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Thriving Neighbors Community Assessment: Member & Parent Survey Analysis

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THRIVING NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT:

MEMBER & PARENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

SPRING 2016
SOCIOLOGY 199 - INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
SHANNON BOSELLI



Executive Summary

The main purpose of this research is to assess the community in the Washington neighborhood in San Jose and further understand the people living there. This survey is a result of the partnership between Santa Clara University's Thriving Neighbors Initiative, a partnership with the university and nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood. The programs associated with the initiative focus on enhancing educational opportunities and pathways to prosperity in the Washington neighborhood. Santa Clara University has been working in the community for over thirty years and asked Laura Nichols and her Sociology students to help with the administration of a survey (modeled on the federal Promise Neighbors research), analyze the data, and give feedback on the results. Surveys were administered at Washington Elementary School and Sacred Heart Community Services in the span of a few weeks. The quantitative survey was separated into three sections that asked questions about neighborhood, children, and personal wellness for each respondent. This report provides analysis of the 223 surveys collected during February 2016.

Demographics of the respondents were analyzed to have a fuller picture of who took the community assessment survey. Ninety-three percent of respondents took the survey in Spanish and 67% of the respondents were Mexican or Mexican American. The survey respondents were primarily female (90%) and the average age was 39. Only about 59% of the respondents were married and just under three quarters had a high school degree or less (72%). Finally demographic information showed that about a quarter of the respondents had a household income of \$5,000 less to sustain them and their family for a whole year, with about 74% of respondents making \$30,000 or less a year. The results of the survey demonstrate that there are many thriving areas in the Washington community that are worthy of much praise, as well as problem areas that may need more focus by community members.

Sections focusing on children's health, education of students, and overall neighborhood health and safety shed light on many positive aspects of the Washington community. It is clear that parents pay a great deal of attention to their children's health and schooling. Children eat fruits and vegetables regularly, exercise daily, and sleep about 8-9 hours a night. The majority of respondents believe it's extremely important for their child to graduate from high school (87%) as well as continue their education thereafter (84%). In regards to neighborhood health and safety we see that the majority of respondents do not believe drugs, alcohol, or smoking is an issue for the Washington community. However larger issues are noted in regards to violence, clean air and streets, and general safety day and night in the neighborhood. It is clear that a greater focus on neighborhood safety would be beneficial to the Washington community.

With the data regarding housing as well as open spaces and green parks we can see more inconsistencies within the neighborhood. Housing is clearly a growing problem for residents. Forty-one percent of respondents note that buildings are not maintained, coupled with 55% of respondents that believe lead, cockroaches, and other health concerns are a problem for Washington buildings. Twenty-eight percent of respondents noted that they earn less than \$5,000 a year to support their family, yet rent prices average between \$1,150-1,350 per month in the community. Additionally, parks in the Washington community are a source of confusion for many residents. A range of answers were given regarding park safety, maintenance, and enjoyment. Continued research will need to be done on this subject to ensure the parks can be used to their fullest advantage for community members.

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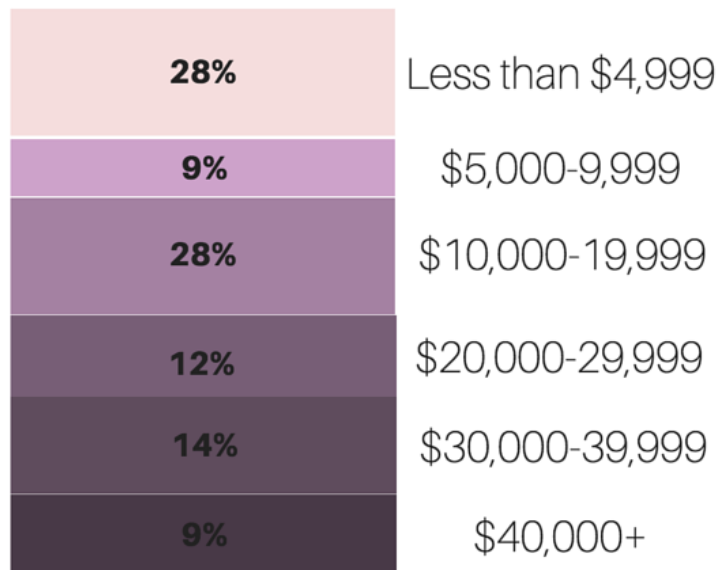
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Introduction

The Washington Neighborhood Community Assessment is designed to help Thriving Neighbors and Santa Clara University better understand how the neighborhood is seen and experienced by the people living in it. The survey includes questions about parents perceptions of their children’s well-being, their own health and well-being, and their observations about the neighborhood as a whole. Thriving Neighbors is a program funded by the Ignatian Center at Santa Clara University, a private Jesuit university in Santa Clara, California with a focus on holistic education taught through community based learning and a passion for justice. The Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education at Santa Clara University promotes the ideals of the Jesuit education through on and off campus work done with students, faculty, and the surrounding community. In 2005 the Ignatian Center began its work with the Greater Washington Community in San Jose, focused on partnering with this primarily Latino immigrant neighborhood. The University works with members of the community to provide high impact programs in the neighborhood through a program called the Thriving Neighbors Initiative (TNI). The TNI project works in partnership with long-standing organizations in the community.

The purpose of the research assessment discussed in this report is to begin to track the wellbeing of the community using a community assessment survey based on the Promise Neighborhoods research model, a federal program out of the U.S. Department of Education. The TNI, while not funded as a Promise Neighborhood, has a similar goal of supporting children from “cradle to career”. To track neighborhood well-being over time, more than 200 surveys were distributed in the Washington community. This report includes the results of some of the survey topics. Survey questions focus on neighborhood health, children’s wellness, and personal health of the respondent. The survey asked questions that dive deep into what has been accomplished in the Universities 10 years working with the community, as well as what work needs to be done to ensure a healthy, thriving neighborhood in the Washington Community continues to grow.

What is your households total income for the past 12 months?

