

Through the Eyes of Youth: Experience with Programs at the Crissy Field Center

Inspiring Young Emerging Leaders and Urban Trail Blazers



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EXPERIENCE WITH PROGRAMS
AT THE CRISSY FIELD CENTER”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ✓ Results of this evaluation study can give the Crissy Field Center (CFC) new ways of thinking and talking about what you do as part of program development, community education, and fundraising.
- ✓ The SFSU research team conducted 43 interviews with young girls and boys in the Urban Trailblazer (UTB) program, teenagers participating in I-YEL (Inspiring Young Emerging Leaders), and a convenience sample of I-YEL Alumni. The youth interviewed came from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and ranged in age from 11 to 22 years old.
- ✓ Based on the overall interview process and document review procedure, a series of recommendations have been developed to guide efforts to enhance the program operations as well as examples for how to use this information for marketing the outcomes among key stakeholders.
- ✓ Ten (10) common themes emerged across all focus groups. Examples include:
 - o Connection: The CFC is a safe place to go; powerful and unique
 - o Impact: The program is a springboard to increasing self-confidence and clear transference to other aspects of life (e.g., school, family, peer relations).
 - o Personal/Social Growth: Deep enjoyment of learning new skills; elevated consciousness about abilities and relationships.
 - o Contribution to Environment: Greater comprehension of environmental impacts, knowledge gained about natural resource issues, experience with resource protection, and desire to educate others about learning.
 - o Healthy lifestyles: Increased awareness of proper nutrition habits, love of outdoor trips as fun and physically invigorating, spiritual/emotional connection to nature.
- ✓ Academics: (1) I-YEL students substantiated how new knowledge and experiences helped with school projects, group work in classes (e.g., science and history), teachers invite students to assist (e.g., recognition of advanced learning); (2) Results also show the I-YEL program created a social awareness for the Alumni, deep enough where several students are pursuing college degrees correlating with the ideas and values gained from I-YEL and strong enough to incorporate into their own value system; and (3) through increased self-esteem and confidence, students noted grades improved.
- ✓ Four key levels: The UTB and I-YEL programs appear to have four levels or spheres of influence that creates communities of support for strong, healthy youth:
 1. *Individual level* – Programs and activities contribute to increasing individual students’ knowledge and skills, self esteem and self confidence. Youth are clearly more empowered. Results indicate participants are more conscientious of eating habits, and are more physically active than normal.

2. *Social network* – Participation in these programs creates stronger relationships among each other (as youth) with their family and friends, and with adult/mentors in the programs and in the community.

3. *Community sphere* – The Center programs create new and broader opportunities for urban youth, and challenge the values and belief systems that often create adverse or detrimental experiences for youth (in their other surroundings).

4. *Institutional level* – The CFC employs strategies that focus on six core beliefs: Common Concern; Experimentation; Mutual Learning; Interdependence; Diversity; and Action (source: Crissy Field Way).

Note: Activities clearly build upon these beliefs and impact institutional and systemic practices and norms that show to positively affect urban youth.

- ✓ Multi-media: Digital Stories (UTB) and Video Productions (I-YEL) are highlights of the programs. Opportunities are numerous including results of task fulfillment, team cooperation for common goal, and pride in accomplishments.
- ✓ Influence of technology outside the Center: In general, beyond CFC programs, results show students still thrive on computer games and watching T.V.
- ✓ Leaders/Staff: Program coordinators and field staff are loved and highly respected by participants. The youth also recognize many/most of the staff are close in age and, believe this is why “they understand me”.
- ✓ Developmental Youth Outcomes: In our opinion, this is one of the most important documents we received from I-YEL based on perceptions of what I-YEL should be about. The UTB program should consider creating one as well.
- ✓ Healthy Lifestyles: All participants spend a certain amount of time in the outdoors through program involvement and receive physical exercise while working on productive tasks. All participants in this study (UTB and I-YEL) were taught proper nutrition and appeared to apply healthy nutritional concepts into their diets and expressed desire to change their daily habits.
- ✓ Natural Environment: Participants learned about basic and advanced environmental concepts such as value of recycling or negative human impacts in the national parks.
- ✓ Social Environment (Peer relations/Friendships): Youth were, for the most part, respectful to their fellow participants as they all became friends and most of them considered themselves “like brothers and sisters”. This trend is clear throughout all years of the programs’ existence. Findings suggest some participants improved their relationship with friends/family as well as educated others about the natural environment (e.g., increased awareness, social skill development, leadership skill building).
- ✓ Social responsibility: Participants learned that positive social skills affect their involvement in the program as well as in the community beyond the Center. Increased awareness of their social environment “broadened their horizon,” in general.
- ✓ “Spreading the word” ~ Advocating for the CFC and the Park: Evidence shows participants clearly promote the program in their schools, local community, with family and friends/peers as they believe in the holistic values and positive benefits of the Center.



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If this report is used, in part or as a whole, the following reference must be included:

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Note: All focus group interview transcripts provided under separate cover. ~ NSR

“THROUGH THE EYES OF THE YOUTH: EXPERIENCE WITH PROGRAMS AT THE CRISSY FIELD CENTER”

Introduction and Background

The Crissy Field Center (CFC) operates a variety of year-round programs for youth and others in the community. They have ongoing programs, growing relationships with schools and local community groups, and the facility is a “welcome mat” for many people visiting/recreating in the park. This Center is a resource for all community users with varied backgrounds. Research and evaluation needs are multi-layered and will hopefully continue to occur over a multi-year period. This report represents a two phase study. Phase I included focus group interviews. We brought together the 2006 I-YEL participants (Inspiring Young Emerging Leaders) and the 2006 Urban Trail Blazer (UTB) participants (2 sessions occurred). A 3rd group consisted of alumni as past-participants in I-YEL and who may have also been leaders in the UTB program. Although not part of the original scope of work, an attempt was made to survey the parents following the summer program; an insufficient number of surveys were returned so no analyses took place. Phase II was a program-related document review and analysis of a sample of materials.

In general, and a valuable component to this study, is the role of parks and outdoor education/recreation in promoting healthy lifestyles. There is a lack of research tracking and evaluating how the health of users of park facilities, spaces, and programs improves during participation and over time (Hobbs-Vinluan, 2006). The CFC provides space and access for youth and adults of all ages, abilities and income levels to increase their daily dose of physical activity. Programs offered for youth, for example, provide a variety of opportunities for young people to learn about proper nutrition, engage in active outdoor recreation, develop an appreciation of the natural environment, and establish new ways to balance their lives.

PRIMARY GOALS:

- 1) Conduct evaluation research of two youth programs and understand the program impacts and leadership development at the Center.
- 2) Incorporate evidence-based information and evaluative research results into park management planning and decisions for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ To examine and discover the outreach influence of teen volunteers on their peers and GGNRA, as a whole, and understand the influences of experiences obtained at the Center.
- ✓ Conduct a brief literature review on the topics of urban youth, environmental education/environmental literacy, outdoor recreation, youth leadership/development and health (e.g., healthy lifestyles connection to park use). Purpose: Provide a brief overview of trends, issues, and outcomes measured that are aligned with the goals and objectives.
- ✓ Determine if, and how, youth experience any behavioral changes as a result of their participation and;
- ✓ Understand how the program affects youth academic and future career choices.

Brief Review of the Literature

Evidence shows that lasting change is created in teams that work in tight networks to successfully create lasting products and services. The outdoor/environmental education and outdoor recreation fields know that positive effects have the potential to create change that can last a lifetime. Professionals involved with these fields of study, and who are familiar with the Crissy Field Center, know that these types of programs, such as those offered by the Center, are more than just “fun and games”. The entire Bay Area community (and beyond) needs to know this as well. The Center programs build community, increase self-esteem, and create important eternal “flow” experiences among children and teens. Such experiences are not only single activities but also can be encounters with a much deeper meaning; this can have life transforming impacts on urban youth.

Concept of flow

The concept of *flow* is relevant to the youth programs at the Center. For instance, Csikszentmihalyi, 1975 (as cited in Voelki, et al. 2003) described flow as the “holistic sensations that people feel when they act with total involvement” (p. 20). It can “occur when a person’s body or mind stretches to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Research suggests that one of the ultimate goals in experiential learning is to be submerged in flow experiences.

Value of qualitative research and evaluation

Based on the nature of outdoor programs offered to urban youth, who often represent different social stratifications, it is often problematic to find matching control groups often required in some types of quantitative studies (Weston & Tinsley, 1999). “Therefore, relying on quantitative methods to identify outdoor program outcomes, researchers may inadvertently miss the influence of outdoor adventure programs” (Garst, Scheider, & Baker, 2001). Hence, qualitative approaches may be much more effective.

Warner (1990), on the other hand, argues that measuring self-esteem provides little insight into the process of the outdoor experience. His suggestion is that “researchers should focus on documenting the nature of both the individual’s experience and the total program experience through qualitative evaluation and research methods” (p. 131).

Hazelworth & Wilson (1990) mention that outdoor programs are often a means to reinforce the participant’s social and interpersonal skills; however, each participant may not experience equal changes. Furthermore, a challenge with evaluating outdoor and environmental programs is the difficulty knowing if the impact on the youth has lasting effects, and if changes are displayed and sustained at the participants home on a lasting basis, or if the personal changes stay within the program boundaries (Pommier & Witt, 1995).

Experiential learning and urban youth

Previously, outdoor and nature-based recreation programs appealed to large segments of youth and offered youth service providers a way to positively influence pro-social behavior (Witt & Crompton, 1997). Today, however, it is becoming more well-known that fewer youth, in general, are participating less and less in outdoor-based programs and activities (Louv, 2006). Research suggests that many people learn best within outdoor

programs when the concept of experiential learning is applied where participants are exposed to purposeful contact with their learning experience (Priest & Gass, 1997).

Several research studies claim that when outdoor programs are combined with experiential learning activities, the negative effects of poor behavior in youth can be reduced. Garst, Schneider, and Baker (2001) concluded that adverse behavior might be “reduced” in at least one of the three ways: (1) Increasing participants’ feelings of positive self-perception; (2) Providing ways that adolescents can gain knowledge, skills, and abilities and/or; (3) Increasing adolescents’ understanding and knowledge of a positive peer culture and their ability to develop positive peer relationships and social skills.

Service learning among school groups

Boyd and Barry (2000) point out that “Service learning projects offer teens the opportunity to practice leadership skills and reflect on the experience to learn more about themselves. Skills such as brainstorming, decision-making, setting goals and working with others can be taught and practiced as teens plan and carry out significant service projects”.

This study concluded that middle school students within large inner-city schools have fewer opportunities to acquire and enhance leadership skills than their high school counterparts. Scheer (1997) suggests this is a problem because possessing leadership skills is essential for young people to feel satisfaction and contribute to society. The Boyd and Barry study concluded that after a 12-week program, using an experiential model to teach youth leadership skills, the use of experiential activities—in combination with service learning—proved to be a successful model for teaching leadership skills to students. “Students significantly increased their knowledge of leadership skills in the areas of decision-making, setting goals, working with others and community service” (Boyd & Barry, 2000, p. 6).

Boyd and Barry indicate that “experiential learning takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity.

In the past few years, research in the area of experiential learning has strengthened this approach by adding several key processing steps beyond simply doing the activity or experience. These steps include:

1. Having participants experience the activity – perform or do it;
2. Having participants share the experience by describing what happened;
3. Asking participants to process the experience to identify common themes;
4. Having participants generalize from the experience to form principles or guidelines that can be used in “real life” situations (e.g., life skills); and
5. Asking participants to apply what was learned to another situation.

It is important to understand that the actual learning results from the reflection and rumination of the activity created by the experience, and that experiencing the activity, by itself, is not creating “experiential learning” (Bonn,1999).

Program outcomes and impacts

A study was completed by the American Institutes for Research (2005) on the *Effects of Outdoor Education Programs for Children in California*. There were 255 sixth-grade students from different schools and geographically different locations who participated in

three outdoor education programs. Students and parents were surveyed to measure changes related to conflict resolution, self esteem, cooperation, leadership, and their relationship with their teacher. The teachers rated students on eight constructs: Self-esteem, cooperation, conflict resolution, leadership, relationships with peers, problem solving, motivation to learn and behavior in class.

Student assessments found that those who attended outdoor science schools exhibited considerably higher gains in conflict resolution. In six to ten weeks, the same children displayed gains in cooperation and conflict resolution that were significantly higher than the control group. The teachers measured improvements and gains in all eight constructs from the students who participated in the experiment. “The study concluded that the participation in an outdoor school was associated with higher ratings of conflict resolution skills and cooperation. Strong evidence of the benefits of the outdoor school is seen in teachers’ ratings of students. For instance, students who attend the program received significantly higher ratings than children who did not participate in six of eight constructs: Self-esteem, conflict resolution, relationship with peers, problem solving, motivation to learn, and behavior in class (American Institutes for Research, 2005).

Healing a broken bond between youth and nature

According to the new book by Louv (2006), “Last Child in the Woods,” most parents in urban, suburban, and rural areas in America say that children aren’t playing outside much anymore, not even in the backyard or neighborhood park. “Kids today have plenty of knowledge about the Amazon rain forest, but they’re unlikely to be able to tell you about the last time they explored the outdoors, or stretched out in solitude in a field to listen to the wind and watch the clouds move.” Additionally, “Researchers at the Human-Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois discovered children as young as five showed a significant reduction in the symptoms of attention-deficit disorder when they engaged with nature.” Environmental psychologists report that nature, in or around a residence helps reduce stress and protect the psychological well-being of children.

Furthermore, Louv notes that outdoor education programs geared toward troubled youth also offer clear “therapeutic” value. He cites several studies that show that children who play in natural settings are more cooperative, more creative, and more likely to exhibit signs of leadership skills as they progress through life.

