Assets for a Healthy Adolescence - Experiential Education Outdoor Service Learning (AHA-EOSL): Crew-Based Youth Summer 2021 Program Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION
This article reports the 2021 evaluation results from the Assets for a Healthy Adolescence - Experiential Prevention (AHA-EOSL) Program, provided by Rocky Mountain Youth Corps-CO (RMYC), which engaged 165 youth who, over the summer, participated in either RMYC's Community Youth Crews (ages 14-15) or Regional Youth Crews (ages 16-18). Participants in both programs live, camp (24/7), and work together in crews of 8-10 members for two or five weeks and perform meaningful conservation and service projects for public benefit 6-8 hours per day, five days per week. Evenings and weekends are spent doing daily living chores, AHA-EOSL Education Curriculum, outdoor recreation and life skills development. The residential nature provides a deep, immersive, and experiential absorption of the life skills to ensure a healthy transition into adulthood. All members ages 14 or older are paid, and those 17 or older may receive AmeriCorps education awards. Evaluation data were collected primarily online using Entrance and Exit Surveys.

PROGRAM'S CONCEPTUAL MODEL
The AHA-EOSL Program emerged within the paradigm of positive youth development (e.g., Catalano et al, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016), which focuses on those individual, family, school, and community factors that often predict both positive and negative outcomes for youth. Underlying the program is the recognition that developing strong bonds with adults and peers through involvement in positive activities could set positive developmental pathways and prevent future problems. Among the myriad of possible desirable outcomes, RMYC program developers focused on eight factors they believed would be positively enhanced by program participation, along with reductions in alcohol and marijuana use: 1. Planning and Decision Making, 2. Interpersonal Skills, 3. Peer/Social Support, 4. Resiliency, 5. Enhanced Self-Efficacy, 6. Leadership, 7. Civic Engagement, and 8. Alcohol and Drug Expectations.

The positive youth development literature supports each of the eight selected desirable program factors as potential positive outcomes.  The sections that follow summarize some of the more recent literature linking these eight factors of interest to promoting positive youth assets. While other factors have also been linked to positive youth assets, RMYC program developers identified these eight protective factors, and so only they are discussed.

1. Planning and Decision Making
Guerra and Bradshaw (2008) identified decision making as one of five core competencies related to healthy adjustment in adulthood.  Problem solving, a part of planning and decision making, was also an improved outcome that Catalan et al (2002) found in a review of 25 youth

development programs. Further supporting inclusion of this factor was a review of evaluation findings from community youth programs by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002).

2. Interpersonal Skills

The review of 25 positive youth development program evaluations conducted by Catalan et al (2002) also identified interpersonal skills as one of the positive program outcomes. Another review of the literature by Schulman and Davies (2007) observed that positive youth development programs promoted social competence. Enhanced interpersonal skills also were included among the positive outcomes of youth development programs in the 2002 review of the research by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine.

3. Peer/Social Support

McBeath et al (2018) found that peer support was important to promote for work-integrated learning. Catalano (2004) included peer bonding among the 15 positive outcomes that effective youth programs foster. Peer bonding also was identified by Shulman and Davies (2007) as one of the constructs of positive youth development. Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development identifies (2022) "close relationships with peers" as one of its positive relationship outcomes.

4. Resiliency

In a review of the literature around positive youth development programs, OJJDP (2014) identified the research on resiliency as a potential outcome for programs. Learner et al (2011) echoed the agreement that resiliency was supported by promoting developmental assets. Catalano (2004) included resilience among the important outcomes of effective programs. Similarly, in a review of the literature, Schulman and Davies (2007) identified enhanced resiliency as a positive construct addressed by youth development programs.

5. Enhanced Self-Efficacy

Competence, which includes self-efficacy, is one of the 5 Cs of positive youth development programs (Lerner et al, 2011). In a review of the literature Schultma and Davies (2007) identified enhanced self-efficacy as a positive construct addressed by youth development programs. Catalano and colleagues (2002) in their analysis of 25 youth development program evaluations found self-efficacy among the improved outcomes.

6. Leadership

Lerner (2004) identified leadership as one of three essential components of a positive youth development program. A large number of youth development programs include leadership training and development in the curricula (e.g., Edelman et al, 2004). A study (Henderson et al, 2007) using a stratified sample of 92 camp programs across the United States found that leadership was one of six constructs positively affected.