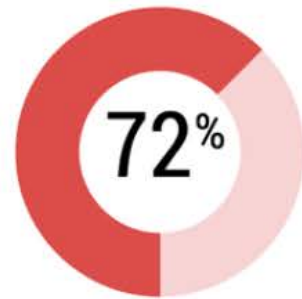


Demographics



of
respondents
are married

of respondents have
a high school
degree or less



of respondents are
Mexican / Mexican
American

average age
of respondent



of respondents
are female

Children's Health

Context

The World Health Organization notes that early childhood development is the most important phase in life that determines one's health, well-being, learning abilities and behavior throughout their life (World Health Organization). This time period is therefore of critical importance in shaping the lives of the children living in the United States. The course that this development takes relies on the love, support, and nurturing the child has with their family, school, and neighborhood. In the Washington Neighborhood parents take their children's health very seriously, and spend each day making sure their children has life opportunities that lead them to a successful future. Because of this importance, a great deal of the survey asked questions in regards to the respondent's children's health. Parents in the Washington Neighborhood were asked questions ranging from eating habits to daily exercise to sleep patterns.

37% of respondents have a television in the room where their child sleeps

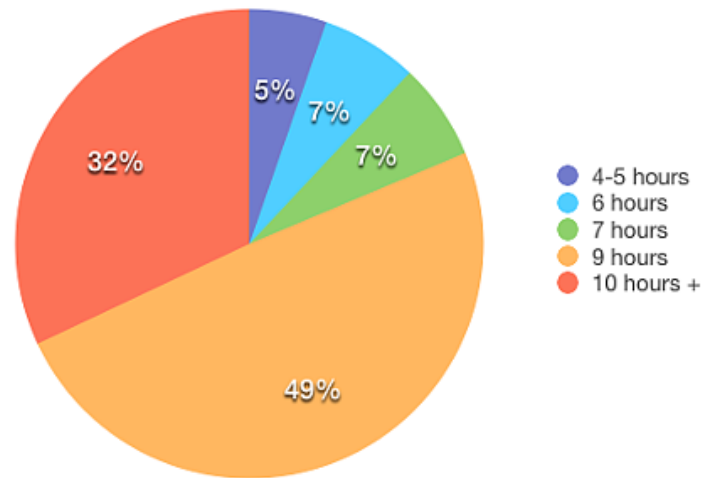


More than 3/5th's of respondents said that their child sleeps 8 to 9 hours a night

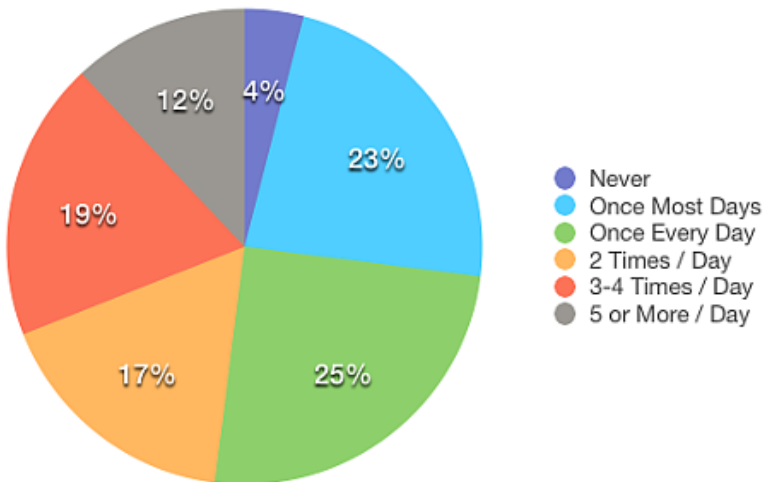
Current Snapshot of the Neighborhood

Children in the data collection range from newborns to teenagers, but we do see here that a majority (51%) of the children get 8 or less hours of sleep a night. It is recommended that toddlers get 11-14 hours of sleep, preschoolers get 10-13 hours of sleep, and 6-13 year olds get 9-11 hours of sleep (Sleep Foundation). Eight hours of sleep is sufficient once they are a young adult.

In a usual night, how many hours of sleep does your child get?



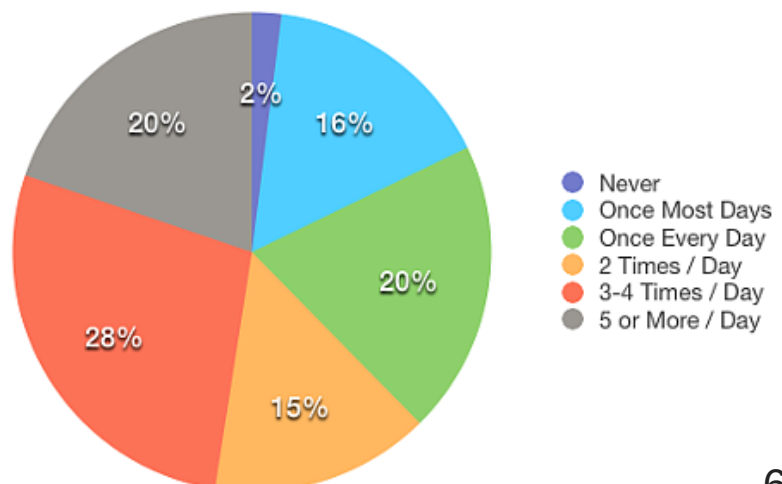
Does this child eat vegetables?



