



Hillside Children's Center: Livingston County Youth Court and Community Services
Evaluation

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Executive Summary

From 2008 to 2010, State University of New York at Buffalo, School of Social Work conducted an evaluation of the Hillside Children's Center - Community Service Livingston County Youth Court (LCYC) program. Analyses focused on the recidivism (readmission) rates of children ages 12-17 who participated in their program. A particular strength of this evaluation is the use of a mixed method design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data elements. Additionally, the ability to integrate research and clinical practice with client outcomes provides an added strength to this evaluation, ultimately building the knowledge base in an effort to more appropriately meet the needs of the children and adolescents that Hillside Children's Center serves.

Based on the initial goals and the interest in having enough allotted time to track follow-up recidivism rates, prospective data was not collected for this evaluation. Beginning in the year 2006, participants entered the LCYC and continued receiving services until 2008. Following discharge, the year of 2009 serves as the follow-up period for this evaluation. With a vast amount of rich data, pretest information utilized for this evaluation was collected by Hillside Children's Center which included program participant information. Additionally, information was collected from Livingston County Probation (Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument [YASI] Recidivism information) and Livingston County Department of Social Services (LC-DSS) (Placement information). The qualitative data collection component of this evaluation consisted of either a face-to-face or a telephone interview, and included multiple sources: LCYC participants and their parents, LCYC volunteers and their parents, LC Probation, and Hillside Children's Center staff.

Due to constraints based on the relatively low rates of recidivism and placement, the available size of the sample was quite small, which perhaps reduces the power to detect significant differences between the groups, essentially elevating the risk for Type I errors. As a result, information on marginal trends ($p < .25$) is also presented. Because of limited power and the increased chance of causality related to a random occurrence, evaluators considered nearly all other potential elements or variables that may help improve existing Hillside Children's Center programs, with the understanding that these factors will need to be evaluated further. This information could perhaps point to areas of future investigation, in addition to potentially saving time, effort, and monetary costs associated with future data collection.

The current evaluation utilized data from 120 participants, of which 55 were LCYC participants and 65 were Community Service Only (CSO) participants. To increase the accuracy of comparisons and results, the two groups were matched on age and gender. Although evaluators were unable to locate a true control group of juvenile offenders who did not experience LCYC or community services in Livingston County, which is the reason for use of the CSO as the comparison, information was found for comparison groups from various other states that were included in an evaluation of teen courts from 2002. While not ideal, the addition of these comparison groups in this evaluation does provide some useful information concerning recidivism among youth.

Lastly, evaluators also considered cost-effectiveness of the LCYC program using recidivism and placement rates as the results or outcomes of interest. For purposes of this executive summary, the Livingston County Youth Court group will be referred to as LCYC, and the Community Services Program Only group will be referred to as CSO.

Findings and Recommendations

- One of the most predominant findings of this evaluation is that the staff, running both the LCYC and Community Services Programs, are exceedingly hard working and dedicated individuals. They show a strong desire to help the individuals in their programs succeed, not just the program. This is a major strength based on key ingredients leading to successful outcomes of clients, and is recommended to be utilized and analyzed to determine how to make the programs not only more efficient, but also more effective.
- Another major finding is that methods of record keeping within Hillside Children's Center may need to be significantly updated and modernized. Computerization of the program information at all levels would help to build a stronger capacity within Hillside Family of Agencies for performing and advancing self-evaluations. Records are currently stored in a variety of methods and perhaps cumbersome and time consuming if intending to gather individual level data. Strengthening an infrastructure for research by computerizing and storing data could better enhance evaluations, identifying both points of strengths and weaknesses across programs, ultimately improving client outcomes, well-being while shrinking some costs of services.
- To bolster collaboration across service providing organizations, such as DSS (placement), and Probation (recidivism), procedures should be developed to allow the sharing of information specific to individuals. Currently, all information from both services is collected on an aggregate level, reducing the ability to analyze specificities and individualization from client to client. It is recommended that a signed release process, of information from both the individuals and their guardians, be implemented to allow Hillside Children's Center access to information across systems, lessening the fragmentation of child and adolescent services and care. Furthermore, this type of information will add to the Hillside Children's Center's capacity to perform evaluations in a more efficient manner, ultimately lowering costs and improving services. While Hillside Children's Center currently completes HIPPA Disclosure Forms for each case, sharing information can be inconsistent and challenging when working with multiple entities.
- While there was a significant difference in the times from referral and admission between the LCYC and CSO programs, which has implications for elements of deterrence, these did not appear to be due to any irregularities in how the two groups are handled.

- CSO participants spent slightly longer periods of time in the program, which was perhaps due to a larger time requirement for completing community service hours assigned when compared to the LCYC group. This may be reflecting a greater risk for problem behaviors in the CSO group and should be assessed in future research. However, there were no differences between the two groups in terms of the time in the program or for follow-up, which reflects the relative success of the matching process for comparison groups, strengthening the ability to compare significant differences between groups.
- LCYC cases tended to be juvenile diversion cases, while the cases in CSO tended to be across all categories: Person In Need of Supervision (PINS), PINS Diversion, Juvenile Delinquency (JD), JD Diversion, as well as youth advocacy.
- There were differences on the initial YASI derived from probation between the two groups. The LCYC group tended to score lower on risk factors and higher on protective factors, which has implications for any between group comparisons. However, because there were missing initial assessment forms, it was not feasible to use covariates that could have potential impact on comparing group results. Future research should consider this.
- The frequency of sanctions handed down by LCYC were measured, and reflected that outside of community service, the most used sanction was a letter of apology and the least used sanction was a curfew. In contrast to other teen courts, the LCYC only assigned 49% to jury duty while other teen courts used this sanction for all participants. Given the finding that assignment to jury duty helped reduce the likelihood of subsequent readmission to probation, the LCYC should consider using this method for all participants, although this sanction is beginning to gradually to increase based on appropriateness and ability.
- While jail tours appeared to be effective in reducing readmission to the program in the interim report from last spring, when all data were available (participant characteristics, e.g. gender, etcetera), the effect of the jail tour was significantly reduced. Although this emphasizes the need for caution with respect to any interim data reports, jail tours may still be effective in reducing readmission to the program. Further research would perhaps clarify the effectiveness of this practice. However, it still appears as if jail tours are effective in reducing recidivism rates.
- The LCYC and CSO groups did not differ in terms of recidivism (formal, informal, or combined). However, when comparing the two groups to a comparison group used in an earlier evaluation of teen courts from other programs in 2002, there was a significant reduction in recidivism for both groups. The comparison group had an 18% rate across six months, while the LCYC had a 3.6% rate and the CSO group had a 6.2% rate. When comparing to other teen court programs, it is clear that LCYC and CSO had significantly lower rates of recidivism, demonstrating the effectiveness of both programs in improving not only monetary, but also non-monetary outcomes.

- Findings indicate that recidivism rates steadily increased across time, rising from the sixth month rates noted above (LCYC 3.6%; CSO 6.2%) to 34.5% for the LCYC group and 33.8% for the CSO group at 47 months. As recidivism rates appear to rise across time, future research should consider factors that may be contributing to this trend, and what types of interventions or program adjustments may be necessary to improve both the primary problem of recidivism and the programs themselves. Adjustments could perhaps include a type of follow-up or after-care component.

- Results show a tendency for the LCYC group to have lower placement rates than the CSO group. When delving deeper into this issue, caution must be used with this finding. Foremost, the CSO group began with higher risk levels and lower protective factors when compared to the LCYC group.

- Lastly, significant predictor factors of recidivism included gender, attendance at the workshop, risk factors for school, personal attitudes and skills, and protective factors for family, school, community, personal attitudes, and skills. Incorporating resiliency, protective factors, and coping skills and assets may lead to a greater reduction in recidivism rates when individual faculties and characteristics are considered. Perhaps working with probation on how these findings could be used to reduce risks while increasing protective factors is something to consider.

Introduction

The University of Buffalo, School of Social Work, was enlisted to collaborate with Hillside Family of Agencies to evaluate the Hillside Children's Center LCYC program which began with the fall 2008 cohort and will continue with the 2009 cohort. Data on 55 LCYC participants and 65 CSO participants (comparison group) were collected. In addition, interviews were conducted with parents and LCYC participants to help understand how the program was influencing the families of the participants. Families, external resources, and protective factors are highly related to successful outcomes. Therefore, the inclusion of family data in this evaluation greatly augments the knowledge building capabilities of this evaluation. Interviews were also conducted with Probation and Hillside Children's Center staff to gain a better understanding of how the program is conducted and how things might be improved, modified, or strengthened. Yet again, this not only improves knowledge building capabilities, but also enhances the richness of the data and information collected for this evaluation.

The goal of the LCYC program is to reduce recidivism for first-time, non-violent offenders (see Appendix A for a brief description). LCYC can delegate several different sanctions that are designed to directly address the severity of the offense. The sanctions supply a means for the young offender to provide restitution to the victim and community in conjunction with developing essential new skills to change behavior. Lastly, these sanctions provide the opportunity for youth offenders to restore their eminence in the

community, ultimately improving recidivism rates and costs associated with such recidivism.

Brief Description of the Evaluation

With collaboration from the University at Buffalo, School of Social Work and Hillside Family of Agencies, this evaluation study was designed to assess the LCYC program offered through the Hillside Children's Center in Livingston County to improve both monetary and non-monetary outcomes related to all stakeholders. The second major objective of the evaluation was to determine if the program has been successful in deterring youth from future illegal activity. Lastly, this evaluation assessed what factors are involved in readmission back into the Hillside Children's Center youth court program. Although cost-effectiveness is tremendously crucial and advantageous to the organization and funders as a business entity, it is perhaps most worthwhile to study the problem of recidivism to improve the quality of life and wellbeing among the youth and families receiving services at Hillside Children's Center. On a larger, more macro level, helping to deter young offenders from further acts of crime does benefit society as a whole, in addition to other cost savings associated with deterrence such as personal property crimes- thus enhancing the quality of life for community members as well. Effective deterrence has the ability to reduce the need for increasingly scarce resources already being used for adult probation and incarceration. Cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness are intertwined, much like the variables that contribute to the recurrent cycle of repeat youth offenders. The current evaluation assessed various levels of data, including conducting a cost-effectiveness analysis, to determine the most efficient allocation of resources, while improving the success of the youth, which in turn reduces re-entry into programs further reducing the costs spent to provide services to repeat offenders.

Additionally, this evaluation was conducted to determine what barriers exist for the youth to complete their sentencing through LCYC and what factors may be associated with subsequent juvenile offenses for youth between the ages of 10 to 15. Often considered a particularly challenging population, these youth have committed various misdemeanor crimes or PINS violations, and as a result, are sentenced by peers to sanctions including: community service, letter of apology, a written essay, restitution, jury duty on the LCYC, and curfew. An examination of the sentences handed down to the youth offender by their peers will be conducted. Individuals may also be assigned to take a jail tour and or to participate in a youth developmental workshop. Analyses included in this evaluation represented all sentences and sanctions delegated by peers.

In addition to data already collected by Hillside Children's Center and Probation, information was gathered using one-on-one interviews with offenders and their parents, participants in the LCYC, and employees of Hillside Children's Center. One particular use of the interviews was to evaluate the level of satisfaction with LCYC and the program's ability to decrease recidivism and placements, and to gain insight into how well the program may be working, potential ways to improve it, and to determine what factors predominantly facilitate positive outcomes for participants.

Major Evaluation Research Questions

- How do outcomes (Readmission, Recidivism, and Placement, Cost-effectiveness) differ for individuals who go through LCYC compared with individuals who go through the CSO but do not experience LCYC?
- What factors influence the effectiveness of the LCYC Program?
- What might be done to improve the effectiveness of the LCYC?

Background and Significance

From a historical perspective on recidivism, juvenile courts and probation offices have largely concentrated, and perhaps restricted, the focus of recidivism on the juvenile and the development of rehabilitation plans to prevent young offenders from reoffending (Kulychek, Torbet, & Bozynski, 1999). However, this approach has neglected to focus on providing the youth offender with the skills and strengths to take personal responsibility for his or her offense. In order to get a sense of the youth's lack of accountability, this evaluation will be looking to the interviews with the family members of the offenders for their perception of the youth's insight into their own sense of accountability. Kulychek, Torbet, and Bozynski (1999) state that juvenile courts are portrayed as a revolving door, with youth rearrested for new crimes, some still under court-ordered supervision or in treatment programs. Some offer reasons such as overbearingly high caseloads, which prohibit or preclude the provision of anything more than superficial instructions and infrequent contacts. In collaboration with University at Buffalo, School of Social Work's evaluation team, Hillside Children's Center conducted the current evaluation in an attempt to assuage the heavy monetary costs associated with recidivism, while improving services to dissolve the cycle of recidivism which affect all levels from the individual, to the community, and lastly to society.

Children and youth do not exist in vacuity; rather are molded, pressured, swayed, manipulated, persuaded, induced, inspired, bolstered, and strengthened by all systems with which they interact. That being said, parents are perhaps the most commonly recognized social influence on children as they develop and age. Factors such as the quality of parenting, e.g. time spent with children, consistency of discipline, and transference of values simultaneously effect children and youth. In 2007, Varma conducted a study in Canada's Youth Court System, which examined the relationship of the parents in the criminal proceedings of their juvenile offenders. Major objectives of this study were to analyze the role of parents and the effect on their children being released to them, as well as sentencing and placement. Results indicated that a parent or parents were usually present at the court hearings of their child, although they may have not played a large role in the trial. Typically, the court would allow the children to be released on bail to the parents if parents were present in the court room and could promise their children would be supervised and would return to court for future proceedings. The Varma (2007) study found that the role of parents is too often

underplayed and that parents could be utilized more by the court system to reduce recidivism or re-offending rates. By utilizing data from multiple sources, including guardians of the youth participants, evaluation of Hillside Children's Center' LCYC, will perhaps improve much needed and advantageous information on the role and perspectives of parents in recidivism rates.

It is clear, perhaps glaringly apparent, that recidivism among the juvenile population is a problem. While parental roles in juvenile court cases can be significant factors, research has also shown that other programs and factors are in contention with Youth Court systems. Programs such as Juvenile Accountability Groups are getting some attention (Patrick, Marsh, Bundy, Mimura, & Perkins, 2003) as another approach for decreasing recidivism. Timing is an additional factor in reducing recidivism; it has also been thought that the earlier society intervenes the better the chances are for decreasing recidivism (Risler, Sutphen, & Shields, 2000). There is an elevated and pressing need for researchers and policymakers to gain a better understanding of the cause(s) and key factors contributing to juvenile recidivism. The current evaluation looks to increase the knowledge base by considering such factors associated with juvenile recidivism, in addition to comparing the LCYC and CSO groups. This may help to further the understanding of how the programs work and what mechanisms may be most influential in preventing recidivism. With the combination of quantitative and qualitative information, Hillside Children's Center may be able to facilitate other programs in identifying potential barriers which may also influence the rate of recidivism. According to Onifade et al. (2008), it is important to understand not only the cumulative risk, but to also predict the pattern of risks in order to identify high-risk juveniles more accurately. Thus, the current evaluation examines such cumulative risks and patterns of risk, which may further enhance the ability to provide effective and efficient services to juvenile offenders, while reducing costs associated with recidivism. It is understood that in order to provide juveniles adequate and effective case management, one needs to have a clear understanding of the established patterns of need and risk with the utilization of valid risk prediction tools in order to decrease recidivism (Onifade et al., 2008). It is evident that juvenile recidivism is neither an organizational nor societal problem, rather the combination. Perhaps this evaluation may serve as a catalyst to view the reduction of juvenile recidivism as a united effort, integrating risk and protective factors, parental factors, program barriers and strengths, and traditional patterns that perhaps fuel or deter the continuous cycle of recidivism.

Theories

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, synthesized by Ronald Akers, is an expansion of the work done by Edwin Sutherland. Sutherland suggested that delinquency is more likely when children and adolescents are exposed to an environment where there is an attitude that is favorable towards violating societal rules (Akers & Jensen, 2007). Akers posited that there are four variables that encourage juvenile delinquency. He stated that Social Learning Theory is strongly supported when they found that several of the major variables of this theory accounted for a significant portion of the variance in marijuana

and alcohol use in adolescents. These authors inferred that Social Learning Theory could also be applied to other forms of problem behavior as well. As a theoretical basis for the current evaluation, the Social Learning Theory provides a tested framework to conduct a comprehensive, theory based program study. Using tested frameworks has the ability to improve and support the findings for this collaborative evaluation. Furthermore, applying this theory to the current study, the analysis of multiple data sources such as agency staff, families, guardians and or parents, and participants themselves increases the ability to view recidivism across multiple levels to improve both costs and client outcomes associated with re-offenders.

There are a number of factors that influence the development of problem behaviors. The first of these are differential associations to a group that influences actions of the individual. Although these groups can range from church and schools to peers and families, the most important of these groups are the peer and family oriented groups. This type of association is one of the most crucial components of the Social Learning Theory and is the first to occur in the development of children and adolescents. Behaviors are correlated with the balance of the reinforcing-punishing contingencies that cause either a fortification or an offset of their behaviors. The law violation can originate from association with peers or observing criminal behavior either in person or via some media outlet. The reinforcement can be of various types: monetary, social, or physical.

The second factor of interest is differential reinforcement and can be closely correlated to the first variable. Differential reinforcement requires the behavior to either continue or end contingent on the rewards and punishments that are experienced as a result of the behavior. If an adolescent is positively reinforced after committing a crime by groups such as family or peers, then that crime increases in occurrence and behavior.

The third factor in the Social Learning Theory is beliefs or definitions associated with favorable outcomes as Akers suggests that a belief system can favorably incline the individual towards crime. These belief systems encompass a set of attitudes that can vary from believing that minor crimes, e.g. shoplifting, are acceptable to a disdain for hard work, and instead look for the thrills and excitement that come from illegal activities, therefore justifying the criminal act.

Lastly, the fourth factor is the imitation of criminal role models. This mechanism requires that there be role models engaging in criminal behavior around the individual. This works in synergy with the beliefs and reinforcements. Skitka et al. (1993) found that the severity of the crime committed was greater when there was a larger presence of people. This study reflected findings from the Hillside Children's Center interviews that were conducted with the LCYC offenders, some of which disclosed that they did not act alone.

The Social Learning Theory can be applied to the participants in the LCYC, in part because the youthful offenders have an opportunity to see role models for behaviors that do not involve criminal activity. They get to observe and learn that there are choices for behaviors that are legal, and that not all people that come from a particular

environment engage in criminal behavior. The youthful offender also experiences prosecution and sentencing from his or her peers. This may have the effect of reinforcing the message that criminal activity is not found to be socially acceptable by his or her peers. The youth who make up the legal portion of the court can be seen as having shifted their role models and perhaps (in some cases) belief systems from one that encourages crime to one that encourages compliance with the law. However, many of the LCYC participants do have strong values and core beliefs that do not necessarily have to be shifted or modified. The application of this theory was investigated through face-to-face interviews with the parents and participants of the LCYC. These interviews suggest that by addressing key factors of the Social Learning Theory via interventions such as LCYC, which address factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, may in fact reduce recidivism and other associated behaviors.

Deterrence Theory

Although Social Learning Theory is highly relevant to juvenile recidivism, Deterrence Theory has also been widely used among the judicial system for thousands of years. Historically it has been thought that in order to deter individuals from committing crimes there has to be a punishment that would outweigh the reasons for committing the crime, and therefore deter the individual from going through with the crime. Deterrent Theory is focused around a very basic and logical thought process in hopes of preventing crimes by threatening legal sanction upon those who commit crimes (Matthews & Agnew, 2008).

For many years however, researchers have argued for and against the Deterrent Theory. Some researchers argue that deterrent theory does not affect whether or not an individual will commit a crime or that re-offending may not be based on the punishment he or she would get if caught. They simply do it anyways based on other factors such as how likely it is that they even will get caught rather than thinking about the punishments. Also, there are other researchers who argue that the Deterrent Theory only works for some criminals, but not for all (Matthews, 2008).

