

The Teen Challenge After-School Learning and Children's Prevention Programs

The After-School Learning and Children's Prevention Programs enhance the capacity of Teen Challenge to offer or accelerate opportunities for a new generation of at-risk young people that will prevent, delay, and/or reduce ATOD abuse with its related problems and will prepare and empower them for their lifetime's work.

Demonstrated Need for After-School Programs

A poll conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University found that teens rank drugs as their single most important problem (Califano et al., 1998). According to the study, average age of first alcohol use was twelve and the first drug use was at age thirteen. Fifty percent of the 1996 graduating class said they had experimented with an illicit drug by their senior year of high school indicating an upward trend in drug use from 40% in 1992. Twenty-four percent of seniors admitted using drugs within the month of the survey.

A University of Colorado study demonstrated that the problem of drug use was also prevalent among young people who attended a local church (Anderson, 1999). The survey, completed by 14, 000 junior high and high school youth, compared drug use among church attendees and non-church attendees. The difference in drug use was very slight. Eighty-eight percent of the non-church attendees reported drinking compared to 80% of church attendees. Forty-seven percent of the non-church attendees had tried marijuana compared to 38% of church attendees. Twenty-eight percent of non-church youth compared to 28% of the church youth used amphetamines and barbiturates while 14% of the non-church attendees compared to 11% of church youth admitted to experimenting with cocaine.

Research suggests that violent juvenile crime peaks when the school day ends. A 1997 FBI data-report on several states suggested that from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. the percentage of juvenile related crime activity increased dramatically. The rise in percentage of crime activity by this group jumped more than 250% from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The percentage of crime activity by this group continues high and tapers through 7:00 p.m.

The 2000 Census data revealed that 7 million children ages 5 to 14 care for themselves after school (Smith 2000). Especially alarming was that the rate of juvenile violence is highest in the after-school hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Constructive after-school activities for children and youth help increase low-income children's chances of succeeding in school. Studies confirm that children enrolled in well-designed programs miss significantly less days of school than they had the year previously, improve the completion of their homework assignments, and demonstrate better school behavior than their peers who did not attend a program. Unfortunately,

especially in light of the obvious benefits, children from low-income families are 50% less likely to be involved in any after-school activity.¹

The After-School Learning and Children's Prevention Programs

Teen Challenge has grown significantly over the past decades establishing centers throughout Southern California. Teen Challenge has earned its reputation as the most effective faith-based substance abuse prevention and treatment program in the nation. Teen Challenge's commitment to its distinctive mission and value system remains firm.

As new opportunities and challenges have arisen, Teen Challenge has sought to offer programs that are innovative, relevant and contextual. They have been creative, intentional and realistic in the prevention and treatment programs undertaken. The newest prevention endeavor will enable Teen Challenge to redraw its maps of how prevention resources can be made available to address the needs of at-risk children in Orange County. These prevention initiatives, functioning in schools, neighborhood sidewalks, community centers, and churches, are designed to make a transformative difference in the life of children and young adults who in turn influence their peers, families and society.

In addition to creating the partnerships and collaborative relationships, designed to bring the resources of the church, school, and the community together, empower young people and their families. *The After-School Learning and Children's Prevention Programs* ensures Teen Challenge's best efforts to prevent substance abuse among at-risk children and adolescents and attracts and enables a new generation of young leaders to become world changers.²

Teen Challenge has a well-respected track record in providing drug prevention and treatment to thousands of young adults from a diversity of ethnic and socio-economic contexts. Through the new projects outlined in this proposal, Teen Challenge aims to increase dramatically its outreach to at-risk children.

The following descriptions provide a summary of the conceptual purpose and goals for the Teen Challenge after-school programs. The proposal seeks to articulate *The After-School Learning and Children's Prevention Programs*, which, if supported, will enable the ministry to accomplish its mission at heightened levels of excellence.

Program Elements

The value-added components of the program include life and leadership skills, school, family and church bonding, and formation of healthy social and spiritual attitudes.

The After-School Learning Program seeks to achieve these goals by providing supplementary educational components that include tutoring and mentoring (volunteers),

¹ It is unrealistic, however, to expect after-school programs to solve the problem of systematic failure within the traditional educational system.

² After-school programs can mean a variety of almost thing. There are three basic types of after-school programs usually focused upon children and adolescents ages 5-14 that are recognized formally: Prevention/Youth Development, Education programs, and Child Care programs.

technological opportunities, family-related workshops and counseling, leadership formation activities, and quality partnerships.³

Academic, creative, spiritual, physical and mental goals will be nurtured via a number of specific activities.

The after-school program consists of 3 components:

1) An educational component provides tutoring or homework assistance to improve school performance and behavior. Trained volunteer **tutors**,⁴ following a structured curriculum, provide assistance in one or more of the following subject areas: language arts, math, history, social studies, and science. Special emphasis is placed upon computer science and **technology** with technologically enhanced learning resources and tools. The after-school program components are integrated, when possible, with the local school's curriculum, instruction, and learning support activities.