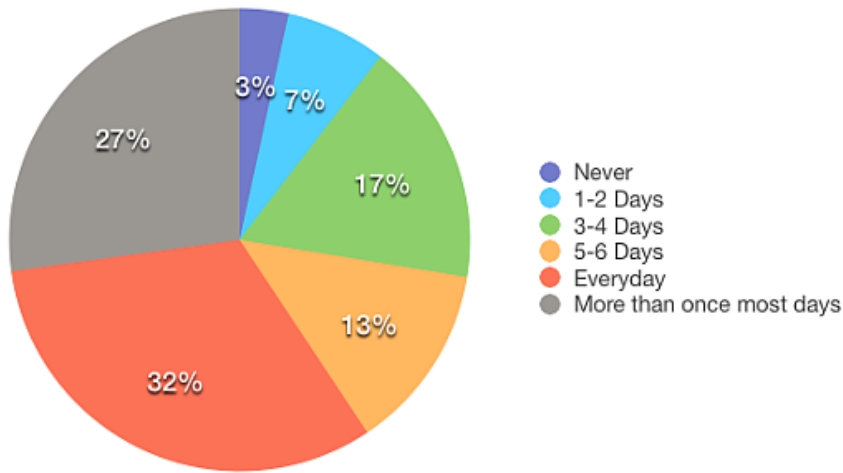
Vegetable intake per day also depends on the age and sex of the child, but it is generally recommended that children have between 3 and 5 servings of vegetables per day (one serving is 75 grams of vegetables) (Healthy Kids). Here we see that only 31% of respondents noted that their children eat vegetables 3-5 times per day.

Fruit intake per day varies based on the age and sex of the child, but it is generally recommended that children have between 1 and 2 servings of fruit a day (1 serving is 150 grams) (Healthy Kids). Here we note that only 35% of children in the survey eat fruit once or twice a day, however we do not know how much fruit the child eats during each meal, a variable that could shift the understanding of if these children are eating the recommended amount of fruit per day.

Does this child eat fruits?



Was this child active for at least 60 minutes at a time?



Children should exercise at least 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous intensity (CDC). Here we can see that a majority (59%) of children in the survey exercise for an hour a day.

Key Takeaways

Overall it's clear that respondents pay great attention to their children's health. Physical activity is prioritized for at least an hour a day, fruits and vegetables are regularly eaten, and sleep averages about 8-9 hours a night. These facts highlight the importance of health for the respondents and their children.



Data on the sleep patterns of the the respondent's children show that in general kids are averaging 8 to 9 hours of sleep a night. Knowing that respondents children range from newborns to teenagers makes it difficult to understand if this amount of sleep is sufficient, but in general it seems that kids are not getting enough sleep. Further comparison of age and sleep patterns would shed more light on if this is an issue for children of the respondents.

Respondents noted that their children eat both fruit and veggies on a regular basis, but the amount seems to be lower than the recommendation amount per day. Additional education on the importance of eating fresh produce multiple times a day is recommended.



Identifying Needs of Local Students

Context

Education is vitally important to the life successes a child will have in the United States. A high school dropout can be expected to make about \$20,000 in annual income in 2016, as compared to \$36,500 for a graduate (PBS). Twelve percent of those without a high school degree in the United States are unemployed, as compared to the national average of 8%. These two facts demonstrate the importance of early education for Americans, especially in the ability for Adult workers to earn enough wages to provide for their families. We can see this value on education in the respondents living in the Washington Neighborhood. In Washington about 60% of residents lack a high school education, yet respondents placed a high importance on having their kids graduate from high school and pursue an undergraduate degree (City Data). The data collected here helps us understand the priorities these parents have for their kids, and allows us to continue placing an importance on education for these kids.

84% of respondents think it's extremely important that their child continues their education after high school

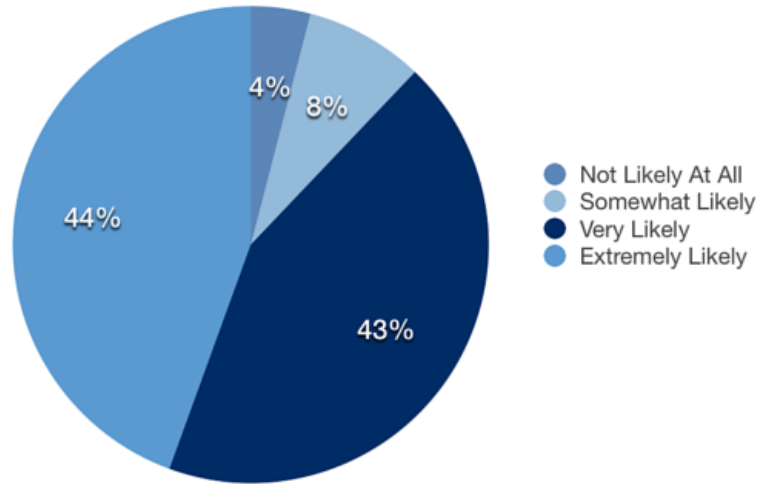


87% of respondents think it's extremely important that their child graduates from high school

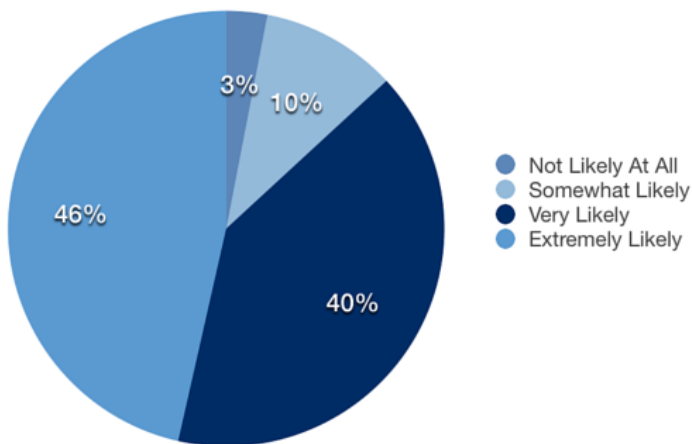
Current Snapshot of the Neighborhood

Over 4/5th of respondents believe that their child is very likely to graduate from high school. Clearly this is a priority for respondents.

How likely is it that your child graduates from high school?



