

VIEWS ON VIOLENCE & IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

AN ANALYSIS OF VIEWS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS

Partnership for Anti-Violence Enhancement (PAVE), an SFYC Project

THE PAVE PROJECT

The High Point Youth Service Provider Coalition via the Partnership for Anti-Violence Enhancement (PAVE) project has the following major goal: to increase positive opportunities and protective factors for High Point youth and negate community and individual risk factors, emphasizing:

- ✦ Enhancement of systems for early and ongoing identification of youth at-risk and development of a community support safety net
- ✦ Opportunities for increased youth bonding to community and adults
- ✦ Community recognition for youth

- ✦ Healthy beliefs and clear standards
- ✦ Education/academic commitment
- ✦ Behavioral and social skill building

PAVE uses the following strategies to achieve this goal:

- ✦ Improve coordination of youth and family services in High Point via the strengthening of the High Point Youth Service Provider Coalition;
- ✦ Improve follow up with youth identified at coalition meetings via a case manager who will conduct in-home



follow up and broker appropriate culturally specific services; and

- ✦ Implement new evidence-based, culturally appropriate programs with a focus on violent aggressive behavior reduction, youth development, and other supportive programs (e.g. educational development, outpatient drug/alcohol treatment, etc.).

KEY FINDINGS

- *Neighborhood diversity is valued by young and old*
- *Recent changes are viewed as valuable*
- *The neighborhood feels safer*
- *Additional improvements to reduce crime and violence are needed*
- *Improved services in many areas are desired*
- *Culture and language oriented services for immigrant communities provided by staff who respect and are members of those communities are desired, but multi-cultural participation is valued*
- *SFYC is a highly valued community resource for its cultural sensitivity, its trusted reputation among teens and adults, and its ability to engage with all segments of the community to effectively improve safety and opportunities for youth to prosper*

ADULT SURVEYS & YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS YIELD IDEAS

The adult resident survey was developed by SFYC staff with assistance from community partners and youth who volunteered for the project. It was distributed by youth volunteers throughout the High Point Neighborhood. The process had multiple purposes

and the methodology developed and implemented reflects these purposes.

First, the process was designed to collect valid and useful insights from a variety of residents on their views of violence and a broad range of violence

prevention efforts and resources in the community. A great emphasis was placed on gaining insights from all segments of this diverse neighborhood.

Second, the process was designed to create interactions between youth and



SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS CONTINUED

adults through dialogue on issues affecting them both.

Third, the process was designed to train youth as active listeners and chroniclers of their neighborhoods. Rather than create a quantitative design with fixed response questions on scales, the designers chose a qualitative approach that did not pre-define answers. Instead, the open-ended questions allowed for more freedom of expression and deeper understanding

once the collective responses were reviewed.

SFYC's primary interests in conducting youth focus groups were to gather youths' perceptions, input and strategies for improving the High Point community and SFYC's programs and services. This included: 1) descriptions of the community; 2) perceptions of the nature of community relationships (e.g., between youth and adults and with their peers); 3) percep-

tions of safety (especially for females); 4) community strengths including availability and accessibility of resources for support and assistance 5) importance, accessibility and availability of multicultural programs and services; and 6) strategies and recommendations for improving High Point, its community programs and services.

"The strengths in the community are the many service providers such as SafeFutures Youth Center, Neighborhood House, the community centers...and in the various cultures and their abilities to share resources."

ADULT SURVEY RESULTS

- ◆ Most of the descriptions of the neighborhood provided by the residents were positive.

- ◆ Diversity is valued.

- ◆ Images of youth in the community were slightly more positive than negative.

- ◆ Residents can identify many strengths in their community including: friendliness, helping behavior, people speaking out, participation in community activities, resources, safety resources, and diversity.

- ◆ Among the challenges noted were: poverty, security, communication, drugs, Seattle Housing Authority regulations, lack of adequate resources, and isolation.

