foundation or organization is another way to sustain youth philanthropy programs. By allowing a youth participant to serve on the board or work within the organizational structure, there will be increased communication between funder and participant. The youth representative will act as a physical reminder of the youth philanthropy program's success. Regardless of how it's done, sustainability is key to the future of youth philanthropy. Without it, the opportunity to pass these ethics of giving on to the next generation is lost (Bjorhovde, 2002; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001; Tice, 2002).

Conclusion

In conclusion, research reveals that youth philanthropy is still an emerging field of study. Found throughout the United States and in conjunction with organizations and foundations, youth philanthropy has room to grow in formal educational settings (Bjorhovde, 2002; Tice, 2002). Through the evaluation of existing youth philanthropy programs, common practices, elements, and successful models have been identified (Garza & Stevens, 2002). Research also shows the importance of providing youth with philanthropic opportunities at the middle and high-school level. This type of community engagement will aid in the adolescent development of teens and help them harness life skills. Youth participants have a chance to learn and practice leadership, collaboration, research, communication, and decision-making skills (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

Research demonstrates that youth philanthropy is not only beneficial to teen participants, but to the greater community as well. While youth philanthropy holds great potential for the community and its youth, studies have identified elements of youth philanthropy in need of improvement. For success in the new millennium, youth philanthropy programs need to increase diversity and documentation, strengthen adult partnerships, and plan for long-term sustainability (Bjorhovde, 2002; Nissan, 2007; Reis & Clohesy, 2001; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001; Tice, 2002).

It is important that research continue in the field of youth philanthropy. By evaluating current youth philanthropy programs, researchers can learn more about the short and long-term impact of youth philanthropy upon youth. Such research will improve existing programs and help in the development of future programs. This study attempts to identify the benefits of youth philanthropy programs, as perceived by its

student participants. It also explores the relationship between youth philanthropy and the experiences of those participants later in life.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study identifies the perceived benefits of youth philanthropy in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools. To identify these perceived benefits, this study used survey questionnaire as its primary method of data collection. The survey questionnaire was administered to alumni of the seventh grade philanthropy project from two participating schools. The survey questionnaire sought to identify the benefits of youth philanthropy through the use of selected response and open-ended questions. The selected response questions provided general information that identified trends, while the open-ended questions obtained more personal, specific information from the youth philanthropy participants.

Participants were informed that their identities would remain anonymous. However, some participants agreed to provide their contact information for a follow-up interview. If a follow-up interview was conducted, participants were asked directed questions and encouraged to speak freely about their participation in youth philanthropy.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective in this study was similar to that of Matt Rosen and Maureen Sedonaen, researchers of youth philanthropy and founders of San Francisco's Youth Leadership Institute. Rosen and Sedonaen are advocates of youth philanthropy and community engagement who claim that providing opportunities for youth to be involved in community change and institutionalized philanthropy helps them grow to become healthy, caring, productive adults (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001).

This study was similar to previous youth philanthropy research in that participants reflected upon their youth philanthropy experience, and more specifically, were asked to identify the benefits. However, this study was different than previous studies because of its longitudinal approach. Program participants from the past ten years were surveyed, so both short and long-term benefits of youth philanthropy were identified.

Research Setting

I conducted research through two private Jewish Day Schools, each serving students in grades kindergarten through eight. Both schools are located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The schools serve families, most of which are Jewish, living in the Silicon Valley or on the Peninsula. The northernmost school, School A, is located in an affluent community, one in which the median family income is \$118,231. The community is somewhat racially diverse, as Whites (49.7%) and Asians (40.7%) make up most of the population. School B is also located in an affluent community, one in which the median family income is \$153,197. The community is not racially diverse, as the largest racial group, at 69.4% of the population, is identified as White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

This setting was appropriate in investigating the benefits of youth philanthropy because both schools have integrated a youth philanthropy project into their seventh grade curriculum. As a former paid employee, I had access to School A. I obtained access to School B by contacting the school administrator by email asking for participation in the study. Both schools have current and former students who could participate in the study.

Participants

Participants in this study were students and alumni of the two Jewish Day Schools described above. More specifically, the participants were alumni of the seventh grade youth philanthropy project. While some participated in the program one year ago, others participated ten years ago. Therefore, participants ranged in age from thirteen to twenty-two years, thus providing me with data on both short and long-term benefits of youth philanthropy.

I gained access to participants by contacting them via email, explaining the study and introducing the data collection methods. In the case of School A, I was a former teacher, making contact relatively simple. If participants chose to partake in the study, they took the online survey questionnaire. If participants wanted to discuss youth philanthropy in more depth, they opted to participate in a follow-up interview. If participants were interested in learning the findings of the study, data was made available via email.

Data Collection

I collected data for this study using surveys and follow-up interviews. I began by contacting the school administrators using an introductory phone call and email. At School A, the administrator supported the study by allowing me access to email addresses of parents whose children participated in the school's youth philanthropy project. I then contacted the parents via email to request consent and the email addresses of their children. At School B, the administrator contacted the parents for me, asking them to send me their child's email address. In both cases, I proceeded by sending an online survey to participating student alumni of the philanthropy project. In the survey,

participants had an opportunity to provide their name and contact information for a follow-up interview. I conducted follow-up interviews via phone and email to clarify questions raised in the survey and/or obtained more detailed information for the study. I used an online survey tool to manage surveys and organize results. I also used notetaking to manage follow-up interviews. By using two methods of data collection, written and oral, I obtained relevant information about the perceived benefits of youth philanthropy.

Data Analysis

This study used descriptive statistics to analyze survey data. This study used Excel's Data Analysis Toolpak to determine the number, mean, range, standard deviation, and frequency of responses. I was especially interested to see if responses differ among age groups, gender, or participating schools.