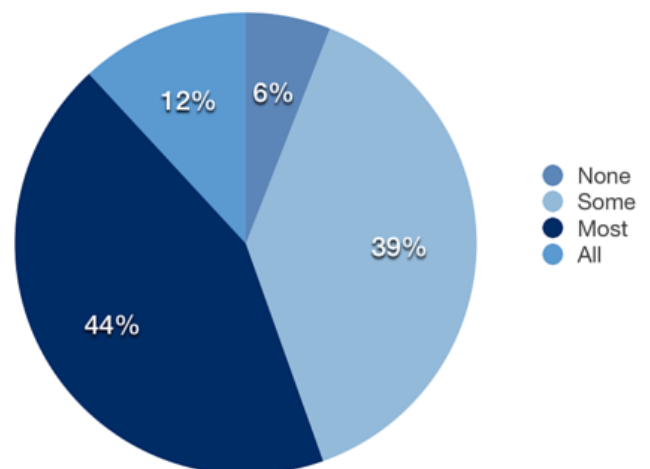
How likely is it that your child continues his/her education after high school?



Here we see a very similar breakdown that respondents note it's likely for their children continues education after high school. Over 4/5ths note the likelihood is either "very" or "extremely" likely. This is a great reflection of the educational priorities of the respondents.

Over 4/5ths of respondents also noted that students study hard and want to do well in school. This promotes a general importance of education for the school and its attendants.

How many students study hard and try to do well in school?





More than 4/5th's of respondents think it's both **likely** and **important** that their child continues their education after high school

Key Takeaways

Education is clearly a huge priority for respondents. They note time after time that it is both likely and important for their children to go to school and pursue an undergraduate degree. Respondents also noted that the other students prioritize their education as well, creating a cultural importance for the Washington neighborhood.



Comparing these responses to sentiments of the children regarding their interest in continued education would help shed light on if the students feel a similar understanding regarding the importance of their education.

Promoting Affordable Housing

Context

In order for housing to be considered affordable it cannot cost more than 30% of the monthly income of the persons living in the house (A Place to Call Home). For example, a household making \$30,000 a year an affordable rent would cost about \$750 a month with utilities included. If households cannot afford these rent prices they can enter into either Section 8 or Public Housing programs. In the Washington Neighborhood a 2 bedroom 1 bathroom apartment will cost roughly \$1,350 (in 2008), the average-sized home for a 4 person household. In more affordable areas of the Washington Neighborhood (namely in the Eastern side, away from Willow Glen) a 2 bedroom 1 bathroom averaged around \$1,150. This data clearly shows that most residents in the neighborhood can only afford rent prices if they are making between \$50,000-60,000 a year for each household. When the household falls below this, they need to apply for assistance or live with family and friends to reduce rent costs. In the survey respondents were asked about the health of the buildings in which they live, how many people they live with, as well as what their yearly household income is. This data helps us understand if housing in the Washington Neighborhood is affordable and reliable for the residents living there.



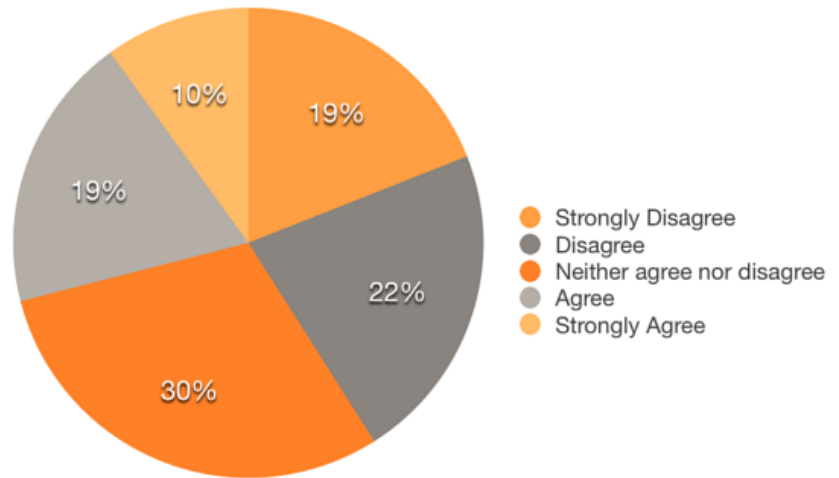
An average of 5.1 people live in a household in the Washington neighborhood, as compared to an average of 2.5 people in an American household.

Current Snapshot of the Neighborhood

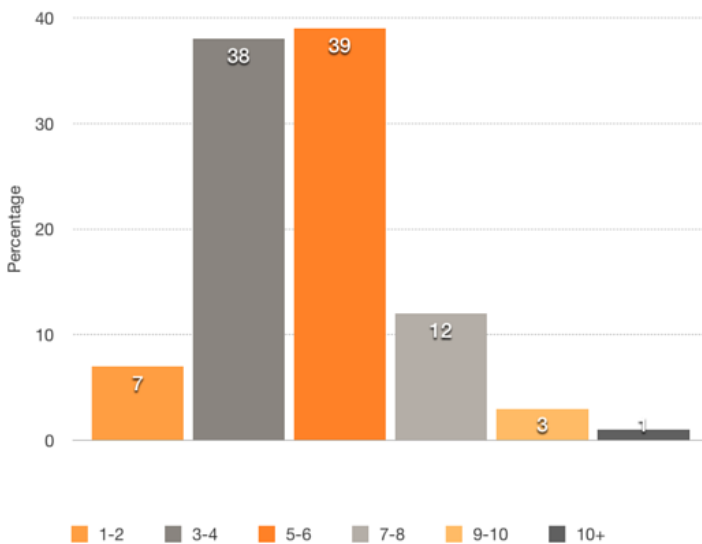
Results show that 41% of respondents noted that they disagree that buildings in their neighborhood are well maintained.

While this can be interpreted in many ways, what is important to note is that 2/5th of respondents are living day after day in a dilapidated building.

