

# **SCSU Recreation & Leisure Studies/ New Haven Public Schools Collaboration**

## **New Haven After-School Program**

### **First Year Pilot Study Results**

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## **Introduction and Overview of Program**

### **Description of the Program**

In January 2014, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) was awarded a grant to implement an after school violence prevention program in Hill Central School, a K-8 school which is part of New Haven Public Schools District (NPHS). The program was to be aimed at grades 6-8, but was adapted to include the fifth grade as well. The funding was provided from the Institute of Municipal and Regional Policy at Central Connecticut State University.

The long term goal of this program is to reduce the number of violent incidents, both in school and in the community. The program intends to accomplish this goal through an after school program. There are two ways that this program will work to reduce violence among youth. First, the program seeks to offer students the opportunities to develop skills in various arts, e.g., music, painting, drama, and sports, both competitive and non-competitive during a critical time during the day. Using new enrichment opportunities will open the students up to new possibilities for their lives, both in finding meaningful ways to spend leisure time and possibly identifying potential careers by finding unknown talents within themselves. Keeping young students occupied during the after-school hours has been shown to reduce many at-risk behaviors and their associated consequences, including substance use, sexual behaviors, and violence behaviors.

The second way this program will accomplish this goal of reducing violence is by providing students with access to mentoring role models, which are the on-site program staff. Hiring college and post-college individuals to work as counselors and program directors in the after school program offers the students access to adults who can have a significant impact in their lives. Finding counselors and staff with similar backgrounds allows the youth to see all the future possibilities they can have by working hard in school and avoiding consequences from poor decision making. Making these adult connections is critical for at-risk youth and has been shown to be effective for long term academic success.

The program was also designed in a manner that encourages participation through the reduction of traditional barriers to program involvement. The program operates on the school site five days a week, beginning right at dismissal. There is after school bussing provided for students so that they may become involved and still have a safe method of transportation home; this is even more critical when working with families that may not have transportation access.

In order to expose students to new enrichment activities, the program contracted with a number of professional artists, musicians, and athletes to run the program. It was important to include many active activities, as students have been sitting in classes all day and providing time to exercise and express energy is important at this age. New sports were introduced, such as rugby and two styles of dancing. Many individuals from across Southern's network were brought in as collaborative partners to provide important services.

The staffing of the project was extensive. The program was overseen by Dr. Esther Howe, Associate Dean of the School of Health and Human Services/Professor of Social Work. There were two Co-Directors, Dr. James MacGregor, Professor and Chair of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies and Dr. Deborah Smith, Associate Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies. These three individuals guided the development of the program and oversaw the implementation and administrative aspects of the grant. Dr. Deborah Smith was integral to program development, overseeing the on-site staff and ensuring the program was addressing the relevant developmental components to the education and services provided. An evaluator, Dr. Deb Risisky, Associate Professor of Public Health, was brought on to provide feedback, gather data and provide reports. Her background in program evaluation and adolescent health was an appropriate match for the needs of the program. Drs. MacGregor and Smith were responsible for contracting with the many consultants that were utilized during the project to provide a variety of enrichment activities for the youth as well as oversight of the program staff.

The current year program began implementation in mid-March and ran for 12 weeks. For the upcoming academic year, the program will be expanded to begin implementation in the fall when school year begins. The program will continue to take place at Hill Central School, as well as at an additional school, A.L. Troup School.

### **Program Development**

In order to design and implement this after school program on short notice, the three lead administrators each played an integral role in shaping the program. For a behavior change and/or educational program to be successful, it must be guided by theory. For this program, Dr. Smith created a framework that was based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This five stage model addresses an individual's needs as they influence behavior. At the most basic level, an individual has basic needs: food, water and shelter. The next level addresses safety needs of an individual, addressing feelings of security, understanding impact of the law on their safety and more (Maslow, 1943). For a violence prevention program housed at a middle school, these are important factors to address as students deal with bullying in and out of school, along with potential home and community violence. The third level addresses belonging – friendship, love, family, and intimacy. This too is a critical piece for an after-school program working with middle school students. Middle school students are at a difficult age – puberty changes can have an impact physically and emotionally. These changes also can impact a child's home and friend relationships, so the ability to provide students with a safe place which includes adults who care about them and the potential to meet other students their age, can be critical to positive development. These early levels are those that the program has chosen to focus on, as esteem and self-actualization can take many years to achieve. However, addressing the second and third levels of the model can begin to build up esteem among these youth, providing a foundation as they move forward towards high school.

Using Maslow as a foundation, the program looked at building a framework that can be used for the program to guide activities in a meaningful way (see Appendix A for a copy of the model). With a short first year (only three months), radical behavior change is not

likely. However, providing a foundation of understanding regarding how to think about moving from violent to non-violent attitudes and behaviors can occur during a short time frame. Therefore, the focus was on those foundational levels of Maslow, addressing safety/security and belonging as a way to reduce violence behaviors and change attitudes towards the use of violence in these youth's lives.

Using the goal of providing a solid foundation, the program could be designed to address those critical safety/security and social connection factors. Activities were provided after school, allowing students to have a safe place to relax, be with friends, and not worry about being home alone or walking through their community alone after school. Providing a variety of activities each day encouraged students to try new things and be with different people; this allowed students to meet others they may not have known and form social connections. The social connections went beyond just the students being with each other. Having counselors there who were primarily college students allowed for the children to have role models and mentors that they could talk to and form relationships with. Having adults who care about youth in their lives has shown to be a positive factor for youth development – while family is important, the more adults a child has that they feel cares for them, the more positive the impact on social and academic development.

Using this empowerment based model, the students were able to feel like they had some choice and control. Every day at the program there were four to five activity choices that the students could choose from. Using this opportunity for skill building through choice, recreation can be used as a social tool to build self-efficacy and life skills. Decision making is an essential skill to build and solidify for youth as they develop towards a healthy and non-violent adulthood. This program goes beyond keeping youth busy and entertained, but is focused on a foundation of positive development towards adulthood. Additionally, staying in the program throughout the years will help with the transition to high school, where a strong foundation will be an asset to their success.

This program is a unique package for an after-school program due to the collaborative partnerships involved. While Recreation and Leisure Studies is the anchor of this program, many other departments in the SCSU School of Health and Human Services play important roles by providing unique skills and addressing a variety of program needs. These needs include structural and environmental supports, along with family and peer support. Without each partner, the program cannot be as comprehensive as needed in order to address middle school youth development. These collaborative relationships will not only be continued as the program expands and moves forward, but enhanced and strengthened. Additional supports from the School may also be included as needed as identified, to provide essential developmentally appropriate services.

### **Program Development Process**

In order to begin the process of creating this program, the three leadership staff members needed to work with NHPS staff in order to determine how to best implement the program. Dr. Howe first spoke with Sue Weisselberg, the Chief of Wraparound Services at the district. Together they decided on which schools to provide the program. Given the timeline, needs

of students, and implementation process, it was decided that in the first year, Hill Central School and A.L. Troup School were named as potential sites. Both are K-8 schools; K-8 is the common make up of schools in the NHPS district.

Dr. MacGregor then reached out to each school to determine interest. Hill Central School was the first to respond and therefore selected as the first year target school. A.L. Troup will be added in during the upcoming year. Hill Central was a good fit for this first year implementation for many reasons. It is a medium size school, offering enough students for the program without being too large for a new implementation (Troup is one of the largest K-8 schools in the district). Additionally, it is one of two schools in the district with a high level of bilingual students and the principal was happy to have this additional service for Hill Central students. When program staff toured the school with school administration, it was discovered that there was a Parks & Recreation program already on site that had to be worked around in order to not overlap services.

Once those administrative aspects were completed, the next step was to identify the correct staff to help design and implement this new program. Since the SCSU Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies has both an undergraduate and graduate program, there were many opportunities to reach out to alumni and students to fill necessary staff needs. The Program Coordinator was a graduate alumnus who is certified in both Recreation and in Education. The Site Supervisor that was hired was also an alumnus of the graduate program. Counselors were hired to help run the program activities; the majority of these hired individuals were junior and senior level Recreation and Leisure Studies students. In order to participate, counselors were required to commit to at least two days per week at the program, with a maximum of five days. Given the demographic makeup of the selected school, it was important to have at least one bilingual recreation counselor, which the program was able to find. This counselor was able to use his language skills to communicate with families when needed as well; all information for the program was created in both English and Spanish to ensure families could read the information in their preferred language. This job would give counselors the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to the field, making them more marketable upon their graduation. Prior to beginning the position, all recreation counselors were required to attend a one-day staff training workshop.