In addition to the Social Learning Theory, the LCYC program is designed with the Deterrence Theory in mind. Rather than the youth awaiting a trial date and perhaps receiving community service, the LCYC is designed to expedite that effect. Therefore, this process does serve to divert having a criminal record and reduces expenses that the family may have accumulated having gone through the system. The sanctions are imposed closer to the time of the initial crime rather than waiting for a trial date and perhaps a community service sentence. This is consistent with findings that rates of re-offending increase over time. Sanctions in the LCYC are consistent with regards to the type of crime, severity of the crime, and age of the offender. The current evaluation analysis sought to determine whether or not the severity of the sanctions is significant enough to deter the crimes, and therefore reduce the recidivism rates among the LCYC participants.

Cost-Effective Analysis

Defining Cost-Effective Analysis

Cost-effective analysis (CEA) is a selective technique developed by the military as a means of choosing one program over another when resources are limited (American College of Physicians, 2009). Given the scarcity of resources available to juvenile offenders offender programs, CEA was used in the current evaluation to calculate the advantages and disadvantages of a particular resource or program and to determine which to financially support over another, including various sanctions. CEA is not a program evaluation, rather it is a way of first providing research evidence to support a program evaluation. Primarily, CEA is employed to compare the benefits and costs of opposing programs. However, when using CEA it is important not just to focus on the program cost-benefit ratio, but to also compare different programs in terms of cost. When utilizing CEA, a comparison of the model version to real life practice should be done to determine differences in costs depending on how the program or resource is used (Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center [JJEC], 2002). In sum, CEA is about choosing a strategy or program that is of greater value, but this does not necessarily mean the program that will save money, instead CEA allows an organization or state to get a better price for a greater outcome.

Importance of Cost-Effectiveness Analysis

Although CEA is not meant to determine whether a program works or to evaluate the the program itself, CEA is designed to help answer the questions about whether the funds attached to a program with demonstrated success are greater than the cost of the comparison program (JJEC, 2002). CEA is particularly useful for policy and decision makers when making often difficult choices on how to disperse limited public resources and what programs should be supported over others. CEA allows decision makers access to research evidence when making decisions about where to allocate funds (JJEC, 2002). For example, the current evaluation looked at juvenile offenders and how to reduce recidivism by using new strategies such as the LCYC. The use of CEA will demonstrate whether the taxpayers and the community are benefiting in the long run in terms of both effectiveness and cost. If LCYC reduces recidivism, therefore reducing costs of jails, detention facilities, and juvenile placement centers, then this is evidence that LCYC may be a cost-effective option or resource. Furthermore, if the cost of LCYC is less than the cost of traditional criminal proceedings that have greater recidivism rates among juvenile offenders, then the CEA should support funding for the LCYC program because it is benefiting the community by reducing the number of repeated crimes as well as taxes for public resources. CEA also creates determinations about the dollar amount needed to achieve the desired outcome, in this case, the reduction of recidivism among juvenile offenders.

Prior Cost-Effective Studies

Prior studies have used CEAs in order to compare new programs for juveniles against more traditional methods. Cost-effective studies have examined reducing juvenile crimes, decreasing recidivism of the same crimes, and preventing younger

siblings of offenders from entering the court system through the use of programs that focus on comprehensive services surrounding the whole the family. Aos et al. (2001) researched cost-effective programs nationwide demonstrating the greatest outcomes resulted from programs concentrated on improving communication, strengthening relationships, and positive socialization between the juvenile, parents or caregivers, peers, and the community. These programs aimed at improving parental skills and strengthening the central family functioning to prevent one of the greatest predictors of juvenile offenders, ineffective parenting (Anderson et al., 2007). Findings from these studies, in part, influenced the current evaluation to include many levels of data, including parental or guardian information, which is also directly aligned with components from the Social Learning Theory.

Additionally, Aos et al. (2001) reported a reduction in repeat offenders in all programs and a net benefit to the taxpayer between \$2,000 and \$18,000 per youth depending on the program. In programs such as Functional Family Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy, the main goals were to decrease the number of youth entering placement and increase the community based resources available to the youth and the family (Aos et al., 2001). In both cases, there was intensive therapy provided to the youth and parents, in combination, to modify behaviors, improve relationships while emphasizing conflict management. These programs aim to show the effectiveness of in-home services, and that placing a child outside the home is not beneficial to the youth, the parents, or the taxpayers. By implementing treatment plans for the youth and the family based on the culture and individual characteristics, results have shown an average reduction of 25% in recidivism and up to 75% in some cases (Anderson et al., 2007). Therefore, the current evaluation attempted to analyze individual characteristics and family data to improve costs associated with recidivism and placement.

Aos et al. (2001) point out the most cost effective programs are those that work to connect families with community services which continue to monitor the youth and the family until they are self-sufficient. In the Generalization Program, which wraps services around the youth and family, there were 50% to 70% fewer minor crimes and 35% fewer serious offenses. The program also succeeded in preventing younger siblings from entering the court system and reduced the number of youth entering the adult criminal system (Anderson et al., 2007).

Successful cost-effective programs support reunification of youth with family and supporting the family with therapy, community resources, and strength and culture based treatment plans rather than other placements such as group homes. The Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program provides youth with individual therapy as well as therapy with their biological family to modify behaviors and to strengthen relationships with biological parents or caregivers. When compared with youth in traditional group care, the number of youth with criminal referrals after participating in the program dropped by 41% as opposed to only 7% of those youth in group care. In addition, youth participating in the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program ran away from home less and were able to spend twice as much time with their families and relatives (Anderson et al., 2007).

When evaluating these programs, financial benefits to taxpayers were considered to not only determine the programs' cost-effectiveness, but also included was the reduction in the number of subsequent crimes as well as their severity, the recidivism rate, and the programs effects on the other children within the household including their ability to prevent siblings from committing offenses. Overall, this prior research indicates the importance of utilizing CEAs of programs for youth offenders. It is a method that can determine the most effective and cost efficient programs for reducing juvenile recidivism for Hillside Children's Center and other comparable programs.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the success of the LCYC when compared to the success of CSO program. In addition, the evaluation strived to gain some understanding of what factors may influence recidivism. Finally, cost-effectiveness was evaluated based on recidivism and placement rates.

Method

Participants

For quantitative elements, this evaluation focused on years 2006 through 2008, to provide time for possible recidivism to occur. Given that collection of recidivism information occurred in December of 2009, this permitted 11 to 47 months for a subsequent offense to occur. Between January of 2006 and January of 2009, 55 individuals had been admitted to the LCYC program. Locating a comparable control group was difficult for multiple reasons. First, all first time offenders with non-violent offenses tend to be diverted; essentially, this means that there was extremely limited access to a comparison group that did not differ from the LCYC. Second, potential comparison groups were found to be insufficient, or lacked equivalency to the LCYC group. In other words, comparison groups must be as comparable or alike as possible to appropriately and accurately judge the differences between the experimental (LCYC) and comparison groups. Due to this non-equivalency issue, meaningful judgments of between group differences are limited. However, in order to quell this potential limitation, this evaluation took into account that the LCYC uses community service as a sanction in addition to other potential sanctions used to help reduce the likelihood of subsequent problem behavior. Therefore, the decision was made to use individuals from the community services program (CSO) who did not participate in the LCYC. Evaluators then matched the LCYC participants with participants in the CSO program who had not participated in LCYC to reduce potential differences across groups. For matching purposes, two elements or variables were used including age and gender. Matching on gender and age increases the likelihood of having comparable or more equivalent groups; thus allowing for better comparison of significant and meaningful results between the two groups. Although matching on gender and age was implemented, access to the events that led to program admission for the CSO participants was not available unfortunately. Thus, matching participants on this criterion did not occur. A total of 65 individuals from the CSO program served as the matched comparison group. Therefore, the total sample of participants for this evaluation included 120 individuals.

Other than quantitative data, qualitative information was also collected, strengthening both the accuracy of results and the evaluation as a whole. Qualitative

interviews were completed in the spring and fall of 2009. In the spring, a total of 72 letters were sent to participants (n = 54) and LCYC volunteer families (n = 18). From this initial sending, only eight letters were returned due to individuals moving and the forwarding addresses were unknown. Evaluators were able to schedule 30 interviews, of which two families did not show up at the scheduled interview time. Of the 28 families who did participate, 16 were from the offender group (29.6%) and 12 were from the volunteer group (66.7%). In the fall of 2009, 83 letters were sent out, 73 to offender families and 11 to volunteer families. From the 84 letters sent out, 14 were returned. A total of 25 interviews were conducted with 22 (30.5%) offenders and three with volunteers (27.3%). In addition to the offender and volunteer families, interviews were also conducted with 17 adults with various levels of involvement with the LCYC or community service only programs.

Measures

Process evaluation measures. As part of the process evaluation, the following were considered:

- Methods for tracking participants and families.
- Ease of access to information.
- Time between referral, admission, and discharge.
- Percent successfully completing the program.

The above information was obtained from records kept by Hillside Children's Center (How information is stored, how individuals are tracked, as well as information on referral, admission, and discharge). Successful completion also came from the records kept by Hillside Children's Center. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 17 individuals who had some contact with either the LCYC or community services only programs in order to identify any problems or barriers that may reduce the effectiveness of the LCYC. To further enrich data, and triangulate information from multiple sources, interviews were also conducted with 38 LCYC participants and a parent-guardian(s), as well as 15 volunteers and a parent-guardian(s). These interviews focused on identifying problems or barriers that may reduce the effectiveness of the program, as well as any ideas concerning how the program effectiveness may be increased. In addition to utilizing a mixed methods design, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, these additional interviews regarding program barriers and or problems have the potential to greatly improve services and client success, and subsequently cut costs related to recidivism for Hillside Children's Center.

Outcome evaluation measures. The information for this part of the evaluation was obtained from a number of sources. Hillside Children's Center records provided information on the following:

1. Demographic and Personal Characteristics:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Age

- c. Ethnicity-Race
- d. Marital Status of Parents-Guardians
- e. Living Arrangements (who person was currently living with)
- f. Grade Level
- g. Family receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

2. Program Information for Both Programs:

- a. Year of Admission
- b. Year of Discharge
- c. Program Completion: Successful-Unsuccessful
- d. Category of Admission Offense (PINS, PINS Diversion, JD, JD Diversion).
- e. Whether Jail Tour was part of program experience (Appendix B)
- f. Whether the Youth Developmental Workshop was part of the experience (Appendix C).

program

3. Program Information for LCYC Only

- a. Crime committed
- b. Sanctions (Descriptions Provided by Mary Jo Acomb, on March 2,

2010)

opportunity to be to the community and government agencies.

- i. Community Service: Youth are provided with the responsible for their actions by contributing helping in non-profit and

apologizing for established by the by the coordinator.

- ii. Written Apology: Offenders write letters to victims their behavior. Letters follow guidelines program and are monitored

with the offenders

- iii. Essays: A written report that details a subject associated offender's crime. For example, numerous charged with possessing an essay about the drinking and

alcohol under 21 years old having to write harmful effects of drinking, or dangers of drinking and driving (Information concerning use of this sanction

was not part of the data sets provided to the evaluation team, reflecting the fact that this sanction is rarely utilized).

loss restitution is

- iv. Restitution: Payment of money that is associated with the connected with the crime. The collection of this handled by Probation.

which and further

- v. Jury Duty: Participation in future LCYC cases as a juror, allows the offender to participate as a court member experience the workings of the court.

home at a guardians and coordinator

- vi. Curfew: Requires that the offender returns to his or her certain hour (supervision from parents-

is required).

In addition to data and records kept by Hillside Children's Center, the Probation Department provided information for this evaluation from the intake assessment completed for all juvenile offenders; the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) (see Appendix D). Data from the Profile of Dynamic and Protective Factors that is derived from the YASI was provided. This entails a wheel that shows 10 key factors: legal history, family environment, school, community and peer, alcohol-drugs, mental health, attitudes and behavior, skills, employment, and use of free time. For the indication of risk factors, or to score the level of risk factors, there were ratings from zero (No Risk) to three (High Risk) for all factors but employment. The protective factors were scored in an identical manner and had ratings for all but the alcohol-drug and mental health factors.

In addition, dynamic and static risk ratings were provided, with scores ranging from zero (None) to six (Very High) for the dynamic risks scores, and a range from zero (None) to three (High) was used for the static risks. Finally, the dynamic and static protective factors were also provided, with the same zero (None) to six (Very High Protective factors) range the dynamic protective factors and zero (None) to three (High Protective Factors) for the static protective factors.

Information from the YASIs was provided for 108 of the 120 participants in this evaluation. Of the 12 missing YASIs, 11 were from the CSO group and only one was from the LCYC group. This difference was found to be statistically significant, Chi-Square = 7.552, $df = 1$, $n = 120$, $p = .006$, indicating that the missing intakes were not absent in a random fashion, rather weighted more heavily from the CSO group. Thus, conclusions drawn from any YASI comparisons need to be viewed with caution. In addition to the missing cases, there were also differences in terms of the type of YASI assessment that was provided. Of the 108, 75 were initial assessments, 16 were case closures, and 17 were reassessments. As with the missing data, the distribution of the type of YASI was also a function of the group membership, Chi-Square = 12.62, $df = 2$, $n = 108$, $p = .002$. This indicates that the LCYC had more initial assessments than the CSO group (46 versus 29), and the CSO group had more case closures (12 versus four) and reassessments (13 versus four) than the LCYC group. As a result, analyses considered these measures in a couple of ways: the first used only those who had initial assessments, while the second used all of the available assessments.

Outcome measures. The outcome measures were acquired from three sources where the first was provided by Hillside Children's Center and consisted of readmissions to either program that were not official cases of recidivism. In other words, the behavior does not qualify as a new offense (recidivism), but still needs to be addressed. Community Service is used as a "consequence" and or a "treatment modality" (Personal Communication with M.J. Acomb from Hillside Children's Center, February 17, 2010).

The second outcome was official recidivism which was provided by the Livingston County Probation Department. Information consisted of whether an offense

occurred, when it occurred, and the type of offense (PINS, JD). This official recidivism rate was also combined with the unofficial readmissions for another look at negative outcomes. The final outcome measure consisted of placements in residential settings in combination with the dates of placement, and was provided by the Livingston County DSS.

Procedures

Sampling. The youth offenders were selected or sampled from the databases of Hillside Children's Center. Data were kept in separate excel spread sheets for each program and each year of the program. Program participants for 2006, 2007, and 2008 were chosen for eligibility in the evaluation process to allow for enough time to track recidivism rates following discharge. The separate files were merged and then matches with CSO participants who did not experience LCYC were identified. Matches were based on the age and gender of the offender. When more than one match was found, all matches were retained in the final evaluation sample, thus the reason for 65 cases from CSO.

Data collection. All information described in the measures section was part of the collection process. However, information concerning the Youth Developmental Workshop and the Jail Tour were kept separately and needed to be gathered and placed into an excel spreadsheet. This data set was then merged with the existing data set.

Information for official recidivism was provided through the Livingston County Probation Department. A list of the 120 individuals included in the evaluation sample was provided to them and they then gave back information concerning whether an individual was re-entered into the system with only the study ID to maintain confidentiality. A similar process was followed for placement information with the Livingston County DSS.

In addition, Hillside Children's Center granted access to parents and youth, as well as agency staff to allow for knowledge growth, development, and to promote the potential for improved outcomes and costs while reducing barriers to successful completion. These individuals were selected from a list by Hillside Families of Agencies. Qualitative unstructured interviews were utilized to gather information concerning the LCYC program. Interviews were conducted with youth offenders who completed their sanctions, their parent(s), as well as volunteers of the LCYC and their parents. Interviews consisted of a series of questions listed in Appendix E, which contains questions for the participants of the LCYC and the participants of the CSO group. Appendix F contains the questions for the parents of the participants of both groups, and Appendix G contains the questions for the Hillside Children's Center staff as well as the Livingston County Probation officers. The full evaluation protocol was submitted to the University at Buffalo Institutional Review Board for human subject research and was approved.

Cost-effectiveness analysis. In order to determine whether LCYC is cost-

effective, evaluators had to first determine the different paths a youth may take upon entering the juvenile justice system and the cost associated with each service. The juvenile justice system spans across a number of agencies that youth may encounter after arrest. Information on the costs associated with each step in the juvenile justice system proved difficult to obtain, due to the multitude and layers of agencies involved. Information for this analysis was gathered by conducting internet searches and contacting local agencies in Livingston County, NY. It is important to note that not all prices included in this study are those specific to Livingston County however, as some costs were not accessible in this area. Prices regarding the cost of intake after arrest, probation, diversion, and secure detention were taken from a 2008 fiscal report from New York City's Independent Budget Office (NYC IBO) on the juvenile justice system, and thus reflect prices in the New York City area.

The cost-effectiveness of the LCYC was also dependent upon comparing the recidivism of the youth completing the court process and youth who were placed in other community agencies. Unfortunately for the current evaluation, there were no true comparison groups available, so community services was chosen because that is also used as a sanction in LCYC. This makes for one comparison between CSO and LCYC plus community services. A second comparison was made against the comparison groups used in the Butts et al. (2002) evaluation of teen courts. These groups generally consisted of juveniles who were referred to juvenile justice, family court or police diversion programs, but did not experience LCYC. Finally, evaluators compared the LCYC against other youth courts.

Data analyses. A major limitation of the current evaluation is the small number of participants, which limits both the ability to detect significant differences across groups and the capacity to generalize to other populations outside of the sample. Unfortunately, the numbers are dictated by the program recruitment and as such, the statistical conclusions will be somewhat limited. As a result, the report provides a discussion of marginal trends, using $p < .25$ as a guideline. It is recognized that in so doing, there may be some findings that were random in nature. In other words, some significant results may not be due to the LCYC program, rather due to chance. However, the perspective being presented is for consideration of elements that may prove to be fruitful for further evaluation to determine the utility of these areas for enhancement or possible elimination.

The evaluation is descriptive in nature, with comparisons being made using t-tests, standard crosstabs with Chi-Square, and logistic regressions. Interactions of factors are considered, with recognition that these are severely under-powered due to the small sample size. Nonetheless, potential moderating effects of factors that were available to this evaluation may provide insight into how the programs can be improved, speaking in both monetary and non-monetary terms of improvements, benefits, and successful outcomes for Hillside Children's Center and other organizations.

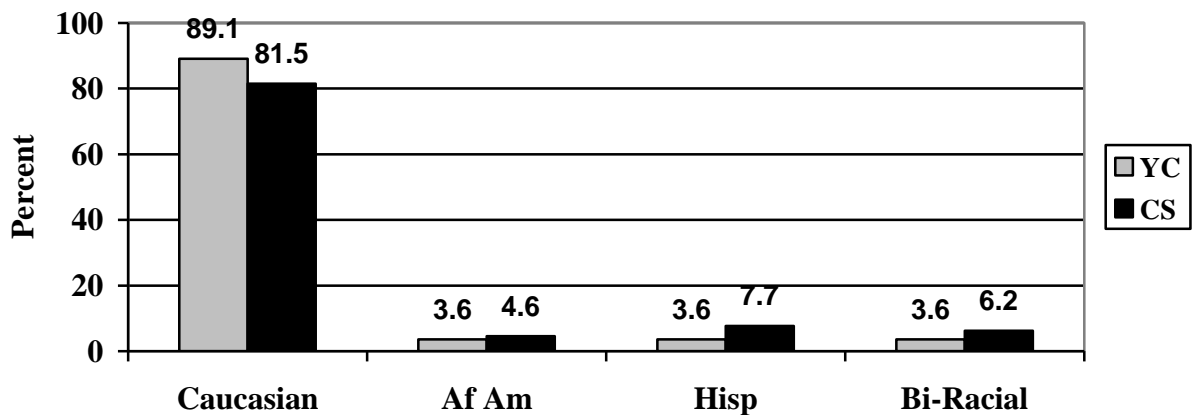
Results

Sample Characteristics

The first set of analyses considered comparisons between the LCYC and Community Services participants across demographic characteristics. Table 1 (Appendix A) shows the results. The total number of participants (Ns) are presented in the parentheses where percentages are presented, while standard deviations are presented in the parentheses where means are presented. Significance tests reflect whether the percentages presented for the LCYC and CSO participants differed within that category of the measure.