In addition, this study used content analysis to analyze open-ended responses to survey questions and interview data. I used coding techniques to determine frequency of responses. I was especially interested to see if participation in the philanthropy project impacted participants' academic, social, and career decisions in high school, college, and beyond. However, I kept an open mind to allow new categories to emerge from the data.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the degree to which an assessment measures what a researcher sets out to assess (Slavin, 2007). In this study, I attempted to use a high level of validity by developing a survey that clearly identified the perceived benefits of youth philanthropy. The survey was extensive, including selected response questions to solicit general information and open-ended questions to solicit more specific, personal information.

Reliability in educational research is the degree to which a measurement will yield consistent results (Slavin, 2007). I attempted to attain reliable results by triangulating the research. Youth philanthropy alumni of all ages, eighth grade to college graduates, were surveyed and follow-up interviews were conducted. Perspectives from various-aged participants contributed to the reliability of research obtained through this study.

The information obtained in this research study may or may not be transferred effectively to other groupings. Those surveyed were participants in a Jewish Day School philanthropy project. The Jewish influence and connection makes it impossible to assume results will be the same in a secular environment or that of a different religious affiliation. Those surveyed were also living in the San Francisco Bay Area during their involvement. Again, results may not be consistent in other geographic settings. The results may only be generalized to Jewish Day School settings in similar geographic areas.

Other limitations present in this study relate to participants' attitudes towards teachers, parents, and schools. Though responses will remain anonymous, students surveyed may have responded in a way meant to satisfy teachers, parents, and/or schools. Alternatively, students surveyed may have responded in a way meant to penalize teachers, parents, and/or schools.

Ethics

The confidentiality of participants was protected throughout this study. Each school administrator and parent or guardian received a letter of informed consent that explained confidentiality and their rights in this study. This information also appeared in the survey. All surveys were anonymous, though if participants wanted to take part in a

follow-up interview, they provided contact information. This contact information was also kept confidential. If participant schools were mentioned in this research paper, all names were changed and anonymity was preserved.

Significance

This research study was the first study of youth philanthropy programs in multiple Bay Area Jewish Day Schools. Identifying the benefits of such programs will help participating schools evaluate and improve upon their existing program. It will also provide data for schools that may be interested in establishing a youth philanthropy program at their own site. The results of this study will educate schools on the short and long-term benefits of youth philanthropy, helping them to make more informed decisions when considering the addition of such social justice related programs.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

Having been a part of several youth philanthropy programs as both a teacher and consultant, I have guided over 150 middle-school students through philanthropic experiences. While teachers, administrators, funders, and community members feel such programs have great benefit, I have recently started to wonder more about the students. What are their thoughts? How did they perceive the program? What specific skills and ideas were developed through their philanthropic experience?

The goal of this study was to identify the benefits of youth philanthropy programs in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools. As the researcher, I strived to learn what the student participants thought about their youth philanthropy experience after the project was said and done. To obtain this information, I surveyed alumni of the seventh grade philanthropy project at two Bay Area Jewish Day Schools.

This chapter unveils the data collected from alumni who chose to participate in the research. The data identifies the short and long-term benefits of this particular youth philanthropy program, as perceived by student participants. The data in this chapter is divided into six major themes: demographics of participants, philanthropy project in comparison to other projects, philanthropy project enhancement of skills, philanthropy project impact on students' views/ideas, philanthropy project impact on future, and philanthropy project recommendations.

Demographics of Participants

Parents of student participants were contacted in September and October of 2009, shortly after the start of the academic year. A total of 63 parents responded to the initial

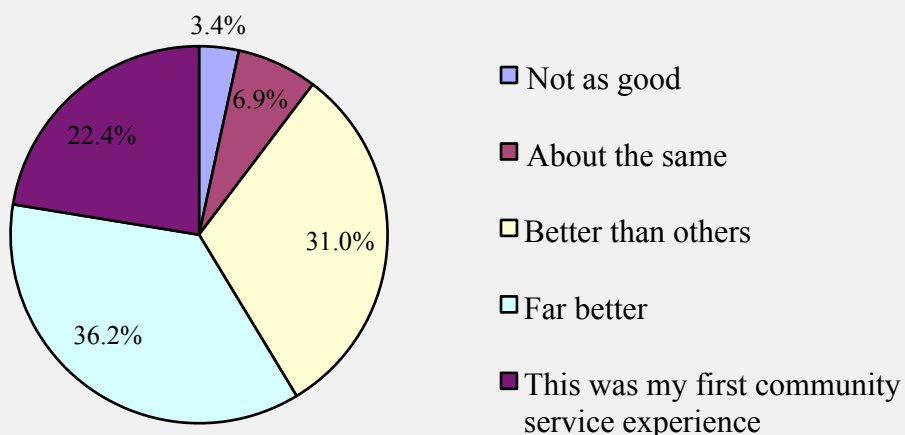
inquiry, giving me permission to contact their child(ren). I contacted 83 students via email and directed them to the online survey. Out of the 83 students asked to participate, 62 chose to take the survey. The survey was fully completed by 79% of students.

The majority of survey participants were female (61.3%). Of the alumni surveyed, 55% participated in the youth philanthropy program at School A and 45% participated in the program at School B. The participants also varied in age. Of the 62 students, 27.4% were in 8th grade, 4.8% were in 9th grade, 22.6% were in 10th grade, 8.1% were in 11th grade, 12.9% were in 12th grade, and 24.2% were high school graduates or beyond.