The Program Coordinator went to the school to start recruiting for participants, followed by the counselors. The Program Coordinator put together a survey for all the potential participants to determine their activity interests to help with the planning and development of the after school program. The program was originally designed to be three hours each day after school but then program staff were informed that between school letting out and bus pick-ups, the program was really approximately 75 minutes per day. The staff needed to reconceptualize the program design to meet the reality of the time constraints. For example, the program was planned to have three units of activity, one of which was homework. The original plan was for one block to be dedicated to homework with students being able to pick when to do their homework. Counselors would be available for assistance and tutoring at the time. Once planning moved to a point where the time was lessened greatly, homework time diminished from the plan.

As planning activities continued, a registration form was developed and program staff requested that school administration distribute to all eligible students (grades 5-8). At this time, program staff were informed that the busses would be available for only three days, down from the expected five days. Given that the eligible population was 60% walkers, there was debate about whether to run the program less than the originally planned five days. However, even though it was understood that Mondays and Fridays would likely have significantly less students due to the lack of busses, it was decided by program leadership to keep all five days in the plan. In order to accommodate smaller population on those non-bus days, less activities were planned.

At the time of this important program planning and development, leadership staff developed critical policies regarding attendance, as well as determining how to track students and activities. Since nothing was in place prior to this program's development regarding paperwork flow, everything had to be created. The program was being run as a virtual organization, which required many regular meetings with school administrators to address key issues as they arose. Examples of issues that needed to be addressed and solved included possible student accidents and behavior issues. NHPS noted that they would take responsibility for accident reports if anything happened during the program on their property. With behavior problems, the liability responsibility was taken on by the school district as well. These were critical to helping create and run this new organization that was housed in SCSU.

The structure of the program and activity selection was built off ideas from the student survey as well as program staff having deep knowledge of adolescent development and the impact of recreation on youth. Sports and fitness (such as Zumba and salsa) were originally two different components, but were combined into one component as development moved forward. Another component was creative arts and included activities such as painting once a week with a hired consultant, making CDs, and playing charades. There was a component of special activities which included learning about hair and nail design with a consultant as well as motivational speakers, although both activities didn't take place as much as originally intended. Science was a weekly component, and included activities such as working on building containers to protect eggs during an egg-drop experiment. Computer lab was another component in the early stages of the program; this had to be reduced when state testing began, as the computer labs needed to be used by the schools. Finally, there was a special track created in the beginning for the seventh and eighth grade students; however, this was not as successful as hoped and did not continue through the entire program.

In addition to the sports and arts activities, there were other activities that were designed to help reinforce messages related to prevention of violence and positive youth development. The SCSU Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Department put on a program called "Be Cool" that addressed stress management and anger management behaviors. This program worked with grade specific students, so students were only in the program every three weeks for a total of 3-4 visits. This activity was required for the students to attend when it was their designated group. The program focused on reminding students of personal management skills they already knew and reinforcing positive aspects

of behavioral control. Be Cool was not designed to teach new skills. One recreation counselor was assigned to help with this activity every week to help with consistency. Towards the end of the program, MFT graduate students were participating as well, which allowed for small group activities. This was especially important with the younger students, as their grades had high numbers of program participants.

The Department of Social Work also played an important role in this after school program. Each day, there was a social worker there; these individuals did not vary by day of the week so that participants knew who to expect on a specific day and saw familiar faces throughout the program. Master of Social Work students were utilized and they, in turn, used this opportunity as part of their clinical internship. The social worker's role was to get to know the students in the program, understand the dynamics among the participants, and intervene when they saw incidents or saw students alone. If necessary, they would do quiet interventions with students having problems. When there were no issues to address, the social workers would play games with the kids and/or participate in activities. This helped to build trust and familiarity in case of student need. The Wednesday social worker always participated and assisted in the Be Cool Program led by MFT.

## **Process Evaluation**

While outcome data is important to determining program success, conducting a process evaluation can point out the strengths and weaknesses of a program. An informal process evaluation was conducted, given the limited time available to do so. However, much information was gathered from on-site observations by the evaluator and project leadership, informal discussions with project leadership and staff, and focus group discussions with the counselors.

## **Implementation Challenges**

As with any new project, there were a number of challenges in developing and implementing this after school program. First and foremost, the turnaround from funding notification to implementation of the program was six weeks. For programs of this size, three to six months of planning time, at a minimum, is typical. The funding was finalized in January and by March, the program had begun in the school. This short time frame included many activities: site selection; design, plan and implement program; hire and train staff; gather student input on program desires; promote the program to eligible students and their families; and register participants for the program. Creating a new program in this short amount of time was very challenging.

At times, the program was challenged by communication and coordination with the selected school. Hill Central School was very supportive of the program, but schools are very busy buildings and identifying space can be problematic, especially when a program such as this one needed so many different locations within the building for all the activities. There were many details to work out beyond space in those early weeks – food, bussing, chain of command, and liability, for example. To work these many issues out took

communication and trust, the latter which had to be built during the planning phase as this was a new relationship between Recreation and Leisure Studies and Hill Central staff. As time went on, some issues did resolve while others arose. In the beginning of the program, the library with computers was accessible to students and many would go in during the end portion of the program and do their homework. Once state testing took over that space, it was no longer available for students to do their work as they had been used to.

The timing of beginning the program also was a challenge. Beginning in March, many students already had routines and schedules that had taken place most of the academic year. In addition, as spring progressed, the weather improved and students wanted to be in the program less because they wanted to be playing outside. The program did have outdoor activities where appropriate to help alleviate this concern. However, many students were not deeply engaged by the program yet because it was new to them, so abandoning it with good weather was not a problem for them. It was also very difficult to recruit 8<sup>th</sup> grade students 12 weeks prior to their graduating middle school and moving to high school. Beginning the program earlier in the year will allow for more buy-in and engagement by participants during the fall and winter so that by spring, they do not want to leave the program.

The school/district had promised late bus access to participants, but in the beginning discussions, it was unclear how many days bussing would be available. The program was originally designed with the understanding that late busses would be available five days a week; this was important as 60% of the students who registered did so knowing they would have a safe option for returning home. Getting students onto the late bus list took weeks, so some students were delayed in starting the program if their parents could not find an alternative option to get them home. This hurt momentum with registration and engagement. The biggest bus issue was with the amount provided; only three days were available (Tuesday through Thursday). This impacted the numbers of participants on Mondays and Fridays greatly.

Determining the actual program time and setting also impacted the program design, since there were aspects that could not take place as planned. During the initial stage, the program was designed to run from 3pm to 6pm, allowing for in-depth activities, homework and tutoring, and plenty of time to enjoy a safe place to play. These hours are critical to youth development and reduction of risk behaviors, so filling them up as much as possible would have the long term biggest impact. However, once discussions with the school moved forward, it was determined that the program would run from 3:30pm until 4:50pm when the late bus arrived. This was a loss of more than 50% of the originally planned time, which made it difficult to include the full breadth of activities originally intended. Additionally, the dismissal space provided was not conducive to quality programming, as it was loud and chaotic. Using these lessons, the program staff have already begun engaging in discussions on how to address these key issues in the upcoming year.

Finally, the last challenge was creating a program that was essentially its own organization within our university setting. The paperwork in place for hiring, purchasing, and other administrative tasks is geared towards academic/on-campus programming. Having this

off-campus program that operates as a community-based agency program ran into numerous problems with regard to paperwork and administration that caused delays in some activities. There was no office space for this virtual organization, as it ran out of faculty offices at SCSU and whatever space Hill Central could find to share; therefore, there was no dedicated phone line for the program with which parents could contact program staff. This creates quite a challenge. Some of the university administration challenges can be addressed, as a larger program at the university that began two years ago is dealing with similar issues of being a virtual organization within SCSU. The remaining issues will have to be resolved with SCSU administration to determine the best option to resolve these critical issues.