Social responsibility and leadership

For Goodale (1991), outdoor recreation is more than one single field of academics. It involves the knowledge of social sciences such as history and philosophy, and the knowledge of the natural environment such as field biology, ornithology, and ocean ecology. Among this fundamental knowledge, he believes professionals in the field of outdoor recreation can instill a craft in their students, which has lasting effects on the students as well as on the local community.

Although written more than 15 years ago, his critique on social responsibility is that we seem to have an inflated sense about what education can accomplish and this still holds true today. Goodale suggests that “behavioral respectability” is needed in our society to make greater contributions to building community and to bring people together in natural ways. One does not need excessive goods to be happy in nature; the excessive material accumulation actually hinders the experience one can gain in the outdoors, as one is held

back by unnecessary material belongings. He says there is work to be done for the “greater good of society” as we cannot console ourselves by saying ‘we are doing what we can, and we are not morally obliged to do more.’ Goodale suggests the current understanding that helping society is something to be done—to feel good if we do, and guilty if we don’t. “Looking good and feeling good about ourselves without making a difference in the lives of others, falls dramatically short of social responsibility” (Goodale, 1991, p. 83).

In today’s society, the need for teamwork and collaboration becomes essential as the demands on staff and supervisors are constantly increasing. This is especially important for outdoor education programs to constantly keep up with the rising demands, and to also constantly monitor and improve the service delivery of opportunities. This implication makes it necessary for the human dimension aspect to not only hire qualified program staff, but also to hire the “right people” for the needed positions. Furthermore, there is a need to find and hire staff who innately feel a sense of responsibility to collaborate and produce a better product for the youth, the community, and the Bay Area overall. Consequently, many more programs have begun to also consider and realize the potential for hiring young people who “come up through the ranks” from participants to leaders.

Conflict between nature and consumerism

Today we live in an age that includes divergence; too many young children from American cities build an identity through the cloth they are wearing, the sneakers they are parading, and the music they are listening to from their I-pod’s (which is on constant display). Cell phones have become an integral part of their lives and, whenever boredom strikes, someone is being called just to escape the possibility that one might have to talk to someone and actually engage in a conversation with a stranger. It is all too common for young people turning 18 to demand a car from their parents or at least a toy with the idea of driving their own car to become ‘independent’, which seems to be the common notion.

Unfortunately one of the many negative effects of a capitalistic society is that people simply value the bottom line yield more than the value of anything else. Moreover, it is the concept of values that gets instilled in children from a very young age. The capitalistic drive made it possible, and perfectly acceptable, for people to commute long hours to work, and for the creation of the shopping mall, physically breaking up local communities and the local corner store. Motor vehicles create an illusion of independence; the truth is they only create a fragmentation of life, destruction of communities and a constant struggle to find the center of life since we are constantly moving to another distant place without considering the journey along our travels (Pert, 2000).

How many young people watch television on a daily basis and talk about T.V. programs with their friends? Do television shows, in general, create meaningful conversations and interactions in a healthy way? Does T.V. foster active behavior and are the values honest and real? In reality, unless educational, it can turn viewers (in particular children) into “passive mindless consumers” who watch a stream of images far of away from real life and reality. Television is an insidious escape route for people who get pulled into a world where buying something “bigger and better” and is a paradigm. How can getting youth outdoors connected to nature counteract this phenomenon?

According to Voelki (1998), the basic assumption is that people, especially young people will listen and follow inspiring leadership that creates flow experiences which tap into their core of natural interests in an organic and healthy way. Youth can achieve greatness by

being infused with a healthy dose of energy and enthusiasm, which could come naturally through possible interest in the environment and participation in outdoor education activities. Young people will see that they are being cared about and come to the realization that the “leaders” want to see them succeed. Leaders will show, express and share their views on the future that will eventually convince young people to see that it is “cool to be one-self and to care about the surrounding environment”.

Facilitators of lasting change

Leaders who work with youth have to exercise caution not to overwhelm the participants and/or interns with their visions as a trusting relationship has to be built. This vision, being one that constantly conveys energy and commitment, creates a passion of lasting change that transforms the possibly materialistic and disjointed youth they work with, to young people filled with new hope. At the very least, when young people spend time with caring mentors and role models, there is no need to surf the Internet and indulge in excessive material consumption and engage in retail therapy. When they spend time exploring the natural environment, they become connected in often unexpected ways.

This leadership vision should be adopted by the entire organization to be uniform and definitely transcending through all levels of the agency (Harvard Business Review, 1998). It is also crucial to maintain a personal integrity, as the leaders are not only selling a vision, offering an experience, and becoming facilitators of lasting change, but also they are selling a part of themselves. This is an ongoing process which is intertwined in every aspect of the participants’ being, with time spent with the leaders positively influencing and instilling self awareness that will be carried over to all aspects of their life.

Effective leaders who work with youth should be able to build positive relationships with young people and empower them to become active participants in their own communities as well as promote (in youth) a moral and ethical sense of right and wrong (Edginton, Kowalski & Randall, 2005). This, ideally, should be accomplished in a way that youth are able to govern their own behavior and ultimately make their own decisions.

The influence of the outdoor education programs will hopefully and eventually become part of the youth’s life, not only affecting their well-being, but also stretching far beyond their imaginable boundaries. This would reach places that improve the quality of life for everyone involved. And, this would have far reaching implications touching not only them but their families and community which can create lasting change.

Final thoughts relating to the Crissy Field Center

With what simple recipe can this lasting change been created at the Center? The Crissy Field Center’s highly qualified staff, who has the autonomy to lead by their own measures and challenge themselves under their own terms, are setting the example to the youth to be highly motivated from within. The all encompassing result that creates an integral and lasting change will allow youth the opportunity to step apart from experiences in which the external rewards that are short lived to instead experiencing the rewards coming from the activities themselves. The recipe is the alchemy of collaboration, acceptance and the innate quest for constant improvement of the self, society, and even, what lies beyond ones’ own horizon.

PHASE I: “Through the Eyes of Youth” – Focus Group Interviews Urban Trailblazers, I-YEL, and I-YEL Alumni (Summer 2006)

Limitations of Study

One of the limitations of this study related to the nature of this project; that is, we did not specifically interview previous participants who only went through the Urban Trail Blazer program. No former UTB participants were contacted to know about availability nor was this requested in the planning. Had we been able to interview former UTB participants this may have allowed us to see the impacts of the program on the participants’ life, and their impressions of the program in retrospect as well as the correlation to the current participants reflections of the program.

Although not part of the original scope of work, an attempt was made to survey parents of both the UTB and I-YEL programs. Only five I-YEL surveys were returned and less than ½ of the UTB surveys were completed – This was deemed insufficient for analysis and completed surveys were given to the CFC staff for review.

Methodology

Introduction

Use of qualitative methods can best provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question such as through use of personal interviews, participant observation, symbolic interactionism, focus groups, and historical reviews. The focus group technique, as the agreed upon methodology, has received widespread attention on the specific target groups of urban youth. Ongoing correspondence with the CFC Director, Deputy Director and the Program Coordinators occurred as needed.

The focus group technique is a tool for studying ideas in a group context and provides a way to identify depth of meaning. The hallmark of this approach is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group. Focus groups are interviews engaging 8-12 people at the same time, in the same group, and are a powerful means to understand depth of experiences, assess services, or test new ideas. A great deal of information was obtained for the Crissy Field Center during these focus group sessions. And, by conducting focus groups, GGNRA and the Parks Conservancy continue to send powerful messages to their constituents about the commitment of the CFC to excellence in youth programming.

The researchers prepared each interview session, established a timeline and created benchmarks. A series of semi-structured questions were developed for each group based on objectives (See Appendix A).

Last, it is critical to assure all participant responses in the focus groups remain confidential. This means youth have not been identified or associated with their responses when analyzing or talking about our findings. Each student who participated in the interview process was associated with a number that is their “unique identifier.”

Phase I: Focus Group Data Collection

Setting and Procedures

After meeting with the CFC staff and reviewing the study objectives, it was determined the interviews would be approximately 1.5 hours long. This was also decided based on the attention span of the participants. We knew the focus and attention span from the UTB youth would probably be shorter than the one from the I YEL participants. And the greatest level of attentiveness was hypothesized to be from the Alumni, which was also the case. The CFC staff provided a room with plenty of bright light; this was important for comfort and to maintain attention needed for the required period of time.

Consent forms from the participants were not required. The documentation already existed at the Center with the parent or guardian signatures to approve participation in this study and similar projects. As one incentive to participate in the interview, snacks and refreshments were provided. Token incentives, beyond snacks, were discussed as an option to also be provided by the GGNPC, however this did not occur.

Prior to the interview, the participants filled out a data sheet with their name, age, gender, number of years in the program, and ethnic background. Each participant was given a number as their identity for their responses. They mentioned this number, instead of their name, before stating their comments and responses to the questions asked during the interview.

In order to record the interview, an audiotape recorder, microphone, and blank tapes were part of the study materials. As a measure to assure proper documentation and capturing of responses, notes were taken by the graduate research assistant as well as by the facilitator to supplement the audio-tape data.

Everyone convened around a large table to conduct the focus group session. The table size was nearly perfect as we all needed to sit close together to ensure accuracy of the audio-recording; this was conveniently placed in the center of the table.



The session facilitators were researchers from San Francisco State University. The Principal Investigator (P.I.), Nina Roberts, conducted the majority of sessions. The Graduate Research Assistant, Roman Iacobucci, served as a facilitator of the second UTB interview process.

Participants

The four focus groups that were held at the CFC consisted of a total of 43 youth who were participants in the I-YEL and in the Urban Trailblazer program, and one focus group consisted of I-YEL Alumni. The following information includes participant details:

<u>Age range:</u>	11 – 22 years old
<u>Females:</u>	<i>n</i> = 21
<u>Males:</u>	<i>n</i> = 22
<u>Years in program:</u>	1 year 21 Students
	2 years 12 Students
	3 years 7 Students
	4 years 3 Students

***Note:** Three of the Alumni were leaders in the UTB, after graduating from I-YEL. Two of the Alumni served on the CFC Youth Advisory Council and have been involved in the program since 2001.*

Race and Ethnic Background

√ Asian: 23 Students Chinese Filipina Asian mixed (<i>n</i> =3) Chinese/Vietnamese Chinese/German Japanese/Caucasian	√ Hispanic: 9 Students Salvadorian Nicaraguan Guatemalan Mexican/Salvadorian (<i>n</i> =2) Mexican/Irish Latin mixed
√ African American: 6 Students Eritrean African American mixed (<i>n</i> =3)	√ “Mixed” [no specific race or ethnicity stated]: 2 Students
√ Caucasian/White: 3 Students	

Note: There are 12 mixed race students out of the 43 total interviewed (28%)

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>	<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Years in Program</u>	<u>Ethnicity/Race</u>
G r o u p 1	7/22/06	I-YEL	13	16-18	9 Female 4 Male	7- Two years 4- Three years 2- Four years	<u>Asian (n = 5)</u> Chinese 4 Filipina 1 <u>Asian mixed</u> Chinese/Vietnamese 1 <u>Latino (n = 4)</u> Salvadorian 1 Nicaraguan 1 Guatemalan 1 Latin mixed 1 <u>African American (n = 2)</u> Eritrean 1 African American mixed 1 <u>White 1</u>
G r o u p 2	7/26/06	UTB Focus Group # 1 of 2	11	11-14	5 Female 6 Male	9- One year 2- Two years	<u>Asian (n = 3)</u> Chinese <u>Asian mixed (n = 2)</u> Chinese German Japanese/Caucasian <u>Hispanic mixed (n = 3)</u> Mexican/Salvadorian 2 Mexican/Irish 1 <u>Mixed unknown 1</u> <u>African American mixed (2)</u> African American/Spanish 1 African American/ Filipina 1
G r o u p 3	7/27/06	UTB Focus Group #2 of 2	12	11-14	5 Female 7 Male	8- One year 1- two years 2-three years 1- four years	<u>Asian = 8</u> <u>African American = 2</u> <u>Latin = 1</u> <u>Latin mixed = 1</u>
G r o u p 4	8/8/06	I-YEL Alumni	7	18-22	2 Female 5 Male	4- one year in I-YEL 2- two years in I-YEL 1-three years in I-YEL <u>Leaders for UTB:</u> 1- one year 1-two years 1- three years	<u>Asian (n = 4)</u> Chinese <u>Caucasian (White) = 2</u> <u>Mixed Race = 1</u>

Data Analysis

First, prior to conducting the focus group interviews, the P.I. and the research assistant participated in two activities with the UTB to become more familiar with the setting of this program at the CFC as well as the group dynamics. This gave the advantage of providing initial exposure and first-hand experience. This was useful to see the children interact with each other and also allow for any possible comparison with the interviews. We tried not to be seen as intrusive, rather more as “part of the group,” and to assist the leaders as requested. (*See program observations*). The intention was also to get the group accustomed to our presence and to make them more comfortable for the interviews that followed.

All interviews were audio-taped; the research assistant also typed notes into a laptop and the P.I. took hand-written notes both as a back up measure. The research assistant transcribed all audio-tapes, compared the transcription to both facilitator notes and assistant notes. The P.I. reviewed and cleaned the data in preparation for analysis. The following steps were taken to analyze the data generated by the focus groups:

- The research team met weekly to review research questions in relation to data gathered. Cross-cutting sub-themes or codes that were relevant and universal to the key themes of the research objectives were developed.
- The research team discussed and further refined these codes.
- A code book and coding sheets were developed based on data reduction to create the key ideas and themes recurrent in the data.