Philanthropy Project in Comparison to Other Projects

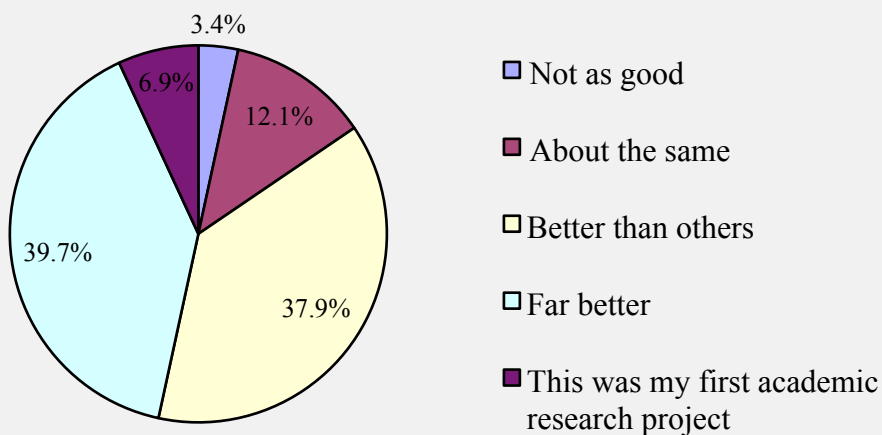
The survey showed that the majority of students who had been involved in similar projects and programs thought the philanthropy project was better or far better than others. Students were asked to compare the philanthropy project to other projects and programs with which they had been involved. When compared to other community service programs/experiences, 67.2% of the students thought the philanthropy project was better than others or far better than others, and 6.9% thought it was about the same. For some students, 22.4%, the philanthropy project was their first community service experience (See Chart 1).

Chart 1: The 7th grade [Philanthropy] Project in Comparison to Other Community Service Programs/Experiences.

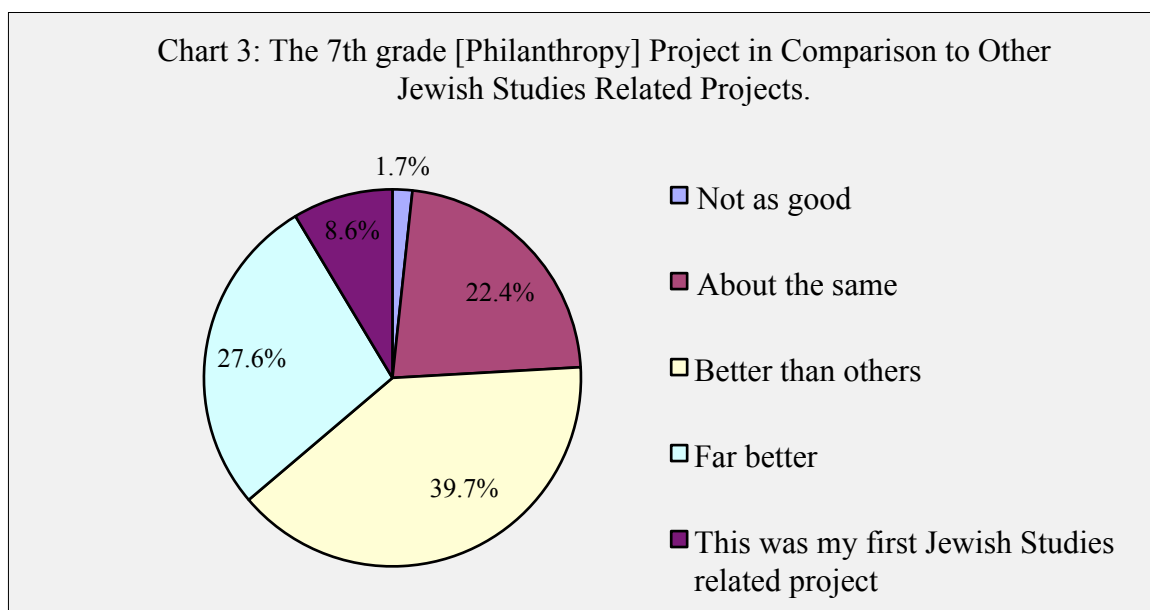


When compared to other academic research projects, 77.6% of the students thought the philanthropy project was better than others or far better. The philanthropy project was about the same for 12.1%. Surprisingly, 6.9% of students identified the philanthropy project as their first academic research project (See Chart 2 below).

Chart 2: The 7th grade [Philanthropy] Project in Comparison to Other Academic Research Projects.



When compared to other Jewish Studies related projects, 67.3% of the students thought the philanthropy project was better or far better than others. The philanthropy project was about the same for 22.4% of students, and some students (8.6%) identified the philanthropy project as their first Jewish Studies project (See Chart 3 below).



Almost all of the participants surveyed noted that they put the same amount of work and effort or more into the philanthropy project versus other academic projects. More specifically, 15.5% put in the same amount of work and effort, 39.7% put in more, and 43.1% put in far more than others. Of those who responded “far more than others,” 40.0% were in eighth grade, thus having had less experience with academic projects. On a related note, two high-school and college-aged participants mentioned that the amount of work and effort was a lot for the seventh grade, but it did not compare to the amount they later put into high-school level work.