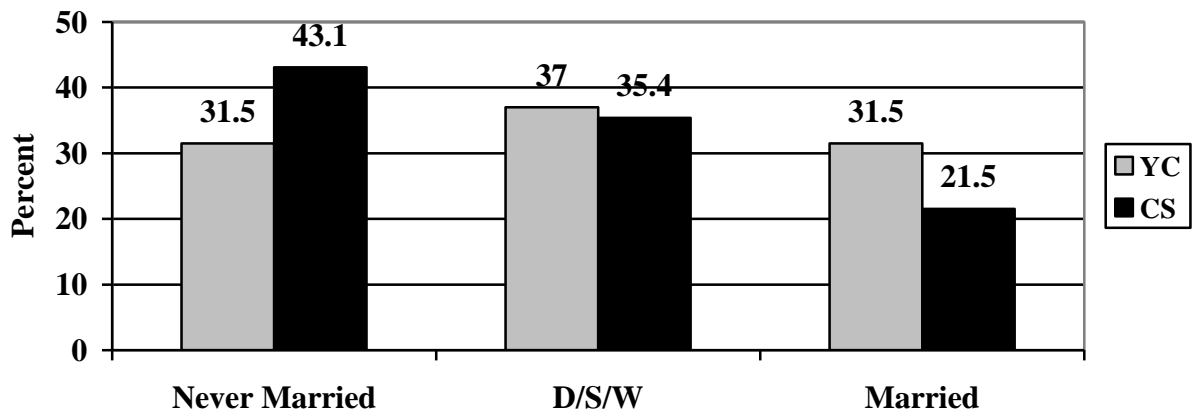
Although the Table is presented in the Appendices, figures are presented below to help understand potential differences between groups on the demographic and personal characteristics. While the comparisons for the race-ethnic categories of African American, Hispanic, and other did not show any indication of possible meaningful differences, the comparison of the percentage of whites within each group was showing that relative to the LCYC group, there was a tendency for there to be a greater likelihood for the Community Services only group to be non-white (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Ethnicity/Race by Group



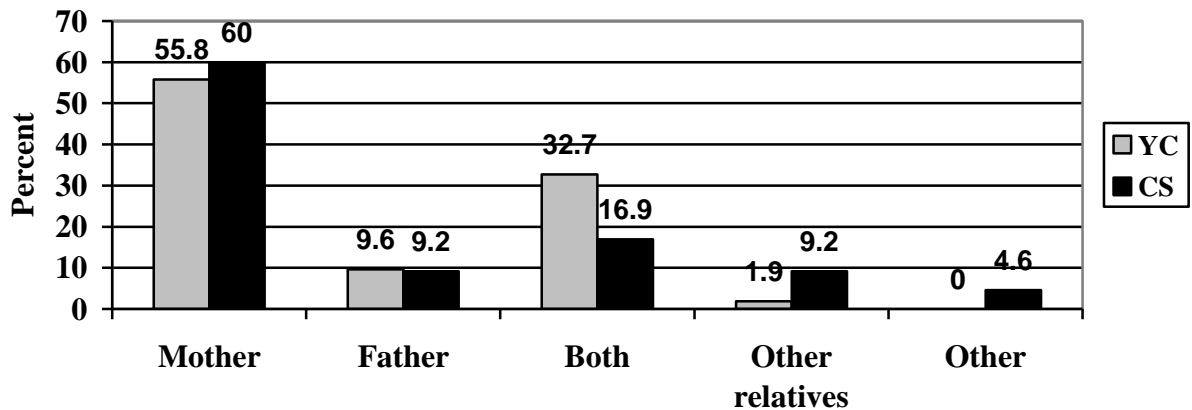
With respect to marital status, there was a trend for the parents of the LCYC participants to be more likely to be married than the CSO participants, while there was a trend for the parents of the CSO participants to be more likely than the LCYC parents to never have been married (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Marital Status by Group



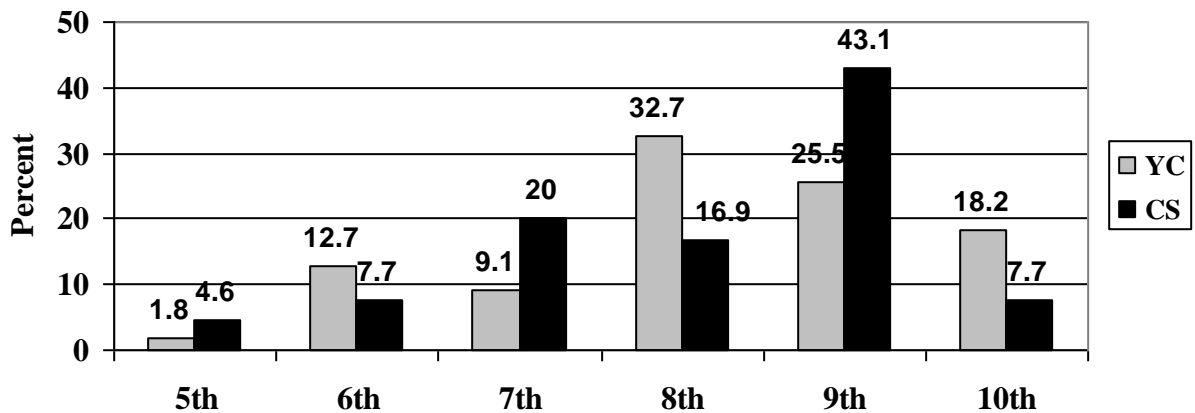
When considering who individuals were living with, there was a trend for the LCYC participants to be more likely than the CSO participants to be living with both parents (Figure 3). In contrast, the CSO participants were slightly more likely to be living with the mother only or other relatives. Additionally, if considering living with any parent versus all other categories, the LCYC participants (1.9%) were less likely than the CSO group to be living with individuals other than a parent (13.8%), Chi-square = 5.254, $df = 1$, $n = 117$, $p = .022$. These results are very useful and tend to be consistent from year to year. Perhaps this lends to the validity to ongoing evaluation with the level of supervision being a significant risk factor.

Figure 3: Living Arrangements by Group



The grade level results are interesting, especially in light of the equality in overall age of the two groups. The results suggest that the LCYC participants were more likely than CSO participants to be in grades eight and ten, while the CSO participants were more likely to be in grades seven and nine (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Grade Level by Group



In terms of where the program participants lived, there were no differences between the two groups. Approximately 65% lived in Mt. Morris (9.3%), Livonia (11.0%), Geneseo (12.7%), Dansville (21.2%), or Avon (11.0%). The rest were residing in the following communities: Wayland (1.7%), Wadsworth (0.8%), Springwater (1.7%), Piffard (2.5%), Nunda (3.4%), Linwood (0.8%), Lima (1.7%), Leroy (1.7%), Leicester (3.4%), Lakeville (3.4%), Hunt (2.5%), Honeoye Falls (0.8%), Henrietta (0.8%), Groveland (0.8%), Conesus (3.4%), and Caledonia (5.1%). Two individuals (1.7%) did not have a community of residence listed in the data provided. Finally, there was no significant difference in receipt of TANF benefits. Of the LCYC participant families, 69% were receiving TANF benefits, while 74% of the CSO families were receiving TANF benefits. Although these results were insignificant, these statistics indicate that a large percentage of juvenile offenders and families are living below the poverty standard.

Summary. Results for the demographic analyses indicate that the two groups were somewhat similar in nature. There was slight indication that the CSO participants were more likely to be non-white, living with a parent who was never married, living with someone other than a parent, and also slightly more likely to be receiving TANF benefits. Nonetheless, the results suggest that the two groups were sufficiently equivalent along the demographic characteristics to preclude any need for use of these factors as covariates in any subsequent analyses.

Process Evaluation

Observational data. The first noticeable characteristic of the two programs was that there is no central database to track participants across services. Each database was kept separate and each year of the program was separate from other years. In addition, there was data that were not stored for easy access. The workshop and jail tour attendance was kept in separate binders. This resulted in an excessive amount of work to identify who in the evaluation sample had actually completed these services. If one desires to link other services to those provided by the two programs it becomes much more work than should be necessary and is quite time consuming.

The individual who runs the two programs is very competent at what she does, but seems to be challenged by lack of computerized records and a secure source of funding for the programs. Although the CSO program does need matching funds, the program currently has secure funding (DSS and Youth Bureau- OCFS). The problem of funding is consistent with results from a report on Teen Courts, where 63% of teen courts indicated that this was a problem for their program. As a result of the funding uncertainty, a large amount of time may be spent on seeking funding options or trying to convince community groups to help with funding, which takes time away from program modification. However, it is important to note the competency and dedication of all staff. They seem to extend themselves beyond what is expected and their efforts are recognized by the participants and the community, as reflected in the interviews with participants and their parents. This dedication and competency is a major strength of the staff for both programs.

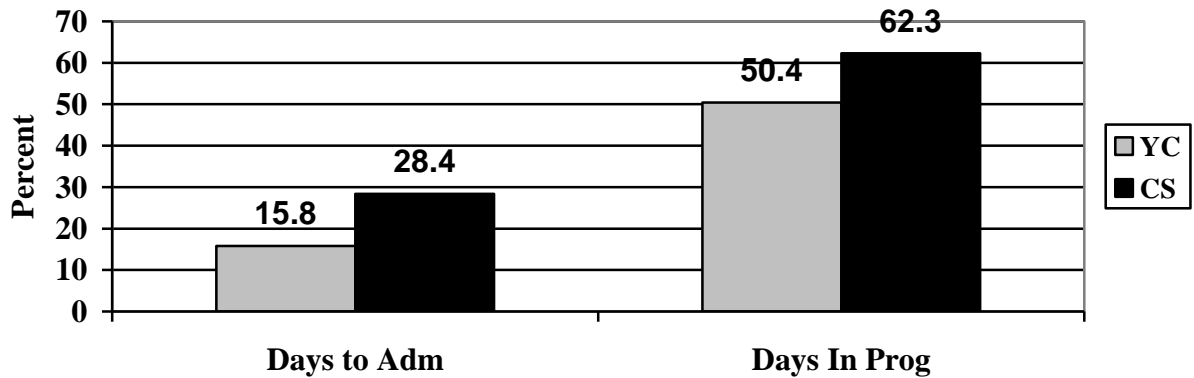
In speaking with staff, there was neither a sense of problems with finding volunteers or keeping them in the program, nor were there problems with referrals to the program. Probation works well with the LCYC and community services programs on this point. Support from the judicial community also seems to be fairly high. Furthermore, coordination with agencies in the community for purposes of community service was not mentioned as a stumbling block by any of the staff or probation. In sum, it appears that the LCYC program is experiencing one of the major problems that all teen courts seem to experience and that is lack of secure funding, however, problems with recruitment of volunteers and community agencies for purposes of community services did not appear to be high problem issues for this LCYC.

One area that may be seen as a possible barrier to enhancing the programs is based in the way information is provided to Hillside Children's Center from both probation and DSS. With respect to program information concerning recidivism and placement, in both cases, data for individuals is never presented back to the program, instead it is aggregated as a percent of individuals who reoffended or were placed. This reduces opportunities for evaluating potential risk and protective factors of the offenders. Evaluating these factors at an individual level is in concert with both probation and DSS approaches to their clients, and it would be beneficial if this could be extended to the Hillside Children's Center programs. Analyzing how specific risk factors are associated with successful or unsuccessful outcomes might point toward how the programs could be improved – potentially looking at specific sanctions that may be beneficial, or specific experiences that might prove more helpful than other methods. Some way of sharing this information at an individual level should be explored. This would help build the capacity within Hillside Family of Agencies to perform their own program evaluations in a more action research oriented approach, where changes and adjustments could be made as they were needed, which perhaps could improve both cost-effectiveness and positive client outcomes.

Program information. Next, evaluators considered the length of time between referral and admission to the respective programs (Figure 5). For the LCYC the average number of days from referral to admittance was lower than that for the CSO participants

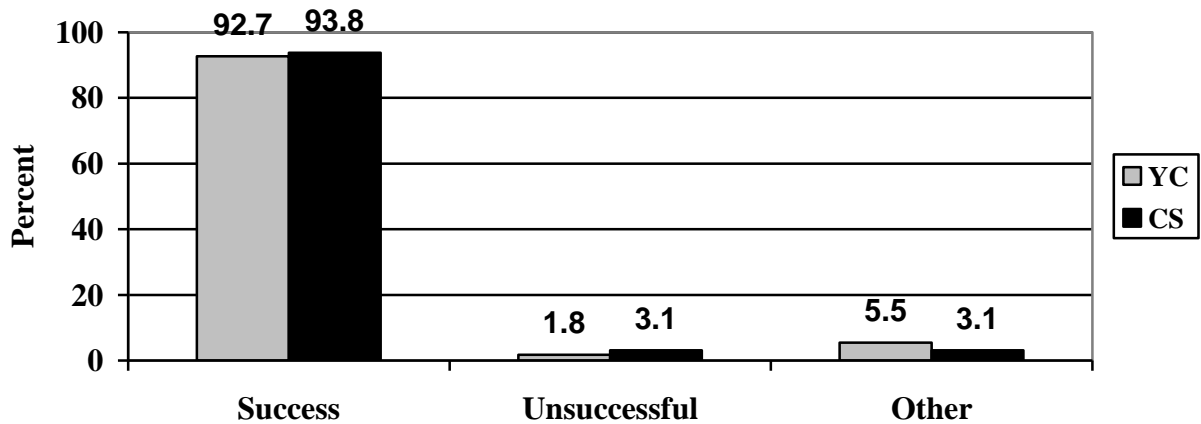
(see Figure 1), $t(118) = -4.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .161$, indicating that the waiting period was significantly longer for the CSO group. The next analysis considered the time between admission to the program and discharge. As shown in Figure 5, the average time-in program for the LCYC participants was slightly less than that of the CSO participants. However, part of this latter discrepancy may have been due to the number of community service hours assigned to the participants (see below).

Figure 5: Time to Admission and Time in Program by Group



There were no differences between groups on outcomes in the program (Figure 6). There were a total of three explicitly recognized unsuccessful, with one in the LCYC group and two in the CSO group. The approximate 93% overall success rates in the two groups meets the goals of both programs (90% success rate).

Figure 6: Program Outcomes by Group



The next analysis considered the number of community service hours completed. While all individuals from the CSO group completed some community services hours, five individuals (9.1%) from the LCYC group did not have any indication they were given community service as a part of their sanctions. However, analyses excluding the individuals who were not assigned community service did not differ significantly from those including these individuals, therefore, the information is presented with all

participants. Results showed that the number of hours of assigned community service was lower for the LCYC participants (Mean = 16.5, SD = 11.6) than for the CSO group (Mean = 28.3, SD = 26.4), $t(1,118) = -3.07$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .074$.

Additionally, evaluators considered the relationship between outcome (successful or unsuccessful) and hours of community service assigned to see if the unsuccessful were assigned a heavy number of hours, which may have led to their lack of success in the programs. For the LCYC the one unsuccessful client was not assigned to community service. Additionally, of the three individuals with the other classification, two had no community service, while one was assigned only one hour. In contrast, for the CSO group, one unsuccessful client had 86 hours assigned, while the other had 22 hours. The two individuals with the other classification had 16 and six hours of community services assigned. Thus, the relationship between outcomes in the program and the number of hours assigned to community services is unclear.

Figure 7: Hours Community Service by Outcome and Group

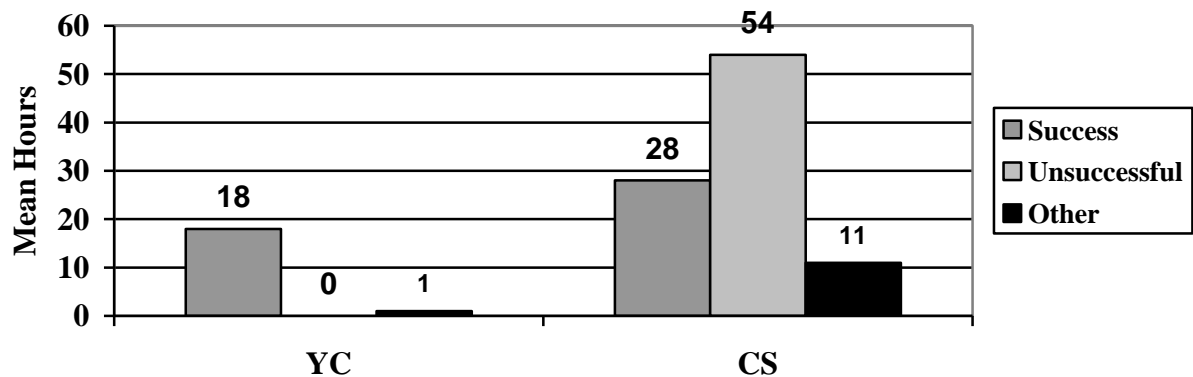
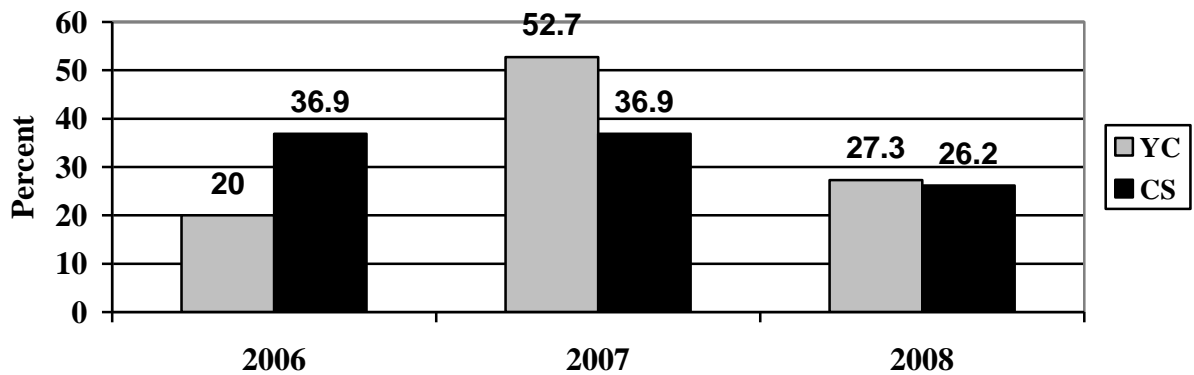


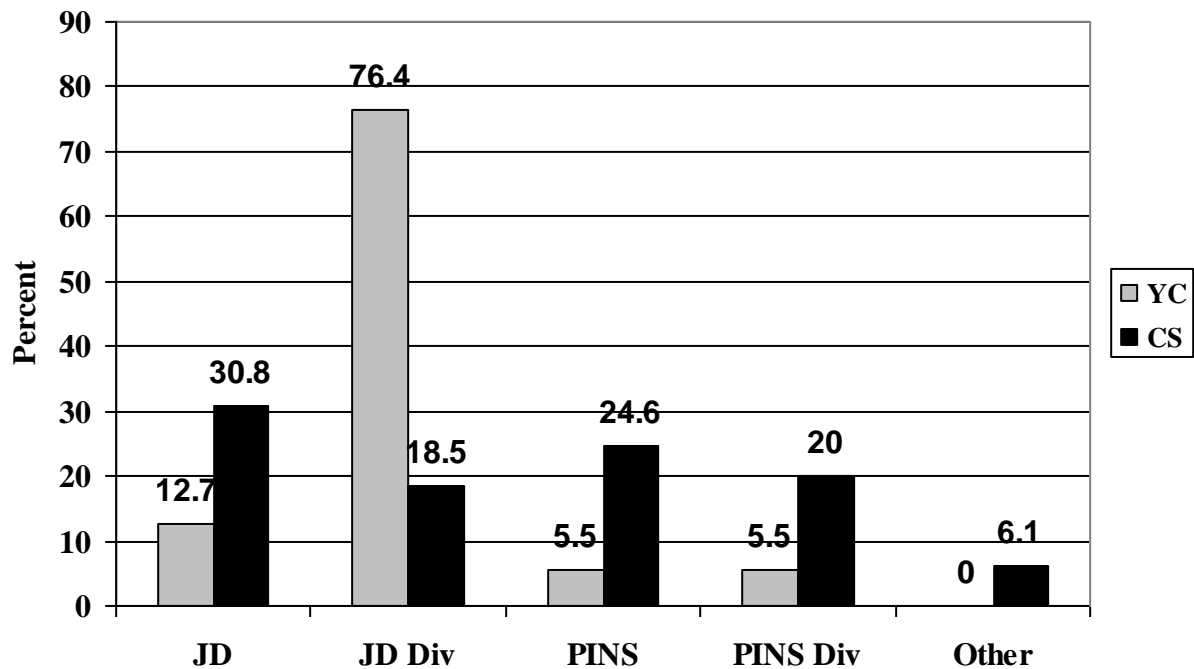
Figure 8 shows the distribution of cases for each of the respective years included in the program. It needs to be pointed out again that matches were based on age and gender, with some attempt at trying to match on the year of admittance to the program. However, the LCYC was just beginning again in 2006 after a brief shutdown. For the LCYC, there was a clear peak of selection from 2007, while for the CSO group, the distribution was more equal across the three years. The overall trend was marginal, Chi-Square = 4.624, $df=2$, $n = 120$, $p=.099$.