The constant-comparative method was used to analyze the interview responses in order to locate themes in the overall data patterns (Glaser & Straus, 1967¹). After first reading through the transcribed interview responses from the UTB and I-YEL, the intent was to first “let the information speak to us and expose its content”. That is, the first analysis stage was to find out “What general ideas are participants saying? What is the tone of the ideas? What is the general impression of the overall depth, credibility and use of the information?” (Creswell, 2003²).

The next step was to acquire and conceptualize the overall meaning of the information, develop an understanding of the content, and interpret the data. After a basic idea of the significance behind the words and depth of information was gained, the data was reduced “into chunks, before bringing meaning to them” (as noted in Creswell, p. 192).

After breaking down all the information to an underlying meaning, similar topics were combined via categorization. Files to be managed were considered “major topics, unique topics, and leftovers” (Creswell, p. 192). Then we went back to the original data and “abbreviated the topics as codes and wrote the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text” (Creswell, p. 192). Then we reduced the total list of categories and combined related topics. For this study, the major findings were classified into ten primary themes and their respective categories (*see results and findings*). The information is represented in table form as well as in descriptive and this, again, is followed by the interpretation and knowledge gained by researchers based on data acquired from the study.

¹ Glaser, B.G. & Straus, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.

² Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design*. Lincoln, NE: SAGE.

Results and Findings - Phase I

“The Crissy Field Center supports the role of youth in improving our National Park and making our Park a more vibrant part of our larger community. From community service work to leadership development, the Golden Gate National Parks has many opportunities for high school and middle school students to use their voice, express their perspectives, and get involved” (<http://www.crissyfield.org/center/iyel.html>). This section reflects the results of a series of focus groups conducted during the summer 2006 with the Urban Trail Blazers, the I-YEL, and a small group of I-YEL Alumni ($n = 43$ youth total).

Some findings may be repeated; this will affirm the “primary themes” reflected are core to the program outcomes and can be utilized to help you talk about (e.g., “sell”) the effect of your program even more strongly. For instance, the persistent emergence of these themes can help you represent the UTB and I-YEL programs more effectively as well as makes more clear decisions with members of the staff.

Urban Trail Blazers

Urban Trailblazers (UTB) entered its third year of operation in 2006. Participants are students enrolled in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade—in a public school in the San Francisco Bay Area—at the time they apply for the summer program. They participate with young people their own age having fun, learning new skills (e.g., social, environmental, personal) and experiencing many opportunities provided at one of the nation’s five urban national parks (i.e., Golden gate National Recreation Area). Youth participate on exciting trips throughout these Bay Area parks “on bike, boat, and foot.” Youth also explore a variety of places beyond the GGNRA boundaries. In 2006, Trail Blazers also participated in 3-day backpacking trip to Phleger Estate (Northwest of Huddart County Park in the Peninsula, July 18-20th) and also consisted of a conservation service project. The previous years’ trips were to Point Reyes National Park and no service project took place.

Sample Program Observations

Prior to the actual interview process, our first encounter with the UTB program consisted of two observation methods on two separate days. The inferences were drawn using the researchers’ judgment and leadership/programming expertise.

Bike Ride/Physical Activity

This first activity was a bike ride to the Presidio Community Garden. This was an opportunity to interact with the youth as well as observe one of their experiential programs. The children got their bicycles from the Presidio YMCA and it took quite some time to get organized and started on their trip. The “rules of the road” had to be explained and it had to be clear that all the children understood and obeyed by the traffic rules. One aspect we noticed immediately was how patient the children were with the preliminary process. Furthermore, conducive to our presence, the children seemed to feel comfortable with us (as researchers) yet may not have grasped the underlying reasons for our presence. We were also available to the UTB staff to assist from the beginning (e.g., we assisted with bringing the bicycles out of the YMCA’s gym to the front of the building). This was also a time to get the children fitted for a properly sized bicycle. Acquainting them to our presence and

involvement was an important step as we found out later during the focus group interviews. That is, the more natural the atmosphere was, the more freely the children shared their thoughts and experiences about the program.

Once the ride started, we noticed not all the kids knew how to ride a bicycle. One of the leaders stayed behind and tried to teach one student how to ride a bike “on the fly.” The rest of the group was, by then, far ahead; yet all of them waited patiently and no one made any negative verbal remarks. This was a positive part of our inquiry as this can be an indicator the children really cared for each other, or at least cared about unity as a group. The entire bike trip consisted of constantly waiting for the slower riders as some were pushing their bike up the hill (as encountered during part of the ride) for most of the way. Again, this “waiting” did not seem to matter to anyone yet we certainly took notice of the groups’ camaraderie. We also assisted the leaders by offering constant encouragement to the kids as well as assistance along the way as needed.

Outdoor Activity / Skit

Our second program observation began by watching the UTB children plan a short advertising commercial (i.e., skit) in the yard area outside the Center. The children worked in groups and had to come up with a topic of their choice for an advertisement and later had to perform their skit via a brief role-play. Some groups found their topic of choice very fast and seemingly enjoyed the process of generating their combined thoughts into a coherent sequence to create a short advertisement on any topic. It was interesting to see how the groups interacted and behaved with each other. Also fascinating to observe was how some children naturally took it upon themselves to be group “leaders” or to be in charge and dominate in order to have their ideas and thoughts presented to the remaining (other) groups.

Some children were seemingly not interested in the skit at all and were basically tugged along by their peers to at least not to be a burden. One kid did not even seem to care about that. The other group-mates did not seem to care too much; or they accepted the fact that some participants simply were not absorbed in participating in the skit. These participants were given very simple tasks in the role play; moreover, the role play was somewhat modified to meet their half-hearted attempt to partake. Nevertheless, most of the skits were funny to watch as we detected quite the selection of ingenuity from the children.

Lesson in Consumption/Consumerism

The program observation after the skit was an exercise and activity in consumption, in particular with the focus on distinguishing between “wants and needs.” This program consisted of a group skit (also outside), followed by an activity, magazine cut-outs in the multi-purpose room, and video about consumption/making decisions (e.g., metaphorically understanding the price of everything and the value of nothing), and culminated in a field trip to the local Safeway grocery store.

Magazine cut-out activity: The children had to cut pictures of products and goods in various magazines that had meaning to them. Later, the task was for them to explain in front of the group why they selected their chosen items and if the items were essentials or accessories for life. This was a helpful exercise for the children to speak in front of an audience (e.g., their peers and adults) and for us to see how comfortable they were. Moreover, this provided us with inferences regarding their perceptions about “consumption” and “consumerism” and how it affects their lives. They recognize the concept yet do not

seem to comprehend the potency and critical nature of consumption in terms of how this truly affects the depths of their lives as well as the environment. This is the growth process in that the UTB students “are not there yet” (as typical of middle-school age).

Video

The video the children watched was called the “Cost of Cool”. This was a critical documentary on the over-consumption of resources and wasteful style of living within American society, in general. The children paid attention for the first half of the video and watched without getting too jittery in their seats.

It appeared that, by the end of the video, the leader just wanted the video to be over as he probably has seen it several times. A few brief questions were asked yet no prompting or meaningful discussion really took place. The leader response to hurry through this exercise appeared to have a possible negative reflection and value of the video to the students. As soon as the video was over, and a few simple questions were asked of them, the students got up from their chairs and started to leave the room. The next activity on this topic was a trip to the Marina’s Safeway and also to complete the consumer lesson. The hurried nature of the inadequate “discussion” following the video could be either a lack of leader interest or lack of time or both.

Trip to Safeway

The aim of this exercise was to obtain the necessary items for a complete meal, or a simple recipe, if one had to purchase the ingredients, for example, for a camping trip meal. The budget was given and the group had to make sure to buy the “needs” (essentials) for the meal within the budget. The trip to Safeway seemed to be more entertaining than educational, as the youth appeared to be more distracted with the “wants”. It was observed that, within one of the groups, the concept between want’s and needs was not very well understood amongst the children (e.g., ketchup was considered a need). Some children made a joke of the exercise overall as it came to watching and snickering at other people who were serious about their shopping. This is also an indicator of their maturity level given their age. This activity may not have been productive at all. This activity may have been ineffective, mostly, because the majority of the kids did not seem to understand or they had trouble differentiating the concept between “want’s and needs”. It might have been more effective to stay at the CFC and teach the children a meaning full lesson, without all the distractions of a supermarket or use this trip to accomplish different goals.

NOTE: After these two exercises it appeared that most of the UTB participants were quite familiar with our presence, at least so it seemed. We did not get the chance to meet with the I-YEL participants before the focus group interviews, or to observe one or more of their activities, nonetheless some of them noticed our presence during instances when we were in the Center.

Results of UTB Focus Groups - Overview

What was the impression the UTB imprinted on us? The UTB youth definitely exhibited an interest and concern for the natural environment. Most students suggested more than one motivation to join the program. Major motivation: *Altruism* (e.g., chance to work with the environment, chance to make a difference in the community), this surfaced

immediately by them telling us—with enthusiasm—how great it was to do trail maintenance, and how good they felt about themselves when they were done. For the UTB it was more important for them to see tangible results. UTB are at a developmental stage where having a good time, experiencing “fun” is a clear personal objective. The group dynamic of these kids is challenging enough and they seek to experience new and positive relationships and “learning” is relative to their interests and their current development in their stage of life (see Table 2, #2 *program impact*).

Environmental Concepts

The UTB gained a basic understanding of environmental concepts such as recycling, composting, saving energy and global warming issues. Another topic they seemingly enjoyed was nutrition. This was interesting because they seemed to understand, for the most part, that this actually affects them individually, and that nutrition can have a significant impact on their life. The children revealed their desire to share their newly learned information with their peers and family. A large number of the participants started an attempt on educating their peers, even by telling their friends not to litter or to pick their litter up when observed throwing trash on the ground. Some kids even exhibited role model values by picking their friends litter up and throwing it into a trash bin, which set a silent statement. Once people are aware of a phenomenon, they are more likely to gather information (or learn) about it and as a result, often change (or reinforce) their attitude towards the idea. After listening to various stories, it seemed to us that students do not intend to impress their friends, rather educate them, and a genuine caring about the environment was displayed. Such statements were followed by several other similar comments (see Table 2, #4 *social growth*, and Table 1, *program impact*)

Connection to the Park

In querying the youth about their connection to the Center and Park, most of the children mentioned feeling special and almost privileged being able to work in such a beautiful place. One participant mentioned he feels a “sense of spirituality” (see Table 2, #1, *connection to the park*). Only one child mentioned that he does not feel any physical or mental connection to the park, which resulted in questioning looks towards him by his group members. Nonetheless, later in the interview, he mentioned that what he learned, and the education he received at the CFC about the environment are helping to prevent further damage and that he was interested in the activities (see Table 1, *personal growth*).

One reason why they feel so special at the CFC is because they know they are able to do valuable activities at the Center and within the Park that other people may not do and see. This, of course, added to the enthusiasm for the program itself, and also added to their sense of self-worth (see Table 2, # 2 *program impact*).

Another reason why the children felt so comfortable at the CFC, and why some of them joined the program in the first place, was that some of the participants are able to “escape family pressures”, such as getting away from brothers and sisters or parents telling them what to do (see Table 2, #3 *motivation to join the program*). We did not learn what exactly was meant by “escaping” their family. We surmise the children want to be out of the house, away from their family, and within the CFC as they are amongst people their same age with the same reason for being there with, for the most part, the same intention to help the environment and, again, to be in a safe place away from home (see Table 1 *connection to*

the program & park). Some children mentioned they are being constantly monitored at school—and at home—in terms of improving their school performance or their behavior at home. Some children mentioned they “feel good” at CFC because they are learning, they are outside of school or home, and they are still productive. This is what their parents want, yet the kids’ note they are not constantly being looked over their shoulders and are in a safe place when at the Center. We did not discover if their constraints at home are actual or perceived. Some mentioned the CFC “feels like home” and “being with friends who are like brothers and sisters” (see Table 2, #1 *connection to the park*).

Physical Activities

Findings also include assertions relating to the privilege expressed by the youth regarding participation in activities in the park that not too many other people have access to, such as some of the places they worked or activities they do. This actually motivates them and they work with more enthusiasm on certain projects (e.g. trail restoration). Some of their enjoyment (e.g., happiness of participation) stems from the physical activity derived from the “work.”

The anticipation and promise to go backpacking, for example, as well as participation in active outdoor activities and adventures, was also a major reason stated for joining the program in the first place. The combination of physical activity and tangible results makes them feel more complete when they go home at the end of the day, and ultimately they feel even more connected to the CFC and the park itself.

Learning / Knowledge Gained

By answering the question “What have you learned at the Center?” students mentioned several topics. The topics specific about education fell within current environmental issues and the conflicts relating to society and the environment. They also indicated learning about self. Several aspects about themselves were concluded in terms of becoming more disciplined by trying to eat less junk food, attempting to watch less TV, comprehending basic environmental issues, and complaining less since being involved in Center programs (see Table 2, #4. *social growth*). One child mentioned she learned that she can “persuade other people”, which can be concluded as a helpful trait based on her comments.

Teamwork

By working together as a team, the participants started to learn from each other and in the process built “strong friendships”. Several children mentioned they started to volunteer or joined the community service clubs in their communities, besides being involved in the UTB program (see Table 2).

Urban Trail Blazers, Trip to Angel Island

Source: Crissy Field Center website



Results of I-YEL Focus Group - Overview

Increased Awareness

I-YEL participants definitely showed an increased understanding and knowledge of the social environment much more so than the UTB. What the UTB started to understand and incorporate into their lives, such as enrichment in awareness of their surroundings (see Table 2, #4 *social growth*), the I-YEL use more or less as their mantra. Evidence from the focus group interview revealed that I-YEL are bringing and sharing their information with the community. It seems that Ernesto and Michele (CFC Staff) challenged them not only with environmental issues they also coached these teens to improve their social and public speaking skills.

