



Joseph Parisi
Dane County Executive

2013-2014 Youth Resource Center Report

Youth Resource Centers provide supervised after-school programming to middle school youth at seventeen sites throughout Dane County. Youth Centers served **3972** youth during the 2013-2014 school year.

After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What It Takes to Achieve It, Harvard Family Research Project, Number 10, February 2008 indicates that youth who participate in after school programming “reap a host of positive benefits” including:

- **Improved academic achievement**—Participation in after school programs is associated with improved attendance, less disciplinary action, improved work completion, engagement in learning and better grades. *All Dane County Youth Centers provide homework help, tutoring and academic support.*
- **Improved social and behavioral skills**—Participation in after school programs is associated with decreased behavioral problems and improved social and relationship skills. *All DC Youth Centers provide opportunities for youth to learn & practice social skills.*
- **Healthy lifestyles**—Participation in after school programs is associated with increased physical activity, better nutrition and improved body image. *All Dane County Youth Centers provide opportunities for participation in sports and physical activities.*
- **Reduced risk-taking behavior**—Participation in after school programs can decrease youth participation in risky behaviors including drug and alcohol use, law violations and sexual activity by providing safe, supervised services. *All Dane County Youth Centers are open from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. when youth are more likely to be unsupervised and engage in risky behaviors.*

The research indicates that “three primary and interrelated factors are critical” to maximize the benefits of after school programs:

- Access to and sustained participation in programs. *Dane County Youth Centers are free and located at schools or in neighborhoods within safe walking distance.*
- Quality programming that is structured, supervised, intentional, and provided by well-prepared staff. *Youth Centers provide structured programming by qualified staff.*
- Partnerships with other community organizations, families and schools. *Dane County Youth Centers collaborate with schools, local businesses, parents, municipal government and other local organizations.*

Service Summary

- **3972** middle school youth participated in Youth Center activities
- **30%** of youth participated in Youth Center activities 3 times a week or more

Asset Development Programming

Youth Centers collectively provided **14,145** hours of asset development programming in the areas of ***Academic Support & Tutoring; Recreation & Sports; Primary Prevention Education; Life Skill Training; and Technical Skills***. The volume, focus and structure of asset development programming differ at each Center. Centers run multiple programs simultaneously on a given day allowing for increased programming capacity.

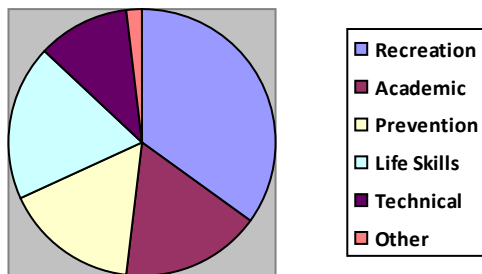


Figure 1 2013-2014 Program Breakdown

Leadership Activity

Centers provided:

- **2576** hours of youth leadership opportunity
- **8** Centers have Youth Advisory Boards
- Leadership opportunities include planning & organizing YRC activities, events, fund drives and planning community service events.

Community Service

Youth develop a sense of belonging and connection to their community through service (Search Institute 2006).

663 youth provided **5141** hours of service to their communities this year. Youth Centers leverage adult volunteers to expand programming. This year, **909** adults volunteered **12,905** hours. At the living wage rate of \$11.33, Youth Centers leverage \$146,213 in adult volunteer time to support program services.

Fiscal Considerations

Dane County is one of several funding sources for Youth Centers. In 2014, Dane County support for Youth Centers totals \$147,050 and ranges from 3% to 35% of a Youth Center's annual operating budget depending on the Center. Youth Centers are a cost effective investment in youth.

The annual cost to DCDHS to serve 3972 youth is \$37.02.

Beyond the Numbers--Student Impact

A few months into the 2013-2014 school year, I was approached by a parent looking for an after-school program for her son with Asperger Syndrome. Their family had recently moved to our community after a slew of incidents with their former school district and after-school programs. Her son had been bullied and alienated to the point that he was unable to function in school and at home. Though she required somewhere safe for him to go after school, she expressed concern about sending "Max" to another YRC.

Having had little experience in working with Autism, I attended training by the Autism Society of America to better prepare myself and our current students. I spent the next several days researching and talking with parents whom I met at the training in order to gain a better understanding of how to serve Max. I also spoke with our current students about Max's arrival, and attempted to answer as many questions as possible. While I felt that I was prepared to work with Max, I was unsure that our youth would be.

These fears were quickly dispelled once Max began attending our after-school programming. Several students took the initiative to introduce him to the Center, and every student was patient, understanding, and compassionate during his first weeks. I soon realized that while the training and information I sought out was valuable, the sense of community and acceptance demonstrated by his peers was infinitely more important. Max soon integrated himself into the YRC and has now become one of our great youth leaders.

While "Nathan" is a great kid, he really didn't feel part of the school and it showed in his grades and behavior. He was in 8th grade, but failing and disengaged. Through, after school, he found a place where he belongs. With persistent outreach, Nathan joined the YRC homework club, soccer team, and REC program. Not only did he join, he became a leader in after school. Better yet, his GPA went from a 0.94 to a 2.66. I truly believe afterschool was a big part of this change!

*Prepared by Connie Bettin, Prevention Manager
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