### **Implementation Successes**

While there were many challenges, there were also many successes seen during the pilot program implementation. First, with short notice, the program was able to pull together a strong staff. From the two hired on-site administrators to the recreation counselors, the hired staff were well skilled for the program, engaged by the purpose and dedicated to the youth they were working with. The staff got along well with each other, providing strong role modeling behaviors while they collaborated together to run the program. Many of the counselors noted that they grew up in similar neighborhoods and/or situations to these students, so were able to relate and mentor on a level that could have deep impact on the participants. Having one counselor that was bilingual was also an important factor to staff being successful in implementing this program.

Even though there was little planning time available, the program was able to develop a full program with a long list of comprehensive options for the participants. Using a survey in the planning stage to determine participant's needs and wants is a critical factor for a successful program. Taking the learned information and using that as a baseline for developing the program ensured the participants would be engaged by the activities. The program worked hard to develop a wide range of activities, some fun and some to facilitate learning, and it kept participants engaged. It will be essential going forward to ensure a wide range of age appropriate activities, especially if the program continues to work with the broad range of fifth through eighth grade students.

While it was challenging to get the older students, especially the eighth grade students, to participate, the participation at the younger ages was very strong. Getting this group of fifth grade students engaged last year will help with recruiting this year when they are in sixth grade, which was the original lowest target grade. The earlier the students get into the program and become engaged by it, the easier it will be to keep them in the program as they progress through the middle school years when it is most significant for their development to be in a safe place during the after school hours.

Finally, in talking to staff, it was noted that they felt the program was having an impact on the youth who were participating. While the longer the program is, the more likely it is to have an impact, this short 12-week program did have influence on the youth. Counselors noted they saw changes in the participating youth, such as that the youth were able to relax

and be kids after school, letting some of the stress go from their lives. The youth were able to focus on having fun and being with their friends, without worrying about being safe at home (often without an adult) or their family responsibilities. Starting the program earlier in the academic year, where youth can be engaged in the fall and stay engaged during the winter months, will help facilitate even more growth when there is more time to be in the program during the second program year.

## Impact Evaluation

In order to determine the success of the program, it is important to look at a number of outcomes, including attendance and participation as well as student feedback. This section will focus on those available outcomes from the pilot study.

### *Demographic Description of Hill Central Middle School Students*

|                  | Attended<br>≥ 10 days | Attended<br>< 10 days | Not in<br>Program |   | Attended<br>≥ 10 days | Attended<br>< 10 days | Not in<br>Program |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Grade</b>     |                       |                       |                   | <b>Talented<br/>&amp; Gifted</b>        |                       |                       |                   |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 26                    | 2                     | 25                |   |                       |                       |                   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 16                    | 2                     | 27                | Yes                                     | 5                     | 0                     | 3                 |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 13                    | 0                     | 24                | No                                      | 62                    | 6                     | 96                |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 12                    | 2                     | 23                |   |                       |                       |                   |
|                  |                       |                       |                   | <b>English<br/>Language<br/>Learner</b> |                       |                       |                   |
| <b>Gender</b>    |                       |                       |                   |   |                       |                       |                   |
| Male             | 36                    | 3                     | 47                |   |                       |                       |                   |
| Female           | 31                    | 3                     | 52                | Yes                                     | 11                    | 2                     | 18                |
|                  |                       |                       |                   | No                                      | 56                    | 4                     | 81                |
| <b>Race*</b>     |                       |                       |                   |   |                       |                       |                   |
| White            | 47                    | 4                     | 60                |   |                       |                       |                   |
| Black            | 18                    | 2                     | 34                | <b>Special<br/>Education</b>            |                       |                       |                   |
| A/PI             | 0                     | 0                     | 1                 | Yes                                     | 7                     | 2                     | 15                |
| Multiple         | 0                     | 0                     | 1                 | No                                      | 60                    | 4                     | 84                |
|                  |                       |                       |                   |   |                       |                       |                   |
| <b>Ethnicity</b> |                       |                       |                   | <b>Lunch</b>                            |                       |                       |                   |
| Hispanic         | 50                    | 3                     | 56                | Free                                    | 43                    | 4                     | 64                |
| Non-<br>Hispanic | 17                    | 3                     | 43                | Reduced                                 | 0                     | 0                     | 1                 |
|                  |                       |                       |                   | Full                                    | 22                    | 4                     | 34                |

\*One student missing race

### *Average Absences & Suspensions for School Year*

|                               | Attended<br>≥ 10 days | Attended<br>< 10 days | Not in<br>Program |                                | Attended<br>≥ 10 days | Attended<br>< 10 days | Not in<br>Program |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Days<br>Enrolled<br>in School | 180.82                | 165.83                | 164.86            | Out of<br>School<br>Suspension | 0.13                  | 0.0                   | 0.52              |
| Absences                      | 10.43                 | 12.83                 | 20.14             | In-School<br>Suspension        | 0.01                  | 0.0                   | 0.04              |
| Tardy                         | 11.30                 | 8.33                  | 11.07             |                                |                       |                       |                   |

## Average Program Attendance

Program staff members were careful to track student attendance and participation in the program. The data provides a clear picture of how the program was utilized, both by day of the week and by grade. On average, there were 173.2 students per week. The weekly range went from a low of 138 students attending to a high of 196 students attending for full five-day weeks. Memorial Day week had 125 students across only four days. Most weeks averaged 170-190 students, although it started to taper at the end, which brought the weekly average down.

The following table addresses average weekly attendance. The table represents total attendance by week, so students who came every day are counted five times. The largest group to attend was fifth grade students; they usually accounted for more attendees than the remaining three grades. Additionally, attendance tended to be highest during the middle of the week, as expected due to the after school bussing availability.

|  | Average Weekly Attendance By Grade |  |           | Average Weekly Attendance By Day of the Week |
|--|------------------------------------|--|-----------|--|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade                  | 90.1                               |  | Monday    | 27.7   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade                  | 40.2                               |  | Tuesday   | 43.2   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade                  | 19.1                               |  | Wednesday | 40.6   |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade                  | 22.7                               |  | Thursday  | 40.7   |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade | 82.0                               |  | Friday    | 23.6   |

The students registered for either three days a week or five days a week, and their participation was tracked accordingly. There were 40 students registered for five days a week and 32 students registered for three days a week. It should be noted that 8 of the students registered for three days a week were in attendance between 36-49 days; these students were moved into the five day a week participation group for the following table. Therefore, the total number of students in the five day program was 48 and 24 students for the three day program.

|                      | Registered for 5<br>days/week (max:<br>54 days) | Registered for 3<br>days/week (max: 35<br>days) |
|----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Fifth Grade</b>   |   |   |
| Average # of Days    | 38.9  | 22.7  |
| Range # of Days      | 9-53  | 4-35  |
| Median # of Days     | 46.0  | 27.0  |
| <b>Sixth Grade</b>   |   |   |
| Average # of Days    | 29.5  | 20.2  |
| Range # of Days      | 12-49   | 5-33  |
| Median # of Days     | 25.0  | 22.0  |
| <b>Seventh Grade</b> |   |   |
| Average # of Days    | 17.3  | 20.8  |
| Range # of Days      | 4-20  | 11-35   |
| Median # of Days     | 13.5  | 14.0  |
| <b>Eighth Grade</b>  |   |   |
| Average # of Days    | 19.3  | 18.5  |
| Range # of Days      | 1-41  | 3-32  |
| Median # of Days     | 14.5  | 19.5  |

Throughout the program, a number of special instructors were brought in to work with the students. These special instructors added additional activities beyond the variety that was provided by the counselors. The most common activities were rugby and Zumba – the students seemed to be excited by those special activities that involved lots of movement.

|                       | Average<br>Students | Number of Sessions<br>Offered |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Art Expression</b> | 7.2                 | 5                             |
| <b>Music</b>          | 7.8                 | 5                             |
| <b>Rugby</b>          | 18.4                | 5                             |
| <b>Salsa</b>          | 7.5                 | 2                             |
| <b>Zumba</b>          | 12.0                | 5                             |

## Student Feedback

Student feedback is critical to understanding the needs and wants of those in the target population. In order to gather feedback from the students, a short instrument was developed that would address critical components of the program. Once completed, it was reviewed by the Hill Central School Principal and approved for use. This instrument was given by the evaluator on May 27<sup>th</sup> and then again on May 28<sup>th</sup> to attempt to maximize the number of students who were able to provide feedback on the program.