We have not determined in what specific settings the I-YEL speak in front of the general public, yet it appeared that the Center is a place for them to get started and become more confident. Then, because of their newly developed “increased confidence,” (see Table 2, #2 *program impact*) I-YEL participants speak in front of other people such as acting in a play, giving a speech at school or participating with their peers through leadership opportunities presented by the Center.

Locus of Control

I-YEL participants mentioned they have the choice regarding what topics they want to learn and work on. This aspect naturally improved their motivation to learn and increase their knowledge on social and environmental issues (see Table 2, #2. *program impact*). It can also be concluded that the Center’s program was helpful for them in academics and various school settings such as working in teams or groups (see Table 2, #7 *improved school performance*). Knowledge gained in the CFC helped them in environmental classes in school; some of these teens indicated they had more knowledge in certain environmental and natural resource topics and issues than their classmates. They attributed this to involvement at the Center. Their increased erudition in certain areas/topic issues made it easy for them to take on leadership roles in school. Their enhanced knowledge and skills made them “feel more secure and confident” that they can take on extra roles in leadership, group work and public speaking. Some of the teens expressed the fact that when such extra challenges came along, they were able to focus more intently (see Table 2, #9 *contribution to environment*).

Differences between UTB and I-YEL

The overall impression concluded from the I YEL participants, in comparison to the Urban Trailblazers, was that they basically progressed and built upon the learning obtained from the UTB. This is irrespective if they participated in the UTB program; the context here is the progress of learning in relation to what students achieve at the middle-school level at the Center. I-YEL participants not only exhibited interest for the natural environment but also incorporated it to their lives. They developed an increased conception of socialism and a sense of the social and political world around them (see Table 1 *social, personal growth*).

What distinguishes the I-YEL from the UTB, mainly, is they are more mature and start to see the bigger picture of social and environmental issues. The participants who

transferred from the UTB program to the I-YEL built upon their knowledge and freely share this with their other I-YEL peers.

The following aspect was not revealed and can be queried in future research: How much additional knowledge or skills do the participants who move up from UTB share with the other I-YEL participants? Another way to frame this is for I-YEL who do not participate in UTB, is there less of a contribution or knowledge incorporated into their participation in the program?

I- YEL Alumni

Results of I-YEL Alumni Focus Group - Overview

Lasting Change

The Alumni looked at the program and their experiences in retrospect and found that I-YEL had “lasting effects with lasting change” on their lives. All the traits the I-YEL gained were manifested and amplified after the program ended. The Alumni started to take issues in their own hands feeling secure enough to talk about serious issues with comfort (see Table 2, #2. *program impact*).

Activism

What the I-YEL started in terms of activism, leadership, and feeling responsible to share and educate others, the Alumni took another step further. Since they are not in the program anymore, they are on their own, and take matters entirely into their own hands (e.g., working on convincing legislators to adopt more environmental policies, giving tours at the marine mammal center, leading summer camps, etc. The Alumni look at social issues much closer and deeper because they are on their own and, second, they gained the skills to address them in I-YEL. They are more mature and secure, and are not afraid to share their thoughts, even if it is contrary to the common belief. Their increased personal security helped them to be more creative and expressive in academic work (i.e., they are all in college as of this interview). They take on leadership roles in school, and other settings, with the intention to deliver the greatest product and an experience with lasting effects for everyone involved and with the intent of having the greatest impact on those around them.

Learning Became Part of Life

The Alumni left another great impression on us, as researchers, different than the current I-YEL or UTB, who exhibited a great deal of group discipline and interest in gaining environmental knowledge. That is, the Alumni indisputably showed “discipline” and “environmental interest” as well and, in addition, they incorporated what they learned from involvement in the CFC into their life in the broadest sense. In the focus group session, the Alumni were much more articulate than the current I-YEL participants and, of course, the UTB. A major result is that the Alumni received the impetus to combine social and environmental issues from their participation in I-YEL, and ever since their involvement, they have built upon their learning to help them make sense of their life as they know it today (see Table 1 *social and personal growth*).

Several of the former participants are currently majoring in the environmental and social science fields in college because of their participation in I-YEL (e.g., influence). This

confirms our theory that I-YEL was—and is—an integral aspect of career decisions and now they pursue further education in this field to foster their interest gained at the Center. One participant mentioned that I-YEL, specifically, led him to his current career choice. The Alumni explained how they went through a consistent learning progression over the years and a multitude of topics and issues were learned exponentially. This apparently broadened their horizon and deepened their understanding for local, state and global issues.

Three Alumni began as UTB participants and went through the entire program, on into the I-YEL, also confirming our findings: A major focus of their experience shifted from mostly the protection of the natural environment, gradually to key social issues and the connection between humans and the environment, and also learning about major issues in our society which ultimately affect our natural, historical and cultural resources (see Table 2, #2 *program impact* and #6 *personal growth*).

Personal growth

The Alumni confirmed that I-YEL was a springboard to becoming more secure in ones-self (see Table 2, #6 *personal growth*). In retrospect, they realized that I-YEL helped them with their personal growth and “made them more mature” (see Table 2, #4 *social growth*), which had positive effects on their social environment.

Their “increased self-awareness and confidence” helped them to have a “better relationship with their teachers”. One participant mentioned that she has a much better relationship with her parents now as well due to her involvement in the Center’s program. As mentioned before, their increased awareness and overall learning about their social environment created a better understanding for the place they live in. They look at social problems in their local community and have a new courage to address them on their own initiative. We also noticed throughout the interview process, by virtue of their interactions together, they seemingly enjoy these aspects of life. They perceive them as part of their learning based on previous involvement with I-YEL (or their current involvement as leaders at the Center now) and are proud of them.

Just like the UTB and the I-YEL participants, Alumni perceive themselves as “brothers and sisters” and are still in contact with each other now, even after completing the program.



Table 1. Common Themes Across All Groups and Meaning (n = 10)

Theme	Meaning
Connection to the program & park	Spiritual place; Safe place to go; powerful and unique.
Program impact	Self improvement; program is/was a springboard for youth to believe in self; became more confident.
Motivation to join program	Help the environment; learned through friends/family/teacher; to have great experiences.
Social growth	Learning new skills; bring back info to community; feel responsible to educate others.
Personal growth	Attempt to educate others; Can influence friends and family; Like helping the environment; Will continue to help environment; Increased consciousness.
Topic specific education	Conservation; consumerism; natural resources; recycling; and waste issues.
Improved school performance	Program was helpful for environmental topics; Program helped in academic work.
Outreach	Involve more people from urban communities; Reach non-traditional users, Engage more ethnically diverse people; More advertisement.
Contribution to environment	Educate and inform others, live more environmentally conscious, help to protect natural environment.
Healthy lifestyles	<i>Nutrition</i> – increased awareness; <i>Consumerism, the environment, and personal health</i> – developing connections; <i>Physical outdoor recreation trips</i> – greater understanding of the value to one’s health; <i>Spiritual/emotional connection to natural environment</i> – Outcome of activities.

Table 2. Major Differences within Common Themes by Group

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p><u>1. Connection to Program and Park</u></p> <p>a) Personal b) Enhancement c) Safety d) Bond</p>	<p>a) - Spiritual Place</p> <p>c) - Refuge for plants and animals</p> <p>d) - Feels like home</p>	<p>a) - A refuge - Safe place to go</p> <p>b) - Self discovery - Learn about life</p> <p>d) - Feels like home - Connected to the place</p>	<p>a) - Incredibly powerful and unique - This can change the world - Still but deep - More committed than ever</p> <p>c) - Feeling safe (enables) feelings of happiness - Increased level of stability noticed by family - Introversion reduced - led to more extraverted style.</p>
<p><u>2. Program Impact</u></p> <p>a) Ability to speak up b) Increased confidence c) Personal improvement d) Personal benefits</p>	<p>b) Feel special to be here</p> <p>c) Get them prepared for the real world</p> <p>d) - Went camping for the first time - Learned about the natural environment - Get to do things you normally don't get to do</p>	<p>b) - Self improvement</p> <p>c) -Improve self esteem -Make friends - Improve motivation - Did not want to be a follower anymore - Increased motivation through increased locus of control from the leaders</p> <p>d) - Became more confident - Became more comfortable - More courage - Helped self-esteem</p>	<p>a) - On behalf of the environment - To challenge people about their attitude toward the environment</p> <p>b) - Increase of self-esteem - Program was a springboard to believe in self - Improved relationship with parents - Increase ability to see "the big picture" - Gained skills to talk about serious issues with comfort.</p>

Table 2. continued

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p align="center"><u>3. Motivation to Join Program</u></p> <p>a) Nature b) Suggested to join by others c) Anticipation for the unknown d) Activities e) Personal improvement</p> <p><i>Note: The fact they are paid to participate was also a factor mentioned; this was not as salient as other reasons.</i></p>	<p>a) - Help the environment - Connect with nature</p> <p>b) - Family influence - Teacher - Mentor</p> <p>c) -Way to occupy unstructured time - Get out of the house - Get prepared for the next stage of life - Program review was enticing</p> <p>d) - New experiences - Learn beyond the classroom</p> <p>e) - Self-esteem builder</p>	<p>b) - Learned through friends - Teacher - Family thought it would be a good idea</p> <p>c) - Hoping to make new friends</p> <p>d) - Go on trips</p> <p>e) - Improve self-esteem - Make friends</p>	<p><i>Question not asked in this group</i></p>

Table 2. continued

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p><u>4. Social Growth</u></p> <p>a) Enrichment in knowledge, confidence, and activism</p> <p>b) Enrichment in awareness of their surroundings</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning new skills - Nutrition class - Started to recycle and to save energy <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Became more aware of environmental problems - See the need to become aware and see what occurs around us 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring back info to community - Importance of sharing knowledge - Educate other people - Advocate on behalf of environment <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get to see the bigger picture - Starts to feel natural to care about the environment 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on activism and leadership - Feel responsible to educate others - Feel responsible for the environment - Started to advocate amongst family/friends - Understanding of what is socially acceptable - See more than just restoration work <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insight of how people deal with the environment - Trips increase natural awareness of surrounding - Leaders changed perception of the environment - See broader picture of the world - Different perception of the community

Table 2. continued

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p><u>5. Topic specific education</u></p> <p>a) Environment b) Society</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation - Saving water - Saving energy - Recycling - Global warming - Waste issues - Petroleum and society - Overuse of resources - Extinction of species - Air quality issues 	<p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumerism - Natural resources - Cause and effect on the environment - Connection between consumerism and environment - Ethnocentrism - Public speaking 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watersheds - Bay View Hunters Point - Environmental justice - National Parks <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learned how to work with people and cooperate in a constructive way - Conspicuous consumption and identity development
<p><u>6. Personal growth</u></p> <p>a) Self awareness b) Identity development</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why to eat better food - Talk and complain less - Attempt to educate others - Can influence friends and family - Becoming more educated - Eat more organic - Adopt basic environmental principles. <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can make friends in a short period of time - Persuade others - Like helping the environment - Like restoration work - Become more environmentally conscious - Will continue to help the environment. 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take initiative to make things happen - Learn from each other <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve social skills - Volunteering and community - Education to prevent further damage - Ethnocentrism - Community and equality - Information perpetuates - Create own opinion instead of being a follower 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created an understanding of what is socially acceptable - Became much more secure about the self - Became more aware of own actions and dispositions - Took notice of becoming more resourceful <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gained courage to be creative and express myself the way I want to - Became more empathetic for environmental “sinners”

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p data-bbox="268 354 520 415"><u>7. Improved school performance</u></p> <p data-bbox="184 451 432 483">a) Group/team work</p> <p data-bbox="184 519 512 552">b) In academics/class work</p>	<p data-bbox="625 354 1010 386"><i>Question not asked in this group</i></p>	<p data-bbox="1060 354 1455 516">a) - Teacher asked them to help out - Leadership skills and teamwork - Public speaking - Socializing skills improved</p> <p data-bbox="1060 552 1438 852">b) - Found topics to write about - CFC helped personally/was resource overall in completing homework - Utilized gained information in environmental class - Knew more about certain subjects than others in class</p>	<p data-bbox="1497 354 1850 548">a) - Taught me leadership skills - Take initiative to make teamwork results successful - Learned delegation skills to organize group/team work</p> <p data-bbox="1497 584 1902 852">b) - Became more passionate about academics - Became more task and solution oriented - Improved confidence - Enhanced creativity - Improved quality of assignments</p>

Table 2. continued

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p><u>8. Outreach to extend the program</u></p> <p>a) From the Center</p> <p>b) Goals from outreach attempt</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The program to be more exciting for more people - To have more ethnicities in the program - The program to go on throughout the year 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in more people from urban communities - Give people our opportunities and resources - Make I-YEL go nationwide - Be more aggressive in advertisement <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get more people of color -Show young people there is more than a mall 	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pictures - Use Center resources for community <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Perception</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low income kids benefit the most - Since people don't ride for commuting the Presidi-Go route should be changed <p>b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include people from certain areas - Increase social responsibility in cities - Help low income kids - Reach non-traditional users
<p><u>9. Contribution to environment</u></p> <p>Effects on society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Join the community service club - Volunteer on environmental projects - Educate peers and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start to take initiative to make things happen - Improved social skills help community - Educate peers and family - Environment encourages social thinking - Inform my folks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persistence in informing other people - Give kids the tools to make future changes - Reduce waste - Being a minimalist - Outreaching to broader Bay Area community - Encourage awareness - Teach passion - Take initiative to make things happen

<i>Common Themes</i>	<i>UTB</i>	<i>I-YEL</i>	<i>I-YEL Alumni</i>
<p><u>10. Healthy Lifestyles</u></p> <p>Includes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual factors relating to overall well-being.</p> <p>This section also consists of education youth received about developing a commitment to a holistic way of life.</p> <p>The Center staff consciously attempts to raise the awareness of participants on this topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical activities and strengthening relates to adventure - Gratification obtained through tangible results, hands-on experiences. - Nutrition (and/or in combination with physical activity) - Concept introduced through experiential learning increases direct meaning to their lives. - For many of these youth, the concept of spirituality in accord with nature is introduced to them (i.e., personal interpretation based on involvement in activities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Derived through conscious active participation. - Acquired through increased self-esteem and self awareness. - Improved ability to see “bigger picture” of their surroundings and community. - Accumulated positive effects perpetuate personal behavior exponentially. - Begin to develop a more active, happier and productive well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An integral part of life. - Take pride in their learning experiences from I-YEL. - Greater understanding of what a “healthy lifestyle” means. - Fostered “healthy thinking” (e.g., solution-oriented). - Become positive role models.
<p><i>Note: Many of the factors involved in physical activity and healthy living is imbedded in other categories. This section provides some additional information as well as references used in other categories.</i></p>			

Variance of Responses within Common Themes by Group

The ten common themes were analyzed between and within groups. Among these ten themes responses varied based on age and program cohort. For each group, the essence of their knowledge gained, attitudes, behaviors, and general experiences from the program are presented. Some experiences and processes in their development might overlap. It is important to keep in mind they went through a gradual incremental learning experience where topics may have been re-introduced, though in more detail and variations, in order to look at them with a more mature lens and changing sphere of influence.