Homes and other buildings are well maintained



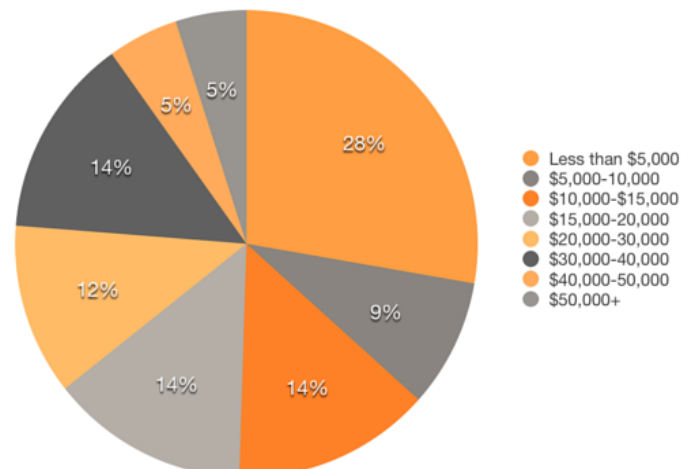
How many people currently live in your household?



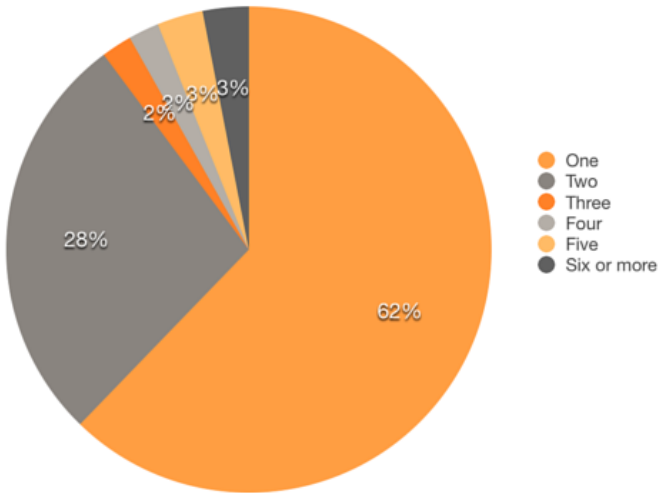
A majority of respondents live with 3-6 people in their household. The average american household has 2.5 people living in it in 2015, as compared to the average of 5.1 in the Washington Neighborhood (Statista).

The average household income in the United States is about \$52,000 (Census). In this study we note that the average income is \$13,400, with over 1/4 of all respondents noting that they live on less than \$5,000 a year. This means that a large number of respondents are completely reliant on outside help to maintain a suitable life for their household.

What is your household's total income for the past 12 months?



How many people contribute to your household's income?



The majority of respondents note that only 1 person contributes to their household income (62%). 90% have only 1 or 2 people contributing to a household income, even though the average household size is 5.1.

Key Takeaways

Here we see that housing is a growing problem for residents in the Washington neighborhood. Buildings are not maintained, housing costs are growing, and household income is not sustaining these residents. This data makes it increasingly clear that housing needs to be prioritized.



Over 1/4 of all respondents live with a household income of \$5,000 or less per year. This is a huge problem, and it greatly affects housing. Residents are living in neglected buildings. They are continuously paying rent, never able to buy a property. Residents also noted living with a large number of people, leading us to believe that multiple families are sharing residences in the neighborhood.

Because a majority of respondents do not make enough income to afford rent prices in the area, it's clear that they would qualify for public housing. However when answering a question regarding if they are using public assistance most noted that they weren't. This leads us to believe that a number of respondents do not use public housing or section 8 and instead use more creative tactics to afford their monthly rent.



Open Spaces & Green Parks

Context

Having ample parks and open spaces for the Washington community is important for the overall health and wellness of the residents. It gives households the opportunity to relax and rejuvenate outside, growing closer as a family. Parks also offer a space for increased interaction between neighbors, often adding to the cohesion of the neighborhood. These two reasons make a focus on the Washington parks vital to the success of the community. There are 5 main parks located within the neighborhood -- Guadalupe River, Brenda Lopez, Parque de Padre, Bellevue Park, and the Washington Elementary School park (Healthy Lifestyles). Residents expressed their worry that the parks are not well maintained, accessible, or safe for them and their children, causing them to be underused. Digging deeper into these issues it's clear that some discrepancies lie in the general feelings of the Washington parks, as you can see in the graphs below.

42% of respondents think its pleasant to walk or run outside.

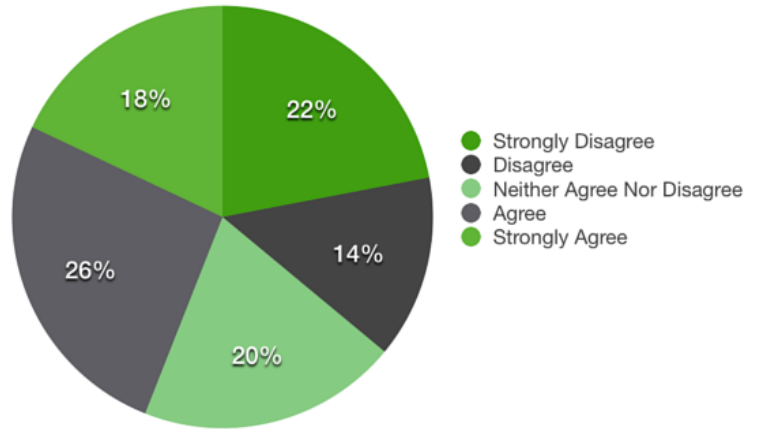


35% of respondents believe that their local parks are safe.