### Instrument

The instrument was developed by the project evaluator with much guidance and feedback from Drs. MacGregor and Smith. Multiple discussions were held regarding the amount of information to gather and what was most important to know at this time. The instrument was developed after reviewing eight other relevant instruments and then reviewed multiple times by both Co-Directors until it was deemed ready for use. The completed instrument has 40 questions across four pages, with some of those questions having multiple components (Appendix B). While the instrument appears extensive and long, it was written in a manner to be easy to read at this developmental stage. Students took 10-15 minutes to complete it during the sign-in portion of afternoon. They were provided with a special snack of juice and chips or cookies as a thank you for filling it out. Program counselors monitored the tables to ensure students concentrated only on their own document as well as to help with reading difficulties among the students, if needed.

The first section of the questionnaire focused on the student's views of the program. Students were asked whether they liked the program, their favorite parts of the program, what they might be doing if not at the program, and how the program made them feel. There were six questions in this section. The second section moved on to address student's views on their lives, using 13 questions with response options of: "Yep, that sounds like me" or "Nope, that isn't me". Items addressed their attitudes on friendship, home neighborhood, stress, and a number of questions related to views on violence.

The third section addressed personal safety through five questions. Response options were "A lot/all the time", "Sometimes", and "Not a lot/never". Students were asked their how often they felt safe at school, coming to/from school, home, neighborhood, and at the program. The fourth section was eight questions about their personal experiences, with "yes/no" as the response options. Students were asked if they had ever joined school clubs, skipped school, played on a sports team, volunteered, attended church, been invited to a gang event or been suspended. The positive and negative behaviors were interspersed to ensure the students read and properly responded to the questions.

The fourth section contained two boxes (each an individual question) on behaviors related to violence. In the first box, students were asked to check the box if someone had done the action to them; in the second box, they were to check the box if they did those actions to someone else. The eight actions listed included verbal and physical fighting, threatening and rumors, as well as attacks by types of weapons. The last question on violence asked students to select people they would go to in a violent/scary situation. They were given nine people to choose from, as well as "no one". They could select as many individuals as they choose and the options included multiple family members (parents, siblings, grandparents), school based staff, their doctor or the police/firemen. The last five questions were demographic, asking grade, gender, ethnicity, race, and who the student lives with at home.

### Outcomes

The outcomes provided show that the program did have an impact on the youth and the information learned can be helpful in guiding the development of the expanded second

year. Over the two days, a total of 41 participants took the instrument. This first table shows the demographic description of those students providing feedback.

|                                      | N  |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Total Students</b>                | 41 |
| <b>Gender</b>                        |    |
| Male                                 | 23 |
| Female                               | 18 |
| <b>Grade*</b>                        |    |
| 5                                    | 23 |
| 6                                    | 9  |
| 7                                    | 4  |
| 8                                    | 4  |
| <b>Hispanic</b>                      |    |
| Yes                                  | 33 |
| No                                   | 8  |
| <b>Race**</b>                        |    |
| African American/Black               | 14 |
| Caucasian/White                      | 23 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander               | 1  |
| Native American/<br>American Alaskan | 5  |

\*1 missing \*\*Some students selected more than one race

### ***Views on the Program***

When asked whether they liked the afterschool program, all 41 students selected “Yes”. Another important aspect to note is that all students felt that the staff cared about them.

### ***Student’s Views on the Program***

|                       | I Liked the After School Program |    | I Think the Program Staff Care about Me |    | This Program Gave Me Chance to Try New Things |    | I Can be Myself at This Program |    |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----|---|----|---|----|---------------------------------|----|
|                       | Yes                              | No | Yes                                     | No | Yes   | No | Yes                             | No |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 41                               | 0  | 40                                      | 0* | 39  | 2  | 32                              | 7* |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                                  |    |   |    |   |    |                                 |    |
| Male                  | 23                               | 0  | 22                                      | 0  | 23  | 0  | 18                              | 3  |
| Female                | 18                               | 0  | 18                                      | 0  | 16  | 2  | 14                              | 4  |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |                                  |    |   |    |   |    |                                 |    |
| 5                     | 23                               | 0  | 23                                      | 0  | 23  | 0  | 16                              | 7  |
| 6                     | 9                                | 0  | 9                                       | 0  | 8   | 1  | 8                               | 0  |
| 7                     | 4                                | 0  | 3                                       | 0  | 3   | 1  | 3                               | 0  |
| 8                     | 4                                | 0  | 4                                       | 0  | 4   | 0  | 4                               | 0  |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |                                  |    |   |    |   |    |                                 |    |
| Yes                   | 33                               | 0  | 32                                      | 0  | 31  | 2  | 25                              | 6  |
| No                    | 8                                | 0  | 8                                       | 0  | 8   | 0  | 7                               | 1  |
| <b>Race***</b>        |                                  |    |   |    |   |    |                                 |    |
| AA/B                  | 14                               | 0  | 14                                      | 0  | 13  | 1  | 12                              | 2  |
| C/W                   | 23                               | 0  | 22                                      | 0  | 22  | 1  | 17                              | 4  |
| A/PI                  | 1                                | 0  | 1                                       | 0  | 1   | 0  | 0                               | 1  |
| NA/AA                 | 5                                | 0  | 5                                       | 0  | 5   | 0  | 5                               | 0  |

\*Missing Responses

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

The next table addresses youth's favorite aspects of the program. They were only allowed to select two from the ten options, which also included the option of writing in their own activity. Program staff and counselors were selected by 25% of youth as being an important part of the program for them.

***Two Favorite Activities at the After School Program***

|                           | Hanging<br>out w/<br>Friends | Playing<br>Games | Being with<br>Staff &<br>Counselors | Playing<br>Rugby | Dance/<br>Zumba<br>Activities | Computer<br>Lab | Not Home<br>Being<br>Bored | Creative<br>Arts | Music | Other* |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------|--------|
| <b>Total<br/>Students</b> | 16                           | 12               | 10                                  | 9                | 8                             | 7               | 5                          | 4                | 4     | 6      |
| <b>Gender</b>             |                              |                  |                                     |                  |                               |                 |                            |                  |       |        |
| Male                      | 11                           | 10               | 3                                   | 6                | 1                             | 6               | 2                          | 1                | 1     | 5      |
| Female                    | 5                            | 2                | 7                                   | 3                | 7                             | 1               | 3                          | 3                | 3     | 1      |
| <b>Grade**</b>            |                              |                  |                                     |                  |                               |                 |                            |                  |       |        |
| 5                         | 9                            | 10               | 6                                   | 3                | 7                             | 4               | 0                          | 1                | 2     | 3      |
| 6                         | 3                            | 1                | 2                                   | 3                | 0                             | 3               | 4                          | 0                | 0     | 2      |
| 7                         | 2                            | 1                | 0                                   | 2                | 0                             | 0               | 0                          | 1                | 1     | 1      |
| 8                         | 2                            | 0                | 2                                   | 0                | 1                             | 0               | 1                          | 1                | 1     | 0      |
| <b>Hispanic</b>           |                              |                  |                                     |                  |                               |                 |                            |                  |       |        |
| Yes                       | 11                           | 11               | 9                                   | 9                | 6                             | 7               | 4                          | 2                | 2     | 5      |
| No                        | 5                            | 1                | 1                                   | 0                | 2                             | 70              | 1                          | 2                | 2     | 1      |
| <b>Race***</b>            |                              |                  |                                     |                  |                               |                 |                            |                  |       |        |
| AA/B                      | 6                            | 4                | 4                                   | 2                | 3                             | 0               | 2                          | 2                | 0     | 2      |
| C/W                       | 8                            | 7                | 5                                   | 5                | 5                             | 4               | 3                          | 2                | 2     | 5      |
| A/PI                      | 1                            | 0                | 0                                   | 0                | 0                             | 1               | 0                          | 0                | 0     | 0      |
| NA/AA                     | 3                            | 1                | 1                                   | 2                | 0                             | 2               | 0                          | 0                | 1     | 0      |

\* **Other Write in Answers:** GETTING TO KNOW NEW PEOPLE (2), MATBALL (2), EVERYTHING BUT KEEP COOL, (THINK KEEP COOL IS POINTLESS)

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

Youth were again asked to select only two options for the next question, which addressed what they might be doing if not at the program. Of the top four choices, three of those involve sitting inactive, and possibly alone, using media and technology, showing the limited options these youth have if not at the program.