7. Civic Engagement

Sherrod (2007) speaks extensively about how civic engagement is a part of positive youth development. Wray-Lake and Abrams (2020) posited that positive youth development theory

includes fostering civic engagement and is particularly challenging for urban youth of color.  In a review of the literature, Schulman and Davies (2007) observed that providing opportunities for pro-social involvement was a positive construct addressed by youth development programs. Roth and Books-Gunn (2016) reported an increase in civic engagement as a result of participation in positive youth development programs.

8. Alcohol and Drug Expectations
A number of evaluation and research review studies have shown that positive youth engagement results in reduction of alcohol and tobacco use (e.g., Catalano et al, 2002; Learner et al, 2011; OJJDP, 2014). One study, a synthesis of 26 meta-analyses of drug prevention programs (Tanner-Smith et al, 2018), reported an average positive effect size of .20 for substance abuse reduction. Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (2022) identifies "perceived risk of drug use" as one of the protective factors for youth development programs. Tebes et al (2007) reported that participants in an afterschool substance abuse prevention program were significantly more likely to view drugs as harmful at program exit.

Curriculum Overview
The AHA-EOSL education curriculum provides a structured resource for crew leaders to effectively facilitate the internalization of the program experience with participants. Lesson activities are designed to be very interactive, with opportunities for youth participants to provide direction, leadership and decision-making on a daily basis. The curriculum involves daily interactive discussion prompts, activities and facilitated experiences that address life skills (healthy lifestyle choices, career/employment exploration, civic responsibility), and Resiliency (problem-solving, outdoor leadership, decision-making and mindfulness). The lessons are designed to enhance the inherent parts of the program and to promote reflection and self-growth for participants through hands-on experiences and active reflection. The program incorporates youth community service and recreational activities, and youth-driven leadership opportunities as an integral process of program implementation.

METHOD

Participant Context & Description
The 10 counties in the AHA-EOSL program service region are all rural, but include a variety of community challenges, barriers, and risk factors. For example, five of the counties have ski resorts, which drive the cost-of-living up and have a high transient population. These communities also tend to have very favorable attitudes towards substance use. According to the *Communities That Care Shared Risk and Protective Factor Profiles*, students in Health Statistics Region (HSR) 11 (Jackson, Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt Counties) reported the highest overall (all grades combined) risk factor scores for parental attitudes favorable toward substance use (58.7% of students at risk compared to state average 53.3%).

According to the *2019 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey* (HKCS2019), the state averaged 29.6% of students who reported at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days.  This was higher (33.3% and 33.9% respectively) for the RMYC service region, encompassing 9 of the 10 counties. in

Colorado's Health Statistics Regions (HSRs) 11 and 12. Binge drinking was also higher than the state average in the majority of counties that RMYC serves. HSRs 11 and 12 all reported a higher percentage of students who binge drank (4+ drinks for females, 5+ drinks for males, within a couple of hours) on one or more of the past 30 days than the state average, with HSR 12 (Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Grand, Summit counties) being the highest in the region with 18.8% binge drinking (state 14.2%).

All participants and the parents of minor participants completed written informed consent forms for participation in the evaluation of the program.  Average age for total group was 15.5 years old. The overall group was 63.0% male, 34.5% female, and 2.4% non-binary. The table that follows contains ethnicity/race information for this group of participants.

Table 1. Percent Participants' Ethnicity/Race

|  | White | Hispanic | Asian | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Group (n=165) | 92.7 | 4.8 | 1.8 | 0.7 |

Instrumentation
Participants completed the same Entrance and Exit surveys online, as they began and ended their two or five weeks of service. Initially, 165 participants responded to the Entrance Survey and 144 completed the Exit survey. Of those completing the surveys, 109 matched pairs were identified to measure changes associated with program participation. As RMYC counted 176 official participants for the summer, Entrance survey response rate would be 93.8%, Exit survey response rate 81.8%, and the matched pair response rate 61.9%, which are well within the realm of acceptability.

Reliability Analysis
A reliability analysis of the eight subscales included in the survey was conducted, using all 165 Entrance surveys received. A reliability of .70 or greater for these types of scales is considered strong. The results of the analysis are shown in the table that follows and reflect strong reliabilities for each of the eight subscales.