Figure 8: Year of Admittance to Program by Group



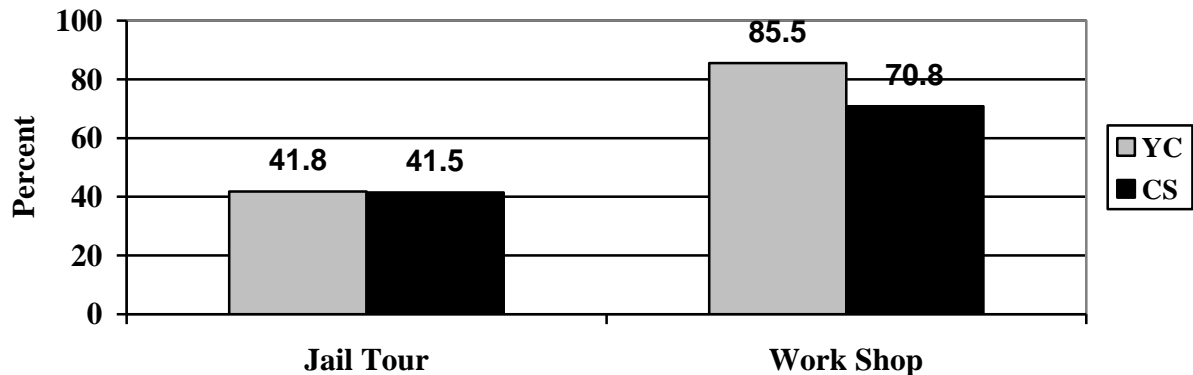
There was a significant difference between the two programs for the type of referral (PINS, PINS Diversion, JD, JD Diversion, Youth Advocacy), Chi-Square = 41.526, df = 4, n = 120, p <.001. In essence, the LCYC participants were mainly JD Diversions, while the community services participants were more equally spread across all categories, except for the other category (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Type of Juvenile Category by Group



The next analysis considered whether the jail tour was assigned differentially to the two groups and Figure 10 shows this distribution. As is clear from the figure, the two groups were equally as likely to have been assigned to the jail tour. However, results for the Youth Developmental Workshop (Appendix C) showed differences. The LCYC participants were slightly more likely to have attended the workshop than the CSO group, Chi-Square = 3.684, df = 1, n = 120, p = .055.

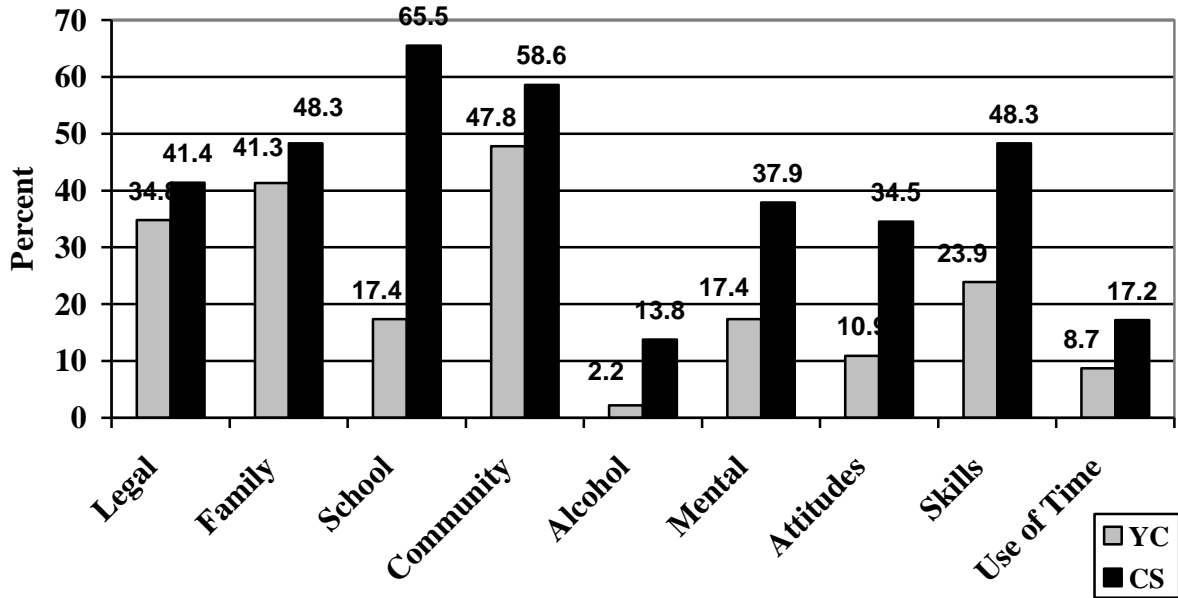
Figure 10: Jail Tour and Workshop Attendance by Group



Results from the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument

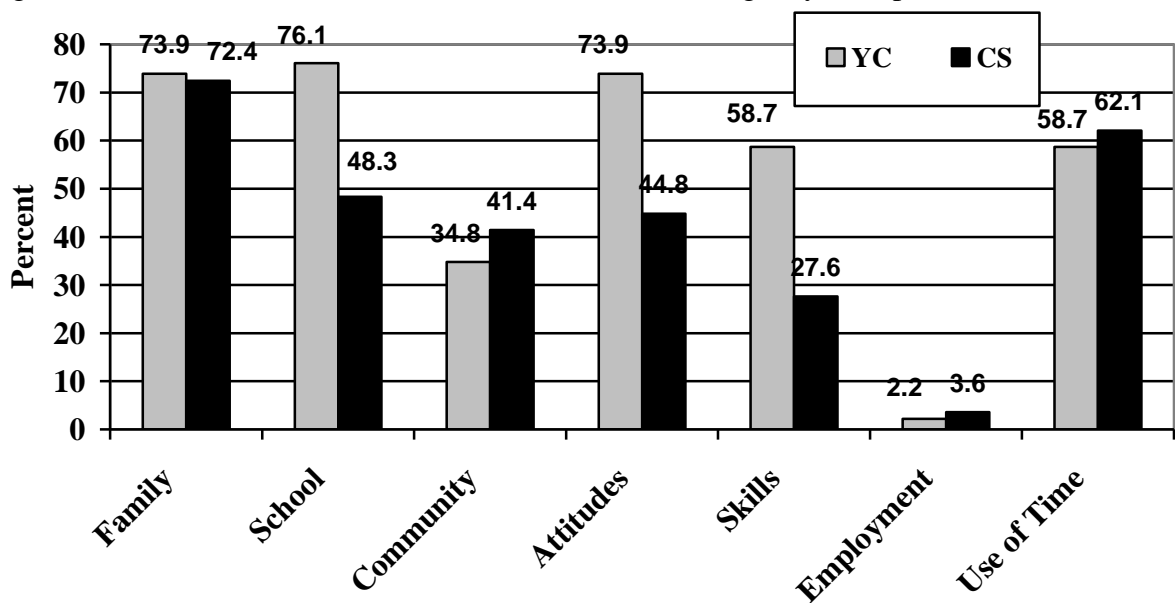
Bivariate analyses from the YASI. The results for the risk factors shown in Figure 11 use only those YASIs that were from the initial assessment. This resulted in a total of 46 individuals from the LCYC and 29 from the CSO group being used for this analysis. However, this places the timing of the assessments at the same point, thus making comparisons more meaningful. The differences shown for school, Chi-Square = 17.88, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p < .001$; Alcohol, Chi-Square = 3.86, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .049$; Mental Health issues, Chi-Square = 3.97, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .046$; Attitudes concerning Problem Behaviors, Chi-Square = 6.20, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .013$; and Skills, Chi-Square = 4.751, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .029$, were all significant. Furthermore, the overall measure of dynamic risk also showed the LCYC participants to be at lower risk (71.7%) than the CSO group (34.5%), Chi-Square = 10.09, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .001$. There were similar results for overall static risks, with the LCYC being more likely to have lower risk (82.6%) than the CSO group (48.3%), Chi-Square = 9.86, $df = 1$, $n = 75$, $p = .002$. The overall results for the YASI risk factors suggest that the CSO participants initially were more at risk for problem behaviors than the LCYC participants.

Figure 11: Risk Factors From YASI - Moderate or High By Group



In addition to risk factors, protective factors were also assessed and results are shown in Figure 12. Differences for school, Chi-Square = 6.07, df = 1, n = 75, p = .014; Attitudes, Chi-Square = 6.43, df = 1, n = 75, p = .011; and Skills, Chi-Square = 6.92, df = 1, n = 75, p = .009, were all significant. The directions indicate that the LCYC group was more likely to have moderate to high protective factors than the CSO group. Full protective factors showed the LCYC participants to be more likely to be in the moderate to high range (73.9%) in contrast to the CSO group (48.3%), Chi-Square = 5.074, df = 1, n = 75, p = .024. However, for the dynamic and static protective factors there were no differences between the two groups.

Figure 12: Protective Factors From YASI - Moderate or High By Group



The combined results for the risk and protective factors of the YASI suggest that the LCYC participants had greater resources available to them to help prevent problem behaviors from occurring. They were more likely to be living in two parent homes, with their parents being married, as opposed to never having been married. While some individuals appeared to be high on the risk factors, the LCYC individuals were consistently below the CSO individuals. The protective factors suggest that they had positive benefits from school activities and found it as a place they enjoyed and found useful. Likewise, they tended to have better attitudes and skills to use with respect to interpersonal and community issues (See YASI instrument, Appendix D).

LCYC Specific Information

The next few analyses consider the information that was provided only for the LCYC participants, or that is specific to LCYC. First, volunteers are critical for the program. Currently there are 21 active youth volunteers, with seven to ten new applicants ready to be trained. Up to this point in the program, 44 individuals have been trained to work in the LCYC (personal communication with S. Todisco, March 18, 2010). Recruiting volunteers was not spoken of in-depth during interviews with the staff, suggesting that once potential individuals learn about the program, recruiting volunteers does not seem to be a problem.

In some places, comparisons were made with the 2002 evaluation of youth courts completed by Butts and his colleagues. The first set of results considers the type of offense that brought the individual to the youth court. Unfortunately, this information was only available for the LCYC participants. Figure 13 shows the results. For the Butts et al. 2002 evaluation of youth courts, the most common charges were for theft or shoplifting, minor assaults, disorderly conduct, alcohol possession or use, and vandalism, in that order. Consistent with the Butts et al. findings, the most common charge within the LCYC was theft or shoplifting, with almost half of the participants charged with some form of theft (burglary, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, and petit larceny). Vandalism (criminal mischief) and assault of some form (harassment, menacing, forced touching, and assault) were also frequent. However, disorderly conduct and alcohol possession charges were not as frequent, with endangering the welfare of a child, trespassing, and arson the next most frequent charges for the LCYC. It should be noted that individuals are rarely referred to the LCYC for sexual behaviors, which tend to be quite case specific.

Figure 13: Charges at Arrest for Livingston County LCYC Participants.

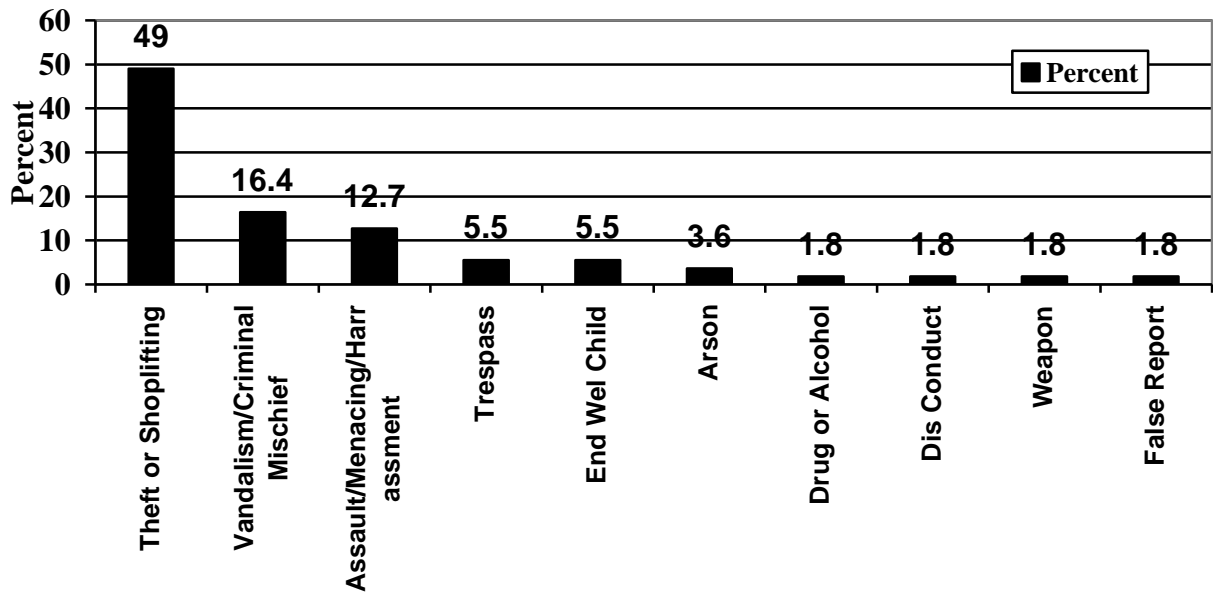
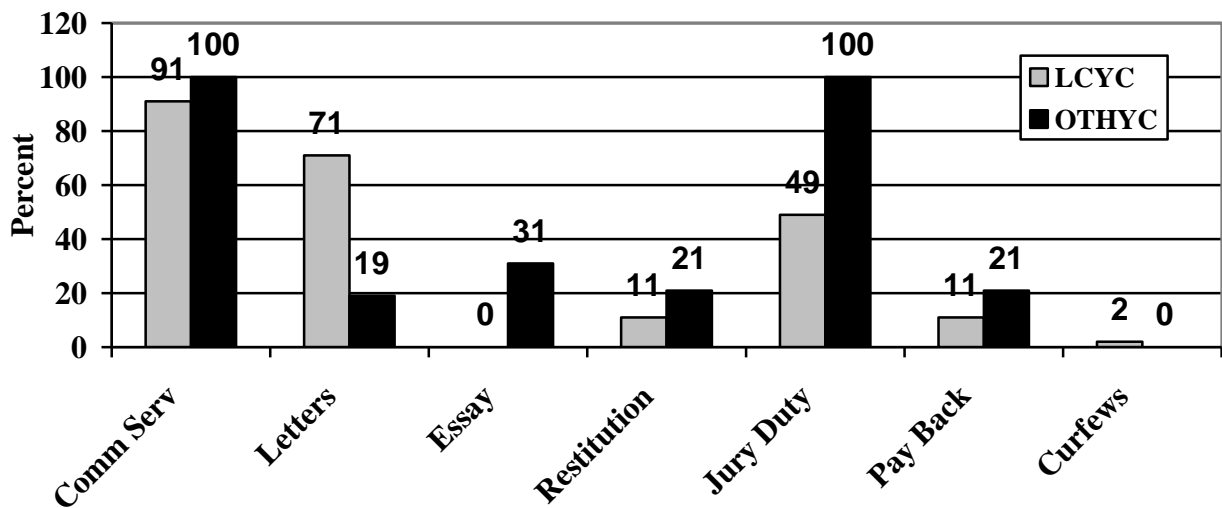


Figure 14 compares the use of sanctions for the LCYC and the youth courts evaluated (OthYC) by Butts et al. (2002). Rates for use of community service were somewhat similar, although in Livingston County, not all LCYC participants were given community services as a sanction. Use of apology letters was more likely for LCYC participants. The average length of the letter of apology for the LCYC was approximately 194 words, ranging from 25 to 300 words. A written essay was not used with the offenders in the LCYC, while 31% of youth from the 2002 evaluation youth courts were sanctioned with the essay. Another striking difference was in the use of assigning jury duty. The youth courts from the 2002 evaluation assigned this to every offender, while in the LCYC approximately half were sanctioned with jury duty on youth court. However, it is important to note that essays and jury duty are being used more frequently now in the LCYC based on appropriateness.

Figure 14: Sanctions for LCYC and Other Youth Courts



Qualitative interview with LCYC participants. LCYC participants (offenders) were interviewed with respect to their experience with the LCYC and probation. The offenders were asked the same questions as the volunteers. This information was also coded to identify trends. Of the 15 participants, only two stated that the LCYC did not increase their understanding of the legal system. The other 13 expressed at least some increase in their understanding of the legal system.

With respect to their overall feelings about the LCYC experience, six reported a good experience, two thought that it was not intimidating enough, and two found it boring. Four expressed that they liked having a jury of their peers. Four discussed that the jail tour was intimidating. Some of the learning experiences reported were that they learned self respect, that anger was not a good thing, and that they should consider their friends better.

For eight of the participants no barriers were identified, however one person felt that the jury was too young and two people felt that they did not learn their lesson and they re-offended.

As far as suggestions to improve the program and to reduce barriers to completion, eight of the participants had no suggestions. Some of the suggestions from the other participants included: make the program more organized, use a jury in which the jury is a bit older than the participant, make the court more realistic, and make it mandatory to be on the jury after being a participant.

All of the participants reported a positive experience with the Hillside Children's Center Staff. Hillside Children's Center staff was described as "friendly," "available," "good," "nice," "understanding," "fair," etcetera. With respect to probation staff, the majority of the participants expressed positive feelings about the probation officers. One person had no contact with probation while several other people found the probation staff to be strict, serious and fair.

As a part of the Hillside Children's Center LCYC process, the participants fill out an exit evaluation that is administered by Hillside Children's Center Staff. Those questions and answers were provided for this evaluation. Two questions were asked of 60 participants about their experience of community service.

Participants were asked to briefly state what they have learned from the community service experience. Eight of the participants commented that they learned about the consequences of their actions and four learned about the value of being responsible. Twelve of the participants stated that this experience would prevent them from getting into trouble again and seven participants expressed regret for the crime that they had committed. Seven participants talked about learning the “STOP method” and five participants learned about the value of helping others. There were many other similar responses including learning about life skills, goal setting, public responsibility, productivity, that crime is “not worth it,” respect for authority, choosing their friends better, peer pressure, etcetera. Only one of the respondents stated that they did not learn anything from the experience.

Participants were also asked to think about where they worked for their community service and what they learned from that particular experience. Five participants discussed learning new skills while 12 participants discussed learning a good work ethic. Eleven discussed learning the value of helping others. Among some of the others, less common responses included learning about walking away from conflict, that jail is not somewhere that they want to be or end up, the value of working with others, the value of community service, respect for others, etcetera. Only two people had negative feelings about community service.

Qualitative interviews with LCYC volunteers. Five LCYC volunteers were interviewed as a part of this evaluation. The volunteers were asked a series of six questions about their experience as a volunteer in the LCYC. This information was coded and analyzed to look for trends in their answers.

The first question asked the volunteers if their experience with Hillside Children’s Center increased their understanding of the legal system. Of the five volunteers, all five volunteers did state that the experience increased their understanding of the legal system. One volunteer was able to get an internship in a legal office as a result of their LCYC experience.

The second question addressed their overall feelings with their participation in the LCYC. In response the volunteers all reported positive feelings about the LCYC experience. Some described the experience as “enjoyable” and a “good learning experience.”

The volunteers were also asked to identify any barriers to completion of the program and what can be done to improve the program or to reduce any barriers. The volunteers did not identify any barriers to completion of the program and did not have any specific suggestions to improve the program. One of the volunteers did comment, though, that the program needed to be publicized more to increase awareness of the program.