***Two Most Likely Activities If Not At the After-School Program***

|                       | Playing Video Games | Watching TV | Texting/ Social Media | Homework | Outdoors/ With Friends In Neighborhood | Home By Myself | Things I Shouldn't Be Doing | Other* |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------|--|----------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 19                  | 16          | 14                    | 14       | 6                                      | 3              | 2                           | 3      |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                     |             |                       |          |  |                |                             |        |
| Male                  | 15                  | 8           | 4                     | 8        | 3                                      | 3              | 1                           | 1      |
| Female                | 4                   | 8           | 10                    | 6        | 3                                      | 0              | 1                           | 2      |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |                     |             |                       |          |  |                |                             |        |
| 5                     | 12                  | 8           | 6                     | 10       | 5                                      | 1              | 0                           | 1      |
| 6                     | 4                   | 5           | 4                     | 1        | 1                                      | 0              | 1                           | 1      |
| 7                     | 2                   | 0           | 1                     | 2        | 0                                      | 2              | 0                           | 0      |
| 8                     | 0                   | 3           | 2                     | 1        | 0                                      | 0              | 1                           | 1      |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |                     |             |                       |          |  |                |                             |        |
| Yes                   | 14                  | 12          | 11                    | 14       | 5                                      | 2              | 1                           | 3      |
| No                    | 5                   | 4           | 3                     | 0        | 1                                      | 1              | 1                           | 0      |
| <b>Race***</b>        |                     |             |                       |          |  |                |                             |        |
| AA/B                  | 7                   | 7           | 4                     | 3        | 2                                      | 2              | 1                           | 0      |
| C/W                   | 10                  | 10          | 8                     | 9        | 2                                      | 1              | 1                           | 3      |
| A/PI                  | 1                   | 0           | 0                     | 1        | 0                                      | 0              | 0                           | 0      |
| NA/AA                 | 2                   | 1           | 3                     | 1        | 2                                      | 0              | 0                           | 0      |

\* **Other:** AFTERSCHOOL ART, EXERCISING, WALKING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Student's Views on Their Lives

The second section addressed the youth's views on their lives, including friendship, school, and violence. The first five questions addressed non-violence related topics and can be seen in the below table. A third of students noted they felt stressed a lot of the time, which could have an impact on their health and violence related behaviors.

### Student's Views on Their Lives (Non-Violence Questions)

|                       | I have at least 3 friends who care about me |    | If I had to move, I would miss my neighborhood |    | When not home, my parents know where I am/who I'm with |    | I enjoy being at school |    | I feel stressed a lot |     |
|-----------------------|---|----|--|----|--|----|-------------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|
|                       | Yes   | No | Yes  | No | Yes  | No | Yes                     | No | Yes                   | No  |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 41  | 0  | 31   | 10 | 37   | 4  | 32                      | 8* | 13                    | 26* |
| <b>Gender</b>         |   |    |  |    |  |    |                         |    |                       |     |
| Male                  | 23  | 0  | 17   | 6  | 20   | 3  | 17                      | 6  | 5                     | 17  |
| Female                | 18  | 0  | 14   | 4  | 17   | 1  | 15                      | 2  | 8                     | 9   |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |   |    |  |    |  |    |                         |    |                       |     |
| 5                     | 23  | 0  | 15   | 8  | 22   | 1  | 18                      | 5  | 7                     | 15  |
| 6                     | 9   | 0  | 9  | 0  | 8  | 1  | 7                       | 2  | 2                     | 7   |
| 7                     | 4   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 3                       | 1  | 2                     | 2   |
| 8                     | 4   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 4                       | 0  | 2                     | 2   |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |   |    |  |    |  |    |                         |    |                       |     |
| Yes                   | 33  | 0  | 27   | 6  | 31   | 2  | 26                      | 6  | 10                    | 21  |
| No                    | 8   | 0  | 4  | 4  | 6  | 2  | 6                       | 2  | 3                     | 5   |
| <b>Race***</b>        |   |    |  |    |  |    |                         |    |                       |     |
| AA/B                  | 14  | 0  | 8  | 6  | 11   | 3  | 12                      | 2  | 3                     | 11  |
| C/W                   | 23  | 0  | 20   | 3  | 22   | 1  | 18                      | 4  | 9                     | 13  |
| A/PI                  | 1   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0                       | 0  | 0                     | 1   |
| NA/AA                 | 5   | 0  | 4  | 1  | 5  | 0  | 3                       | 2  | 2                     | 3   |

\*= Missing data

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

With regard to violence, many youth felt that violence is an acceptable way to handle problems. There should be concern with regard to gangs, gang presence was visible in the youth's community and there was pressure to join gangs.

***Student's Views on Violence – Those Agreeing with the Statement***

|                       | If a fight between students is going to happen, I would try to stop it | I think it is OK to use violence to stop problems | I would rather use violence to handle problems | I think if I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward ("chicken") | I think it is OK to hit someone who hits you first | I think it is easy for someone my age to get a gun | I think gangs cause most of the violence in my community | I feel pressure to join a gang |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 22   | 9*  | 9*   | 12*  | 31*  | 3*   | 30*  | 17*                            |
| <b>Gender</b>         |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |                                |
| Male                  | 10   | 6   | 7  | 4  | 17   | 1  | 17   | 8                              |
| Female                | 12   | 2   | 1  | 7  | 13   | 1  | 12   | 8                              |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |                                |
| 5                     | 10   | 5   | 6  | 5  | 14   | 2  | 15   | 11                             |
| 6                     | 7  | 1   | 1  | 3  | 8  | 0  | 7  | 4                              |
| 7                     | 1  | 2   | 1  | 2  | 4  | 0  | 4  | 1                              |
| 8                     | 4  | 2   | 0  | 1  | 4  | 0  | 2  | 0                              |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |                                |
| Yes                   | 17   | 6   | 6  | 11   | 23   | 2  | 21   | 14                             |
| No                    | 5  | 2   | 2  | 0  | 7  | 0  | 8  | 2                              |
| <b>Race***</b>        |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |                                |
| AA/B                  | 8  | 3   | 2  | 2  | 11   | 1  | 12   | 5                              |
| C/W                   | 15   | 4   | 4  | 7  | 15   | 0  | 15   | 9                              |
| A/PI                  | 0  | 0   | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0                              |
| NA/AA                 | 1  | 1   | 1  | 2  | 4  | 1  | 4  | 2                              |

\*= Missing Data

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Youth Views on Personal Safety

Overall, youth felt safe in school and the program, but less so when they leave school property.

### Student's Responses to How Safe they Feel in the Following Places

|                       | School |            |       | Coming To and/or From School |            |       | At the After School Program |            |       | At Home |            |       | In Neighborhood |            |       |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|-------|------------------------------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------|-------|---------|------------|-------|-----------------|------------|-------|
|                       | A Lot  | Some-times | Never | A Lot                        | Some-times | Never | A Lot                       | Some-times | Never | A Lot   | Some-times | Never | A Lot           | Some-times | Never |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 28     | 13         | 0     | 16                           | 19         | 6     | 33                          | 8          | 0     | 32      | 8          | 1     | 10              | 20         | 4*    |
| <b>Gender**</b>       |        |            |       |                              |            |       |                             |            |       |         |            |       |                 |            |       |
| Male                  | 18     | 5          | 0     | 12                           | 9          | 2     | 20                          | 3          | 0     | 18      | 3          | 0     | 9               | 9          | 1     |
| Female                | 10     | 8          | 0     | 4                            | 10         | 4     | 13                          | 5          | 0     | 14      | 5          | 1     | 1               | 11         | 3     |
| <b>Grade</b>          |        |            |       |                              |            |       |                             |            |       |         |            |       |                 |            |       |
| 5                     | 15     | 8          | 0     | 7                            | 11         | 5     | 21                          | 2          | 0     | 19      | 4          | 0     | 4               | 12         | 2     |
| 6                     | 8      | 1          | 0     | 5                            | 3          | 1     | 6                           | 3          | 0     | 6       | 3          | 0     | 3               | 3          | 2     |
| 7                     | 2      | 2          | 0     | 1                            | 3          | 0     | 2                           | 2          | 0     | 2       | 1          | 1     | 2               | 2          | 0     |
| 8                     | 3      | 1          | 0     | 3                            | 1          | 0     | 4                           | 0          | 0     | 4       | 0          | 0     | 1               | 2          | 0     |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |        |            |       |                              |            |       |                             |            |       |         |            |       |                 |            |       |
| Yes                   | 22     | 11         | 0     | 11                           | 18         | 4     | 27                          | 6          | 0     | 25      | 7          | 1     | 8               | 17         | 3     |
| No                    | 6      | 2          | 0     | 5                            | 1          | 2     | 6                           | 2          | 0     | 7       | 1          | 0     | 2               | 3          | 1     |
| <b>Race***</b>        |        |            |       |                              |            |       |                             |            |       |         |            |       |                 |            |       |
| AA/B                  | 11     | 3          | 0     | 8                            | 3          | 3     | 11                          | 3          | 0     | 12      | 2          | 0     | 5               | 4          | 1     |
| C/W                   | 15     | 8          | 0     | 17                           | 14         | 2     | 18                          | 5          | 0     | 16      | 6          | 1     | 5               | 13         | 2     |
| A/PI                  | 0      | 1          | 0     | 0                            | 1          | 0     | 1                           | 0          | 0     | 1       | 0          | 0     | 0               | 1          | 0     |
| NA/AA                 | 4      | 1          | 0     | 3                            | 1          | 1     | 5                           | 0          | 0     | 5       | 0          | 0     | 2               | 2          | 1     |