1. Connection to the Program & Park

UTB: For many of the UTB participants, the connection to the program and the park seems to be a very personal one. Some said it feels like a being in a place where they really want to be. They perceive their activities such as restoration work, trail maintenance, etc. as a very personal activity, which has a deeper meaning than just helping the environment. One student mentioned when he is alone in the park whether working on a project or not, per se, he feels a sense of spirituality. Other students said it feels great to get away from family/peer pressures, and to meet and connect with friends who they perceive as family as well.

“To me it feels like it is coming together with your friends and family... it is like a connection with my family”.

~ 14 year old Hispanic male, one year in program

I-YEL: These participants find their connection to the program and Park through the connection to nature and through the sense of being a safe place as well, but more so through the invitation to learn about life and self-discovery. Students also mentioned that the CFC and the park as a refuge for plants and animals like the UTB students. In addition, they recognize with even more weight than just flora and fauna, to the natural environment in a sense of a personal level, such as an escape from home/school and to “find one’s-self”.

“...Diversity - different people, new people everyday...”

~ Chinese/Vietnamese female, 2 years in program

“...Helps to make me a better person”

~Latin/white female, 18 years old, 2 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: Like the participants in the I-YEL program, but even more so than their younger current participants, the Alumni see a much deeper meaning in the program. And because of their reflection back to “the days” and their increased maturity, a sense of self-reflection—in combination with their part in the program—resulted in descriptions such as “feelings of happiness” and “increased level of stability.”

“I wanted it to be completely socially acceptable and something people of my age were concerned about ... and if I hit some sort of a road block I didn’t see that as a reflection of what was going on with me, but rather them not being informed or not questioning the situation.”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

2. Program Impact

UTB: The effect of the program mostly relates to the connection to the Park and the CFC itself. They feel an increased bond to the land and to nature as for many of these younger participants, it is the first time they can actually connect or be with nature for longer periods of time without their parents or family. This gives them a heightened sense of independence, and a closer connection to the group, who they consider friends and family. One theme that surfaced was that many participants learned about the natural environment more in-depth for the first time; this was a completely new experience for some of them. This study found the participants learned to understand the connection of cause and effect of modern western civilization on the natural environment. Several kids also went camping and hiking for the first time in this program; this increased their level of understanding for the natural environment. The fact these children know that some of their activities within the park are not mutually exclusive to them has a profound impact on their perception and confidence.

I-YEL: The major impact is improvement of one's mind, character, etc., through one's own efforts. They want to improve their self-esteem through challenging activities and improve their motivation through exciting tasks they can choose themselves. Findings show they are becoming more courageous in speaking up and expressing their voice in both discussions and arguments. A sense of increased maturity can be seen by stepping apart from the crowd and not being a follower anymore; this could be the result of an increase of self-esteem.

“YEL throws you in the cold water in a great environment.”

“In the long run, it [I-YEL] will put out people who are more opinionated, socially and environmentally. 95% of us all will go to college, we are one step ahead of the game; we come out and contribute more to society because of the learning’s here.”

~ White female, 17 years old, 3 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni confirm the current state of the I-YEL participants in that the program was a catalyst to belief in self and the rewarding projects helped the increase of self-esteem. This resulted in an improved and deeper relationship with parents and friends. Findings indicate they are challenging other people about their attitude and behavior towards the environment. All these former participants interviewed mentioned they are feeling comfortable enough in taking an active initiative to help the environment and advocating for it. One point that set them apart from the UTB and current I-YEL participants is that they gained an increased ability to see the “big picture” of topics and also gained the skills in I-YEL to talk about serious issues with comfort. Findings also show the overall realization and

the real impact of the program occurs afterwards (i.e., when they are no longer active participants, now leaders in some capacity).

“I-YEL is not just a program that wants a certain image outwardly, but they want to actually reflect that inwardly ... throughout the entire program and their lives. It also teaches you to be a better listener; part of a leader is to be a listener.”

~ 20 yr old Mixed-race female, 3 years in I-YEL, one year as Assistant Leader for UTB.

3. Motivation to join the program

UTB: Many of the UTB were introduced to the program by family or teachers with the incentive to help the environment. This was also the major underlying motivation. By applying to the program, many learned they would get to participate in activities such as camping and hiking as well in addition to active participation to help the natural environment. During the program, participants expressed how they enjoy learning about the environment beyond the natural classroom setting; the learned information is easily absorbed, since the atmosphere in CFC is more relaxed than in a school setting. They spoke of the money received yet this was not seemingly a core factor.

“I joined this program because I thought it would be something to give back to the community, kind of. I feel like learning something, kind of hands on learning – restoration work and going to places, not just classroom work.”

~ 13 year old Asian female, one year in program

I-YEL: Some of the I-YEL learned of the program (like their younger UTB fellows) through teachers, family or friends. Besides the incentive to help the environment, some wanted to get away from peer pressure, increase their sense of identity. Additionally, they wanted to engage in a program for their own sake, to do something for themselves, and to make new friends outside their regular circle of friends. Receiving monetary rewards through their leadership was also a key motivation (e.g., at school, neighborhood).

“I am part of the leadership!”

~ Nicaraguan male, 18 year old, 4 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The motivation to join the program, at that time, was somewhat the same as for the current I-YEL participants. However, this group was able to convey their experiences throughout the program and correlate that to their initial motivation to join.

“I hadn’t felt what it meant to be ‘youth’ and being connected to the environment ... I did not connect well to people before I-YEL ...and this showed me that people are part of the environment and I don’t see them as separate anymore.”

~ 20 year old, Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader [Involvement shaped attitude about the natural environment]

4. Social Growth

UTB: For middle-school students in the program, social growth comes in several forms. First, they learn about the natural and social environment. Environmental issues such as conservation, recycling, waste and consumption issues are learned and adopted to a certain extent. Findings show these kids come to realize that the issues they are learning are affecting them on a day-to-day basis and they start to convey their perception of the environment to friends and family.

*“Every night I go home and give my parents a lecture of what I learned!”
~ 13 year old, Mixed-race male, one year in program*

I-YEL: These participants take what they have learned one step further. Many of the participants start to watch how they articulate and express themselves in terms of environmental topics; this is one factor that separates them from the UTB. They start to see the need to take initiative, to take matters in their own hands, and to make things happen. I-YEL participants observe themselves more closely and learn from each other. Regarding the “big picture” of issues and situations, findings show they see a need to volunteer in the community, to set an example or be a role model, and to see the need to educate society to prevent further damage [to the environment]. Evidence shows this group notices the issues of ethnocentrism, value of a tight community, and equality as relevant issues that people need to be aware of.

“People would not act if it does not affect anybody, except themselves.”

“... We learn in I-YEL and we take action to inform people about it. We want to leave a message to everyone. If you get to one person, you get to more people, it perpetuates.”

~ Chinese female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: What the I-YEL participants started to notice and to be examples of, the Alumni set as their mantra. For instance, the Alumni see their role in leadership and focus as “activist”. They feel responsible to educate others on the environment. The Alumni also see a much deeper meaning in restoration work which the I-YEL started to see but were not really able to express.

“... I am doing an internship that is definitely non-paid, but I am out there every day trying to convince legislators to adopt laws to help the environment.”

~ 20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

5. Topic Specific Education

UTB: Specific education comes in a form as an introduction to basic environmental topics such as conservation, saving energy, and issues relating to water and the consumption of excessive electricity, global warming, air quality and waste issues. The topics are taught

to them and presented in a fashion they can relate to as most of the UTB are too young to deal with abstract concepts. Societal issues, such as cause and effect from humans on the environment (e.g., petroleum and society, extinction of species, melting ice caps) were introduced to them in a way that they understand the relevance to their lives and make meaning of the information.

I-YEL: Findings show these teenagers learned, much more specifically, the effects humans have on the environment. Topics are still related according to their age group so, developmentally, it has relevance to them. “Consumerism and identity” was mentioned several times as the I-YEL participants can relate to this issue. And, they see how this affects their peers and friends. They learned about topics such as natural resources, global issues, ethnocentrism and public speaking.

“In the beginning it is hard - it becomes more organic to teach friends the longer you stay in the program”.

~ Guatemalan American male, 17 years old, 2 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni built upon their knowledge gained from the CFC and incorporated their information in their school work or to broaden their own horizons. Some of the projects and learning experiences dealt with social issues in Bay View Hunters Point, Environmental justice, and National Parks, to name a few. They learned how to deal and work with people in a constructive way and with social issues such as conspicuous consumption. Findings also indicate they learned about “identity development” which affects them as individuals, as well as many of their peers. Most of the specific topics they were involved with in the program were chosen by them in order to have personal relevance.

“I never have been a fan of busywork. I-YEL gave me the courage to make each and every assignment as creative as I wanted it to be. ...Professors were surprised and actually did let me be this creative because they realized that I was actually learning from it. ... I saw the opportunity to make education passionate.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

6. Personal growth (self awareness and identity development)

UTB: Findings indicate these middle-school students acknowledge that they “learn how deal with other people, they talk too much, complain too much” (e.g., may lack some discipline), and start to “realize new aspects about themselves” (e.g., speak too silent; realize when they need more confidence). They learned it is possible to make friends within a short period of time. UTB learn how to eat a better diet (e.g., more organic food), are encouraged to watch less TV, and they realized they actually like helping the environment.

“We also learn to protect the environment by them [staff] educating us about different things that affect the environment by doing things or doing more things”

~ 12 year old Asian male, one year in program

I-YEL: They came to realize that “people belong to the environment” and that “change has to be created through responsible behavior”. With that in mind, they start to advocate on behalf of the environment within their own community or other settings where they feel their voice is needed. Findings reveal it is important for I-YEL to share their knowledge and to learn as much about social and environmental concepts as possible. Their social growth comes through enrichment in knowledge, confidence, activism and a strong belief in their cause.

“I-YEL made it easier to speak in front of an audience, and in presentations I felt alive. It made me a better public speaker ...”

~ Caucasian female, 17 years old, 3 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni focus on activism and leadership on their own. Again, they are taking matters into their own hands and make group/team-work a success. They challenge themselves by extending beyond their comfort zones to experience the social environment they live in. Their increased confidence, enhanced discipline and more in-depth self-awareness has given them the tools to address serious topics or how to deal and work better with other people.

“... I started to realize that some really good people surrounded me. I started to feel safe, but not only safe but happy. This was actually something really special for me, and I started to become really close to the people here, this was a sanctuary. I began to have more confidence in myself and I began to feel happy wherever I went to and I carried that happiness from I-YEL outside, and my parents began to notice changes in me.”

~ 20 year old, Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

7. Improved school performance / learning's from CFC & Park affecting day-to-day life

UTB: These youth are much more aware of the effects petroleum products in daily society, especially “gas guzzling SUV’s” as a result of their participation in the UTB program. They are more conscious about product packaging, in general, since waste and recycling is a topic they learned to understand very well. Overall, they are paying more attention to saving energy such as turning off lights after leaving a room, or not using excessive amounts of water when unnecessary. Findings show they start to adopt more advice from their parents because in CFC they say the same about conserving energy.

“Ever since we went to the dump I have been more conscious of what I am throwing in the garbage and in the compost.”

~ 13 year old African American male, one year I program

I-YEL: One of the I-YEL students was asked to help out in class by a teacher because of her great knowledge in one specific topic learned at the Center. In general, because of their core experiences at the Center, I-YEL students found topics to write about and utilized their new knowledge in their environmental classes at school. Students

mentioned they knew more about certain subjects in their environmental studies class than their fellow classmates. Not only did their experience help in school, their environmental knowledge for their personal interest was broadened. This was built upon on in their spare time outside of the CFC and Park.

“... because of I-YEL I got perks and advantages and leadership skills, I honestly feel I am able to teach the idea and initiative of teamwork.”