Lastly, the volunteers were also asked about their experience with LCYC staff and with probation staff. With respect to the Hillside Children’s Center staff, all five volunteers expressed a positive experience with the staff and two volunteers commented on how supportive the staff was to them. All five volunteers reported that they had no involvement with probation, so they had no comments on how they were treated by probation as this was not applicable.

Qualitative interviews with parents of youth offenders and volunteers.

Fifteen parents of youth offenders were interviewed as a part of this evaluation. The parents were asked a series of six questions about their children's experience with the LCYC. This information was coded and analyzed to look for trends in their answers.

The parents were asked what they thought the impact on their child was and the most common answers were that their children enjoyed the experience they had with community service, which was one of the "sentences" that could be handed down to offenders. Other common answers included a positive experience in learning life skills, a positive introduction to the judicial system, and a positive experience in facing consequences for their actions.

The parents were asked about the severity of their children's sentence relative to the offenses committed. Eight parents felt the sentence was not severe enough, seven felt it was appropriate, and only one felt it was too severe.

The parents were also asked what they disliked about the program and 13 of the 15 parents expressed no negative feelings towards the program. Additional comments included a wish that there were more local services available to the children and that there could have been more hard labor included in the sentences.

When asked if they experienced any barriers to the completion of the program, transportation and schedule conflicts were the only answers that arose beyond a majority who did not experience any barriers. When asked how the Hillside Children's Center staff treated the parents, all said that they were helpful and flexible. There was no negative feedback. Lastly, the final question asked how the probation department treated them throughout the program. The majority felt that the officers were supportive.

Qualitative interviews with staff, probation, and administration. Interviews with the Hillside Children's Center staff, probation officers, select Livingston County Administration, and Hillside Children's Center Advisory Board revealed several conclusions about the LCYC program and possible ways to improve its services. Participants were asked five questions pertaining to the efficacy of the LCYC, barriers the program is facing, suggestions of improvement, etcetera. The interview questions included: What suggestions do you have to improve the LCYC program?, How receptive are the participants to the program?, What barriers have been identified within the program?, What has been done to remove or reduce those barriers?, How do you feel the interactions between the parents and the staff influence the program?, and additional comments were noted. Thirteen staff members were interviewed and based on their responses the following suggestions, issues, and concerns were identified.

In response to the first question, suggestions in four major areas were repeated throughout the interviews: recruitment, funding, Age/PINS, and communication. The court has faced a six member volunteer decrease since 2008, from 22 volunteers to 16. Although the court structure has been modified to accommodate the decrease, several respondents still cited the lack of volunteers as a problem. Current volunteers are graduating high school, therefore ageing out of the court, but because of funding issues it has been difficult to train new volunteers. Which leads into the second barrier cited which is funding and was the second most suggested improvement. Because the court relies on grants for funding, attention is being taken away from the program services due to the stress of re-application. Probation has a close relationship with the LCYC and

suggests that communication should be improved. Two probation respondents commented that after they make the referral to youth court, it takes a long time to hear back about the status of the client, or they do not hear back at all. Additional suggestions worth noting include raising the age limit for potential youth court offenders from 16 to 18, and allowing more PINS status offenders to participate. However, it should be noted that the age limit exists with youth court as it has been indicated that when older youth go through they are less impacted or swayed by the court of peers. Teen courts that address ages 16 through 19 are typically run with an adult judge.

The second question asked how receptive the participants were to the program. Aside from one non-response, the respondents all answered positively to this question; however, much of the impact was not on the offenders themselves but on the youth court volunteers. Serving on the court has sparked interest for many volunteers in the areas of law and law-enforcement, and has even led to some career choices. Some offender participants who benefited from their youth court experience did go on to volunteer as a court player.

In response to the third question regarding barriers to the program, the largest theme was that of coordinating volunteer training schedules and recruitment, and at a close second were funding issues. As is the case with high school students, many of the volunteers have difficulty coordinating their extracurricular activities with youth court training and responsibilities. The decreasing number of youth court volunteers, combined with the elimination of new volunteer training classes (due to lack of funding), further amplifies the issue of conflicting schedules, and may drive away potential volunteers. In terms of funding, which is perhaps the program's most imminent problem, the LCYC has been cut to part-time until March, at which time the program could be terminated altogether. With the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Senator Volker (Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and a private donor, the program is able to run part-time. As mentioned above, the grants used for the program are of short duration, and Livingston County is facing difficult economic times. Many funding sources need to see proof of a successful program, but a respondent who works at the county level commented that due to these various issues, the program is not even getting off the ground enough to prove its effectiveness. Additionally, a few probation respondents cited restrictions regarding LCYC eligibility for PINS cases as a barrier (may include mental health challenges, etcetera) of the program.

The fourth question dealt with what if anything has been done to reduce or remove the barriers discussed in question number three. In response to the barrier of low recruitment, the program went to local schools in the county to seek new volunteers. Several respondents felt this was an effective strategy, but think it needs to be done more often and on a grander scale. To solve the conflict between the volunteer's extracurricular activities and the LCYC training schedule, summer sessions were added in the summer of 2009 to accommodate volunteers. As far as the barrier of funding, many respondents feel their hands are tied. According to some respondents the issue has been taken up with county officials, and the LCYC's appeal to local government was "done well"; however, it is unclear if these proceedings will have any permanent effect on the court. The program is in talks with local law enforcement for funding, private investors, and there is a movement on the state level to create funding legislation for all of New York State's youth courts.

Finally, in response to the fifth question, which asks how parent-staff interaction influences the program, the overarching theme was one of positive interaction and cooperation. According to the interview responses, most parents are compliant with the LCYC program and staff, because it is an alternative to more “serious” trouble for their child. Aside from the positive feedback, several respondents observed that the children’s success is highly dependent on parental attitude. If the parents are uninvolved or do not agree with the way their child’s case was handled, their children are less likely to complete the program successfully, and more likely to continue getting into trouble. It may be beneficial if the LCYC staff looked into ways to better integrate parents into the process.

In addition, the topic of stigmatization was brought up frequently throughout the interviews, but not in response to a specific interview question. Many respondents commented that one particular strength of the program is that it gives young offenders a chance to be in trouble, and suffer consequences, without being stigmatized through formal proceedings or a juvenile record.

Qualitative survey distributed to community service organizations. In 2008, Hillside Family Agencies distributed questionnaires to elicit feedback from community service organizations and an educational workshop attended by LCYC offenders. Hillside Children’s Center provided the evaluators from the University at Buffalo with this information as the University was not affiliated with the development of the questionnaires, collection of responses, or the educational workshop.

When asked the question “How does you or your organization benefit from the youth placements?”, several trends were found. The most popular responses included youth being helpful with labor-intensive tasks, youth being helpful with office tasks, and the youth freeing up time for the employees to do more meaningful work. Overall, a conclusion can be drawn that with the youth present to complete more of the menial work, the organizations can better focus on their true mission.

In regards to the question “How does the youth benefit from working with you and your organization?”, four major responses were uncovered. The organizations felt that the youth were able to realize the impact they had on the community, gain guidance and goals, increase exposure to potential job opportunities, and that the youth were able to learn responsibility. In the organizations’ opinions, the youth appeared to benefit from their time spent serving their community service sentences, in general.

In conjunction with community service, youth also participated in an educational workshop. Three questions were asked to 49 respondents, the questions read as follows: “What do you feel you have learned from the workshop?, What part of the workshop did you value most, or feel was the most effective?, and Overall, how would you rate the workshop on a scale of excellent, good, fair, and poor?.

In response to the first question, asking what the youth learned from the workshop, four major responses were found. Twenty respondents cited the “STOP method”, 14 respondents felt they learned better decision making, six answered self-control, and five replied that they learned about making goals for themselves. In response to the second question, asking what the most effective-valuable portion of the workshop was, five majority themes were noted. Twelve respondents felt “The Outsiders” movie was effective, nine youth again cited the “STOP method”, seven

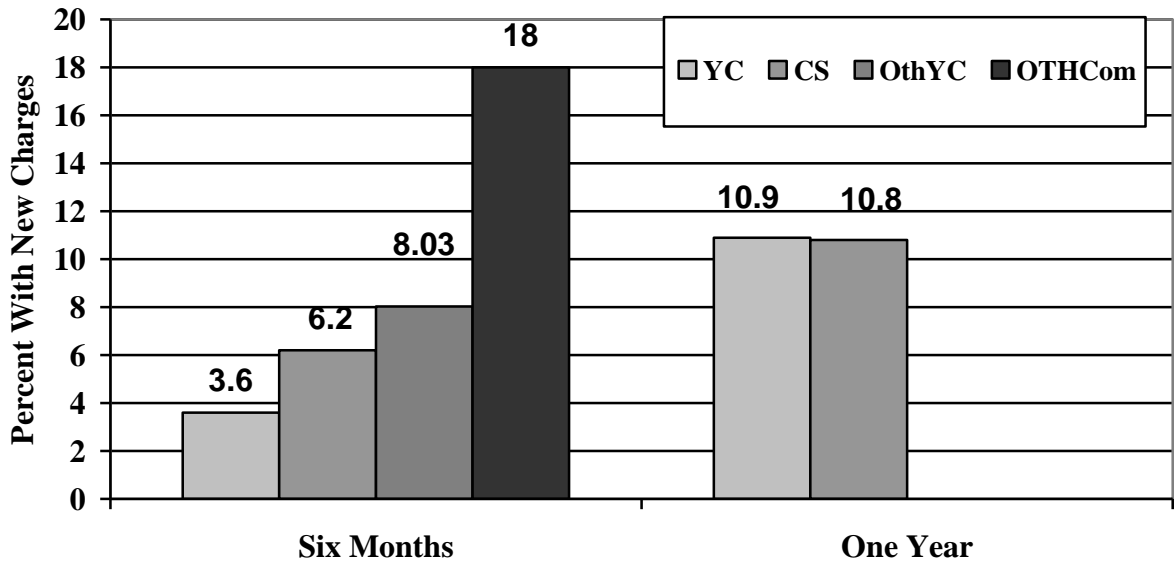
answered the “card thing”, five answered learning about goals and values, and four felt learning about decision making was valuable. Finally, 35% of respondents rated the workshop as excellent, 51% good, 14% fair, and 0% poor.

Eighty-six percent of youth rated the workshop as good or excellent, which shows it was largely helpful and or enjoyable. The “STOP method”, video, and “card thing” seemed to be effective educational tools. The circumstances surrounding when, where, why, and how this survey was administered and explained to the respondents is unknown. However, an argument can be made that the workshop was successful. If this is the case, the workshop should be integrated into the sentence of all LCYC offenders, if this has not been done so already.

Outcome Results

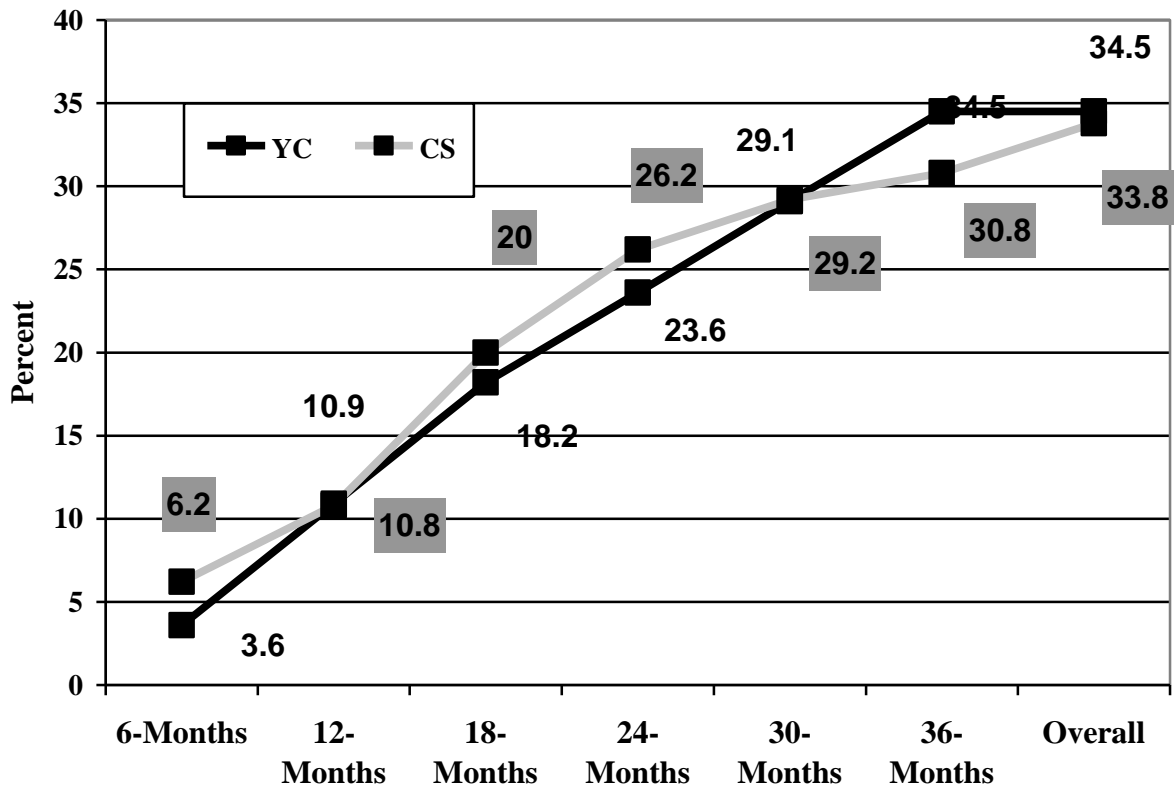
Recidivism. The next set of analyses considered the program effects on recidivism (new charges). For the first set of comparisons, evaluators considered recidivism for a six-month window in order to compare with the Butts et al. (2002) evaluation. In the Butts et al. evaluation, the comparison groups represented youth referred to the division for juvenile justice (Anchorage Alaska, $n = 120$), juveniles referred to juvenile court for the first time (Maricopa County, $n = 115$), youths referred to a police diversion program (Howard County Maryland police, $n = 62$), and juveniles referred to family court for the first-time (Jackson County Family Court, $n = 142$). The Butts et al. evaluation combined these into one single comparison group, which is used in the current evaluation. Figure 15 shows the comparison results. It is noticeable that the LCYC had the lowest six-month recidivism rate. While not statistically different from the CSO group or the other youth court group, using test of proportions, it does differ significantly from the comparison group that was used in the Butts et al. 2002 evaluation, $Z = 2.401$, $p = .008$. Similarly, the CSO group also differs significantly from the other evaluation comparison group, $Z = 2.26$, $p = .011$. Another point of interest is that the LCYC and CSO recidivism rates become similar when using a one-year window.

Figure 15: Recidivism by Group



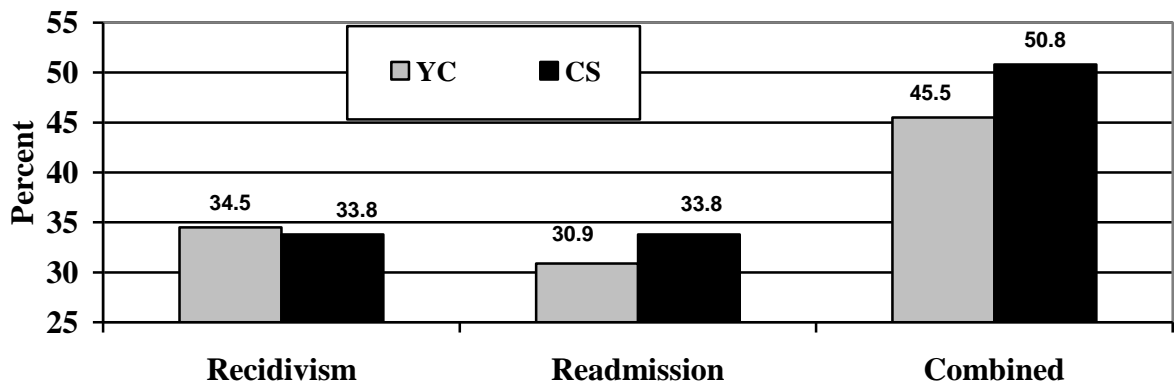
The previous results suggest that as time passes, recidivism rates for the CSO and LCYC groups converge. Figure 16 shows the trends across follow-up periods for the two groups. It is clear that recidivism for the CSO and LCYC groups is not significantly different.

Figure 16: Recidivism as a Function of Time and Group



The next analysis considered both formal recidivism (charges being filed) and informal recidivism (readmission back into a program but no formal new charges presented). There was no difference between the LCYC (Mean = 2.56 years, SD = .653) and the CSO group (Mean = 2.67 years, SD = .774) for amount of follow-up time available. The overall mean time was 2.62 years (SD = .703), with a range of from 0.97 years to 3.99 years. Figure 17 shows the results for the overall rates. The results demonstrate that the two programs were relatively equivalent with respect to overall recidivism. When looking at informal recidivism (readmission with no formal new charge), there was only a very slight tendency for individuals from the CSO group to be more likely readmitted than the individuals from the LCYC group. For the combined formal and informal recidivism measure, the CSO group was again, slightly more likely than the LCYC group to have been readmitted to one of the programs.

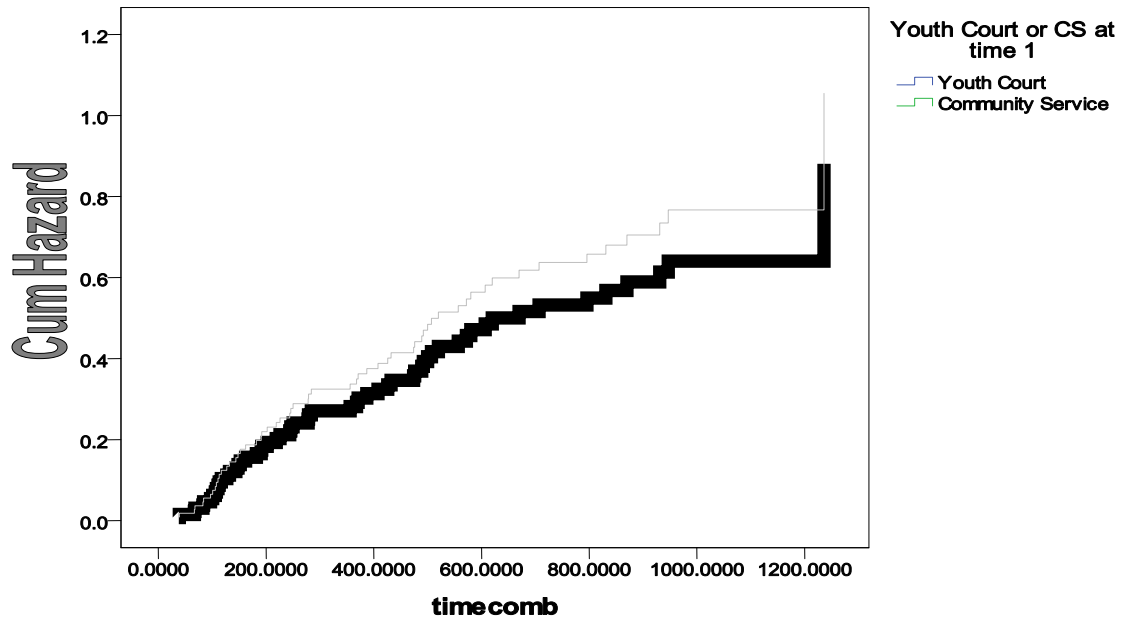
Figure 17: Formal and Informal Recidivism by Group



Cox regression on the latter resulted in the hazard rates shown in Figure 18. Hazard rates represent the risk for subsequent admission to the programs at specific points in time. With respect to Figure 18, the two curves begin to noticeably diverge at around 300 days, suggesting that risk for subsequent readmission increases more sharply for the CSO group than for the LCYC group at that point, and that the separation increases slightly from that point forward. However, caution needs to be used with interpreting these results as the difference between the two groups was not significant.