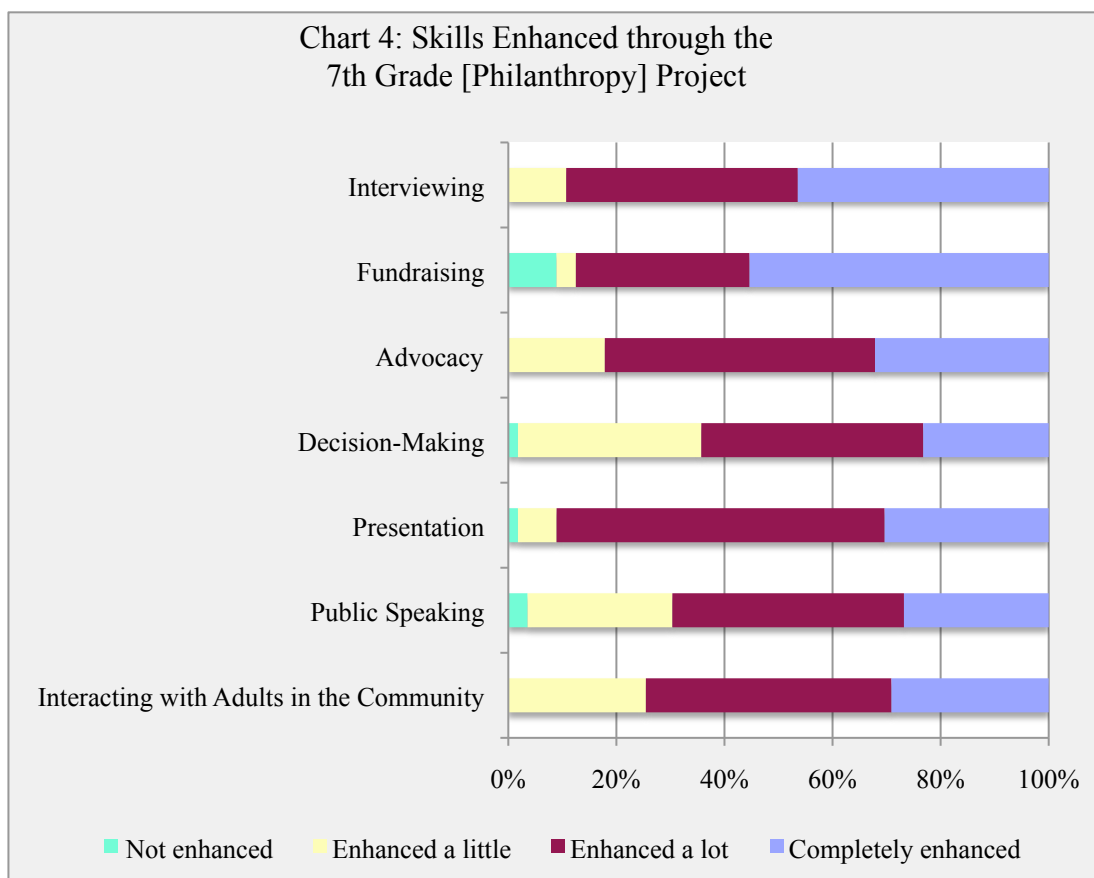
The majority of students felt they put forth more work and effort because it was something they cared about and bettered the community. For example, one student said,

“I knew this was going to help benefit someone so I put a lot more effort and heart into it.” Another said, “Since it was a topic that I truly cared about, I devoted more time and effort into than say into a research paper for history or English.” Finally, one participant summed up her feelings by saying, “I put a lot of work into it because I WANTED TO not because I was told to.” Students put more work into projects with which they feel connected. In the case of the philanthropy project, students felt connected to the topic or people they were serving, thus encouraging them to work hard.

There was a noticeable difference in the responses between School A and School B and between males and females. Students from School A had a more favorable view of the philanthropy project when compared to other projects. The largest percentage of students from School A responded that the philanthropy project was “far better” than other projects in which they had been involved. Males and females had different views in this area as well. Females had a more favorable view of the philanthropy project when compared to other projects. The largest percentage of females responded that the philanthropy project was “far better” than other projects in which they had been involved. However, when asked about the amount of work and effort put into the philanthropy project versus other academic projects, the largest percentage of males responded “far more than others” while the largest percentage of females responded “more than others.”

Philanthropy Project Enhancement of Skills

The survey identified seven skills, most of which are considered life skills, as being enhanced through the philanthropy project: interviewing, fundraising, advocacy, decision-making, presentation, public speaking, and interacting with adults in the community (See Chart 4).



All of the students reported that the philanthropy project enhanced their interviewing skills to some degree. Of the students surveyed, 46.2% said the philanthropy project completely enhanced their interviewing skills, 42.9% said it enhanced their interviewing skills a lot, and 10.7% said it enhanced their interviewing skills a little. Similar results were revealed for fundraising skills: 55.4% said the project completely enhanced their fundraising skills, 32.1% said it enhanced their fundraising skills a lot, and 3.6% said it enhanced their fundraising skills a little. Only 8.9% said fundraising skills were not enhanced, and of those, 60.0% were college students.

In addition to interviewing and fundraising skills, the philanthropy project also enhanced students' advocacy and decision-making skills. All of the students thought the philanthropy project enhanced their advocacy skills in some way: 32.1% said the

philanthropy project completely enhanced their advocacy skills, 50% said it enhanced their advocacy skills a lot, and 17.9% said it enhanced their advocacy skills a little. The survey revealed similar results for decision-making skills. In fact, 98.2% of students reported that the philanthropy project enhanced their decision-making skills. More specifically, 23.2% said the philanthropy project completely enhanced their decision-making skills, 41.1% said it enhanced their decision-making skills a lot, and 33.9% said it enhanced their decision-making skills a little. Only 1.8%, or one person, said decision-making skills were not enhanced.

The survey showed that presentation and public speaking skills were enhanced through students' participation in the philanthropy project. In terms of presentation skills, 30.4% of students said the project completely enhanced their skills, 60.7% said it enhanced their skills a lot, and 7.1% said it enhanced their skills a little. Public speaking produced similar results. The majority of students, 96.4%, said that philanthropy project enhanced their public speaking skills. More specifically, 26.8% of students said their skills were completely enhanced, 42.9% said their skills were enhanced a lot, and 26.8% said their skills were enhanced a little.