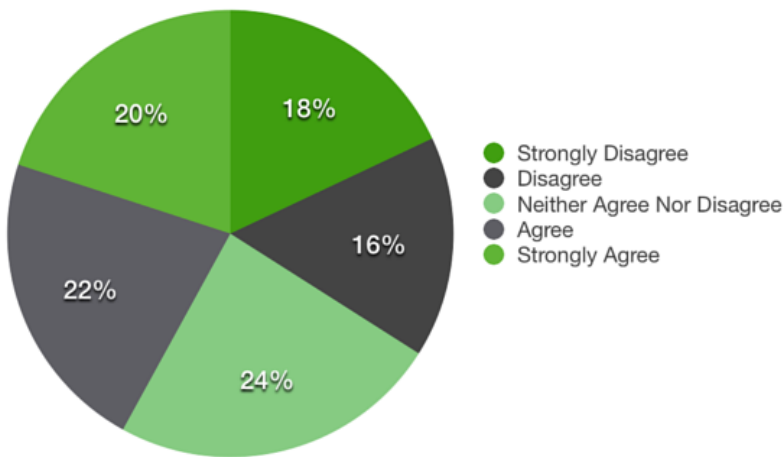
Current Snapshot of the Neighborhood

Here we see a wide range of responses, distributed quite evenly throughout the five possible answers. Only 34% of respondents note that they agree that local parks and sports clubs are sufficient for physical activity.

Local parks, sports clubs, and other facilities offer many opportunities to play and be physical active



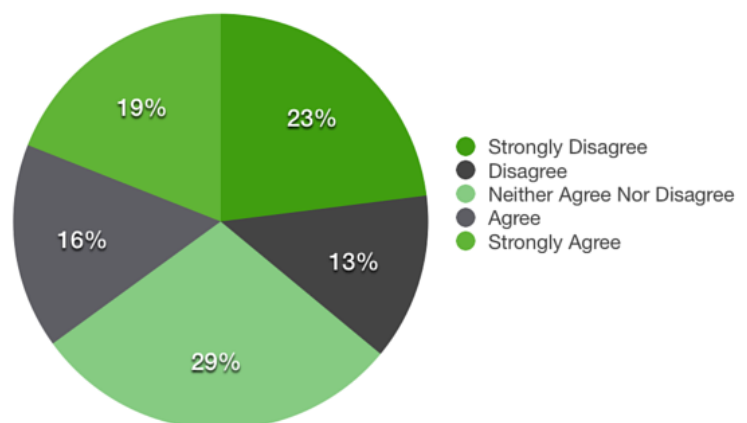
It is pleasant to walk or run outside



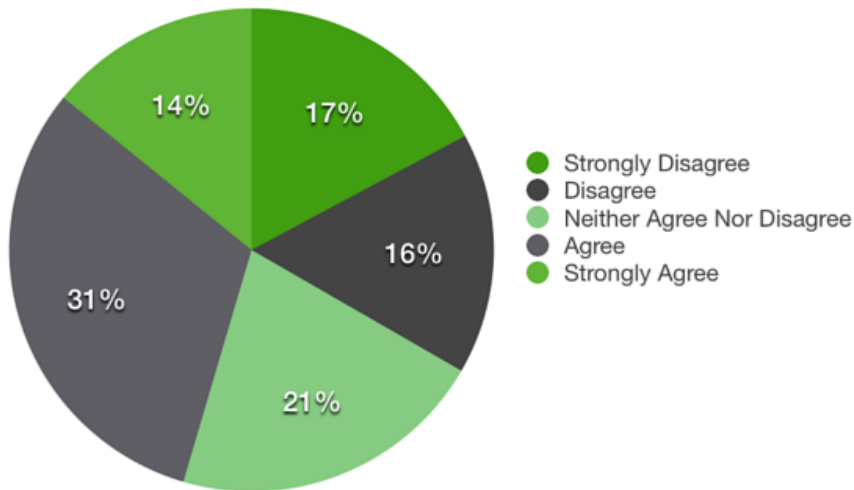
Again respondents have a wide range of responses in regards to their local parks. 2/5ths of respondents note that it's pleasant to walk or run outside.

Interestingly the largest number of answers to this question are that people "strongly agree" that parks are well maintained and safe. While this is still less than a 1/3rd of respondents, it does tell us that a good amount of responses indicate that parks are safe. Unfortunately a larger percentage (42%) disagree that the parks are well maintained and safe.

Parks and playgrounds are well maintained and safe



I often see children and other people playing or exercising outside



Again we see a wide distribution of answers in regards to the question of children playing outside. About 50% of respondents agree that they often see this happening, and about 50% either disagree or don't have a particular opinion on the question.

Key Takeaways

Overall we are seeing mixed opinions in regards to the parks in Washington. A range of answers is given for each question, making it difficult to interpret how safe, well maintained, and pleasant these outdoor spaces are. Some respondents note that the parks are safe and well used, and another large group disagree. We see that residents lean towards believing more needs to be done to better these spaces, ensuring the children and adults can use the parks to their fullest advantage. Continued research on the topic would lead to further understanding surrounding the greatest, if any, needs for the Washington parks.



Greater specificity in the questions related to the parks would really help during analysis of the data. The difference between "well maintained" and "safe" is potentially large, and lumping the ideas together in one question makes it difficult for respondents and analysts to understand what, if any, the real problems are in regard to the parks.

Neighborhood Health & Safety

Context

Neighborhood cleanliness refers to the overall safety and health of the Washington community. In regards to safety we can note that it is essential for residents to feel comfortable walking through the streets both days and nights. Without this communities will feel separated from one another, reports of violent altercations will increase, and outside communities will feel less comfortable being in the particular neighborhood. In regards to health it's important to understand the levels of alcohol, cigarette and drug abuse of the residents and use those figures to create programs to help teach safe habits. In both the 2002 and 2008 Washington Neighborhood Improvement Plan Amendment efforts were made to target reducing crime and creating greater neighborhood safety. The plans also pointed towards developing rehab programs and further educational plans for residents with drug abuse problems. Because of this focus in the past 15 years, it's essential to collect data on the current status of neighborhood cleanliness to understand if previous programs have been successful in making their neighborhood a safer and healthier place.