Figure 18: Hazard Rates for Combined Formal and Informal Recidivism By Group

Hazard Function for patterns 1 - 2



Placements. Results for placements are shown in Figure 19 which shows a trend for individuals from the CSO group to be more likely to have been placed than the individuals from the LCYC group ($p = .139$). Of the nine placements, two were from LCYC and seven were from CSO group.

Figure 19: Placements by Group.

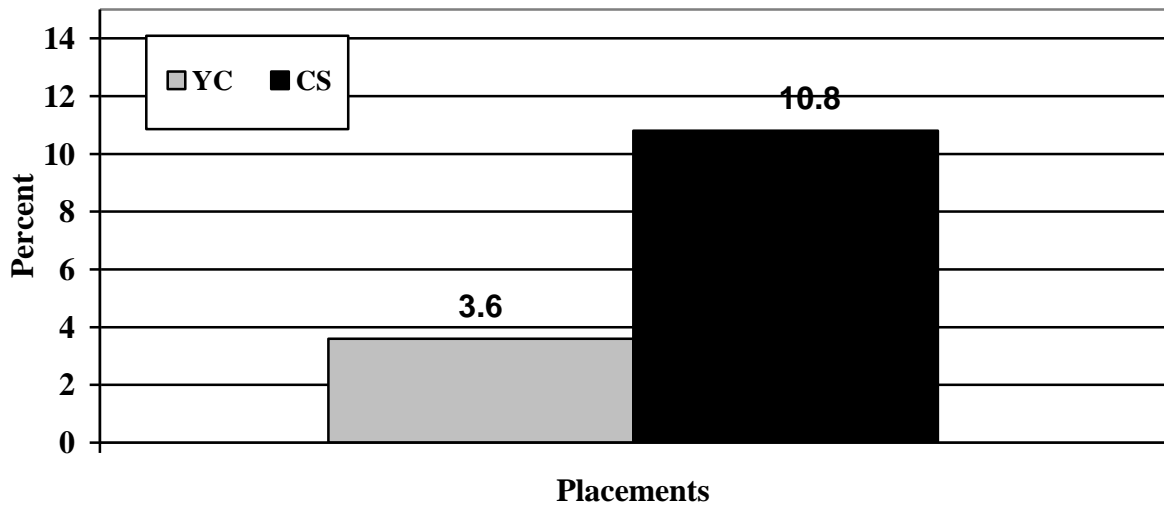
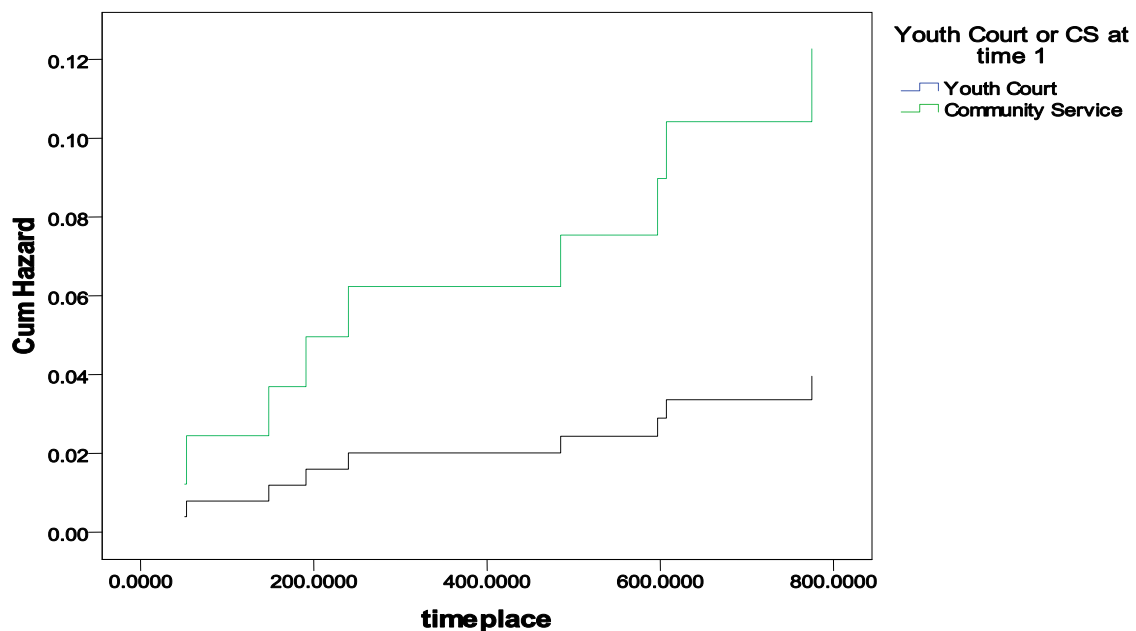


Figure 20: Hazard Rates for Placements by Group.

Hazard Function for patterns 1 - 2



Hazard rates for placements as a function of group are shown in Figure 20 above. The increasing risk for placement in the CSO group can be seen clearly in this figure. There is a sharp increase in the hazard rates at around 200 days, suggesting that after six-months there appears to be an increased risk to be placed for the individuals in the CSO group, relative to the risk for placement of the LCYC participants. However, as with the recidivism information, these differences did not reach the traditional $p < .05$ statistical level, indicating a need for caution in how these results are utilized. In other words, this significance could be due to change or purely random as opposed to a function of the group (CSO or LCYC).

Summary. Formal recidivism for the both the LCYC and the CSO was 34 percent. Thus, the recidivism rates comparing youth who completed the LCYC process and those youth who participated in the CSO were not significant. However, when looking at a comparison group used in an evaluation of teen courts, the findings suggest that the comparison group had a recidivism rate of 18%, while that for the LCYC was only 3.6% and that for the CSO group was only 6.2%. Both of the latter were significantly better than the comparison group- demonstrating the relative success or effectiveness of LCYC and CSO when compared to the other comparison group. In addition, when considering the recidivism rates across varying follow-up periods, the results are similar to findings for various evaluations of teen courts across the nation (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000).

However, for placements there was a trend ($p = .139$) for greater likelihood for the participants in the CSO group to have been placed, relative to the LCYC participants. In

numbers, two of the 9 placed individuals were from the LCYC, while seven were from the CSO group. Thus, while recidivism did not vary as a function of the two groups in the current evaluation, both showed lower recidivism than a comparison group used in an evaluation of other teen courts and, with respect to placements, participation in the LCYC may have been beneficial. Caution is advised, as the LCYC group seemed to be lower risk than the CSO group, which may be the reason for the differences in the referral rates, and not the experience of the LCYC per se.

Cost-Effectiveness Results

According to The Livingston County Sheriffs Department (B. Aplin, personal communication, October 2, 2009), the first step in the juvenile justice system is arrest and intake procedures. Intake procedures determine whether a youth may be released to his or her family or detained in either secure or non-secure detention facility until his or her assigned court date. Intake procedures are estimated to cost \$520 per arrest (New York City Independent Budget Office [NYC IBO], 2008). After an arrest intake, the probation department also performs an intake and decides whether the youth must appear in court, or if they are eligible to have his or her case diverted, meaning that the youth's charge will be suspended pending any further arrests. A probation intake costs \$520 per youth, while diversion costs \$393 per youth (NYC IBO, 2008). If a youth is detained until his or her court date in a secure facility, the average cost is approximately \$777 per day (NYC IBO, 2008). The average cost of a youth to stay in a non-secure detention facility in Livingston County is \$159 per day, based on an average length of stay of seven to 10 days (M.J. Acomb, personal communication, November, 2009). According to Livingston County Probation Department (personal communication, October 2, 2009), based on the ruling of the family court, the juvenile then may be placed on probation for up to two years. It is also the probation department that decides whether the youth must be placed in a residential treatment facility, placed on PINS, or if they are eligible for a referral to LCYC (Livingston County Probation Department, personal communication, October 2, 2009).

According to Hillside Children's Center (M.J. Acomb, personal communication, October 2, 2009), the cost of residential placement is \$272 per day with an average stay of nine months. On top of this \$272 per day is the cost of tuition for those in residential placements, which is \$860.24 a week per youth (M.J. Acomb, personal communication, November, 2009). Information regarding the costs surrounding a PINS placement has been elusive. The estimated cost of probation is \$2,359 a year per juvenile (NYC IBO, 2008). The price of LCYC of \$65,000 per year for approximately 30 youths, which would equate to approximately \$2,167 per youth and if including the benefits to the 21 volunteers, the costs per youth would decrease to approximately \$1,275 per youth. The cost for the community services program is \$138,055 per year, with a contract for 110 individuals, although in 2009 they served 116. This would translate into approximately \$1,190 per individual, a relatively inexpensive alternative to probation. One aim of the LCYC and community services is to divert youth away from costly services such as residential treatment and lengthy probation procedures.

Despite little difference in the recidivism rates between the LCYC and other traditional placements, there are benefits for both the youth and the county when there is a youth court alternative to the traditional court process. The youth who participate in alternative programs benefit because these programs provide social supports, develop high expectations, and provide meaningful participation. As noted above, for the current evaluation and also in other evaluations, youth who have successfully completed the youth court process reported having a better understanding of the legal process, improved behavior, and had become more responsible (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). In addition, youth reported having better communication with their parents and some youth reported improved grades (U.S. Department of Justice, 2000). These findings indicate the significance of providing alternative programs for youth in order to help them develop stronger familial relationships, continue their education, and develop a sense of responsibility and accountability for their own actions and behaviors.

The current evaluation used a simple approach to cost-effectiveness by considering the costs of the programs and the reduction in recidivism that occurred as a result of experiencing the program. Next, the savings per individual were multiplied to get at the rough calculation of cost-effectiveness. For recidivism, the cost of the comparison groups was considered from the Butts et al. evaluation to be equivalent to the probation costs reported above. So if evaluators consider a recidivism rate of 18%, and evaluators focus on the number of individuals that are referred to the LCYC ($n = 55$), one would expect 10 individuals to get a subsequent charge filed against them. For the LCYC, evaluators would expect two individuals (3.6%) to get a subsequent charge filed against them. As such, the overall recidivism costs for the comparison group would be $10 * 2359 = \$23,590$. For the LCYC the cost would be $\$2167$ (cost of LCYC) + 1190 (cost of community services) = $\$3357 * 2$, or $\$6,714$. A rough guess at cost savings would be $\$23,590 - \$6,714 = \$16,876$. So at a minimum, if the comparison group recidivism rate is used, the LCYC program has the potential to save over $\$16,876$ in a six-month time frame.

Additionally, LCYC benefits the county not only because it helps in the development of the community's youth, but also because they help with the costs associated with the juvenile justice system. The cost of a youth placed in a residential treatment center after going through the traditional court process is significantly higher than a youth going through the county's LCYC. In addition, according to The New York State Division of Criminal Justice (2009) recidivism rates of delinquent boys and girls leaving the residential treatment centers ranges between 81% and 89% by the time the individuals reached the age of 28. Thus, residential treatment is not only costly, but also somewhat ineffective at reducing recidivism rates among youth. In this study, only two LCYC participants were placed in residential treatment versus seven participants from the CSO group. This indicates that the added experience of the LCYC may be more effective in reducing the number of costly residential placements compared to experiencing only the community services element. There would appear to be substantial savings in the sense that the cost for residential programs is much higher than standard probation, LCYC, or community services. Using the lowest number from the above quoted costs for residential settings, by reducing the number of placements by five

individuals, that would amount to a savings of \$1,360 per day for the length of the residential placements not including costs of education. However, as indicated previously, this must be viewed very cautiously, as the number of overall placements was relatively small, and the individuals from the CSO group were more likely than the LCYC individuals to have been identified as moderate to high risks on the YASI. The resulting placements may not necessarily have been a function of the program per se, but rather a result of the greater risk associated with individuals in the CSO group.

Potential Predictors of Recidivism

Demographic factors. The next set of analyses considered demographic characteristics and the relationship with recidivism. Results for these analyses are shown in Table A.

Table A: Bivariate Relationships of Combined Recidivism with Various Demographic Characteristics

Measure	Percent Combined Recidivism	B	SE	Wald	Sig	OR	95% CI Low - High
Age				4.566	.471		
10 (n=2)	50.0%	0.452	1.455	0.097	.756	1.571	0.091 –
11 (n=10)	30.0%	-0.395	0.770	0.263	.608	0.673	27.211
12 (n=11)	45.5%	0.270	0.695	0.150	.698	1.310	0.149 – 3.047
13 (n=19)	57.9%	0.770	0.577	1.784	.182	2.161	0.335 – 5.117
14 (n=42)	57.1%	0.740	0.463	2.555	.110	2.095	0.698 – 6.693
15 (n=36)	38.9%						0.846 – 5.189
Gender*		-0.794	0.394	4.050	.044	0.452	0.209 – 0.980
Male	55.1%						
Female	35.7%						
Ethnicity				2.842	.417		
White	45.1%						
Af Am	60.0%	0.602	0.934	0.415	.519	1.826	0.293 –
Hisp	71.4%	1.113	0.860	1.675	.196	3.043	11.397
Bi-Racial	66.7%	0.890	0.889	1.003	.317	2.435	0.564 –
							16.421
							0.427 –
							13.894
Marital Stat	40.0%			2.319	.314		
Never (n=45)	55.8%	0.639	0.432	2.185	.139	1.895	0.812 – 4.421
	51.6%	0.470	0.471	0.996	.318	1.600	0.636 – 4.027

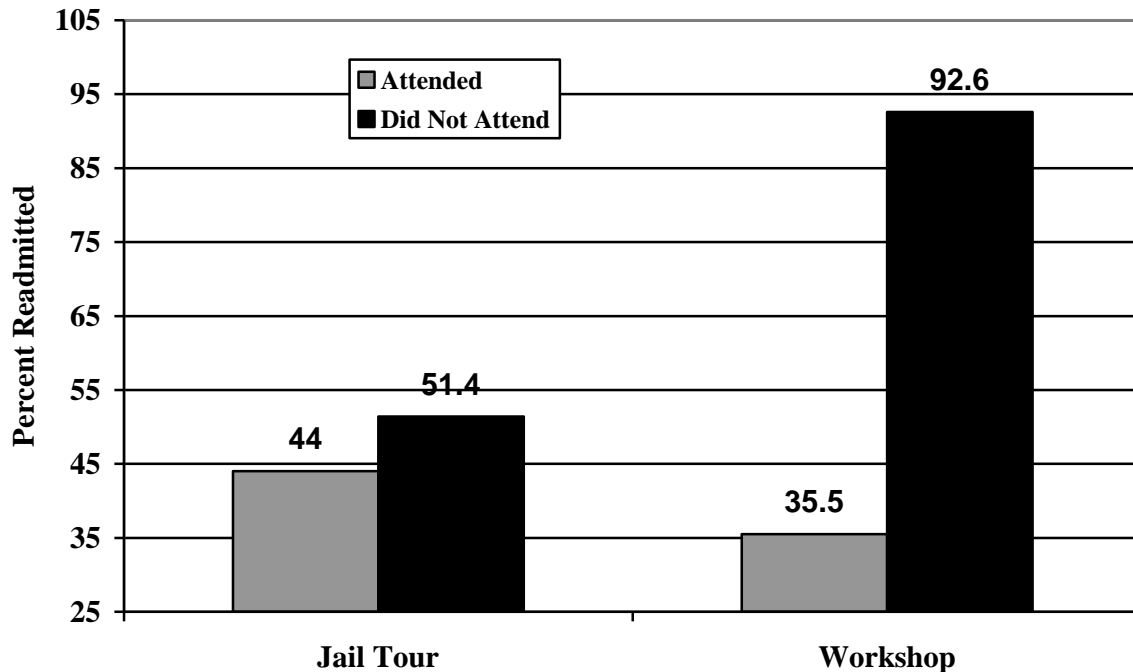
D/S/W (n=43) Married (n=31)							
Grade*				12.810	.025		
5 th (n=4)	25.0%	-2.054	1.269	2.620	.106	0.128	0.011 – 1.542
6 th (n=12)	33.3%	-1.649	0.807	4.169	.041	0.192	0.040 – 0.936
7 th (n=18)	72.2%	-0.607	0.647	0.880	.348	0.545	0.153 – 1.938
8 th (n=29)	58.6%	-0.860	0.610	1.987	.159	0.423	0.128 – 1.399
9 th (n=42)	6.7%	-3.595	1.161	9.583	.002	0.027	0.003 – 0.267
10 th (n=15)							
Reside				7.791	.100		
Mother (n=68)	47.1%	-0.405	0.453	0.803	.370	0.667	0.275 – 1.619
Father (n=11)	72.7%	0.693	0.777	0.795	.373	2.000	0.436 – 9.176
Both (n=28)	57.1%	-2.079	1.146	3.295	0.70	0.125	0.013 – 1.181
Relative (n=7)	14.3%	-1.897	1.160	2.674	.102	0.150	0.015 – 1.457
Other (n=6)	16.7%						
Receives TANF Yes (n = 86) No (n = 34)	50.0%	0.236	0.407	0.337	.562	1.267	0.570 – 2.814
	44.1%						

Percentages of individuals within the category who were readmitted are presented for clarifying the relationship. The logistic regression analyses showed no significant relationships for age, ethnicity, marital status, or receipt of TANF benefits. There was a significant relationship with gender, indicating that the females were approximately 55% less likely than the males to be readmitted or have committed another offense. There was also a significant relationship with grade. For this variable, evaluators used 7th grade as the referent group, meaning that the odds are always a reflection of the odds for recidivism of the 7th graders. The recidivism rates appear to peak in the 7th grade and then begin to decrease. The latter may be a result of LCYC being limited to individuals under the age of 16 in the current evaluation sample.

Jail tour and youth development workshop. Given the lack of statistically

significant findings for the programs, evaluators next considered the possibility of other factors, as well as the potential for moderating factors. The two factors initially considered were the jail tour and the youth developmental workshop. The results are shown in Figure 21. The participation in the jail tour was not significantly or marginally ($p < .25$) associated with recidivism, nor was the interaction of jail tour with program. However, the direction suggests that participation in the jail tour did have some impact on the individuals who attended.

Figure 21: Combined Recidivism by Jail Tour and Workshop Attendance



Results for workshop attendance showed a significant effect on combined recidivism, $B = 3.160$, $SE = .773$, $Wald = 16.99$, $p < .001$, $OR = 23.58$, $95\% CI 5.18 - 107.36$. This basically suggests that the individuals who did not attend the youth development workshop were over 23 times more likely to have a subsequent readmission to one of the programs than the individuals who did attend the workshop. In terms of hard numbers, of the 27 individuals who did not attend the workshop, only two did not have a subsequent readmission to one of the programs (LCYC or CSO). The interaction of program by workshop was not significant, nor did it approach the marginal level used in this evaluation ($p < .25$).