- ◆ When asked if they felt safe, half of the respondents felt safe but significant numbers also said "No" (20%),

"Yes and no" or "It's getting better" (30% combined). There was general agreement that public safety has improved.

- ◆ Suggestions for improving safety include: more police, community helping behaviors, community services, communication, changing attitudes about youth, physical improvements to the neighborhood, and actions by parents and other adults.

- ◆ Services that help people or that are used most often include: SafeFutures Youth Center, the community center, the health clinic and dentist, the library, the tutoring center, the gym, the Vietnamese language classes, and hoop teams.

- ◆ Diversity is valued but is also a challenge in service delivery and community building activities. Residents

(sometimes the same ones) express support for services and activities for their own cultures and language community and activities designed to serve people from many cultural backgrounds.

- ◆ Ideas for improving safety in the community included: activities for youth, adult/parent actions, economic improvements, enhanced feelings of community, service activities, security and police, emotional and psychological support, education support, facilities and environment, expanding SFYC, cultural support, and programs for seniors.



KEY FINDINGS FROM YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

- ◆ The majority of youth hold a balanced perspective about High Point, acknowledging its assets and challenges.
- ◆ Perceptions of recent changes to the community are both positive and negative.
- ◆ Relationships between neighbors were found to be one of the community's greatest strengths.
- ◆ Community programs and services are mentioned by many youth. SafeFutures Youth Center, the Community Center and other resources (stores) were considered some of the community's assets.
- ◆ Outsiders' perceptions of High Point, as a dangerous, violent, low-income neighborhood with drug activity, have left its mark on many youth in the community. Conversely, some youth also recognized limitations of outsiders' perceptions.
- ◆ Diversity is mentioned in a positive light.
- ◆ Youth present mixed views on safety, indicating that it is still a major concern to them. Female youth more often describe feeling unsafe, especially around older males.
- ◆ Youth identify knowledge of some individual and community-wide actions that improve safety in the community.
- ◆ Youth want more activities and programs and see how they would improve safety and personal growth opportunities for themselves and their peers. Youth are attentive to funding changes and constraints, and their related effects on cutting programs and activities. Specific activities mentioned include: conduct fundraising, promote educational opportunities for youth, provide information and access to more employment training services, recruit more "good" adult role models, volunteers, and create opportunities to help others, especially younger youth.
- ◆ The majority of youth speak positively about their relationships with adults in the community.
- ◆ When asked, 'Who do you turn to/go to for help?' an overwhelming number of youth mentioned a SFYC staff member.
- ◆ Recommendations for strengthening program activities, for promoting positive, community relationships, for promoting positive, respectful relationships, for promoting a positive, female-friendly environment, and for promoting active involvement in community service projects are offered.

"SafeFutures is a good example for teens. They will feel that there is an adult who is their friend. They will feel more comfortable to share their problems."

- High Point Adult

"SafeFutures staff [are] more open-minded [and] will listen to your problems without adding to it..."

- High Point Teen

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Foster Active Community Support & Relationships. Recruit and train more adult volunteers and role models. Encourage active participation from Board members and others from the broader community to assist with programs and services.
2. Promote Positive Community Relationships.
3. Promote Positive Peer Relationships. Allow older youth to develop and take leadership in implementing a peer-based mentoring program with related activities for younger youth.
4. Promote a positive, female friendly environment. Promote an environment, along with programs and activities that are female friendly, providing age and developmentally appropriate activities targeting young females.
5. Promote Active Involvement in Community Service Projects. Continue to promote active youth involvement in the development of programs and services to meet community needs.





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SAFEFUTURES YOUTH CENTER'S MISSION IS TO
CREATE A CARING EXTENDED FAMILY ATMOSPHERE
AT A CENTER THAT PROVIDES THE HIGHEST
QUALITY SERVICES, IN ORDER TO FULLY DEVELOP
THE POTENTIAL OF EVERYONE WHO ENTERS
THROUGH OUR DOORS.



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