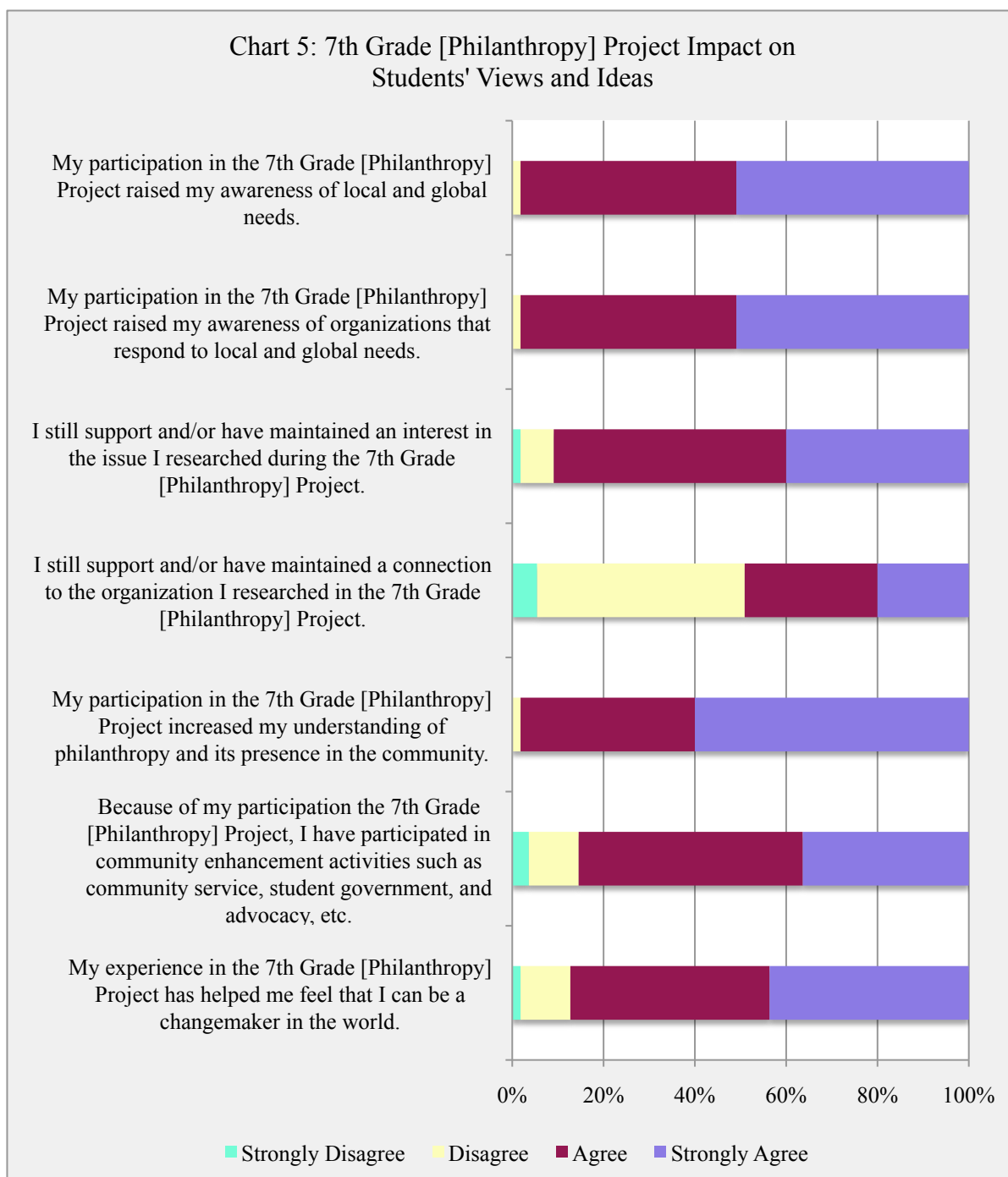
The philanthropy project pushes students to work and connect with community members, thus allowing them an opportunity to interact with adults in the community. The students surveyed said that their philanthropy project experience helped them better develop this skill. In fact, 100% said the project enhanced the skill of interacting with adults in the community: 29.1% of students said this skill was completely enhanced, 45.5% said this skill was enhanced a lot, and 25.5% said this skill was enhanced a little.

Several participants commented on how they had already harnessed these academic and life skills, but the project gave them an avenue through which they could practice the skills. For example, one student said, “I like to think that I already have all of these skills and the project helped me refine my skills.” Another said, “Some of these skills I knew before the project, but the project definitely helped me practice my skills.” One participant specified the skill he harnessed through the project, “This project helped me overcome my fear of public speaking, and just in time before my Bar Mitzvah.” Another student summed up her growth when she said, “Through this project I felt I really grew, not just academically but I also gained a lot of confidence in public speaking, presenting, and interviewing. I had never interviewed anyone, or gave a really great presentation, but through this project I did both AND had fun!”

There was a noticeable difference in the responses from School A and School B in the skills section of the survey. Students from School A tended to respond with “completely enhanced” or “enhanced a lot” more often than School B. The reason for this may have to do with where the project occurs in each school. The philanthropy project is rooted in the Humanities class at School A, while it is rooted in the Jewish Studies class at School B. Perhaps there is a larger focus on the integration of academic skills at School A. Additionally, almost half of those surveyed at School A were in eighth grade, thus having had fewer opportunities to cultivate these important skills than their older counterparts.

Philanthropy Project Impact on Students' Views and Ideas

Participants were asked to reflect upon how the philanthropy project impacted their views and ideas about the world. Students were given statements with which they had to strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree (see Chart 5 below).



Not surprisingly, the survey revealed that most participants gained much in the area of philanthropic education. When given the statement, “My participation in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project increased my understanding of philanthropy and its presence in the community,” 60.0% strongly agreed and 38.2% agreed. One college student commented on the importance of introducing philanthropy, “I think this program serves as a great initial exposure for middle school students to the world of philanthropy. Hopefully this initial exposure will fuel further involvement in the community.”

The survey also showed that the philanthropy project heightened students’ awareness of both community needs and organizations. When faced with the statement, “My participation in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project raised my awareness of local and global needs,” 50.9% of students strongly agreed and 47.3% agreed. When given the statement, “My participation in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project raised my awareness of organizations that respond to local and global needs,” the results were identical: 50.9% of students strongly agreed, 47.3% agreed, and only 1.8%, or one person, disagreed. Some students commented on how the project heightened their awareness of community needs and organizations. One student said, “Through the [Philanthropy] project I have learned more about my community and learned more about many global issues that need to be addressed.” Another student said, “It gave me a good understanding of the range of issues in our world and the different ways people are solving them.” One more student said, “It was an eye opening experience because I was introduced to a lot of problems in the world and found out how hard people work to fight these problems. I got a chance to connect with an organization that meant a lot to me and make a difference.”