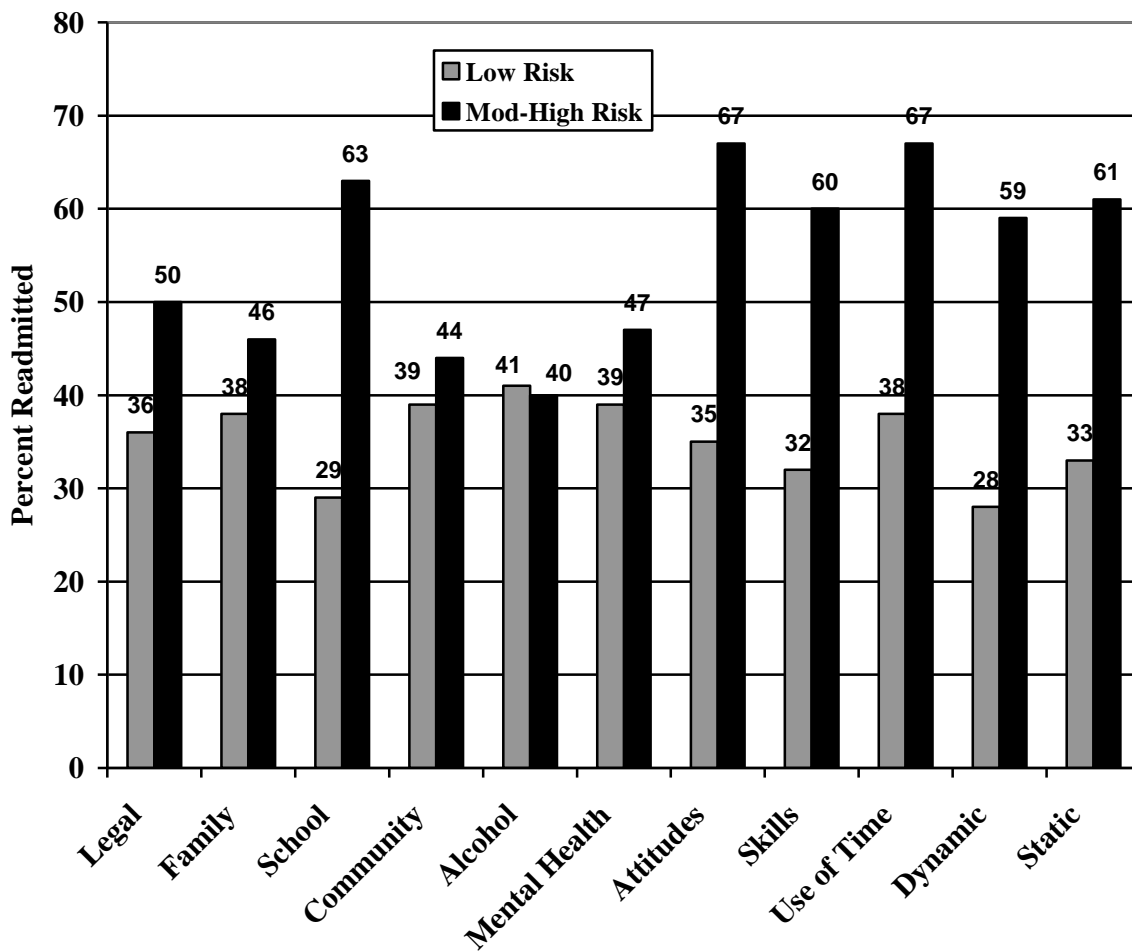
Risk factors from the YASI. The next set of analyses considered the risk and protective factors from the YASI administered by the probation department. As with the analyses for the jail tour and the workshop, evaluators used the combined recidivism measure. For purposes of discussion, evaluators will talk about this as a readmission to probation. Binary logistic regression was used for analytic purposes.

Table B: Combined Recidivism as a Function of YASI Risk Factors

Risk Factors	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Overall Dynamic	1.329	.495	7.200	1	.007	3.776	1.431	9.964
Overall Static	1.164	.520	5.019	1	.025	3.203	1.157	8.866
Legal	.568	.485	1.373	1	.241	1.765	.682	4.564
Family	.303	.472	.412	1	.521	1.354	.536	3.418
School	1.418	.510	7.743	1	.005	4.129	1.521	11.209
Community	.194	.470	.170	1	.680	1.214	.483	3.052
Alcohol	-.059	.945	.004	1	.950	.943	.148	6.002
Mental Health	.330	.535	.381	1	.537	1.391	.488	3.967
Attitudes	1.312	.611	4.613	1	.032	3.714	1.122	12.300
Skills	1.159	.509	5.197	1	.023	3.187	1.177	8.636
Use of Time	1.188	.751	2.500	1	.114	3.280	.752	14.300

The results for the risk factors are shown in Table B and Figure 22. In Table B the risk factors associated with school, attitudes, and skills were all significant, suggesting that individuals with high or moderate school risk factors were over four times more likely to have been readmitted to probation than those individuals with low school risks. Likewise, individuals with moderate or high risk attitudes were over three times more likely to be readmitted to probation than those individuals with low risk attitudes. Furthermore, individuals with moderate or high risk skills were also over three times more likely than those with low skills risks to be readmitted to probation. Finally, the overall dynamic and static risks also reflected that the moderate to very high risk individuals were more likely than the low risk individuals to be readmitted to probation.

Figure 22: Combined Recidivism by YASI Risk Factors



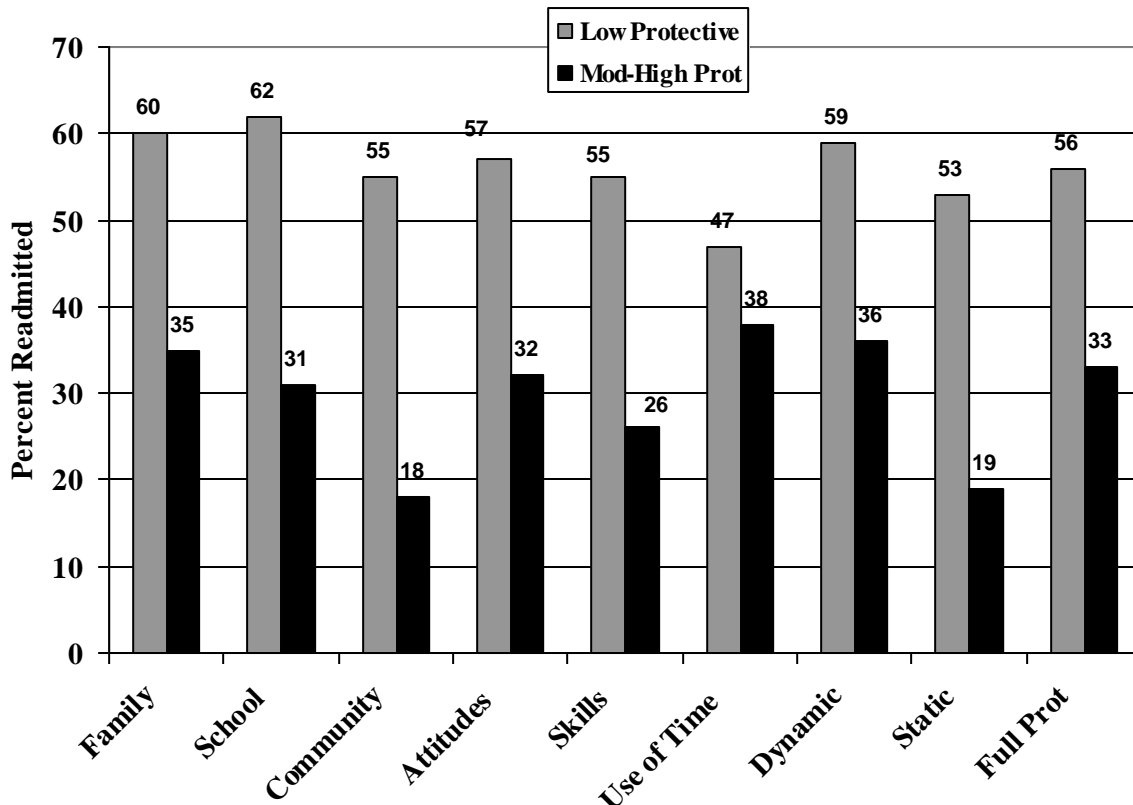
The results for protective factors are shown in Table C and Figure 23. Results in Table C indicate that protective factors associated with school, community, attitudes, and skills were all significantly associated with readmission to probation. Relative to individuals with low protective factors in the respective areas, there was a 79% reduction in readmission for individuals with moderate to high protective school factors, 82% reduction in readmission to probation for community protective factors, 65% reduction in readmission to probation for protective factors associated with attitudes, and a 72% reduction in readmission to probation for protective factors associated with various skills. In addition, for the overall static protective factors, there was an 82% reduction in readmission to probation for those with moderate to high levels relative to those with low levels of static protective factors.

Table C: Combined Recidivism as a Function of YASI Protective Factors

Protective Factors	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Full Protective	-.916	.494	3.444	1	.063	.400	.152	1.053

Overall Dynamic	-.923	.563	2.684	1	.101	.397	.132	1.199
Overall Static	-1.558	.574	7.363	1	.007	.211	.068	.649
Family	-1.045	.537	3.779	1	.052	.352	.123	1.009
School	-1.288	.509	6.419	1	.011	.276	.102	.747
Community	-1.740	.574	9.183	1	.002	.176	.057	.541
Attitudes	-1.045	.494	4.483	1	.034	.352	.134	.925
Skills	-1.262	.501	6.351	1	.012	.283	.106	.755
Use of Time	-.365	.478	.585	1	.445	.694	.272	1.771

Figure 23: Combined Recidivism by YASI Protective Factors



Summary for YASI prediction of combined recidivism. The results for the risk and protective factors associated with the YASI show that the instrument has decent predictive ability for juvenile recidivism. Unfortunately, the findings within this evaluation are somewhat limited, as YASI information on the initial assessment was available only for 75 of the 120 participants. Nonetheless, the results are promising and suggest areas where potential services might be improved to assist with reducing recidivism rates by bolstering protective factors in conjunction with reducing risk factors.

Final model for predicting recidivism. The next set of analyses considered the results from the bivariate assessments of recidivism and looked to determine the best set of predictors. Logistic Regression was used for this purpose. The initial run included all significant associations that were found in the previous analyses. The final model results

are shown in Table D.

Table D: Final Model Delineating Factors Associated with Combined Recidivism.

Factors	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Gender	1.936	.868	4.973	1	.026	6.933	1.264	38.019
WorkShop	- 3.477	1.173	8.780	1	.003	.031	.003	.308
Community Protective	- 1.224	.728	2.825	1	.093	.294	.071	1.225
Skills Risk	.909	.657	1.910	1	.167	2.481	.684	8.998
Constant	1.160	1.202	.932	1	.334	3.190		

The results show that males were almost seven times more likely than females to get readmitted to probation, even after controlling for workshop attendance, levels of community protective factors and levels of skills risk factors. Workshop attendance reduced the likelihood of being readmitted to probation by 97%, while having moderate to high community protective factors reduced the likelihood of being readmitted to probation by approximately 70% over those with low levels of community protective factors. Finally, having moderate to high levels of risk factors associated with Skills had a trend to increase the likelihood of readmission to probation over twice that of the individuals with low levels of risks in the skills area.

When considering these results, they are of interest to both programs. In essence, the CSO and LCYC programs are focused on building some resources in the community for the individual – forming some protective factors, while they also focused on building the interpersonal skills of the individual. Given that these factors are also somewhat predictive of recidivism, it reinforces the idea that these areas need to be focused on within the contexts of the two interventions. In reviewing the comments from parents and offenders, it also is evident that this is occurring for the majority of these individuals. Next steps may entail evaluating progress of participants in these areas while they are still part of the programs. Also, reviewing how these elements are handled may be of use as the programs move towards trying to reduce recidivism. Finally, the fact that the workshop played such a role in reducing recidivism suggests use of this with all individuals who are assigned to LCYC or community services. It seems this program has a strong positive benefit as reflected in the association with recidivism, as well as the comments from participants.

Relationships of Sanctions Used in the LCYC to Combined Recidivism

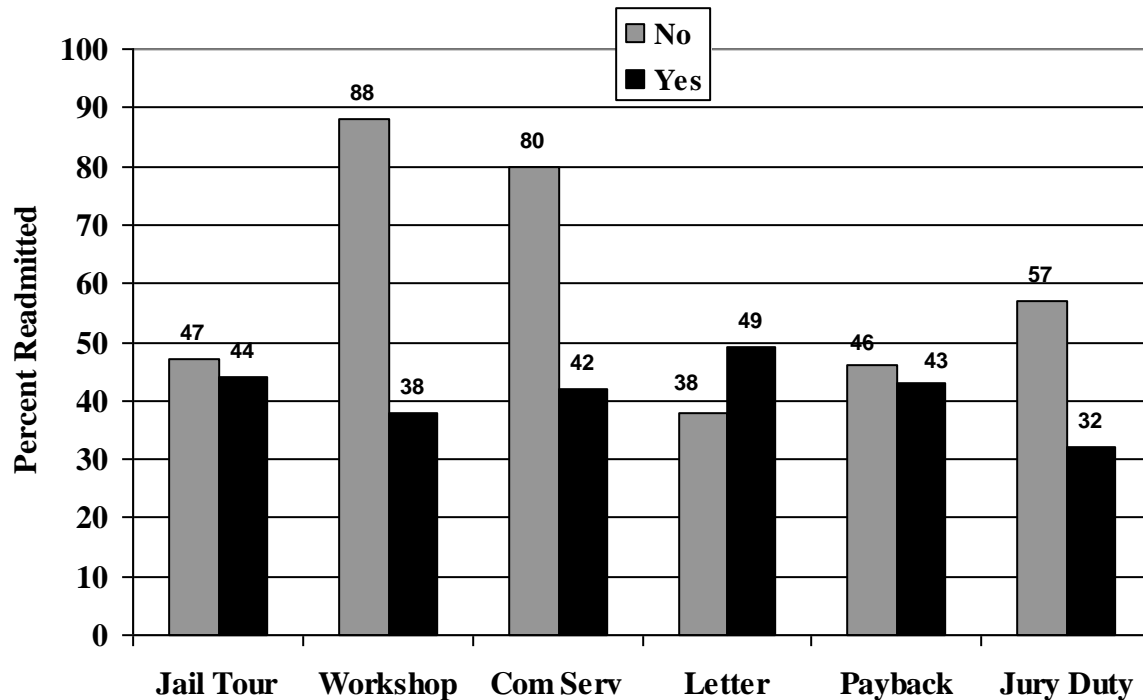
In the next set of results, evaluators considered the impact of specific sanctions used in the LCYC on subsequent readmission to probation (combined recidivism). The results are shown in Table E and Figure 24.

Table E: Final Model Delineating Factors Associated with Combined Recidivism.

Sanctions/Service	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Jail Tour	.137	.550	.062	1	.803	1.147	.390	3.370
Workshop	- 2.423	1.110	4.761	1	.029	.089	.010	.781
Community Service	- 1.709	1.154	2.193	1	.139	.181	.019	1.739
Letter of Apology	.460	.608	.572	1	.450	1.583	.481	5.210
Restitution	-.121	.817	.022	1	.883	.886	.179	4.395
LCYC Jury Duty	- 1.022	.565	3.269	1	.071	.360	.119	1.090

The results show that the workshop and LCYC jury duty were most strongly related to combined recidivism. For the LCYC participants, if they attended the youth developmental workshop, the likelihood of readmission to probation was reduced by over 90%. This is consistent with the overall finding for workshop attendance. Also, being assigned to jury duty on the LCYC reduced the likelihood of readmission to probation by approximately 64%. In addition to the data above, there were also statements from participants that suggested both the workshop and jury duty assignment had positive benefits for them. Indications were that these helped provide them with knowledge and increased confidence and community contacts. Community service was also important in this regard. Implications are that these three elements, the workshop, LCYC jury duty, and community service should always be parts of any sanctioning done by the LCYC.

Figure 24: Combined Recidivism by LCYC Sanction



Discussion

There were a number of interesting findings within the context of this evaluation process. One thing of importance that should be reinforced is that preliminary data always need to be viewed cautiously. The interim report found that attendance at the jail tour was significantly associated with readmission to one of the programs. However, the data used at that time were incomplete. Once data for all individuals were considered, the effect of the jail tour was significantly diminished. This reinforces the need for caution whenever considering preliminary data within the context of an evaluation process.

The process results need to be strengthened. At the current time the observations are based on conversations and materials that were provided. From the perspective of the evaluation team, the staff of both programs, as well as at probation, and the individuals involved in the community all seemed to be invested in seeing the programs succeed. However, there are some elements that could be perceived as barriers to the program successes. The major one is not having a secure funding stream for the LCYC program. It should be noted that the CSO does have secure funding at this time. While this is common with teen courts (Butts et al., 2002; Butts and Buck, 2000), it is still a diversion from the work on program improvement that could be taking place if funding were not an issue.

One of the major issues noticed during this process was the lack of any centralized database for purposes of tracking the program participants. Hillside Children's Center should consider a standardized intake process for all programs and a

system that would allow for ease of sharing information across programs. This would be an exceptional capacity building process that could lead to Hillside Family of Agencies becoming proficient in performing its own action oriented evaluations, allowing for changes to be made in a more responsive manner while reducing costs.

A significant strength in the organization is the dedication and hard work the employees provide. This should be capitalized on by Hillside Children's Center. Provision of training and educational workshops for the staff could provide significant return on their investment.

Another process evaluators noticed as a potential block to program effectiveness was the way in which information was collected from external sources for purposes of reports. The two agencies that evaluators became familiar with were probation and DSS. Evaluators recognize the need for privacy and protection of the information, especially for children. However, while use of aggregate data allows for some sense of what has happened, it precludes any development of why programs works or does not work because there is a loss of the ability to tie specific recidivism or placement data to specific information for the individual that Hillside Children's Center may have available. It would be extremely beneficial to all parties if some method of sharing could be worked out that would allow for individual data to be used by Hillside Children's Center. This may be a critical element in building a capacity within Hillside Children's Center for evaluating their programs- which could ultimately improve services and outcomes, in addition to costs associated with services and recidivism.

Some of the information from the interviews with staff and community involved adults was consistent with that from evaluations in the literature (Butts & Buck, 2002; Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002). The adolescent LCYC participants tended to be brief with their responses but in some instances provided information that allowed for tie back to program elements. It was clear from these interviews that the majority of the youth who participated found that the programs were beneficial and many mentioned the workshop and jail tour as being positive components. A few also mentioned that they felt the LCYC jury should have older youth, as they felt that the younger ones did not fully understand the situation of the participant. None indicated problems with the staff at Hillside Children's Center. Parents of the LCYC participants all thought the program was beneficial for their children but many felt the sanctions were not severe enough and some mentioned the issue that transportation to and from the community service sites was sometimes a chore (although most accepted that as part of the process). In conclusion, the parents and LCYC participants all seemed to view this as a learning experience and the majority indicated they had learned from this process.

With respect to the volunteers, they also had mostly positive things to say concerning the program. The majority felt that they had gained significant information concerning the legal system and how it operates. They also felt that it provided new learning experiences for them and helped them make new friends and associates. The parents of the volunteers all felt that the program was beneficial to their children. The implications are that the LCYC program does more than just prevent subsequent

delinquent behavior, it also provides opportunities for learning and engagement.

The question from the interviews with the staff and community involved adults that focused on suggestions to improve LCYC resulted in five areas being mentioned. As indicated in the section regarding the qualitative interviews, the common themes from the staff and community involved adults tended to focus on funding, recruitment, PINS-age of eligible individuals, and communication. One thing that was heard from a few individuals was that there was a need to get the information about the program out more in the community. This was actually something that some of the parents of both volunteers and offenders indicated. These findings suggest a possible need for information presentations at schools or community centers to make more individuals aware of its availability. This might also help to possibly secure sources of funding, which happened to also be something of importance to this group. As stated earlier, they tended to view trying to get funding as taking away from time that could be spent on the program. Also, reinforcing the mention above concerning information provision, many in probation felt a need to improve communication between the programs and probation. Other areas that seemed to be targeted by this group for improvement included the age of the eligible individuals and the issue of PINS cases being excluded. All of the things mentioned seem to be fixable and could possibly lead to greater utility of the program.

When asked about barriers to the program, the major ones mentioned were coordinating the schedules for training and court cases with volunteers and offenders, with funding also being mentioned. Coordinating schedules is perhaps always going to present difficulties and the coordinator for the LCYC indicated that Spring tends to be more difficult, as sports begin to increase and external activities of volunteers tends to interfere with scheduling of cases and training. Recruitment may be part of this, as having a sufficiently large pool of volunteers may help ease the scheduling problems.

Outcome Results

Findings for recidivism showed no significant difference between the LCYC and the community services program. However, comparisons of both groups with the comparison group used by Butts and his colleagues (2002) showed that the two programs had a significantly lower recidivism rate than did the overall comparison group used in that study (3.6% and 6.2% versus 18%) for a six-month follow-up. Even looking at the other youth courts used in that evaluation, the recidivism rate for the LCYC was lower (3.6 % versus 6 to 9%). This may suggest that the LCYC has some utility when it is compared against a group of juveniles who do not experience LCYC, or similar services to LCYC. Again, one needs to be cautious with this finding, as it uses a comparison group from 2000 to 2001. Nonetheless, it does suggest some benefit from the LCYC.

When evaluators consider placements, it is found that the LCYC participants were less likely to have been placed in a residential setting than the community service youth. While not statistically significant, placement with this group of individuals seems to be a relatively rare event. The fact that there were differences between the two groups indicates a potential impact for LCYC. However, caution is again advised, as the CSO

group did show greater risk and lower protective factors on the YASI. These results may be more a reflection of those initial levels of risk, as opposed to the actual content of the two programs.