3/4 of all respondents say people in their neighborhoods rarely do drugs

3/4 of all respondents say people in their neighborhood rarely smoke



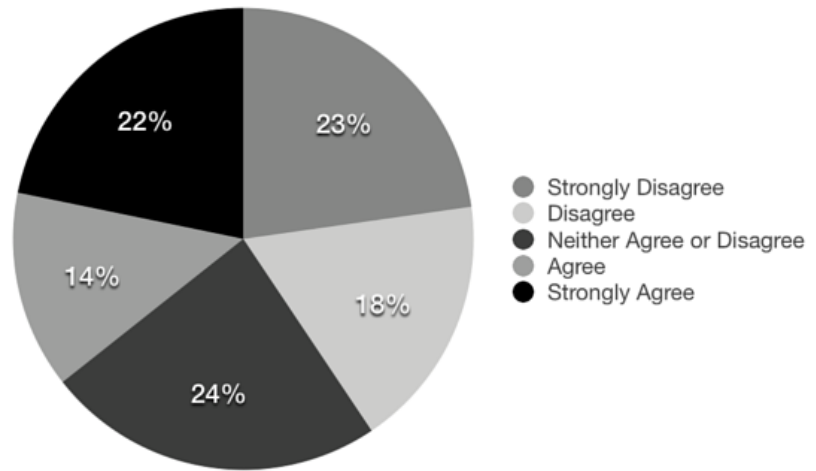
4/5 of all respondents say people are rarely drunk in public

4/5 of all respondents say people rarely act violent



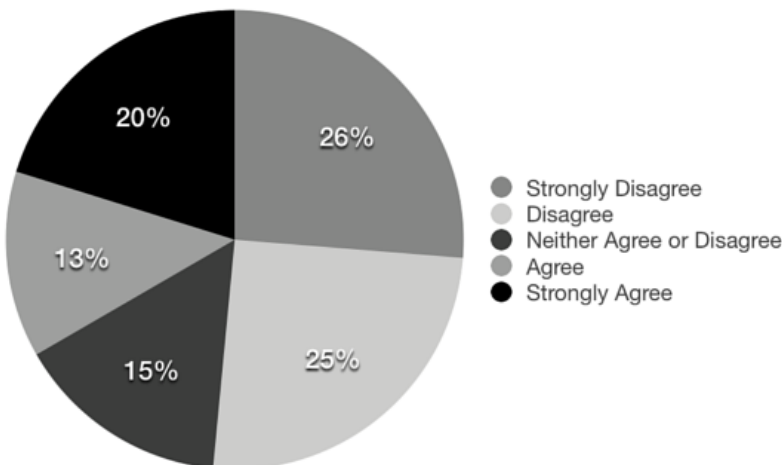
Current Snapshot of the Neighborhood

I feel safe walking in my neighborhood day or night



Unfortunately only about 1/3 of respondents believe it's safe to walk through their neighborhood during the day or night. Without safe streets to walk on, people are exercising less and spending more time alone in their homes.

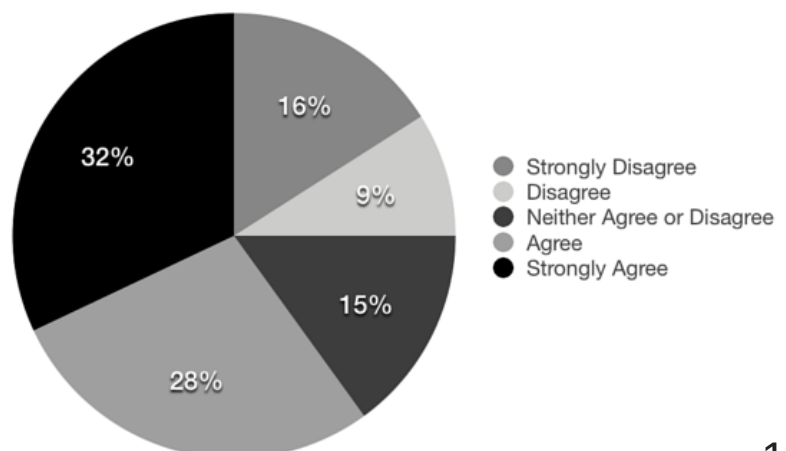
Violence and crime are not a problem in my neighborhood



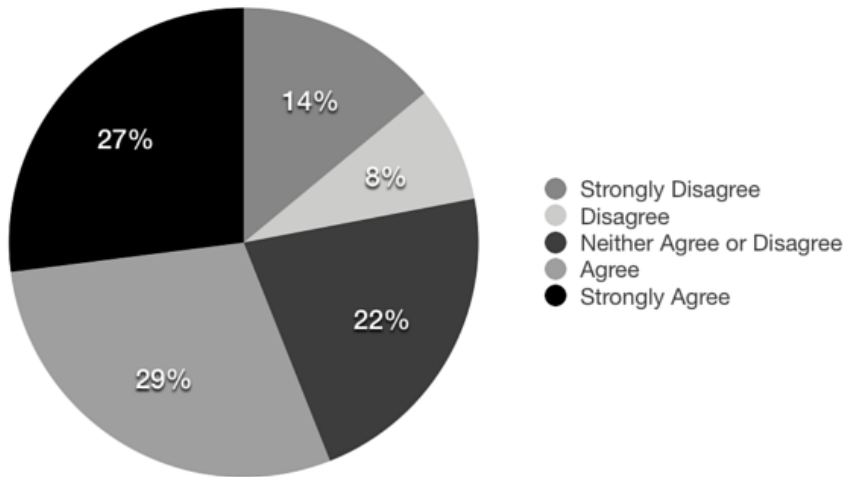
Over 50% of respondents noted that violence and crime is a problem in their neighborhood. Crime rates in the Washington neighborhood are drastically different than in neighboring Willow Glen, which boasts of some of the safest streets near downtown San Jose (Neighborhood Scout).

3/5ths of respondents note that air pollution is a health concern for their children. If the air children breathe is dirty, they are more likely to develop health problems that will span a lifetime. Problems that could develop include bronchitis, asthma, and reduced lung function (CDC).

Air pollution is a concern for the health of my children



There is a lot of trash and litter on the street



Again we see that about 3/5ths of respondents think that trash and litter on the street is a problem in the Washington neighborhood. Not only does this make it less desirable to be walking outside, but it can become a health and safety risk for residents.