2) An educational enrichment component, supported by volunteer **mentors**, offers opportunities for participation in recreational activities and cultural events, and perhaps just as important is the time a mentor invests in a child or young person. The activities in this component might involve art, music, sports, and general recreation; church and community service; and other youth development activities based on student needs and interest.

3) A spiritual and social formation component to incorporate **Community and Church** involvement both as partners and focal points. **Family** building to enable the parents to become primary prevention models accompanied by counseling for both student and family. The development of **Leadership** and social skills that challenge children and youth to explore healthy identity and self-esteem development.

Funding

The program is funded by contributions (cash or in-kind) from churches, corporations and businesses, private foundations and individual donors.⁵

After the initial year of operations it is possible that state and federal assistance could be pursued. At present, state funding requires the local program to supply an amount equal to 50 % of the grant.

³ For several reasons this project should be considered as a "start-up."

⁴ Perhaps 20 hours initially and 10 hours in continuing education annually.

⁵ Clearly the cost of the program depends on what the program does. The State of California in its *After-school Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program* (mostly within schools) provides \$5.00 per 3-hour day for each child and expect the local entity to match half of that, thus an estimated daily cost of \$7.50. Most after-school programs receive public funds.

Operational Requirements

Focus on At-Risk Students

The after-school program is designed to meet the needs of students who are most at risk of academic and social failure in a community.

The TC staff selects children-at-risk (1) from schools that do not have after-school programs, (2) from low-income families, (3) with low academic performance, (4) whose neighborhoods are unsafe, (5) who are identified as "hard to reach," (6) who are not participating in other extracurricular activities, (7) from single-parent homes, and/or (8) who are identified as victims of domestic violence, abuse and neglect, or homelessness or as living in a migrant family.

The after-school program operates during the critical hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. when most children are left unattended. The youth or middle school program chooses a flex schedule of 9 hours per week to accomplish program goals. The supervisor, staff members and volunteers (tutors and mentors) must meet pre-determined qualifications. The staff/volunteer ratio of 14:1 permits students to receive assistance whenever they need it.

The budget provides adequate funding for transportation for students who may not be able to participate in program activities because of a lack of transportation.⁶

A mental health therapist offers small-group and individual counseling sessions for children and their families.

Program Outcomes

The formation of young people with strong Life and Leadership skills and Educational and Career aspirations; the formation of young people who are Independent learners, Spiritually alive, and Able to Dream.

Short and mid-term outcomes

- Improve grades; pass grade
- Strengthen analytical and decision-making skills
- Provide opportunities to develop life and work skills (leadership and computer)
- Improve behavior and attitudes toward family, school, and community
- Create and support a sense of self-esteem and future aspirations
- Encourage spiritual and social formation
- Produce a child or young person who avoids drugs

Evaluation Criteria

The after-school program will conduct evaluations that include measures for academic performance, attendance, and positive behavioral changes.

⁶ Transportation is an essential element in most successful programs.

Cost Elements for After-School Program and Systems Program Costs

Start-Up Costs

Needs Assessment

Program Planning and Curriculum Development

Technical Assistance

Equipment/Supplies

Initial Staff Training

Volunteer Recruitment/Training

Furniture

Equipment/Supplies (computers, software, hub, server, smart cart etc.)

Facilities Preparation

Licensing and Accreditation

Insurance

Other

Operating Costs

Program Staff Salaries

Social Service/Health Staff (e.g., counselor, nurse, dentist)

Food

Equipment/Supplies

Furniture

Facilities, rent, utilities, maintenance

Transportation

Planning/Coordination

Training/Accreditation

Monitoring/Evaluation/Reporting

Insurance

Other

FACT SHEET

About Children and Families in Crisis

Over 4 million children are reported each year as suspected victims of child abuse and neglect.⁷

In 1998, 88 percent of the states named substance abuse as the main reason child mistreatment cases were reported to authorities.

Almost 5.5 million children live in households headed by a relative other than a parent.

1 child in 2 will live in a single parent family at some point in childhood.⁸

1 child in 3 is born to unmarried parents.

1 child in 3 will be poor at some point in childhood.

1 child in 4 lives with only one parent.

3 in 5 preschoolers have their mother in the labor force.

1 child in 1,056 will be killed by guns before age 20.

About Children and Education

The richest school districts spend 56 percent more per student than do the poorest.

Thirty-three percent of all children are behind a year or more in school.

Seventy-seven percent of 4th graders, 73 percent of 8th graders, and 78 percent of 12th graders scored below basic writing proficiency level.

Forty percent never complete a single year of college.

Over 80 percent of students in the Santa Ana Unified School District are Hispanic.

⁷ Children's Defense Fund

⁸ The State of America's Children Yearbook 2001.