Relationships with recidivism showed that attendance at the youth developmental workshop was strongly associated. In fact, of the 29 individuals who did not attend, 27 had a readmission to probation. This is strong evidence that something within this program benefits the participants. This was again reflected in some of the comments of the participants who specifically mentioned some of the elements of the program as very beneficial.

Also related to recidivism were some of the YASI risk and protective factors. Specifically, the risk factors for school, personal attitudes, and skills were all related to combined recidivism. In all cases, individuals with moderate to high risk levels were much more likely to have a subsequent readmission to probation than individuals with low risk levels on these factors. Similarly, findings for the protective factors of family, school, community, personal attitudes, and skills all showed that individuals with low levels on these protective factors were much more likely to have a subsequent readmission to probation than individuals with moderate to high levels of these protective factors. These make sense from a theoretical perspective. Weak protective factors and strong risk factors result in greater likelihood of problem behavior.

When evaluators looked at all significant predictors, the findings indicated that attendance at the workshop and gender were the two strongest predictors of recidivism. Again, consistent with the literature, the girls were less likely than the boys to experience a subsequent readmission to probation. The workshop finding was again very strong and most of the predictors from the YASI ended up dropping out of the final model. Only the protective factors from the community remained marginal. This might indicate that attendance at the workshop helped to alleviate some of the weaknesses in terms of the risk and protective factors. Future work should consider using this tool to evaluate the workshop and see how it influences the risk and protective factors.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this evaluation. The lack of random assignment to condition, or in the absence of that possibility, the lack of a true control group was a major limitation of this evaluation. While evaluators did locate information from a previous evaluation performed in 2002, the fact the data was from eight years ago indicates the need for caution when interpreting these results. The same issue can be said for the cost-effectiveness findings. It was difficult getting specific information on juvenile outcomes from all sources evaluators went to. In many cases, data for juveniles are not disaggregated by program. Therefore, recidivism is presented as a general number. The same problem was found for costs.

While the study had 55 LCYC participants, numbers in previous evaluations ranged from over 100 cases. The lack of numbers hindered any in-depth analyses

concerning potential moderators of program effectiveness, as well as the use of covariates. For some of the individuals in the study, the recidivism window was only 10 to 11 months, representing a short period of time for a subsequent charge to be filed. The same can be said for placements.

Additionally, evaluators did not receive the full information for the probation pre-assessment with the YASI. This tool has some very informative data and would be highly beneficial to use in analyses concerning recidivism and testing of potential moderating or mediating effects. Insufficient numbers of cases did not allow for this to occur.

The results from the evaluation need to be taken with caution. As indicated earlier, the numbers in the two groups were not sufficiently large enough to allow for sufficient power with low likelihood outcomes, such as recidivism and placements. Inclusion of informal recidivism helped to increase the rates for recidivism but nonetheless, the numbers in groups was still sufficiently too small to effectively evaluate potential moderators. In addition, information from the YASI assessments appears to be very useful for identifying high-risk youth but the information provided for the individuals in the evaluation were not all from the initial assessment, which is what would be necessary to allow for predicting subsequent problems.

Recommendations

1. Capitalize on the work ethic of your staff – provide opportunities for training and education of the staff.
2. Computerization of the program information at all levels would help to build a stronger capacity within Hillside Children’s Center for performing self-evaluations.
3. Sharing of information with DSS (placement) and probation (recidivism) is now done only at an aggregate level. Some procedure should be developed to allow for sharing of information specific to individuals.
4. Evaluate how the length of time in the programs may be associated with greater risk for problem behaviors.
5. The interviews with staff and community involving adults suggested that PINS cases and children up to the age of 18 be eligible for LCYC. Suggest this be considered, although further research is necessary to determine if older youth can benefit from the LCYC when compared to adult-run courts.
6. Evaluate the differences on the YASIs more thoroughly. Consider programs provided to high-risk individuals and determine how YASI scores may change following specific program completions.
7. Use LCYC jury duty and community service for all individuals.

8. The letter of apology seemed to have little or no impact on recidivism or placements – indicating this may not be an effective sanction. Instead, Hillside Children’s Center may want to consider dropping the letter and replacing it with the essay, which was not used for the current LCYC participants.
9. Provide the youth developmental workshop to all individuals coming through the LCYC or community services programs.
10. Future research should consider factors that may influence the trends for recidivism to continue to rise as follow-up time increases. Identifying points of risk for subsequent arrests or problem behaviors to occur would aid in development of methods to intervene.
11. There was a tendency for the LCYC group to have lower placement rates than the CSO group. Caution needs to be used with this finding, as risk levels were greater for the CSO group, with protective factors being lower for this group when compared to the LCYC group. Future research needs to evaluate this further.
12. Significant predictors of recidivism included gender, attendance at the workshop, risk factors for school, personal attitudes, and skills, and protective factors for family, school, community, personal attitudes, and skills. Working with probation on how these findings could be used to reduce the risks and increase the protective factors is something to consider.

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APPENDIX A

Hillside: Livingston County LCYC

What is LCYC?

Livingston County LCYC is a voluntary alternative to the traditional Juvenile Justice System for young people who are first-time offenders of a non-violent crime or offense. The offender has already admitted guilt and agrees to have his case heard by a group of peers between the ages of 13 to 18. The goals of LCYC are:

To intervene in early anti-social, delinquent or criminal behaviors and teach new behaviors and skills.

To hold the offenders accountable by offering opportunities to make amends and to educate them on the impact of their actions on themselves, their victims, and the community. (Restorative Justice)

What happens in LCYC?

A youth who has admitted guilt to a crime or an offense appears before a sentencing hearing before a jury of peers. There is a youth judge, youth defense and prosecuting attorney who present the facts of the case. The youth jury is presented with evidence, deliberates and determines an appropriate disposition/sentence for the offender. The offender must comply with the disposition/sanction given by the youth jury.

Who participates in LCYC proceedings?

The LCYC is composed of highly trained student volunteers who function as the judge, jury, prosecution, defense, jury and the bailiff during LCYC Proceedings. The offender is present as well as their parent or guardian. At times a witness or victim could also be present.

What are the benefits of LCYC?

Benefits for members:

Team members gain poise, confidence and experience in our justice systems.

It positively involves youth in leadership roles and governmental processes.

It can be used as school community service credit

A chance to meet and work with youth from Livingston County

Opportunities to meet with and learn from criminal justice professionals

Letters of reference provided for college, jobs. Looks great on a college application

LCYC benefits for the Offender:

It holds the offenders accountable for their actions without incurring the consequences of a juvenile arrest record.

LCYC utilizes peer pressure in a positive way.

LCYC holds the offender accountable for their actions.

LCYC is based on the philosophy of Restorative Justice – whereby the impact of the offense on the victim and the community is considered when determining sanctions.

Performance of community service provides needed help for non-profit agencies and organizations.

Reduces the caseload for Family Court and Probation, allowing those resources to focus on the more serious offenders.

Communities have more young members with a positive attitude toward rules and authority.

What crimes or offenses does LCYC Hear?

LCYC will hear cases that involve: petit larceny, possession of stolen property, criminal mischief, trespassing, minor assault, possession of a weapon, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, school offenses, harassment, disorderly conduct, and false statements.

Who can be referred to LCYC?

Livingston County youth referred by Probation ages seven up to sixteen who have been arrested and:

They are a first time offender and have never been seen by the LCYC.

It was a non-violent offense.

The offender needs to admit to being guilty.

The offender and parents/legal guardian both need to agree to have the case determined by LCYC.

After intake, the Coordinator will discuss with Probation any concerns of appropriateness.

How often does LCYC hear cases?

LCYC will hear cases one night a week, twice a month at the Geneseo Court House.

What are the dispositions/sanctions that can be imposed?

Community Service hours, restitution, apologies (written and/or verbal), educational workshops, essays, counseling, a jail tour, servings as a juror in future LCYC hearings.

What happens when the youth offender and/or family does not follow through with the sanctions imposed by the LCYC?

After a set amount of time, Probation will be notified and the offender will be referred back to Probation and the traditional Juvenile Justice System.

How do I become a LCYC member?

Complete the LCYC Membership Application and return it to:

Steve Todisco

24 Main Street, Mt. Morris, NY 14510

For more information contact LCYC at 658-5502

What age do I have to be to volunteer as LCYC member?

LCYC volunteers are between the ages of 13 to 18 must be in school or home schooled and residing in Livingston County.

What is the time commitment for me as a LCYC member?

Successful completion of a law-related education training program consisting of 15-20 hours for a new member.

3 hour quarterly training updates.

Members must commit to serving at least one year on the court.

Members need to attend majority of court hearings which will occur twice a month (every other Monday evening from 6 to 8pm at the Court House in Geneseo).

What are the rules and expectations of a LCYC member?

Please see the Rules for LCYC Members attached to the LCYC Membership Application.

APPENDIX B

Livingston County Community Service Jail Tour
Hillside Children's Center
1/2010

The Jail Tour is a tour of the local correctional facility. This tour is not a traditional "scared straight" program. It is better described as a reality check. It is facilitated by HCC program staff and the correctional facility staff. Youth meet with the prison Major and his Guards and walk through the facility. Although there is purposely no yelling or screaming at the youth, the tour is reality based and the inmates and the surroundings are real life. The youth are required to go through a metal detector, walk in a straight line against the wall, etc. They see the small quarters, the living area, the bathrooms, etc. The facility staff and Guards are firm with the rules and require obedience of the youth; while at the same time treating the youth with respect and kindness. The objective here is for youth to see that the Guards (or authority) are not the "bad guys" and hopefully see them as helpful and someone they can respect & trust.

Youth then have an opportunity to speak with prisoners (chosen by facility staff) who describe what life is like in jail/prison. The inmates often speak of the loss of privacy; how they miss their families, how they wished they stayed in school, how they wished they had listened to their parents or counselors' and how some have children growing up without them, etc. The inmates also give examples of how they first started to commit crimes and how their crimes got more serious in nature as they got older and various things they wish they had done differently in their life. Overall objectives of the jail tour are to provide youth with an opportunity to see and experience where their "at risk behaviors" may lead; also to show them that they have choices in their life and they can choose not to end up in prison by making better choices. It's all up to them.

Prior to participation in the tour, each youth is assessed for appropriateness based on age (must be 13 or older), mental health status, emotional and developmental ability. All youth and parents are informed of every aspect of the tour and what is expected of the youth (behavior, appropriate clothing, etc.) prior to agreeing to participate. After the completion of the tour, all youth are debriefed; helping them process their experience, their thoughts, any questions, and what they have learned.

Here are a few various comments collected from youth who have participated in the tour. No particular date.

Questions: 1) What was the most effective part of the jail tour for you?
2) What was the one thing said by the prisoners we talked with that was valuable to you?

Responses:

"I remember some big guy (prisoner) telling me he was going to "get me". I'll never

forget that! Also, that you can lose everything, your family, friends everything if you go to jail.”

“I thought that wow, once your 16 you can go to jail for little stuff too. Like the things I did, if I were 16 I could be in jail.”

“When the jailmates told us about their jail lives. That the one guy had blown his scholarship to party, get in trouble, etc.”

“Talking to the prisoners”. (I realized) “You better turn your life around now. It’s better to be with your family than in jail”.

“Seeing the tiny cells, with no windows, knowing that you can’t get out, that really freaked me out. Hearing that guy talk about never seeing his baby and not being there when it was born.”

The most effective part of the jail tour was the interview with the prisoners. The one thing said by the prisoners that was valuable to me was what jail was and how much they did not want to see us in jail.

The most effective part was meeting the three inmates. I know some people like that, but it still helped. What happened because of what they did. Now this is how they have to pay for it.

Talking with the people and talking to us about not be able to see their family. To watch who your friends are and not to do their time by sticking up for them cuz they might not be their for your when you get out.

Seeing all of the prisoners locked up and scarred for life. Not being cared about anymore..
People saying stuff to you. Stay out of here.

Talking to the inmates. Being with your family and being able to see the outside world.

The scary cells and people. The things they yelled at me from their cells. Its not a cool place to be you lose your freedom and family.

Talking with the prisoners. To listen to my family.

I got to see the cells and they did not look like a very happy place. Not to steal because when you are in there you have no family or friends and the other prisoners are not very nice to you.

Seeing Maximum security. Never to go to jail. No free time & Not being able to do simple things.

Seeing the Maximum security section and talking to the people. Not being able to see people.

Walking through the part where everyone made comments. How they live in jail.

The most effective part of the jail tour for me was when we walked by all the other prisoners to see how they lived. About what would happen to me , the food, and about the family.

The way they have to live. When they said that none of their friends came to visit them.

The part where they said I would have no privacy.

When the guys were talking to us. Don't come back here, its not cool.

When the woman talked to me. That this place is not fun.

The people talking to me. You have no privacy. Lots of people. Not seeing your family.

The people saying "Do not end up here, like I did." And not being able to see my sister.

The cells. They started out the same way all of us did. All your freedom gets taken away.

APPENDIX C

Livingston County Community Service Program
Youth Development Workshop
9/2008
Submitted by Mary Jo Acomb

Primary objective/skills: Impulse management, Values & Goals, Self-Esteem, Character Education, Anger management.

Implementation: Discussion/lecture, video/DVD's, worksheets, pamphlets, role play, games

Notes: Each youth is assessed at the time of admission to the Community Service Program concerning age, developmental ability, literacy skills and social skills. Although the primary objective remains the same, the curriculum material is adapted when required and 1:1 workshops are arranged when necessary. Most worksheets, including ice breakers are interchangeable through out the curriculum.

Objectives and Method

Impulse Management: Used with all youth. Main method the "STOP Method". Skills focus on self-control and self-discipline, rules, choices and consequences. Stop and Think; evaluate your Options and the Price you will pay for each of those options.

Values & Goals: Used with older youth and developmentally appropriate. Main method is "Your Deal" cards. Skills focus on assessing and recognizing personal Values, Goals, Strengths and Needs

- 1) Card sets consist of a variety of Values such as, family, honesty, career, education. The youth decide what they value and the level of importance they place on that value.
- 2) The youth then assess a variety of Goals such as education, family, employment, safety, health. This exercise allows the youth to narrow their choices and focus on immediate and long term goals such as, getting a high school diploma, so that they can go to college. They are taught how to break down their goals into to attainable steps. For example, "I need to attend class and do my homework in order to get my high school diploma, so that I can someday attend college".
- 3) Then they assess a variety of personal Strengths & Needs such as, sense of humor, responsible, reliable, and organized. This allows the youth to assess what strengths they already possess and what traits they made need to work on in order to achieve their goals. This exercise can also used in building self-esteem.

Self-Esteem: Used with all youth. Main method is based on age and ability. Skills focus on identifying feelings of self and behaviors, choices and activities that enhance or deplete feelings of self. Identify the benefits of high self-esteem and the consequence of low self-esteem. Evaluate Self-esteem in conjunction with decision making, peer

pressure and achieving personal goals. Self-esteem Bingo and worksheets, such as “Who am I”, “Affirmations for Me” and “How do I see Myself”.

Anger management: (Not ART). Due to time constraints, used with youth whose behavior indicates a specific need. Main method includes the “Feeling Thermometer”, journaling, the “STOP Method. Skills focus on anger as a natural emotion; recognizing personal anger signs/physiological; how to handle those emotions/signs, how to gain self control over those emotions/feelings and recognizing personal triggers to anger.

Character Education: Used with all youth. Main method is a variety of worksheets/exercises/role play. Skills focus on *Accountability, Respect and Responsibility and Empathy*.

General discussion on being held accountable and accepting responsibility for personal actions and choices. Identify benefits from learning from the mistakes made and moving forward. Identify ways to increase responsibility and earn respect and freedoms.

Comparison between the behavior and choices of positive people in their lives and those behaviors and choices of less positive people in their lives. Celebrity profiles are especially useful here, such as Michael Jordon vs. Michael Vick or Brittany Spears vs Abby Wombach or Mia Hamm. It has to be a comparison that is generation appropriate! Worksheet on “Heroes” can be implemented in this discussion.

Empathy exercises and worksheets include assessing how the youth would feel if a random event would happen to him/her. “The Way I See It” is an exercise evaluating how an event affects every one involved and how each person perceives the event.

APPENDIX D



R:\Agency
Projects for Tom I

To Display the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) document click on the Icon above.

APPENDIX E

Questions for LCYC and Community Service Participants

Has your experience in the Hillside LCYC increased your understanding of the legal system?

What are your overall feelings with your participation in the Hillside LCYC?

What barriers to successful completion to your program did you encounter throughout your participation in the program?

What suggestions can you provide us with for improvement of the program or to remove any barriers encountered while participating in the program?

How did the staff at Hillside treat you?

How did probation treat you?

APPENDIX F

Questions for Parents of Participants

What impact did the program Hillside LCYC have on your child?

What do you think about the severity of your child's LCYC sentence relative to the offenses s/he committed?

Was there anything that you particularly disliked about the LCYC program?

What barriers to completing the program successfully did you encounter?

How did the staff at Hillside treat you throughout the program?

How did probation treat you throughout the program?

APPENDIX G

Question for Individuals involved with the staff of Hillside Children's Center and Livingston County Probation Officers

What suggestions do you have to improve the LCYC program?

How receptive are the participants to the program?

What barriers have been identified within the program?

What has been done to remove or reduce these barriers?

How do you feel the interactions between the parents and the staff, influence the program?

APPENDIX H

Table 1.
Sample Characteristics as a Function of Program

	LCYC (N = 55)	Community Service (N = 65)	Significance
Age Mean (SD)	13.62 (1.42)	13.66 (1.23)	NS
Gender (Female)	36.4% (20)	33.8% (22)	NS
Ethnicity/Race			
Caucasian	89.1% (49)	81.5% (53)	p = .248
Af American	3.6% (2)	4.6% (3)	NS
Hispanic	3.6% (2)	7.7% (5)	NS
Other	3.6% (2)	6.2% (4)	NS
Marital Status*			
Never Married	30.9% (17)	43.1% (28)	p = .170
Separated	10.9% (6)	7.7% (5)	NS
Divorced	25.5% (14)	23.1% (15)	NS
Widowed	0.0% (0)	4.6% (3)	NS
Currently Married	30.9% (17)	21.5% (14)	p = .243
Living Arrangement			
Mother Only	52.7% (29)	60.0% (39)	NS
Father Only	9.1% (5)	9.2% (6)	NS
Both Parents	30.9% (17)	16.9% (11)	p = .071
Grandparents	1.8% (1)	6.2% (4)	NS
Aunt	0.0% (0)	3.1% (2)	NS
Foster	0.0% (0)	3.1% (2)	NS
Adoptive	0.0% (0)	1.5% (1)	NS
Grade Level			
5 th	1.8% (1)	4.6% (3)	NS
6 th	12.7% (7)	7.7% (5)	NS
7 th	9.1% (5)	20.0% (13)	p = .095
8 th	32.7% (18)	16.9% (11)	p = .044
9 th	25.5% (14)	43.1% (28)	p = .044
10 th	18.2% (10)	7.7% (5)	p = .083
Receiving TANF	69.1% (38)	73.8% (48)	NS

Table 2.
Program Information as a Function of Program.

	LCYC (N = 55)	Community Service (N = 65)	Significance
Year of Admission			
2006	27.3% (15)	36.9% (24)	NS
2007	47.3% (26)	40.0% (26)	NS
2008	25.5% (14)	23.1% (15)	NS
Outcome			
Successful Completion	92.7% (51)	93.8% (61)	NS
Failure	1.8% (1)	3.1% (2)	NS
Other	5.5% (3)	3.1% (2)	NS
Category of Admission Offense			
JD	12.7% (7)	30.8% (20)	p < .001
JD Diversion	76.4% (42)	18.5% (12)	
PINS	5.5% (3)	24.6% (16)	
PINS Diversion	5.5% (3)	20.0% (13)	
Youth Advocacy	0.0% (0)	4.6% (3)	
Parent referred	0.0% (0)	1.5% (1)	
Took Jail Tour	41.8% (23)	41.5% (27)	NS
Youth Developmental Workshop	85.5% (47)	70.8% (46)	p = .055