Table 2. Survey Reliabilities

| Survey Outcome Subscales | Number of Items | Number of Respondents | Cronbach Alpha Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Planning and Decision Making | 10 | 158 | .79 |
| 2.  Interpersonal Skills | 8 | 165 | .82 |
| 3.  Peer/Social Support | 5 | 164 | .91 |
| 4.  Resiliency | 7 | 165 | .79 |
| 5.  Enhanced Self-efficacy | 10 | 157 | .91 |
| 6.  Leadership | 6 | 162 | .82 |
| 7.  Civic Engagement | 4 | 163 | .91 |
| 8.  Alcohol and Drug Expectations | 5 | 164 | .97 |

In addition to completing items about the eight subscales, participants were asked about their alcohol and marijuana use in the previous 30 days prior to the entrance and the exit surveys. The exit survey also asked participants to rate their satisfaction with the program, how likely they would be to recommend the corps experience to others, how helpful their service was to the community, and what the most impactful part of the corps experience was to them. This evaluation report first presents in sections 1-10 a comparison of the Entrance and Exit survey responses for the eight subscales by item. Then it provides a summary of participants' responses to the unique Exit survey questions.

RESULTS
Survey Subscale Responses
The tables that follow provide number of respondents, means, and standard deviations (SD) by item for both the Entrance and Exit Survey responses. These subscales asked participants to rate statements, using a 4-point Likert scale. The first subscale, Planning, Decision Making and Problem-Solving asked respondents to select among four choices: Not at all like me (1), A little like me (2), Somewhat like me (3), and Exactly like me (4). The remaining seven subscales used Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4) as their options. Paired t-test were conducted to determine any significant differences between pre- and post- items. The p-values listed are 2-tailed significance levels; for this analysis a p-value of 0.100 or less would be considered significant. The tables additionally provide effect size differences, which can be compared across items. According to Tanner-Smith, S., Durlak, J, & Marx, R. (2018) setting targets and interpreting effect size changes is directly related to program contexts. After their synthesis of 74 meta-analyses from more than 1100 controlled empirical trials with almost a half-million school age participations, they reported average effect size ranged from .07 to .16 standard deviations. An effect size of .25 or greater would indicate a substantial positive change for a program aiming to enhance protective factors among participants.

1. Planning and Decision Making

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' planning and decision making skills. Respondents generally thought the statements were "Somewhat like" themselves or "Exactly like" themselves. Four items showed significant differences during the program (i.e., Items 2, 3, 4, and 8) with Item 8, *It is easy for me to stick to my plan*, showing the strongest changes with an effect size of .256.

Table 3. Pre/Post Survey Results for Planning and Decision Making

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I have goals in my life. | 108 | 3.52 (.68) | 3.49 (.69) | .688 | -.039 |
| 2. If I set goals, I take action to reach them. | 109 | 3.28 (.68) | 3.39 (.72) | .096 | **.161** |

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. I develop step-by-step plans to reach my goals. | 108 | 2.74 (.89) | 2.96 (.93) | .019 | **.229** |
| 4. Sometimes I can't stop myself from doing something, even if I know it's wrong. | 109 | 2.87 (1.10) | 2.70 (1.07) | .100 | **.159** |
| 5. I often act without thinking through all the alternatives. | 109 | 2.68 (1.62) | 2.61 (1.11) | .558 | -.056 |
| 6. I look for information to help me understand the problem. | 109 | 3.41 (.64) | 3.44 (.71) | .693 | .038 |
| 7. I manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough. | 108 | 3.46 (.69) | 3.54 (.69) | .278 | .105 |
| 8. It is easy for me to stick to my plan. | 109 | 2.94 (.69) | 3.17 (.69) | .009 | **.256** |
| 9. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort. | 106 | 3.60 (.69) | 3.58 (.69) | .707 | -.037 |
| 10. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions. | 109 | 3.12 (.72) | 3.30 (.80) | .023 | .221 |

2. Interpersonal Skills

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' interpersonal skills. Respondents generally thought they "Strongly agreed" or "Agreed" with the statements. Three items showed significant differences during the two-week period (i.e., Items 6, 7, and 8); all three of these items show positive changes in participants' beliefs about teamwork with Item 7, *I like working in a team*, showing the strongest changes with an effect size of .276.