Most of the students have maintained an interest in their philanthropy project research topic. When given the statement, “I still support and/or have maintained an interest in the issue I researched during the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project,” 40.0% agreed and 50.9% strongly agreed. One student commented on her continued involvement with the issue she studied. She said, “Thanks to the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] project, I am volunteer at the SPCA in the TLC for Cats program, and the Reading to Dogs. I volunteered all summer and will continue to do so.” Alternatively, students were split on their connection to organizations researched through the project. When presented with the statement, “I still support and/or have maintained a connection to the organization I researched in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project,” 20.0% strongly agreed and 29.1% agreed, while 45.5% disagreed and 5.5% strongly disagreed.

The philanthropy project inspired many students to get involved in other citizen building activities. When given the statement, “Because of my participation in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project, I have participated in community enhancement activities such as community service, student government, advocacy, etc.,” 36.4% strongly agreed and 49.1% agreed. For example, one student said, “Since the [Philanthropy] project, I have joined two major Jewish youth groups whose major focus is Jewish identity and community service.” Another philanthropy project alumnus and college graduate discussed her ongoing involvement in various service activities. She said, “I have been a participant of multiple service days on my campus as well as coordinator for some of them. I have actively participated in and been on the committee for Relay for Life on my campus 2 years running. I have also independently raised funds for a temple near my college that was suffering economically.” There was a noticeable difference in the

responses from high-school graduates and middle/high-school students in this area. The overwhelming majority (91.6%) of high-school graduates “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement. The older students may be more developmentally capable of seeing the connection between the philanthropy project and other activities, or the difference may be due to older students having had more exposure to the aforementioned community enhancement activities.

The philanthropy project empowered its student participants, allowing them to feel actively engaged in the community. This was revealed when the majority of students, 87.2%, agreed with the last statement, “My experience in the 7th Grade [Philanthropy] Project has helped me feel that I can be a changemaker in the world.” The feeling of empowerment shone through their comments as well. One student said, “[The Philanthropy Project] made me aware that I can make a difference.” Another said, “It is a life-changing experience. I learned to speak and give an amazing presentation. At the same time I learned that I can really change the world.” An additional student said, “It is a great way to find your inner self and figure out what you care for. It’s also a great way to find your place in the world and what you can contribute to it.” Lastly, one student summed up his experience by saying, “It was a very fulfilling experience. The program taught me a lot about raising money, making important connections, and the difference that each one of us can make if we put our hearts into the cause.”

Philanthropy Project Impact on Future

The philanthropy project is meant to both challenge and inspire students, providing a foundation from which they can grow. Schools implement the program hoping its alumni will become educated, responsible, and contributing members of

society. To gauge the effectiveness of this, the survey asked students open-ended questions regarding the project's impact on their future.

For some students, the philanthropy project has served as inspiration for writing. Of those surveyed, 36.7% wrote about their philanthropy experience later in life. Students used the project as a topic for high school and college applications. One student said, "I am applying to high schools this year and have been putting this project as an answer to the question 'What have you done that makes you stand out?'" Another student said, "On college applications, it was a great topic." An additional student said, "I wrote about it as an experience that changed my life in my high school application." Students also used their philanthropy project experience as a topic when applying to other leadership programs, both Jewish and secular. For example, one student said, "[I used it as a topic] on my application to the Jewish Community Teen Foundation which teaches Jewish high schoolers how to become philanthropists." A college student said, "I believe I wrote about it in my Bar Mitzvah speech, my application to high school, and maybe for a fellowship."

Many students have taken the skills they harnessed in the philanthropy project into future educational settings. Most of the participants discussed specific skills that had been provided earlier in the survey. Skills included advocacy, philanthropy, research, writing, interviewing, public speaking, and communication with adults. However, many participants commented on skills not listed. A few participants mentioned having learned how to educate and persuade others through the project. One student said, "I have learned so much about how to talk to people from the [Philanthropy] project. It taught me how to explain something to someone in such a way that would grab their attention and make

them want to listen to what I had to say.” Another student said, “Public-speaking, definitely. But the big one for me was educating people on a cause that was close to home.” Other students commented on how they would take the lesson of helping others with them into their academic future. One student said, “[I will take with me a] belief in my abilities and the amazing things that can be achieved when everyone contributes.” Another student summed up his experience by saying, “I am taking the whole experience [with me] because it taught me so much on how to be involved in the community.” A few students discussed how they have taken the Jewish values they learned through the philanthropy project into future educational settings. For instance, one student said, “I look at this project as a life changing experience where I learned so much about myself and my Jewish identity. The project helped me find my passion in life and I continue to apply the skills to the philanthropy and advocacy work I do today.” Another student said, “I have learned the value of tzedakah and am reminded of the project in service events I have been involved with on my college campus.”

Through the philanthropy project, students gained valuable life skills that can be applied outside educational settings. Students were asked to consider what skills or lessons they will take, or have taken, with them into their life and community, and/or how they will apply, or have applied, these skills. Many students commented on applying what they learned to other leadership programs. For example, one student said, “Many of these skills have been immensely helpful in the leadership activities in which I am or was involved such as student government, USY, and currently, Residence Hall Association.” Another student said, “I am a participant in an initiative called Shomer Achi, ‘my brother’s keeper’ in Hebrew. This program, which consists of a group of six American

students from the University of Oregon and six Israeli students from Haifa University focus on certain social justice issues, this year being immigration. Through dialogue, debate, volunteer work, and educational sessions we work with our local communities to show that as Jews, we care for our ‘brothers.’” On a related note, students noted how the philanthropy project helped them develop stronger interpersonal skills. Students are more comfortable speaking up and talking with both adults and peers. One student said, “I’m right now trying to get involved with the Shelter Network and have found talking to their volunteer coordinators is a lot easier because I have experience working with these types of people from the [Philanthropy] project.” Another student said, “I can address what I want to say clearly and in a formal but not cheesy manner.” One student told a story about having to give a tour to important school donors later in life. She said, “The [Philanthropy] project helped because I was very comfortable talking to a group of eight adults I had never met, and also, I was able to capture their interests.” Finally, survey participants noted that the philanthropy project helped them become more active in other service projects. They have continued giving back to the community. For example, one student said, “I worked in New Orleans to help rebuild the lower 9th ward two years ago. I am president of the American Disaster Relief Club at my high school.” A second student said, “I joined the East Bay Jewish Community Teen Foundation, which is a teen philanthropy board. I have learned to feel passionate toward the community service I do by volunteering at the Stanford Blood Center.” Another student said, “I also do a lot of community service and I think that the [Philanthropy] project might have sparked something in me to keep on giving.”