Key Takeaways

In regards to neighborhood health and safety we see respondents have noted some positive and negative sentiments regarding their neighborhood. The majority of respondents do not think that smoking, alcohol, and drugs are a problem for residents. However they do note other large issues such as violence, clean air and streets, and general neighborhood safety. Overall we can see that residents believe an increased focus on clean streets and clean air will go a long way in the health of the neighborhood.



There is a clear discrepancy with residents feelings surrounding violence in the neighborhood. In question B7 respondents were asked if they feel safe walking day or night in the neighborhood, and a majority said they do not. In question A18 respondents were asked how many people in the neighborhood act violently, and 4/5ths say people rarely act violent. This can either tell us that a small minority of residents are making respondents feel unsafe in the neighborhood, or that respondents are confused on the topic and more research needs to be done.

Recommendations

Recommendations Related to the Community Assessment Survey

In regards to the specific survey administered to respondents, a lack of specificity and background in regards to multiple questions led to confusion in the answering of the survey. If the questions do not fully explain facts necessary to answer the question many respondents could be confused and answer incorrectly. Additionally questions can be vague and leave much room for interpretation, further confusing the respondents. For example, when asked about the amount of fruit and vegetables their children eat in a day, it is helpful to give respondents a reference of how much is in one serving of produce. Another example is helping clarify what the word "household" means to respondents. Some may interpret this word as "family" while others may say it is simply "number of people living in a house". By eliminating these inconsistencies respondents will be better able to answer the questions and further strengthen the data we continue to collect.

Recommendations Related to Data Collection

General survey recommendations will also help in continued data collection for the Washington neighborhood. When the survey is implementing again, the researchers might investigate the possibility of providing the survey electronically. The Santa Clara University library has tablets and laptops that may be able to be rented and used for data collection. Using online surveys will eliminate the possibility of human error with data input and could help with any respondent answers that were vague or incorrectly circled.

Future data collection in the form of qualitative data will further prove the strength of the quantitative data collected in the community assessment survey. I would suggest conducting interviews to go along with the survey and add insightful quotes and more detailed descriptions of the areas of most concern for respondents. By going in depth on those problem areas we will be better able to understand why respondents feel some concerns are larger than others and in turn use that to create additional programs to tackle those problems.

When data are collected again it would also be beneficial to add additional data collection locations within the community. Ideally the demographics of the survey respondents should be similar to the demographics of the neighborhood. Both an elementary school and a social services nonprofit have the ability to attract very specific members of the community, namely members who have kids or are in need of help. Locations such as a church, a library, or a cafe would provide for collection of data from respondents that regularly go to these locations in the neighborhood.

Conclusion

The Washington Neighborhood Community Assessment is an extensive survey used to help the Ignatian Center and the neighborhood better understand the daily lives of the members of the community. Two hundred and fifteen surveys were collected in the month of February at Washington Elementary School and Sacred Heart Community Services. The survey asked questions about the general neighborhood, parent's perceptions of their children, and the well being of the respondent. Findings show that children's health and education are clearly a main priority for respondents. Community members shy away from drugs and alcohol but the community does still face an uphill battle with general safety, violence, and clean air and streets. More focus needs to be put on the growing housing crisis in the Washington community, as well as further understanding of the status of green parks and open spaces. Continued data collection will improve the understanding of the Washington neighborhood and help Santa Clara University and its community partners make lasting changes to the lives of the neighbors in this San Jose community. As new residents find their home in the Washington neighborhood and the new generation of adults continue to establish roots in San Jose it will be integral to understand how this dynamic population is improving their chances at having a successful, happy, and healthy life.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Madre a Madre group at Washington Elementary, especially community research assistants: Maria Elizabeth Ramirez, Maria Claudio, Socorro Madrigal, Arcelia Ramirez. Without them we would not have had 223 respondents or answers to questions that the spanish speaking population asked while taking the survey. Thank you to students in the Applied Sociology capstone for data collection and entry, especially Caitlin Courshon for managing data entry and Galilea Silva for coordinating data collection at Sacred Heart Community Services. Special thank you to Irene Cermeño at the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education.

Appendix

Methods

Survey

The 223 surveys were distributed to members of the Washington neighborhood to ensure a depth and breadth of research is being conducted on the community. The surveys were distributed at the Washington Elementary School (115), Gardner Elementary School (5), and Sacred Heart Community Services (100), a nonprofit focused on this specific neighborhood. Surveys were collected throughout the month of February to those who live in the Washington neighborhood. Surveys were grouped into categories based on the age of the respondents youngest child, color coded to add specific survey sections based on their children's age. The survey has three main goals: to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the neighborhood, to better develop programs for young people in the area, and to better describe the community members taking the survey.

Data Collection

The data for the analysis was collected at both the Washington Elementary School and Sacred Heart Community Services. At the school the weekly "Madre a Madre" meeting took time from their schedule to administer the survey. The school also hosted drop in hours for additional neighbors to come take the survey. Promotores, or spanish speaking residents of the community trained in research ethics and the survey instrument, were available to recruit neighbors to participate and answer any areas of confusion for the respondents. At Sacred Heart Community Services residents who came to take advantage of the nonprofit's services were asked to take the survey. In return for their time spent on the survey each respondent received a \$10 gift card to Target.

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Appendix

Methods

Survey Respondents Demographics

Table 1. Demographics by Data Collection Site and Full Sample Data

	Sacred Heart	Washington Elementary	Full Sample
Took the Survey in Spanish	89%	97%	93%
Female	85%	95%	90%
Married	49%	70%	59%
Mexican/Mexican American	68%	66%	67%
High School Degree or Less	65% -- more educated	78%	72%
Household Income is \$30,000 or less	65%	84%	74%
Household Income is \$5,000 or less	31%	24%	27.6%
Average Age	41	38	39
Average Income	\$15,500	\$12,500	\$14,000

Community Assessment Survey

The community assessment survey is attached.