Table 4. Pre/Post Survey Results for Interpersonal Skills

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I support my friends when they do the right thing. | 109 | 3.61 (.59) | 3.66 (.64) | .437 | .075 |
| 2. I encourage my friends to be the best they can be. | 109 | 3.47 (.79) | 3.57 (.76) | .109 | .155 |
| 3. I would defend my friends if others were treating them badly. | 109 | 3.74 (.52) | 3.81 (.50) | .225 | .117 |
| 4. I am there when my friends need me. | 109 | 3.68 (.59) | 3.70 (.59) | .753 | .030 |
| 5. I try to help my friends feel good about themselves. | 109 | 3.59 (.74) | 3.63 (.70) | .510 | .063 |

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. When I work in a team, it helps me better understand other people. | 109 | 3.36 (.74) | 3.52 (.71) | .041 | **.198** |
| 7. I like working in a team. | 108 | 3.17 (.81) | 3.27 (.85) | .005 | **.276** |
| 8. I accomplish more working in a team than by myself. | 109 | 2.91 (.91) | 3.17 (.88) | .013 | **.241** |

3. Peer/Social Support

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' peer and social support. Respondents generally thought they "Strongly agreed" or "Agreed" with the statements. All but one item showed significant differences during the two-week period (i.e., Items 5) and that item, *Building community within a group is important,* was the highest rated at entrance (3.49 out of 4); it had very little space to increase but did to 3.60 at exit. The remaining four items all show positive changes in participants' beliefs about teamwork with Item 1, *My friends help me when I am having trouble with something,* and Item 4, *When I do a good job at something, my friends are happy for me*, showing the strongest changes with an effect size of .266 and .269 respectively.

Table 5. Pre/Post Survey Results for Peer/Social Support

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My friends help me when I am having trouble with something. | 109 | 3.12 (.84) | 3.39 (.68) | .006 | **.266** |
| 2. If there is something bothering me, I can tell my friends about it even if it is something I cannot tell to other people. | 109 | 3.05 (.96) | 3.27 (.81) | .045 | **.194** |
| 3. My friends would stick up for me if someone was causing me trouble. | 109 | 3.22 (.84) | 3.41 (.76) | .044 | **.195** |
| 4. When I do a good job at something, my friends are happy for me. | 108 | 3.15 (.85) | 3.40 (.75) | .006 | **.269** |
| 5. Building community within a group is important. | 107 | 3.49 (.83) | 3.60 (.67) | .279 | .105 |

4. Resiliency

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' resiliency. Respondents generally thought they "Agreed" with the statements. All but one item showed significant differences during the program (i.e., Item 6 *When I'm stressed, I have trouble doing*

*things*).  The remaining six items all show effect sizes in excess of .25, arguing that the program experience greatly enhanced the resiliency of participants. The strongest effect size of .406 was seen in Item 7, *When needed, I ask for help,* which speaks to an essential resiliency factor for youth.

Table 6. Pre/Post Survey Results for Resiliency

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. When I am in a difficult situation, I can find my way out. | 109 | 3.17 (.74) | 3.41 (.57) | .002 | **.301** |
| 2. I know what to do in an emergency. | 109 | 3.15 (.83) | 3.41 (.66) | .001 | **.337** |
| 3. Sometimes you have to push through a situation when you'd rather stop. | 110 | 3.43 (.82) | 3.65 (.53) | .008 | **.257** |
| 4. I learn from my mistakes. | 110 | 3.31 (.76) | 3.55 (.55) | .005 | **.276** |
| 5. When I'm upset, I think before I act. | 110 | 2.85 (.80) | 3.18 (.74) | .000 | **.343** |
| 6. When I'm stressed, I have trouble doing things. | 110 | 2.90 (.93) | 3.01 (.77) | .291 | .101 |
| 7. When needed, I ask for help. | 110 | 2.92 (.85) | 3.28 (.64) | .000 | **.406** |

5.  Enhanced Self-efficacy

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' self-efficacy. Respondents generally thought they "Agreed" with the statements. All items showed significant differences during the program with all effect sizes in excess of .25, arguing that the program experience enhanced the self-efficacy of its participants. The strongest effect size of .660 was seen in Item 4, *I am confident speaking up in groups.* Hovering at an effect size of .50 were Item 5*, I tell people what I think of them*, Item 6, *I have important contributions to make to groups*, and Item 7, *I cope well with stressful situations.* These results provide extremely strong evidence supporting the enhanced self-efficacy of participants during the program.