For some students, the philanthropy project influenced later academic decisions

and/or their career path. One student said, “I am now pursuing a degree in economics and International government with the idea of going into international development work in Africa. This interest was derived directly from the project. My analytical skills of being able to assess how well an organization is addressing the root of a problem were greatly enhanced by this project.” Another student said, “I am interested, in terms of career plans, in studying international development with an emphasis on youth education. For my philanthropy project I supported ELI, an Israeli organization assisting abused youth. My participation in this program facilitated my passion for helping youth around the world.” Lastly, a student commented on how the philanthropy project, in conjunction with other experiences, led him to politics. He said, “I very early on became committed to public service and issue advocacy. I'm currently interning in the U.S. Senate, and experiences like the [Philanthropy] project, along with many others, have certainly contributed to that.”

It is clear that students gained much from their philanthropy project experience and applied their learning to other areas of their lives. In fact, when asked if they would recommend future students participate in the philanthropy project, all of the students surveyed responded “yes.” In addition, some participants chose to comment further. They shared what the philanthropy project meant to them and how it helped them grow. One student said, “It is a great learning experience because I realized how fortunate I am compared to the rest of the world. Not only was I able to reflect on this, I was able to make a difference.” A second student said, “It was a great experience that taught me many different things. You find out what truly matters to you, and you form strong connections with the organization you are helping. I became a better person from this

project, and I highly recommend it.” An additional philanthropy project alumnus said, “It is a very useful program. It gave me the most real world experience of any middle school program.” Another student said, “I would absolutely recommend it. This project was an amazing opportunity to learn about the different needs in our communities as well as organizations. It also allowed us to see that despite being young, we do have the power to make a difference. It is an incredibly inspiring and empowering experience.” Finally, the philanthropy project was a first step for one college student to learn more about herself. She said, “I think that this project is incredibly valuable especially during the middle school years during which students are beginning an identity journey and facing challenges and struggles about who they are. I think that the 7th grade [Philanthropy] project lay the foundations for me to recognize the importance of finding a cause that ‘gets me up in the morning’ and motivates me to make change and be a leader in my community.”

Philanthropy Project Recommendations

While 100% of those surveyed recommend other students participate in the philanthropy project, there is room for improvement. As with any project or program, there are always ways to enhance the student experience. In the surveys and post-survey interviews, students provided recommendations on how to improve the philanthropy project. The survey also identified areas in need of work.

To begin with, the survey showed that participants did not make a strong connection between the philanthropy project and Jewish values. When given the statement, “The Jewish Values studied in the 7th grade [Philanthropy] Project have application in my daily life,” the participants were somewhat divided. The results

showed that 63.6% agreed or strongly agreed and 36.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is unfortunate, as one of the program goals is for students to see how Jewish values are applied to the real world. When given the statement, “My participation in the [Philanthropy] project helped strengthen my Jewish identity,” the results were split yet again. The results showed 52.7% agreed or strongly agreed and 47.3% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed. Again, this is unfortunate because the philanthropy project is meant to help strengthen students’ Jewish identity. Some students commented on this topic. One student said, “I didn’t feel like there was much Jewish content to the project itself, though the context for tzedakah was Jewish.” Another said, “It didn’t stand out as a Jewish project to me.” An additional student said, “It could have had more of a focus on Jewish causes and Jewish texts.” It appears that for program goals to be met, schools need to work on strengthening the Jewish connection within the philanthropy project.

There was a noticeable difference in the responses from School A and School B in the area of Jewish values and identity. A larger percentage of students from School A tended to “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statements related to Jewish values and Jewish identity than their counterparts at School B. The reason for this may have to do with where the project occurs in each school. The philanthropy project is rooted in the Humanities class at School A, while it is rooted in the Jewish Studies class at School B. There may be more of a focus on the integration of Jewish values at School B. Additionally, survey participants from School B tended to be older than participants from School A, thus being more developmentally capable of assessing the role of Judaism in their lives.

Another area in need of work relates to specific academic and life skills. While the survey identified skills that had been enhanced through the philanthropy project, it also identified skills that were not enhanced. For example, students did not feel their teamwork skills were greatly enhanced. When asked directly about teamwork, 14.3% said the project did not enhance this skill, and 44.6% said the project enhanced this skill just a little. The survey showed similar results for collaborative learning: 11.1% said the project did not enhance this skill, and 44.4% said the project enhanced this skill just a little. Results were similar in terms of academic skills such as active listening, notetaking/summarizing, and Internet research. The majority of participants noted these skills were enhanced only a little, and some students commented on this topic. One student said, "I love the project, but it would be nice if teachers focused more on writing mechanics and research skills during the project." The philanthropy project is meant to teach academic and life skills in a meaningful way, allowing students to apply newly learned skills. Based on the survey results, schools should spend more time explicitly teaching skills related to teamwork, collaborative learning, active listening, notetaking/summarizing, and Internet research. Alternatively, schools could find more effective ways to integrate these skills into the philanthropy project.

Some students recommended that the philanthropy project include community-service opportunities. Allowing students to spend time at various organizations will bring the work to life and forge a stronger connection between the students and organizations. One student said, "As a suggestion, maybe instead of just an interview, you can encourage your students to spend a day at their respective organization to gain a better connection with the cause." Another student said, "I think that over the years I have

learned that I enjoy volunteering better than just raising money. No matter how much research I do, I learn more when I meet the people I am trying to help.” One student addressed this topic in her post-survey interview, “There should be an added service piece. Students should work at their organization for a portion of the project. Doing research is only half of it; meeting the people helps students to better understand the organization and its work. This will also help during presentations because students can speak from their own experience.” Service enhances philanthropy and vice versa. Therefore, schools should consider adding a community-service component to the philanthropy project to enrich the experience for its students.