~ Filipina female, 16 years old, 2 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: When reflecting about their experience, the Alumni see several advantages they obtained from their involvement in I-YEL. Their experience and personal growth helped them to be more creative with school projects (e.g., during their high school days as well as now in college). They also became more passionate and learned to be creative with writing assignments for school. Findings reveal that through their pursuit in environmental activism and leadership at the Center, they saw the opportunity to become more passionate about education then ever before. With that in mind, students mentioned that “grades have no meaning if one does not learn” since education and schooling is about learning and not just busywork. The result of their responsibility for academics, and their passion for achievement, was honored by the teachers and definitely recognized by the Alumni. Some of the help the Alumni had received at the CFC was to learn through life examples and teachings beyond classroom work; the students said this has a more lasting effect. Some students needed tutoring in certain classes such as Chemistry and help in Mathematics which the CFC staff provided for. Furthermore, the CFC offered a program which was called “Job Shadowing” which the students found extremely helpful since some of the students needed help to find out in what field they wanted to study in college. The CFC also offered SAT books to get them prepared for the college entrance exam.

“In terms of education, it has given me a passion, a drive of what I want to study.”

~ 20 year old, Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

8. Outreach to expand the program

UTB: The UTB, who are already a great mixture of ethnicities, feel that there cannot be enough youth from different backgrounds in the program hence they want to have even more ethnic diversity! They feel the program should be extended and made more exciting to additional participants. They also all seemed to agree the program should continue throughout the year.

I-YEL: In terms of outreach attempts by the CFC, the I-YEL perception is to bring in more people from urban communities. They suggest that if more people would get the same opportunities and resources they get, the program would grow much larger. They also suggest that the program should “go nationwide” yet, in general, staff should be more aggressive with advertisement. Their recommended goal is to get more people of color involved and to show young people that “there is more than a mall to be happy in.”

“I-YEL is the best Sunday ice cream I ever had!”

~ African American female, 17 years old, 4 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni suggest using more pictures to advocate for the program and to use the Center’s resources more in-depth for the community as a whole. It is their perception that low-income children benefit the most from the program since it takes them out of their regular domain and teaches them different types of positive aspects about life. The Alumni suggest changing the “Presidi-Go” route, since they believe it runs empty most of the time. The consensus was the Presidi-Go should pick up people from certain areas around the city who would not have the chance to get to the CFC otherwise. Findings show they would like to see the Center “include more people from low-income areas, such as non-traditional users, and to increase society’s social responsibility.”

“I don’t just act or behave differently, I live differently. And more appropriately, I live better than I used to.”

~ 20 year old Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

9. Contribution to the environment

UTB: Most of the restoration work comes in active forms such as pulling weeds on trails and activities where they learn “Leave No Trace” or working in the Presidio Nursery. Some youth join the community service club at their school in addition to their active participation in the CFC.

“I learned that I extra like helping the environment because I never thought I did until I came to this program.”

~ 13 year old African American male, one year I program

I-YEL: Their contribution comes more in a passive way (in comparison to UTB) such as improved social skills; they are then able to convey new knowledge to their community. They feel the program taught them “social thinking”. These participants feel the need for social change and try to get people to be more opinionated on environmental issues. Evidence obtained shows that through their experiences learning about leadership and teamwork, they create synchronization and harmony because they teach initiative and teamwork among others; this is, again, beneficial to the “greater good of society”.

“We are one step ahead of the game and contribute more to society.”

~ White male, 17 male, 4 years in program

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni feel that they want to contribute in a good/positive way to environmental change now even more so then when they participated in the program. Findings indicate that I-YEL gave them the passion for the environment which led to some of their career choices and the program in college they have chosen. Since they acquired new insight for how people deal with the environment, they use that knowledge to educate other

people who are in need of a greater environmental awareness. Some of their active participation consists of working at summer camp for children and, second, they noted trying not to use vehicles very often. They want to give children the “tools” to help the environment and broaden their perception of their natural surroundings. One of their personal realizations, based on experience at the Center, is that they are becoming much more “minimalist” in terms of materialistic aspects. They are also becoming much more aware of what they consume and therefore seem to pay much closer attention to waste.

“ ... I am working with six and seven year olds and these kids here really believe they can change the world, and they believe they are responsible for the environment, and that makes me believe so much more I can give them the tools and really go out there and make the difference...”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

10. Healthy Lifestyles

UTB: For middle-school students, activities that are physical in nature and provide strengthening of their bodies is derived through their desire and anticipation of adventure. Examples frequently noted include backpacking trips, camping, and (for some) the restoration work. This finding also includes the mental and emotional gratification received through tangible results they experienced by hands-on opportunities provided at the CFC and based on various park activities. Nutrition, and/or in combination with physical activity, is a concept that becomes more meaningful to this group of youth as it affects them directly.

I-YEL: For the teenagers (i.e., leaders-in-training), physical activity and health is derived through conscious active participation. This is the direct result of their improved self-esteem and self awareness. Additionally, they gained the ability to see the “bigger picture” of their surroundings, overall, and community they live in. Findings indicate this translates in a more active and healthy life style for instance, through better nutrition practices (e.g., eating organic whole foods). Accumulation of these combined positive effects and modified behaviors are perpetuated and, consequently, leads to a more active, happier and productive well-being for this group of participants.

I-YEL Alumni: Young adults who are part of the I-YEL Alumni group see and perceive physical activity and health, overall, as an integral part of their life. Findings indicate these alumni interviewed are proud of their learning experiences from I-YEL. Conclusions also indicate involvement in I-YEL encompassed fostering a personal “healthy lifestyle”, promoting a “healthy thinking” in their own life, and using themselves as positive role models for their friends and peers (e.g., grow organic food, work in greenhouses, teach peers, leaders in own community).

**Differences Across Groups –
Within core categories or sub-themes yet no specific “common” ground**

Data analysis resulted in many common themes as well as differences. Some of the differences were subtle, since the children were learning and growing at the same time. Nonetheless, there were some distinct differences, most notably between the Alumni and the UTB (as expected). For instance, a major difference between the two groups is that, for one, the UTB are being introduced to many new concepts or even the natural environment itself, whereas the I-YEL Alumni experimented with their new leadership skills and take initiative to learn about issues and situations themselves as well as express their concern to others.

MEANING OF THE CENTER AND PARK

UTB: For these youth, life in the program is more about protecting the physical environment. They enjoy community service with tangible results. They see their positive impact on the natural environment through physical projects. They also feel it is a safe place for them to go and they perceive the park also as a “safe place for animals and plants.”

I-YEL: For I-YEL, it is more about improving skills and self-discovery. They are learning about life and feel a special connection to the “place”. They are gaining skills they would otherwise not be learning in their personal/private environment at home or school.

I-YEL Alumni: They feel responsible to educate others and feel personally responsible for their environment. They start to see a broader picture of the world, their community, and their role within these. Their increased awareness of their natural surrounding improves their confidence and their socializing skills.

MOTIVATION TO JOIN THE PROGRAM

UTB: For most of the UTB, their motivation to join was to connect with, and spend time in, the natural environment. Many of them joined the program through family influence and/or based on referrals from teachers in school. Another reason was the anticipation for the unknown and their expectations to participate in adventures such as camping and hiking. Money was mentioned yet more as a side note.

I-YEL: Some of their incentives to join included the expectation for “self improvement” and to “get away from peer pressure.” Some participants mentioned they were hoping to make new friends outside their regular circle of peers. Again, being paid was also mentioned as a valuable incentive.

ACTIVITY PREFERENCES

UTB: For this group, mostly being active and productive where physical work is involved were strong preferences (e.g., trail maintenance). Favorite activities included games, field trips and camping. At this stage in the program, they start to enjoy learning new

skills. Findings show they like telling their peers and family what they learn and now know about the natural environment.

I-YEL: For these leaders-in-training, activities are all about the reward in exceeding or surpassing challenging situations; examples include speaking in front of an audience or approaching the community with certain issues. Their activity preferences stem more from the outcome of their involvement and their gained experience in terms of personal growth which is shared with all the I-YEL participants.

LEARNING ABOUT NATURE

UTB: The UTB learn about the natural environment such as native and non-native plants but also the importance of the practice of conservation, such as saving water, energy and recycling. They learn about basic issues like overuse of resources, air quality issues and global warming.

I-YEL: Besides the effects on the natural environment, I-YEL learn and discuss issues such as “consumerism and identity development.” They learn about “community” and how to address environmental issues and topics of importance to the community.

LEARNING ABOUT THE SELF

UTB: Findings show these youth come to realize how and why to eat better food and why good nutrition is important (e.g., value of organic food). They indicate they “watch less T.V.” and notice they are starting to incorporate the environmental concepts they learn into their daily life. They realize they are becoming more educated in a variety of ways.

I-YEL: They take the initiative to make things happen in their surrounding environment. They want to learn because they have a choice on what topic they are excited to learn about; this increases their motivation. They notice it starts to feel natural to care about the environment and to educate others about it as well. They start to speak up on behalf of the environment; moreover, they feel responsible to protect it.

I-YEL Alumni: These former I-YEL participants noticed they have learned incrementally on a personal growth level through constant challenges in the program. They learned they feel much more mature than they have been before. They like taking on leadership roles in school and in group situations. Additionally, they are much more inclined to believe in other people. They like taking on the task to help others express themselves, help others learn, and to take on “coaching” roles.

PROGRAM IMPACT

UTB: The program has inspired these youth to the “nth” degree ~ When asked if they are interested in being part of the I-YEL program when they “are old enough”, all but one student indicated a resounding “yes.” Three indicated “maybe, would consider” this option in their future.

I-YEL: They are becoming more courageous in speaking up and expressing their voice in discussions and arguments.

I-YEL Alumni: The Alumni take their experiences gained from the CFC another step further and build upon them. For instance they advocate on behalf of the environment, and challenge other people about their attitude towards the environment. They verbalize the fact that the program was a springboard to a stronger belief in “the self” and also improved family relationships because of increased self esteem. They became increasingly able to see the big picture of serious issues and gained the skills to talk about them with comfort.

Summary / Conclusions: Phase I

The UTB are introduced to basic environmental concepts such as recycling, saving energy, and general issues such as cause and effect of society on the environment. Since they are younger than the I-YEL participants, they learn more about the basic concepts of environmentalism in a fun setting, which is important because their attention span is not as long as the I-YEL and entertainment is therefore important to them. The UTB need tangible results to appreciate their contribution to the environment; this is one reason social and theoretical concepts are more reserved for the I-YEL participants. Nonetheless, some fundamental issues are introduced and incorporated into the program, enough to make them aware of the relevance. The children feel safe and special at the Center and the park as they get to do and see things other people might not. The youth carry their new knowledge with them, share it with friends and family, and most of them incorporate basic environmental issues into their lives. They feel proud that they gained an awareness and introduction to their environment.

I-YEL participants build upon the UTB learning experiences, yet they get to see the “bigger picture” of cause and effect of humans and society on the natural environment. Their focus shifted from mostly nature and environmental issues to an emphasis between humans and environment. Because of their older age (than the UTB), the results do not have to be immediate or necessarily tangible; this allows the youth leaders to incorporate more complex topics such as consumerism, global issues, or other serious issues into their work and lives. I-YEL clearly improve their social skills as well as their critical thinking as a result of participation in the program. Some of the UTB tended to “complain” a bit about the restoration work while the I-YEL have matured to a point of greater appreciation for this type of activity.

I-YEL can choose topics they want to learn and study and, when needed, they get help from the CFC leaders. Also, if they have problems in school, then tutoring can also be available. Like the UTB, they feel comfortable at the Center and also consider their “colleagues” (a.k.a. peer leaders-in-training) like family. Their increased level of mental competence—in combination where in a setting where they feel at ease—increased their personal confidence and motivation to take on challenges beyond their comfort zone. Their satisfaction stems from succeeding in challenging situations such as talking in front of an audience or giving a presentation they had to prepare on their own. What the UTB started to

incorporate into their lives, such as fundamental knowledge of natural resource issues, is a considerable foundation for the I-YEL participants, and they also began to advocate for the environment and take the initiative to get projects started on their own.

The main difference between the UTB and I-YEL is that the UTB learning seems to focus mainly on physically active environmental projects (important for a simple understanding) such as trail maintenance and being aware of environmental issues. I-YEL, on the other hand, work on personal and social growth, with the aim to go out into the community and educate and create awareness to others. With that, the focus shifted from the “self” to looking at “other” people around them. By doing so, they first have to learn about social issues, enhance comfort with public speaking, their ability to articulate, and—of course—gain a greater knowledge of environmental issues. As a result they start to see a broader perspective of the natural world around them, which stimulates their natural curiosity, improves their school performance, enhances self-esteem and, in turn, encourages their social thinking.

The Alumni were given the “educational” tools to take on environmental and social issues upon themselves. They are fully aware of the importance of conserving resources, and protecting the natural and social environment. They carry the “name” (of the program) and the “deeper meaning” in their own interpretation of I-YEL into the community, promote the program, and they, themselves, become role models from their learning’s in I-YEL. The Alumni are proud of their experiences and even somewhat of the “status” they have gained through the program. Additionally, their self-perception has changed because of these experiences and due to personal growth recognized in various aspects of life (see Table #2, Phase I). Findings for this group show the true realization of the program impact occurred to them retrospectively while in the midst of a new chapter in their lives. However they are building upon all their previous experiences in the program, including personal and social growth, as part of their current inherent values of life.