Table 7. Pre/Post Survey Results for Enhanced Self Efficacy

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events. | 109 | 3.11 (.80) | 3.48 (.59) | .000 | **.465** |
| 2. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations. | 109 | 3.15 (.73) | 3.41 (.61) | .001 | **.327** |
| 3. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I know what to do. | 109 | 3.06 (.78) | 3.43 (.60) | .000 | **.404** |
| 4. I am confident speaking up in groups. | 108 | 2.63 (1.00) | 3.31 (73) | .000 | **.660** |
| 5. I tell people what I think of them. | 109 | 2.58 (.83) | 3.09 (.81) | .000 | **.497** |
| 6. I have important contributions to make to groups. | 109 | 2.99 (.73) | 3.42 (.63) | .000 | **.487** |
| 7. I cope well with stressful situations. | 107 | 2.72 (.90) | 3.21 (.74) | .000 | **.508** |
| 8. I am a good friend. | 108 | 3.40 (.77) | 3.63 (.54) | .006 | **.269** |
| 9. I know my strengths. | 106 | 3.20 (.86) | 3.65 (.55) | .000 | **.436** |
| 10. I am confident that I could plan a balanced meal on a limited budget. | 109 | 3.23 (.90) | 3.65 (.55) | .000 | **.446** |

6. Leadership

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' leadership skills. Respondents generally thought they "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" with the statements. All but one item showed significant differences during the program (i.e., Item 3, *I see what needs to be done*). Three of the five remaining items all showed effect sizes in excess of .25, arguing that the program experience enhanced the leadership skills of participants.

Table 8. Pre/Post Survey Results for Leadership

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can manage small group to complete projects. | 107 | 3.22 (.83) | 3.52 (.59) | .000 | **.378** |
| 2. I understand the strengths and weaknesses of others. | 108 | 3.21 (.81) | 3.48 (.60) | .002 | **.312** |
| 3. I see what needs to be done. | 108 | 3.42 (.76) | 3.52 (.60) | .117 | .152 |
| 4. I can communicate what needs to be done. | 109 | 3.24 (.90) | 3.48 (.65) | .000 | **.344** |
| 5. I am a good listener. | 109 | 3.44 (.75) | 3.58 (.60) | .039 | **.200** |
| 6. I adjust my plan based on team input. | 109 | 3.37 (.74) | 3.53 (.60) | .017 | **.231** |

7. Civic Engagement

The program experience had significant positive impact on the participants' civic engagement. Respondents generally thought they "Strongly Agreed" or "Agreed" with the statements. All but one item showed significant differences during the program (i.e., Item 3, *I am concerned about the environment*), which had the highest rated entrance score. It's possible that participants attracted to the program did so because of their concerns for the environment. Their experience with the program maintained this strong interest and increased it somewhat. Three of the five remaining items all showed effect sizes in part in excess of .25, providing solid evidence that the program experience enhanced the leadership skills of participants.

Table 9. Pre/Post Survey Results for Enhanced Civic Engagement

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am concerned about community issues. | 109 | 3.18 (.84) | 3.47 (.67) | .000 | **.378** |
| 2. Involvement in programs to improve the community is important. | 109 | 3.35 (.77) | 3.59 (.53) | .002 | **.312** |
| 3. I am concerned about the environment. | 108 | 3.50 (.74) | 3.60 (.61) | .160 | .152 |
| 4. Involvement in programs to improve the environment is important. | 109 | 3.48 (.77) | 3.66 (.50) | .007 | **.344** |

8. Alcohol and Drug Expectations

The program experience had little effect on the participants' expectations about using cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use. Respondents generally "Agreed" with the statements provided, which were positively worded. In this case a decline from entrance to exit would be desirable, which would explain the negative effect sizes. One item, Item 2, *Using e-cigarettes or vapes makes you look cool*, showed significant differences during the program but only showed a -.185 effect size difference.