CHAPTER FIVE

Major Findings

This study has shown that the youth philanthropy project in Bay Area Jewish Day Schools brings about great benefits. Some of the benefits are felt immediately, while others are not recognized or appreciated until the participant is older. Benefits include the development of both academic and life skills. The student participants were given an avenue through which they could learn and practice academic skills such as writing, research, and public speaking. The philanthropy project also allowed students to be trained in important life skills such as advocacy, interviewing, and fundraising. The learned skills prepared students for future academic and social arenas.

The student participants viewed their philanthropy project experience favorably, be it one year or ten years later. Students felt the philanthropy project was better than other service, academic, and religious programs in which they had participated. For some students, the program paved the way for their participation in future community enhancement activities. In some cases, students' middle school participation in philanthropy factored into their academic decisions at the collegiate level.

Overall, participants felt the philanthropy project was worthwhile. Despite areas in need of improvement, all of the participants thought the program should continue. Having had an opportunity to reflect upon the project's impact upon their lives, the participants felt strongly that other students should experience youth philanthropy.

Connection to Literature Review

The results of this study support earlier research in the field of youth philanthropy. The philanthropy project in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools

provides experiential education, allowing students to become active in their communities. This is exactly what John Dewey, the “Father of Service Learning,” calls for in his educational and social philosophies (Giles & Eyster, 1994). In addition, the philanthropy project supports the research of youth philanthropy experts, Matt Rosen and Maureen Sedonaen. Rosen and Sedonaen identify youth philanthropy as a tool for successful youth development. They believe participants in such programs learn important life skills and develop into healthy, productive adults. Such is the case with many of the philanthropy project alumni surveyed in this study (Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001). Furthermore, the philanthropy project in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools takes place during a highly formative period, middle school. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development recommends that adolescents be exposed to service during this time, as significant growth can occur in the development of values, purpose, citizenship, and social responsibility. Again, this was the case with many of the students surveyed in this study (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989, p.45).

The youth philanthropy project offered in San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Day Schools most resembles the program established through the Surdna Foundation in New York City public schools during the early 1990s. Both programs exist within the confines of the classroom and involve the creation of a mini-foundation. Through both programs, students are able to develop skills and experience philanthropy (Frank, 1994). Additionally, the Jewish Day School’s philanthropy project supports the research of Patricia Bjorhovde. Bjorhovde advocates teaching philanthropy to children both inside and outside the home so as to keep philanthropy alive and well in the United States (Bjorhovde, 2002).

Recommendations

Parents, teachers, funders, and now students have labeled youth philanthropy as a worthwhile and beneficial program, one that should be made available to more students. Educators should review the research and consider bringing youth philanthropy into their middle and high schools. When schools bring youth philanthropy into the classroom, they provide students with experiential education while assisting the greater community. Teaching philanthropic values within the confines of a classroom allows schools to support, or take the lead in, passing down the ethics of giving.

Integrating youth philanthropy into the curriculum and tying it to academic standards fosters engaged scholarship among students. For example, students practice research skills so they can learn about a real life issue that matters to them. They study organizations that do real work and help real people. Through this applied research, students learn how they can educate themselves, educate others, persuade others to care, and support real people in need. Youth philanthropy allows students to see that in the real world, academic skills have real meaning and real outcomes. By providing opportunities in youth philanthropy, schools can make academics more meaningful and help create healthy, productive, and socially responsible adults.

Many schools already have service programs in the form of canned food drives, mandatory community-service hours, or organized volunteer opportunities. While these are all worthwhile activities, youth philanthropy goes deeper. Youth philanthropy requires the development and application of academic and life skills. Youth philanthropy also requires more discussion and reflection, elements often forgotten in other service programs. Discussion and reflection allow students to gain a deeper understanding of

social issues, creating a stronger sense of responsibility. Youth philanthropy and community service enhance one another, offering different perspectives on the same issue and different responses to the same problem. As such, both youth philanthropy and community service should be made available to students in middle and high schools.

Funding is an obvious setback for schools wanting to implement youth philanthropy and/or community-service programs. School budgets are always tight and finding funding will always be a challenge. Therefore, schools should reach out to community resources. By creating partnerships with foundations, organizations, and/or companies, schools do not have to shoulder the financial burden alone. Additionally, these community partners should be open and willing to assist schools with such admirable programming endeavors. By supporting such citizen-building programs like youth philanthropy, these partners are helping students develop into contributing adult members of society. They are helping to create a brighter future.

Study Limitations

The information obtained in this research study yielded interesting and important information, but its results may not be automatically transferred effectively to other groupings. Those surveyed were participants in a Jewish Day School philanthropy project. The religious connection makes it impossible to assume results will be the same in a secular environment. In addition, participants were residents in the San Francisco Bay Area during their involvement in youth philanthropy. Results may not be consistent in other geographic settings. While the study has helped identify the benefits of youth philanthropy and furthered the discussion of this topic, the findings reflect a very specific population.

Further Study

Youth philanthropy is a relatively new concept in the United States. As it slowly creeps into the classroom and curriculum, it is essential that research in this field continue. While research has been conducted on the short-term impact of youth philanthropy, more is needed to identify the long-term impact. For instance, research should be conducted on youth philanthropy participants once they become adults. What kinds of careers will they choose? Will they get involved in their communities? How will they incorporate philanthropic values and ethics of giving into their daily lives? And, most importantly, how will they pass these values on to their own children?

By tracking youth philanthropy participants into adulthood, researchers can learn more about the long-term impact of youth philanthropy. Such research will improve existing programs, aid in the development of future programs, and answer another important question, “How do we ensure that traditions of service and philanthropy carry on in our communities?”

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