PHASE II

Document Review

Phase II: Document Review

Review and Analysis of Currently Existing Evaluation Data

Introduction/Method: This analysis is based upon a sample of materials and documents received by the UTB and IYEL Program Coordinators. This phase was an objective review and analysis of secondary data that occurred by the research team. This phase consisted of reviewing a variety of materials and documents about the UTB and I-YEL. A document review provides contextual information for the evaluation as a whole and responds directly to some of the evaluation issues and questions posed by the Crissy Field Center director and staff. This review provides an overview of activities to date and reviews some of the key issues that have emerged since the inception of each of the two programs. This method helps determine consistency (or lack of) among methodology across evaluators; detects problems in document content (e.g., report errors, omissions); identifies uniform themes across report findings, conclusions and recommendations; determines gaps in the program overall; and allows for a certain level of synthesis to provide concrete recommendations (Creswell, 2003). The document review procedure provides reliability and completeness of assessment across the content of reports and other materials provided.

I. Research Content Criteria

The criteria below include the primary factors followed in the assessment for this phase of the study for the sample of materials obtained:

1. Review type of document/material – determine content/information included (written, audio, digital, etc.)
2. Review summer schedules year-by-year, determine variations, similarities, implementation of proposed changes in subsequent years.
3. Evaluation summaries – Determine progress and indicate if there is a correlation to proposed changes. Can we detect changes in program summary based on proposed suggestions for each subsequent year by the CFC staff?
4. Compare and contrast student summaries – Have activity preferences changed and why?
5. Program evaluations questionnaire – does it correlate to the Handbook? Did the students' expectations match the Program Handbook?
6. Developmental Youth Outcomes –
 - Are the categories appropriate for the program goals and capabilities based on resources available and leadership and based on research (e.g., trends in youth development)?
 - Are the results of current evaluations (e.g., sample received) accurate measures of these outcomes, and second, are students achieving these outcomes (e.g., see youth outcomes and evaluations - physical, mental, emotional, social).
 - Does staff believe the outcomes were reached yet did the program live up to student expectations?

II. Results and Findings

A. Structural

- *Level of Organization:* There is a perceived lack of organization on the part of the program staff. For example, many of the materials are not dated, pages are not numbered, some documents do not have headings or titles, and several seemingly important documents are hand-written potentially resulting in lost computerized archival information. Improving these facets would be beneficial for better organization and tracking.
- *Handbook versus End of Year/Summer Evaluations* – Students receive the Handbook at the beginning. At the end of the year, the I-YEL evaluations, for instance, include student reflections. Some responses (based on the questions asked) on the end of the year summaries reviewed do not correlate with the Handbook. It would be beneficial to ensure the end of the summer/year evaluation questions are tailored to the students' anticipation and expectations when entering the program in the beginning so there is a greater connection. That is, the student have a great anticipation for what the year/summer will bring (i.e., "anticipation" is part of the experience), however, the end of the year questions on the evaluation do not fully address the content of the handbook.
- *Mid-term and Final Evaluation Summary of I-YEL Responses:* We received 2001-2002 mid-program summary responses, no end of year responses to evaluations. For 2002-2003 we have a final evaluation but no mid-program evaluation. We received 2004-2005 mid-program summary responses, no end of year responses to the evaluations. This made it difficult to determine trends or changes.
- *Debrief Sessions with Staff:* From our point of view, the "Debrief Changes for UTB" could be typed for electronic archives (and not only hand-written). Point: All essential notes relating to any type of evaluative session should be computerized.

B. Program Content (sample assessment/comments)

UTB:

- Activity Calendar: Comparing the 2004 summer calendar with the 2005 summer calendar, after the proposed changes in the final staff debrief, it was noticed that the 2005 summer calendar is more detailed and easier to read. The proposed changes (e.g., more preparation to talk about the projects) are mentioned in this calendar, for example. It is also easy to see that more trail work is being implemented in the program.
- In the UTB Final Staff debrief 2004, and changes for 2005, staff mention why the changes are being proposed and what the desired effect would be, or should entail, to compare and contrast the proposed changes (for '05) with the results of the end of year evaluation (for '04). We could not detect if the proposed changes, however, had any significant outcome in the end of the year evaluation in '05 in comparison to the evaluation from '04.
- Themes: We are told each summer has a different "Theme". If "Trails" were the main theme in the summer of 2004, why, then, was more work on trails proposed for the summer of 2005?
- In the 2005 UTB Measures and Outcomes, it is mentioned that 81% of the students ate healthier and were more active this summer than normal. 69% responded that because of

UTB they will make a habit of eating healthier and being more active. These are valuable results worth showcasing.

- Three years of program evaluation (2004, 2005, 2006). Results show most of the responses in all three of these evaluation summaries correlate, or have the same meaning as the responses in the UTB focus group interview to similar questions. This indicates a consistency among student responses to the questions each year. The student's might need to learn to articulate better and for the staff to seek greater details and depth of responses. Questions seem somewhat superficial and responses may be similar year-to-year because, developmentally, students may only be providing what the staff want to hear (e.g., social desirability). And second, the students may follow the path of least resistance to just "get it done" rather than possibly putting more effort into the responses the Center deserves. The program has a profound meaning to the youth so to extract more detailed, more honest, and specific information ensuring youth express themselves better will only benefit the results of such program evaluations.
- We know, for the most part, students are respectful to their fellow participants as they all became friends and most of them considered themselves as "family." This trend can be seen throughout all the years. It would have been interesting to see some more answers in this field. For instance, we know the children felt challenged at times due to the "hard physical work" and they experienced challenges with the developing "digital stories", nonetheless we don't know how this actually affected them?

Summary UTB

The summer of 2006 has the most complete data. Not only that, it has the most information on the students' perception from which effective changes can be implemented. The 2006 data would have been complete if we had a 2006 "Student Handbook", which would have allowed us to see what information was given the students in the beginning, prior to the program start. The 2006 student feedback results, the staff's evaluation and interpretation of the results, followed by suggestions from the previous year, shows clear progress in the program evaluation in comparison to 2004 and 2005, which lacked some clarity.

We were informed that no written "Developmental Youth Outcomes" exists for the Trail Blazers; we therefore did not get any data on this topic. This would be useful, since "needs" could be addressed and "strength" could be fostered within the program. Additionally, for 2004 and 2005 end of summer reports, the UTB program coordinator indicated "none exist that I could find." No data for review, comparison, or recommendations for program improvements therefore are provided as part of this study.

After requesting information on the "Bunny System" it was mentioned to us that "no write-up" currently exists. This is a potential barrier as we learned in the focus group interview that several participants had problems with this system for various reasons. Since the Bunny System is a major motivator for some participants, it would be helpful to pay more attention to this issue and create specific guidelines.

It would have been helpful to have 2004 and 2005 'end of summer reports' to determine if improvements occurred. Furthermore, it would have been helpful to have complete data from all 3 years to see if there is a trend or not.

The videos (i.e., digital stories) are exciting; clearly the kids learn a lot through the process, and evidence shows they take pride in the final product. Keep in mind that the music in the videos we viewed was too loud in contrast to the narrating voice. The youth could be trained (“coached”) to have their voice sound more enthusiastic as the overall message of the video displays creativity, productivity and the great times in UTB.

I-YEL

- “El Tecolote” (News article, Oct. 2004): “Self-Conscious to Self-Conscience” is an example where I-YEL pushes their comfort zone within the boundaries of the community to set an example of activism and leadership. Also expressed are statements to avoid needless spending (consumerism) and implications of such negative effects on the environment. Talking in front of a crowd of 70 is a great example where youth make a statement on behalf of the environment and reflects the challenges they face with of speaking in front of an audience. The article says the interns believed so much in these issues, that they started feeling guilty, to an extent, when they shopped for themselves. Ernesto states: “They have unconscious things running through their head, so they start questioning their habits”. This substantiates the comments from the I-YEL participants, and certainly from the Alumni, during the focus group interviews. Words such as *compromising, delegating, and decision-making*, are mentioned in the article as well as in our interview results as displayed in Phase I (see personal and social growth, Table #2).
- “VolunteerToday.com” – Electronic Gazette for Volunteerism (March 2005): Phrases include “environmental issues” ~ “skills needed to respond with creative solutions” ~ “success can be attributed to the trust and respect given to its participants”. This was also heard in the focus group interviews where skills are learned and experimented with, and success is achieved in challenging situations, such as setting a statement or performing a creative play. In these instances, where the outreach messages come through, poignant statements are derived from their newfound creativity.
- “News Hour Extra with Jim Lehrer” (Sept. 2005): I-YEL participant reflects onto her experience. This shows that participants are engaging in the promotion of the I-YEL program and the Park. It sounds like the Center as well as the Park, is an integral part of them, similar to evidence found in the interview process.
- 2006 Report of Accomplishments: “Redefining environmentalism while connecting and caring for the environment and national parks to their communities”. This goes along with one of the program emphases on the connection between people and the environment. This information is the perception/summary of the program written by the Coordinator. This can be inferred as a personal interpretation and includes recognition for the students’ parents as well. This document discusses the “impact” of the program on the lives of the students and offers the program highlights as the essence of the season. This is a slight summary of what has happened and, minimally, ties into the Developmental Youth Outcomes (e.g., supports a few of these goals). Without obtaining evaluative details from the students directly, this type of summary report can be reflective of tangible program products yet would be considered biased without content of direct student experiences.
- 2006 End of Season Video (trip Grand Canyon and Yosemite): Great strength in community. Verification in empowerment to bring the best out of each other. Preparation of this trip by themselves (with support and advice by staff) clearly provided them with an

opportunity to take their depth of teamwork to the next level. They were trusted by the staff, and each other, for trip planning, logistics, and execution of major decisions. Ultimately, upon arrival, this had overflow to the other park tourists/visitors. I-YEL exuded happiness, knowledge, confidence, growth and being in pristine natural environments. You could see how comfortable they felt with park rangers and other people. This was also mentioned in the focus group interview where the way. This is certainly a highlight of the program and experiential learning at its finest. Learning also occurred through reflection and recollection of this entire experience.

- Journal / Portfolio: This is a major facet of the I-YEL program. Youth are given freedom for self-expression and to be as creative as possible. Through the process of our [researcher] review and understanding of the purpose of these portfolios, they appear to have great value, and they should. It appears as if there is more quantity (materials provided) than quality (solid features included). The criteria/parameters that must be fulfilled appears to be lenient where “corners can be cut”. Evaluation sheet for this portfolio may be insufficient – That is, a simple checklist is provided as the tool for assessing whether students met the requirements and what gaps remain. Apparently, there is a verbal meeting with each student, however, if written comments were included other staff and students could benefit from the process and content in the future.

This journal requirement was not brought up in the interview process by either the I-YEL or Alumni group at all. This potentially can be inferred as this product having little influence on their experience (e.g., something they ‘need’ to do). Does the CFC make a bigger deal out of the portfolios than they currently really are for the students?

- ✓ Some I-YEL may perceive this journal as a mandatory task to be accepted to the next “step” rather than a true benefit to their leadership development. This may also be reflective of remuneration received only versus a collective value for the entire effort.
- ✓ The portfolios are displayed at orientation for all students to look at and have an understanding of what needs to be included.
- ✓ Example provided: Student perceptions that one student took at “short-cut” in terms of completing as little as possible (in terms of quantity and quality). Did this student need more guidance and assistance to deliver a better portfolio?
- ✓ The portfolio is a display of their growth within the program and just because you want to reach another Step doesn’t mean that they will and should be coached accordingly to greater readiness. This student (example) provided may have been a great leader yet this may not have been exhibited in his portfolio (e.g., perhaps they may not be ready for the next Step?).

Comment: These conclusions are merely observations from our assessment as a comprehension of the theoretical value (of the journals). The true relevance of these portfolios is not known as the sample portfolios reviewed reflects lower level of quality than what the program is clearly about.

“Developmental Youth Outcomes in I-YEL”

Three page document (no date). Good information overall. This strongly correlates with the focus group interview process with students. This is just expressed more highly than the students articulated – And, the Alumni also conveyed the same information on a more sophisticated level. This document is a lot more reflective than the interview process. The deeper meaning of the outcomes as part of the program objectives is clearly conveyed.

- ✓ The categories for the I-YEL *Outcomes* do match the overall “Developmental Youth Outcomes” worksheet for the Center (Areas of Identity and Areas of Ability). However, the I-YEL content does not match/correlate with information in the Handbook. Why not and should it?
- ✓ Who created each of these documents? Staff? Team? Youth? How was it compiled (based on what parameters or outcome objectives?). Each of these documents could be more in sync and be more connected to each other.
- ✓ How are the desired outcomes actually being measured (beyond the scope of this study?). What is program staff doing with this information to obtain actual measures and results? (i.e., validation that outcomes are being met).

Results and findings regarding the connection of the content of this *Outcomes* document to the Focus Group interview results (Phase I) ~ NOTE: Each number noted below corresponds to the actual numbering system on the document itself:

ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

1. Safety and Structure – All I-YEL participants felt safe and comfortable at the CFC. This was mentioned in the interview in terms such as ...“feels like home” ...“get away from things”. The Document mentions “*Participants are given the authority and space to change the structure of the program to better meet their collective needs.*” This was agreed upon and highly valued by both the I-YEL and the Alumni in the interviews. Participants mentioned that this extra little bit of freedom, within the organization, shows the importance to the students. This locus of control allows them to be more creative and therefore gives them extra motivation, besides the impetus to see the “big picture” of the program, the products, and their connection to the environment in many ways.
4. Belonging and Membership: Findings from the interviews indicate this is true within the program and the CFC as a whole. Some UTB stated: “...it feels like home, to get away from family problems, and to be with friends who are considered like brothers and sisters.” I-YEL mentioned similar comments with greater emphasis on the fact they become like “brothers and sisters.”
5. Responsibility and Autonomy: Results from the I-YEL focus group interview show students find this combination a part of the success of the program and their reward is succeeding in challenging situations. The UTB, in contrast, results need to be materialized for them to be fulfilled within the program.
6. Self-Awareness and Spirituality: The Document states: “*Participants are challenged to look at the ‘Big Picture’ of where they fit and the impact they make in the different communities*”. From the Alumni interview, we learned that exceeding in challenging situations (e.g., speaking in front of a large audience or working with the community) opened their eyes to see the bigger picture in terms of environmental and social issues, as well as their connection to their own families.