Table 10. Pre/Post Survey Results for Alcohol and Drug Expectations

| ITEMS | Number of Responses | Mean Entrance (SD) | Mean Exit (SD) | p-value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool. | 109 | 3.06 (1.28) | 2.96 (1.33) | .213 | -.120 |
| 2. Using e-cigarettes or vapes makes you look cool. | 109 | 3.11 (1.24) | 2.98 (1.36) | .056 | **-.185** |
| 3. Drinking alcohol lets you have more fun. | 109 | 2.95 (1.24) | 2.91 (1.27) | .610 | -.049 |
| 4. Using marijuana lets you have more fun. | 109 | 2.92 (1.27) | 2.95 (1.28) | .625 | .047 |
| 5. Cocaine and other illegal drugs always make you feel good. | 109 | 3.10 (1.26) | 3.03 (1.34) | .327 | -.094 |

9. Use of Alcohol Last 30 Days

Use of alcohol was measured pre and post program by asking for frequency of use in the prior 30 days. As can be seen in the table that follows, almost 85% of participants reported not using alcohol before program participation. This high percentage of non-users does not allow much room for positive change, which is what the exit survey data show. These results are supported by similar RMYC data from previous cohorts, consistent for this age group.

Table 11. Pre/Post Percentages of Alcohol Use Last 30 Days

| | Number of Responses | None | 1-2 days | 3-5 days | 6-9 days | 10-19 days | 20-29 days | All 30 days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Entrance Survey | 163 | 84.6% | 5.5% | 4.9% | 2.5% | 0.6% | 0% | 1.8% |
| Exit Survey | 136 | 86.8% | 8.1% | 2.9% | 0.7% | 0% | 0% | 1.5% |

10. Use of Marijuana Last 30 Days

Use of marijuana was measured pre and post program by asking for frequency of use in the prior 30 days. As can be seen in the table that follows almost 90% of participants reported not using marijuana before program participation. This high percentage of non-users does not allow much room for positive change, which is what the exit survey data show. These results are supported by similar data from previous cohorts, consistent for this age group.

Table 12. Pre/Post Percentages of Marijuana Use Last 30 Days

|  | Number of Responses | None | 1-2 days | 3-5 days | 6-9 days | 10-19 days | 20-29 days | All 30 days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Entrance Survey | 165 | 89.7% | 0.6% | 2.4% | 1.8% | 2.4% | 0.6% | 2.4% |
| Exit Survey | 135 | 89.6% | 3.7% | 2.9% | 3.7% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 1.5% |

Exit Survey Program Questions

11. Work Skills as a Result of Participation

More than 90% of participants responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" about the positive impact of the program on their work skills. Most impressively 97.7% believed that they were more confident in their ability to be a productive member of a team, 93.3% felt more confident in their ability to complete a job interview in a professional manner, and 92.6% thought they had become a more responsible person.

Table 13. Exit Survey Work Skills Responses

|  | Number of Responses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel more confident in my ability to complete a job application. | 135 | 45.1% | 45.6% | 8.8% | 0.1% |
| 2. I feel more confident in my ability to complete a job interview in a professional manner. | 134 | 47.0% | 46.3% | 6.0% | 0.7% |
| 3. I feel more confident in my ability to be a productive member of a team. | 135 | 58.5% | 39.2% | 1.5% | 0.7% |
| 4. I am a more responsible person. | 135 | 56.3% | 36.3% | 6.7% | 0.7% |

12. Career Exploration as a Result of Participation

More than 85% of participants responded "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" about the positive impact of the program on their career explorations. Most impressively 98.5% believed that their community service helped them think about the kind of job that they wanted in the future, and 95.9% felt their experience gave them important skills and experiences that would help them obtain professional employment in the future.

Table 14. Exit Survey Career Explorations Responses

| | Number of Responses | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My experience in the corps helped me to consider future career options. | 134 | 47.0% | 41.8% | 11.2% | 0% |
| 2. The community service that I did in the corps helped me to think about the kind of job that I want in the future. | 135 | 61.5% | 37.0% | 0.7% | 0.7% |
| 3. My experience in the corps gave me important skills and experience that will help in obtaining professional employment in the future. | 136 | 62.5% | 32.4% | 3.7% | 1.4% |

13. Program Satisfaction (136 responses)

The table below shows that 94.9% of participants were either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with their program experience Participants also were asked to explain their rating. A few representative comments follow the ratings table.