\*Missing Responses

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Youth Personal Experiences

When asked about experiences related to both healthy and non-healthy activities, there was a wide range of answers. While most youth tried to do well in school and have also attended religious activities and clubs, there is already a small portion of students who have been suspended, skipped school, and gone to a gang event by middle school.

### Students Who Say They Have Participated in the Following Activities During the Current Academic Year

|                       | Joined a Club/Group After School | Tried to Do Well in School | Skipped at Least 1 Day of School | Been Invited/ Gone to Gang Event | Been Suspended From School | Played on Sports Team (school/city) | Volunteered in Community | Attended Religious Activity/ School |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 25*                              | 39*                        | 9*                               | 4*                               | 6*                         | 18*                                 | 12                       | 32*                                 |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                                  |                            |                                  |                                  |                            |                                     |                          |                                     |
| Male                  | 16                               | 22                         | 5                                | 3                                | 4                          | 14                                  | 9                        | 16                                  |
| Female                | 9                                | 17                         | 4                                | 1                                | 2                          | 4                                   | 3                        | 16                                  |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |                                  |                            |                                  |                                  |                            |                                     |                          |                                     |
| 5                     | 15                               | 21                         | 7                                | 2                                | 4                          | 10                                  | 8                        | 18                                  |
| 6                     | 6                                | 9                          | 1                                | 2                                | 2                          | 5                                   | 3                        | 8                                   |
| 7                     | 3                                | 4                          | 0                                | 0                                | 0                          | 3                                   | 2                        | 1                                   |
| 8                     | 1                                | 4                          | 1                                | 0                                | 0                          | 0                                   | 0                        | 4                                   |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |                                  |                            |                                  |                                  |                            |                                     |                          |                                     |
| Yes                   | 19                               | 31                         | 8                                | 3                                | 5                          | 14                                  | 9                        | 25                                  |
| No                    | 6                                | 8                          | 1                                | 1                                | 1                          | 4                                   | 3                        | 7                                   |
| <b>Race***</b>        |                                  |                            |                                  |                                  |                            |                                     |                          |                                     |
| AA/B                  | 9                                | 13                         | 3                                | 1                                | 1                          | 7                                   | 4                        | 10                                  |
| C/W                   | 12                               | 22                         | 5                                | 0                                | 3                          | 10                                  | 7                        | 18                                  |
| A/PI                  | 1                                | 1                          | 0                                | 0                                | 1                          | 0                                   | 0                        | 1                                   |
| NA/AA                 | 3                                | 5                          | 2                                | 2                                | 0                          | 2                                   | 2                        | 5                                   |

\* = Missing Data

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Violence Behavior Experiences

The next two tables represent violence behavior experiences. The first table addresses behaviors that have been done to the youth. Every category had someone who had experienced that type of violence, whether verbal or physical.

### Students Who Say *SOMEONE DID* the Following Activities *TO THEM* during Current Academic Year

|                       | Started Yelling Argument | Swore/ Cursed/ Name Called | Teased/ Picked on Someone | Spread Rumors/ Lies About Someone | Threatened to Hit/ Kick/ Punch/Hurt | Started Physical Fight | Attacked or Threatened with Non-Gun Weapon | Attacked or Threatened with Gun |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 25*                      | 25*                        | 23*                       | 21*                               | 17*                                 | 11*                    | 2*   | 2*                              |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| Male                  | 12                       | 12                         | 11                        | 11                                | 9                                   | 8                      | 2  | 2                               |
| Female                | 13                       | 13                         | 12                        | 10                                | 8                                   | 3                      | 0  | 0                               |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| 5                     | 10                       | 10                         | 12                        | 12                                | 7                                   | 5                      | 2  | 2                               |
| 6                     | 8                        | 7                          | 6                         | 5                                 | 6                                   | 3                      | 0  | 0                               |
| 7                     | 4                        | 4                          | 3                         | 3                                 | 3                                   | 3                      | 0  | 0                               |
| 8                     | 3                        | 4                          | 2                         | 1                                 | 1                                   | 0                      | 0  | 0                               |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| Yes                   | 19                       | 18                         | 19                        | 18                                | 15                                  | 9                      | 2  | 1                               |
| No                    | 6                        | 7                          | 4                         | 3                                 | 2                                   | 2                      | 0  | 1                               |
| <b>Race***</b>        |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| AA/B                  | 8                        | 9                          | 6                         | 5                                 | 4                                   | 3                      | 1  | 1                               |
| C/W                   | 13                       | 13                         | 12                        | 12                                | 10                                  | 6                      | 0  | 0                               |
| A/PI                  | 0                        | 0                          | 1                         | 1                                 | 0                                   | 0                      | 0  | 0                               |
| NA/AA                 | 4                        | 4                          | 4                         | 3                                 | 3                                   | 2                      | 1  | 1                               |

\* = Missing Data

\*\* = 1 student did not identify gender

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

Similar to the previous table, the youth not only experienced verbal or physical violence towards them, but many have already acted as the instigators of these behaviors. While the youth have instigated less than they have had the experiences inflicted upon them, like the previous question, each category had a least one individual note the experience.

***Students Who Say THEY DID the Following Activities TO SOMEONE during Current Academic Year***

|                       | Started Yelling Argument | Swore/ Cursed/ Name Called | Teased/ Picked on Someone | Spread Rumors/ Lies About Someone | Threatened to Hit/ Kick/ Punch/Hurt | Started Physical Fight | Attacked or Threatened with Non-Gun Weapon | Attacked or Threatened with Gun |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 18*                      | 15*                        | 8*                        | 6*                                | 12*                                 | 8*                     | 3*   | 1*                              |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| Male                  | 10                       | 9                          | 4                         | 4                                 | 5                                   | 7                      | 3  | 1                               |
| Female                | 8                        | 6                          | 4                         | 2                                 | 7                                   | 1                      | 0  | 0                               |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| 5                     | 9                        | 7                          | 5                         | 4                                 | 8                                   | 4                      | 3  | 1                               |
| 6                     | 5                        | 4                          | 3                         | 2                                 | 3                                   | 3                      | 0  | 0                               |
| 7                     | 2                        | 2                          | 0                         | 0                                 | 0                                   | 0                      | 0  | 0                               |
| 8                     | 2                        | 2                          | 0                         | 0                                 | 1                                   | 1                      | 0  | 0                               |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| Yes                   | 14                       | 11                         | 7                         | 5                                 | 10                                  | 6                      | 2  | 1                               |
| No                    | 4                        | 4                          | 1                         | 1                                 | 2                                   | 2                      | 1  | 0                               |
| <b>Race</b>           |                          |                            |                           |                                   |                                     |                        |  |                                 |
| AA/B                  | 7                        | 6                          | 3                         | 2                                 | 4                                   | 3                      | 2  | 0                               |
| C/W                   | 10                       | 8                          | 3                         | 3                                 | 5                                   | 4                      | 0  | 0                               |
| A/PI                  | 0                        | 0                          | 0                         | 0                                 | 0                                   | 0                      | 0  | 0                               |
| NA/AA                 | 2                        | 1                          | 2                         | 1                                 | 3                                   | 1                      | 1  | 1                               |

\* = Missing Data

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Violence Disclosure

Lastly, youth were asked to identify who they would disclose to about a violent or scary situation. Only one youth noted s/he would not tell anyone, which was positive. While only knowing the afterschool staff for 10 weeks, about half would go to the counselors and staff to talk, which is an important outcome.