Table 15. Exit Survey Program Satisfaction Responses

| Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| 62.5% | 32.4% | 3.7% | 1.5% |
| 85 | 44 | 5 | 2 |

- *I had a ton of fun meeting new people and making friends. The outdoor environment and positive energy really had a good effect on my anxiety disorder.*

- *It taught me a lot about the environment and helped me grow as a person and become a leader.*
- *I absolutely loved the session. I felt like the work was important to myself and the community. The crew itself worked well together and we were able to form lasting bonds. I had a great experience with RMYC last year and this year was even better.*

14. Recommend Corps Experience to Others (125 responses)

The table below shows that 92.8% of participants rated it either "Very Likely" or "Likely" that they would recommend the Corps experience to others. Participants also were asked to explain their rating. A few representative comments follow the ratings table.

Table 16. Exit Survey Likelihood to Recommend the Program Responses

| Very Likely | Likely | Unlikely | Very Unlikely |
|---|---|---|---|
| 52.8% | 40.0% | 5.6% | 1.6% |
| 66 | 50 | 7 | 2 |

- *I would recommend RMYC to anyone looking to build their resume, help the community, spend time in the outdoors, and meet some really cool people because that is everything I was looking for and everything I found with RMYC.*
- *I would recommend this program because it teaches youth to work together as a team, and helps the community to.*
- *It was very difficult because of the heat and bugs but it was a good experience to know that I finished the 2 weeks pretty strong.*

15. Helpfulness of Service to the Community (134 responses)

The table below shows that 92.0% of participants rated their service to the community either "Very Helpful" or "Helpful." Participants also were asked to explain their rating. A few representative comments follow the table.

Table 17. Exit Survey Helpfulness of Service to the Community

| Very Helpful | Helpful | Not so helpful | Not at all Helpful |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53.6% | 38.4% | 5.1% | 2.9% |
| 74 | 53 | 7 | 4 |

- *We built a trail that I believe will be very beneficial to the community we worked in.*
- *We helped build trail for people to use and helped restore campgrounds to create a cleaner and better environment.*
- *We had a lot of hikers tell us how good of a job we were doing.*

16. Most Impactful Part of Corps Experience

Participants were asked to identify the most impactful part of their Corps Experience. Representative verbatim comments follow:

- *I think I gained some muscle and things I wanted to gain from this experience and working hard.*
- *Meeting new people and creating memories with them, I will never forget the people I worked with!*
- *I was able to prove to myself that I have control of my mindset about my work and can use that to my advantage. The people I bonded with are some I would like to keep in my life for years. I also feel as though my experience in at RMYC will be beneficial to me in the future.*

DISCUSSION

As shown by the table below, the program yielded significant changes in all outcome subscales. Using the Tanner-Smith, Durlak, and Marx *(2018)* criteria for interpreting effect size changes, an effect size of .25 or greater would indicate strong program outcomes. Thus, the observed changes for "Enhanced Self-Efficacy ," "Resiliency," "Civic Engagement," and "Leadership" exceeded this standard, showing strong program outcomes in a very modest period of time. The observed changes for "Peer/Social Support", "Interpersonal Skills", and "Planning and Decision Making" met this standard for several of the items, while the observed changes for "Alcohol and Drug Expectations" were below this standard, but were still significant.

Table 18. Comparison of Sub-Scale Results, Showing Number of Significant Items with Effect Size Ranges

| Survey Outcome Subscales | Number of Items | Number of Items Significantly Different | Effect Size Range of Significant Items |
|---|---|---|---|
| Enhanced Self-Efficacy | 10 | 10 | .269-.660 |
| Resiliency | 7 | 6 | .257-.406 |
| Civic Engagement | 4 | 3 | .312-.378 |
| Leadership | 6 | 5 | .200-.378 |
| Peer/Social Support | 5 | 4 | .194-.269 |
| Interpersonal Skills | 8 | 3 | .198-.276 |
| Planning and Decision Making | 10 | 4 | .159-.256 |
| Alcohol and Drug Expectations | 5 | 1 | .185 |

Use of Alcohol and Marijuana Last 30 Days,
Consistent with data from previous program years, use of alcohol and marijuana among this age group is very infrequent. More than 85% of the participants reported no use either in the

past 30 days upon entrance into the program or at exit. For example, based on the 109 matched Exit and Entrance survey responses for alcohol use, only 15 (13.8%) reported any use at the beginning of the program and of those at the end of the program, 7 reported no use and 4 reported reduced use, which would indicate a 73.3% reduction for participants for alcohol use among users.

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