### *If a Student Was in a Violent/Scary Situation, They Would Tell*

|                       | Parents | Siblings | Friend | After<br>School Staff | My<br>Doctor | Grand-<br>parents | Other<br>Family | Teacher | Police/<br>Fireman | Other* | NOONE |
|-----------------------|---------|----------|--------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| <b>Total Students</b> | 29      | 24       | 19     | 19                    | 4            | 13                | 21              | 22      | 18                 | 4      | 1     |
| <b>Gender</b>         |         |          |        |                       |              |                   |                 |         |                    |        |       |
| Male                  | 16      | 11       | 10     | 10                    | 3            | 6                 | 10              | 11      | 11                 | 0      | 1     |
| Female                | 13      | 13       | 9      | 9                     | 1            | 7                 | 11              | 11      | 7                  | 4      | 0     |
| <b>Grade**</b>        |         |          |        |                       |              |                   |                 |         |                    |        |       |
| 5                     | 16      | 12       | 11     | 14                    | 2            | 9                 | 14              | 13      | 12                 | 3      | 1     |
| 6                     | 7       | 4        | 3      | 4                     | 2            | 2                 | 4               | 5       | 4                  | 1      | 0     |
| 7                     | 4       | 3        | 2      | 1                     | 0            | 1                 | 2               | 2       | 1                  | 0      | 0     |
| 8                     | 2       | 4        | 3      | 0                     | 0            | 0                 | 0               | 2       | 1                  | 0      | 0     |
| <b>Hispanic</b>       |         |          |        |                       |              |                   |                 |         |                    |        |       |
| Yes                   | 25      | 19       | 17     | 16                    | 3            | 10                | 18              | 16      | 15                 | 4      | 0     |
| No                    | 4       | 5        | 2      | 3                     | 1            | 3                 | 3               | 6       | 3                  | 0      | 1     |
| <b>Race***</b>        |         |          |        |                       |              |                   |                 |         |                    |        |       |
| AA/B                  | 8       | 9        | 6      | 7                     | 3            | 6                 | 7               | 10      | 6                  | 1      | 1     |
| C/W                   | 17      | 15       | 12     | 12                    | 2            | 7                 | 13              | 10      | 11                 | 3      | 0     |
| A/PI                  | 0       | 0        | 1      | 0                     | 0            | 0                 | 1               | 0       | 1                  | 0      | 0     |
| NA/AA                 | 4       | 2        | 2      | 1                     | 0            | 1                 | 1               | 3       | 1                  | 0      | 0     |

\*OTHER: ADULT IN CHARGE, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, PRINCIPAL, UNKNOWN/NO ANSWER

\*\* = 1 student did not identify grade

\*\*\* = Some students selected multiple races

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Discussion

Overall, this pilot implementation was very successful. A program was developed within a short planning time period and the designed program was comprehensive in services provided and well received by the youth who participated. Even with a late start, when many potential students may have had other after school activities, the program averaged over 23 students on Mondays and Fridays and over 40 students Tuesday through Thursday. Staff members were hired that were dedicated to the work and students, providing a caring environment for these at-risk youth. The students were exposed to new activities, such as rugby and salsa dancing, and were able to interact with professionals in these fields for instruction. They were also able to receive supportive services through the mental health professionals that worked with the program.

Looking at the attendance, tardy and suspension data, most of the program students fared better. Those attending the program at least 10 days were in school an average of 181 days, compared to 166 for those who only came to the program a few times and 165 for those that did not attend at all. They were also less likely to be suspended (in and out of school) than those not in the program. This may be biased by the type of student who opted to join this program.

Looking at the feedback from the participating youth, there are some interesting items to note that can be used in developing the program for the future. When asked if they like the program, all students stated they did. All youth who answered the question noted they felt cared for by the staff. Almost all youth noted they got to try new things and almost 75% stated they could be themselves at the program. These important factors likely kept the youth coming to the program and enjoying it.

When asked for their favorite program aspects/activities, the top three selections were hanging out with friends, playing games and being with the staff/counselors. This is significant to showing the program's impact, as there were many items on the list to choose from and program staff/counselors made the top three. When asked what they would be doing instead of being at the program, the top three selected activities were sedentary and home alone activities: playing video games, watching TV and using social media/texting. Homework was next on the list. Based on these outcomes, it can be seen that providing a place where youth can be with friends, be cared for by adults while not being home alone and sedentary were important factors for participation.

Students were asked about their thoughts on violence and it showed that even at this young age, there is a need to address and adapt views. Approximately 25% of participants (9/41) thought it was ok, and often preferred, to use violence to handle a problem. More felt that walking away from a violent situation made them a coward and more than 75% said it was ok to hit someone who hit them first. Gangs also impact these youth's lives, as

75% said gangs cause the most problems in their neighborhoods and close to half stated they felt pressure to join a gang. These are significant factors that will need to be continually and consistently addressed in future years.

For the most part, participants felt safe in many places throughout their daily lives; this is relevant as it relates back to our program model which includes safety as a critical factor in violence prevention. All youth felt safe at school and at the after-school program. A handful of youth felt less safe going to/from school as well as in their being in their community/neighborhood. These factors continue to reinforce the need for this type of after school program, as well as for those supportive factors such as bussing availability to increase feelings of safety and security.

Lastly, many of the students have been engaged in violent behaviors, whether they are name calling, yelling, verbal threats or physical, weapon based threats. More of the youth noted being on the receiving end of the violent behaviors than being the perpetrator of the behaviors. However, it should be noted that under the "I have done [behavior]" list, every behavior had at least one youth, often more, do that behavior. The youth did note that they would disclose violence behaviors to individuals, many in their families. Almost half noted they would share the information they had with after-school program staff; again, this reinforces that even though the program was short in duration, the youth formed meaningful and trusted relationships with the after school program staff and counselors.

### **Recommendations for the Future**

Taken as a whole, this baseline information shows great need for continuation of this program. The students are aware and engaging in violent behaviors, they have little other options for after-school activities that are not sedentary and individual, and formed deep connections to staff/counselors within 12 short weeks. While the program was short, in that time frame the program was able to address critical components of our program model, specifically safety, security, and social belonging. Keeping students occupied during the after school hours is also a significant factor to reducing high risk behaviors and their negative consequences.

The program has many positive aspects which to build upon during the upcoming year which will include expanding time in the schools, along with a second school. Keeping the foundation of what was working, the program should continue to use the model to address those factors and consider the following recommendations for the upcoming year's expansion:

- The original plan was for the program to address grades six through eight. Fifth grade was added in, and while they are at-risk and starting young is helpful, they may have discouraged older students from participating. The seventh and eighth grade students are vital to engage in this program for program goals to be met. The program needs to find innovating ways to engage these older youth and may want to consider a separation of the four grades into two groups for activities, so as to be more developmentally appropriate. Beginning recruiting early in the year may address this,

as the older students will not be so close to their high school transition period.

Addressing the high school transition with the students may provide great benefits to the older youth as well. The program may also want to consider using the older participants as peer leaders at times, which may help engage the older youth as well.

- While the attendance was high during the week, Mondays and Fridays saw about half the amount of students. This was primarily due to a lack of bussing. Working with the district to determine if bussing can be found for all days will be important. Many students noted they did not feel safe coming to/from school, so may not attend without a safe method to return home. If busses are not available, reduce staff and activities for those days to manage resources.
- Continue to work with the counselors and youth participants to determine activity selection. While it is important to expose youth to new ideas and activity options they may not be aware of, finding what they do like may help with bringing in new and innovative choices to expose the students to. Using the survey during the planning time was a great method. During a long school year, it may be beneficial to check in mid-year with a second survey to see student views and desires, including any changes they want to see occur in the program.
- Continue to seek out strong staff members, ones who have a strong recreation skill set and desire to work with youth as the program expands and needs additional staff. The students felt connected to the project staff, likely because many came from similar backgrounds as they do. Having more than one bilingual staff member can enhance communication with families.
- Finally, as a violence prevention program, more education and focus needs to be on violence prevention skills. The first component to reducing at-risk behaviors in youth is to occupy them during the after school hours. However, education and an opportunity to discuss what is happening in their lives related to safety and violence is equally important. Providing lessons on conflict resolution and bystander intervention will provide the youth with the skills needed when outside of the program. Stress and bullying should also be addressed as relevant topics. Adding in other health related risk reduction lessons sporadically can also provide the youth with a larger tool kit to move forward in their education and life.

# **Appendix A: Program Model**

# AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM MODEL DRAFT BASED UPON MASLOW

| <u>Feel Safe</u><br>(Physiological/<br>Safety)                              | <u>Be Connected</u><br>(Belonging/Social)   | <u>Dream Big and Find the Hope/Build the Skills</u><br>(Esteem)   | <u>Become More</u><br>(Self-actualization)                                     |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Recreation and<br/>Setting Domain</b>                                    | <b>Belonging and Connection:<br/>Micro to Macro</b>   | <b>[Empowerment Model]</b><br><b>*Locus of Control</b><br><b>*Self-Efficacy</b>   | <b>Achievement</b>   |
| *freedom <u>from</u> pain<br>and fear                                       | *start with micro: friends<br>and interactions with<br>others   | *respect<br>*recognition from others<br>*personal feelings of accomplishment<br>*curiosity built<br>*challenge provided   | *celebrate small<br>successes  |
| *stability  | *add on family: special<br>events and programs  |   | *incubate potential  |
| *provide a safehouse  |   | <b>Everyone Track</b><br>*abilities developed<br>*reduce anti-social behaviors<br>*improve life skills: social skills,<br>hygiene, communication skills,<br>discipline, character development,<br>*improve work skills: able to work<br>with others, problem solving,<br>decision making, planning skills,<br>creative skills, educational skills<br>*improve physical health | *nourish desire for<br>growth, self-expression,<br>constructive accomplishment |
| *health, relaxation,<br>release from stress,<br>and recuperation<br>from... | *grow over time to macro:<br>community engagement<br><br>- community provides<br>programs and services:<br>Common Ground and<br>Sound School, community<br>members lead programs,<br>sport leagues with parent<br>coaches | <b>Older Track Add-ons</b><br>*financial literacy<br>*college readiness/Promise program<br>*career education  | *showcase whatever we can<br>on an on-going basis                              |
| <b>Social Work, Public<br/>Health and Family &amp;<br/>Marriage Domain</b>  |   |   |  |
| *structural,<br>environmental<br>family and<br>peer challenge               | - youth involved in<br>community service and<br>service learning  |   |  |
| <b>Preconditions To Address</b> ----->                                      | <b>Foundations and Tools To Achieve</b> ----->  |   | <b>Non-Violent Alternatives</b>  |

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# **Appendix B: Student Feedback Instrument**

ID (First Name Initial, Birth Month, Birth Date, Last Name Initial): \_\_\_\_\_

### Hill Central After-School Program

Thank you for taking the time to take this questionnaire. You won't get a grade on it and no one from the after-school program will not see your answers. Please answer as honestly as you can.

***The first set of questions asks you about what you think about being in the program. There is no right answer for these questions – every person is different. For each set, circle the answer that is most like how you feel.***

1. Overall, did you like the afterschool program?

*Yes*

*No*

2. What two things did you like best about the after school program? (**circle only TWO/2**)

*Being with the staff and counselors*

*Playing rugby*

*Creative arts*

*Dance/zumba activities*

*Music*

*Hanging out with my friends*

*Computer lab*

*Not being bored at home*

*Playing games*

*Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

3. If you were not at this after school program, what would you most likely be doing instead?  
(**circle only TWO/2**)

*Watching TV*

*Doing things I shouldn't be doing*

*Playing video games*

*Home by myself*

*Homework*

*Other: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Hanging out outdoors/neighborhood with friends*

*Texting/social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...)*

4. I think the staff from this after school program care about me.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*

5. This after school program gave me the chance to try new things.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*

6. I can be myself at this after school program.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*

***For this group of questions, tell us whether you think this statement is true or not true about you.***

7. I think I have at least 3 friends who care about me.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*

8. If I had to move, I would miss the neighborhood I live in.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*

9. When I am not at home, one of my parents knows where I am and who I am with.

*Yep, that sounds like me*

*Nope, that isn't me*



10. I enjoy being at school.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
11. I feel stressed a lot.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
12. If a fight between students is going to happen, I would do something to stop it.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
13. I think it is OK to use violence to stop problems.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
14. I would rather use violence to handle problems.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
15. I think if I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward ('chicken').  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
16. I think it is OK to hit someone who hits you first.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
17. I think it is easy for someone my age to get a gun.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
18. I think gangs cause most of the violence in my community.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
19. I feel pressure to join a gang.  

|                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yep, that sounds like me</i> | <i>Nope, that isn't me</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|

**For this next group of questions, tell us how often you feel safe in these places. Circle the answer that is most like how you feel. Do you feel safe:**

20. In your school?  

|                           |                  |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>A lot/all the time</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Not a lot/never</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
21. Coming to/from school?  

|                           |                  |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>A lot/all the time</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Not a lot/never</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
22. At your after school program?  

|                           |                  |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>A lot/all the time</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Not a lot/never</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
23. At home?  

|                           |                  |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>A lot/all the time</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Not a lot/never</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|

ID (First Name Initial, Birth Month, Birth Date, Last Name Initial): \_\_\_\_\_

24. In your neighborhood?

*A lot/all the time*

*Sometimes*

*Not a lot/never*

**Now we want to know about your experiences. For these next groups of questions, tell us which of these behaviors or activities you did in the last school year (September until May). Have you:**

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 25. Joined a club or group after school ( <u>not including this program</u> ) | YES | NO |
| 26. Tried to do well in school  | YES | NO |
| 27. Skipped one day of school   | YES | NO |
| 28. Been invited to/gone to a gang event                                      | YES | NO |
| 29. Been suspended from school  | YES | NO |
| 30. Played on a sports team (school or park/city team)                        | YES | NO |
| 31. Volunteered in your community   | YES | NO |
| 32. Attended church/religious services or school                              | YES | NO |

**The next set of questions, put a check in the first box if someone did this behavior or activity to you during this school year (SEPTEMBER to MAY).**

33. Behaviors/Activities

|   | Someone did this to me |
|---|------------------------|
| Started a yelling argument  |                        |
| Swore/cursed/called names   |                        |
| Teased or picked on someone   |                        |
| Spread rumors or lies about someone   |                        |
| Threatened to hit/punch/kick/hurt someone                                   |                        |
| Started a physical fight  |                        |
| Attacked/threatened with anything but a gun (ex: bat, bottle, chain, knife) |                        |
| Attacked/threatened with a gun  |                        |

**The next set of questions, put a check in the first box if you did the behavior or activity to someone during this school year (SEPTEMBER to MAY).**

34. Behaviors/Activities

|   | I did this to someone |
|---|-----------------------|
| Started a yelling argument  |                       |
| Swore/cursed/called names   |                       |
| Teased or picked on someone   |                       |
| Spread rumors or lies about someone   |                       |
| Threatened to hit/punch/kick/hurt someone                                   |                       |
| Started a physical fight  |                       |
| Attacked/threatened with anything but a gun (ex: bat, bottle, chain, knife) |                       |
| Attacked/threatened with a gun  |                       |

ID (First Name Initial, Birth Month, Birth Date, Last Name Initial): \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

35. For this last question on activities and behaviors, if you were in a violent or scary situation, who would you tell? *Check as many as you want.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My parents          | <input type="checkbox"/> My grandparents                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My brothers/sisters | <input type="checkbox"/> Other family(cousins, aunts, uncles) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A friend            | <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After school staff  | <input type="checkbox"/> Police or fireman                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My doctor           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO ONE              |   |

***Finally, tell us a little about you. Check the answer that is most like you.***

36. What grade are you in?

- ☐ 5<sup>th</sup>
- ☐ 6<sup>th</sup>
- ☐ 7<sup>th</sup>
- ☐ 8<sup>th</sup>

37. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

38. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

39. What is your race (*you may check more than one answer*):

- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Native American/American Alaskan

40. Who lives in your house with you (*you may check more than one answer*)

- ☐ My parents
- ☐ My grandparents
- ☐ My brothers/sisters
- ☐ Other family(cousins, aunts, uncles)
- ☐ A friend
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ANSWERING OUR QUESTIONS!!***