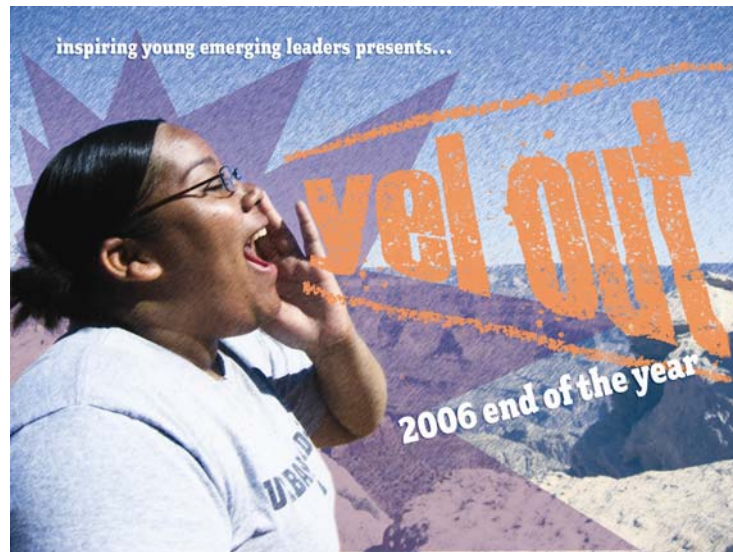
AREAS OF ABILITY

2. Mental Health: The students will gain the ability “to respond affirmatively and cope with positive and adverse situations”. Again, through the I-YEL interview, findings show participants started to feel much more at ease to address critical/uncomfortable topics and situations. Results of this interview suggest such issues, when involved with the program, are addressed in a “joking way”, or to make light of the situation. However, this is also a way to downplay the importance of the situation. Furthermore, this strategy may be a way to cope with the students own insecurity (e.g., “to not step on someone’s toes”). This was also mentioned in the Alumni interview; hence, this point is a potential problem with the ‘line of communication’ among students (peer relations) as well as staff. Such situations can become more explosive if not addressed.
3. Intellectual Ability: Results of the Alumni interview revealed their school performance, while in H.S., had increased; few examples of the transference to their current college performance were also mentioned. This increased school performance seemed to be a primary result of the increased personal and social growth, in combination with becoming more competent and grasping the concept of responsibility, overall. Their improved self-esteem allowed them to express themselves more creatively which was accepted and honored by teachers as well as peers when it came to group/team work.
4. Employability – The Document notes one of the environmental leadership aspects is “job shadowing”. During the Alumni focus group (as noted by a current UTB leader) this aspect of the program no longer exists. This was “another door” for him that he did not know existed. Other alumni fully agreed. This young man changed his major from computer science to a double-major in environmental economics and biology because of this particular I-YEL experience.
5. Civic and Social Ability: The Document states “...to work collaboratively with others for the larger good and to sustain caring friendships”. From the Alumni interview, findings indicate although they have completed the program they are still all friends with each other (and continue to consider one other “like family”). Results also show the I-YEL program created a social awareness for the Alumni, deep enough where several students decided to pursue college degrees that correlate with the values gained from I-YEL.

Summary I-YEL

Results of both phases show, for the most part, a trend to program improvement is evident. Additionally, it is very obvious that the program leaders have great insight and understanding of the deeper meaning of the program and how to pass this on to the students (interns). Findings of the interview process and sample documents analyzed corroborate this trend of program progression. However, the student evaluations in written form should express or hint more to the deeper meaning of I-YEL. It appears that the student evaluations are meant to determine if the program has met its goals and objectives, but are the students performance measured as well (e.g., how they perform in relation to the participants’ expectations reflected in the Handbook)? If student abilities are measured, how does this occur and where is this information stored or filed? If not, consider how increasing capacity for accomplishing this can be achieved.

The I-YEL program should consider how to gather more pertinent information (including more written documentation) relating to program outcomes, proposed changes based on evaluation results, and intentions to improve the program. This would allow staff to see if program/Center goals are actually being met in both the short-term and long-term. This tracking and reporting should be represented both from the student point of view and from the staff perspectives and determine how the two relate and/or coincide.



OVERALL (Two Phases)
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE

“Learning is not always comfortable and certainly not about following the path of least resistance” (Roman Iacobucci, SFSU Graduate Student, Research Assistant).

Conclusions

Evaluation is a living process, not a static one. This evaluation provides the Center, and park partners, with glimpses of empirical insight and understanding in relation to the great work of the Center at different points in time. That is why evaluation, and the process of analyzing and interpreting data and findings, should be an ongoing process. It is imperative that the CFC collect new evaluation information (a.k.a. “data”) in order to keep up with the rapidly changing “world” at the heart of these extraordinary youth programs.

The Center staff listen, recognize, and inspire the youth through positive examples, positive feedback while showing a genuine interest in their quest for being part of the natural environment. Participants from the Crissy Field Center I-YEL program indicate that through the empowering and servant leadership exhibited by the Center staff, the program and the experiences were more than just defining the environment. It is defining a social life, a personal life, academic enrichment, and overall growth in every aspect and component in their lives. Youth, broadly, also indicate most participants in activities, including leaders and other students, work in a tight knit collaboration where “you don’t set boundaries but instead set expectations for yourself and the group in order to empower everyone involved.”

The Center staff creates experiences for the youth while working as a team and empowering each participant through genuine interest in them as individuals which, again, stems through their genuine interest and commitment in their role as a leader (e.g., “the right person for the job”). The youth, in turn, seem to empower the team leaders through proactive participation, which has the potential to result in true collaboration which is a valuable skill derived from involvement in the program.

Some participants mention they, themselves as youth, are encouraged to bring the best out of each other to create a harmonious group dynamic. This does not “happen over night”, rather germinates naturally, and by the end of the program the participants (i.e., I-YEL interns) consider themselves, as mentioned, “like brothers and sisters”.

The boundaries are more clearly set between the UTB staff members and participants versus the I-YEL leaders and the Center staff. Within I-YEL, roles are understood and respected, and mostly within their boundaries; subsequently, everyone involved contributes to the tasks as an all-inspiring team. One reason the program, even on such a macro-level, is a success is because a relatively “flat organizational structure” (vs. extreme hierarchy or top down management) allows the young leaders-in-training the extra needed autonomy to handle and delegate responsibility in a fashion that comes natural to them without having to think of pleasing the “higher rankings” (i.e., Center staff) and worrying about consequences.

Internal versus External Motivation

Another reason for success, as previously mentioned, is the right staff members are hired that are intrinsically motivated to work with urban youth. When the staff feels as

though their decisions and contributions are taken into consideration and valued, they will grow increasingly encouraged to further their contributions to the collective goals of enhancing the lives of urban youth.

A staff team that is intrinsically motivated as a whole needs to be a team whose individual components also works authentically. Each contributing staff member should be able to perform tasks according to their abilities and suited for their personality. As exhibited with the Crissy Field Center, the experience of the staff and I-YEL collaboration then becomes desired in itself, eliminating the dreadful weight that can often hinder the completion of daily tasks to reach an ultimate goal.

Several of the participants, from all three groups interviewed, mentioned that while “working” on a task, such as trail restoration, or other community and service learning, many of the experiences completely included a degree of “concentration, absorption and a sense of control” (for example, over any given situation, locus of control, freedom within their realm of possibilities while completing a task ‘on the job’).

Why is this an important conclusion and what can this result in later on? The connection to these outcomes with the literature reviewed can revert back to the value of *flow*, in part. This combines the concept of freedom and personal growth to portray the experience that the urban youth go through from experiences acquired at the Center. That is, the intrinsic rewards are obtained when their skills gained match the challenge needed to fulfill the task. This study shows that the reward ultimately lies within the experience not fully based on the material output. For example, as the lead-in quote on the 2004 UTB program overview indicates: *“The trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast and you miss all you are traveling for.” ~ Louis L’Amour*

While this inferred spiritual fulfillment is a clear outcome of participation, evidence also shows the external rewards are essential as well (e.g., stipend received and visually seeing their finished products, in particular with UTB). To what domain do internal rewards therefore have a broader impact? The thought of focusing on the bottom-line yield (external reward) will become obsolete if urban youth look at the experience itself and not the tangible output/product. If this paradigm can be instilled in these Trail Blazers—and/or IYEL—there might be a possibility that the CFC mentors can “plant the seed” and instill the thought process that more young people should avoid building identity through the accumulation of material possessions (e.g., capitalism versus social justice issues). Unfortunately, one of the many negative effects of a capitalistic society is that youth typically value the bottom-line yield more than the value of anything else. Moreover, it is “values” which get instilled in children from a young age by adult influences. The more influence the Center can have, the healthier the youth will continue to be.

What? So What? Now What?

The focus groups for this study can be considered the “control group” whereas the documents received and media reviewed are considered a partial collected history (e.g., sample of information received for review from past years). The interviews were coded and analyzed in a way that provided actual, “real time” observations and interactions for this research team at that moment in time. The other materials received relates to the programs’ inception as recent past experiences of the students. The research team assessed the interview data and compared and contrasted many of the results to what we encountered with the documents and videos. We looked for trends over time yet this was difficult in some

capacity because the materials received varied and were incomplete (e.g., years missing). There was no sequence or room for comparison to establish a trend analysis; this is crucial for program improvement for the future.

With the information obtained from this study, the UTB and I-YEL can determine where they've been and where they might want to go in the future. They can use the material provided as a benchmark and the gaps can be bridged by keeping better track of the evaluations received, and capturing all possible experiences and impacts of the programs on the participants through a tighter system. For example, based on several documents requested, we were told "nothing exists in writing" and what has been done—or is known—appears to be stored in the cortex of the program coordinators (i.e., some program memory, attention, perceptual awareness, thinking, language and consciousness is all in their heads!). If they ever leave, certain institutional knowledge and memories will leave with them.

This is an exciting time for the Crissy Field Center to continue directing attention toward the understanding of needs and challenges faced by urban youth today. The Center can help shape community perceptions about these kids and brag about the contributions these youth are making to the ever-evolving Bay Area culture.

Recommendations for Future

A. Urban Trail Blazers (UTB)

1] Self-Expression: Staff should try to get the UTB students to express themselves much more explicitly in order to extract more concrete information out of the evaluations. The UTB could be taught about the value of clear expression not only for program evaluations but for their life skills. The way it is now, the trend relates to all sample evaluations (reviewed in the study) are mostly the same (+ or – a point here or there). There is no distinct or significant difference from year-to-year from student responses. The only significant trend relates to the Likert-scale results of the activities. For example, the bike trip in 2004 was the highlight of the summer experience, in 2006 this was not a highlight yet there is a lack of information as to why (Note: According to the 2005 weekly calendar, no bike trip occurred). If in 2004 the bike trip (for many students) was the highlight of the summer. We were later informed that based on prior incidents decisions about safety outweighed the "fun" or enjoyment for that next year (2005) schedule. Apart from scheduling decisions, by the end of the summer, the evaluations should provide more information and details from the students in order to recognize a trend over the next few years.

2] "Bunny System": The write up/description/criteria was requested for review, we were told that "no write up currently exists". This is a problem or potential issue because a majority of the UTB youth interviewed expressed a large amount of frustration relating to what was felt like "unfair" and "confusing". The only place this topic seems to be discussed in the materials provided (phase II), is in the 2006 staff debrief. They mention, for example, "Some students were uncertain as to the details of the bunny system." This is true; again, results show the system may be "unfair" as students simply "do not agree with the system". This needs to be addressed in future and proper changes or modifications should be considered.

3] Backpacking / Restoration: In 2006, it was suggested that the backpacking component be cancelled when doing trail restoration service work. This may not be justified, and should be further explored more deeply as to rationale at the end of the program prior to making this decision. For example, kids simply like to “complain” that the work is too hard, yet the rewards gained have been enormous and this was reflected in the enjoyment expressed during the focus group process (e.g., the reward lies within the activity).

4] Activity Calendars: In the previous year evaluations, a key suggestion was made (by one of the H.S. I-YEL leaders) to have the weekly calendar more detailed and more complete with the activities so the participants have a better idea what is ahead of them, and also to have more input and/or reference points in advance to the activities. We believe this is a good idea:

- Was her feedback and request given any consideration? The reason for this question now is because the 2005 and 2006 calendars do not incorporate her suggestions.
- Do you take notes on this type of essential feedback from your own/internal program leaders provided in written format?
- These suggestions are not evident in any of the materials provided. For example, since the calendars do mention “Field Trip”, “Project Day”, etc., but the specifics of what kind/type of trips and projects are not mentioned. There is also no attachment or supplemental descriptions provided with the calendar for students, parents, etc

Note: This would allow the participants to have more conceptual preparation over each week. With these additional highlights of program content, more preparation and/or anticipation can provide more opportunity for readiness. Therefore a slight bit of increased autonomy within the program can be provided for the participants; this might improve their motivation and decrease the amount of complaints after a “hard” day of work and truly determine how legitimate their “complaints” really are.

6] Activities – Example → Bike ride to community gardens in the park (UTB evaluation 2006 one child noted dislike for this activity): The probability that someone will fall on a bike ride is an inherent risk in the activity and is a natural factor in certain activities. Nonetheless, one must be aware that the reward lies within the activity itself and one should not focus on expected outcomes (e.g., fall, skinned knee); this only adds character and teaches the kids a valuable lesson they will not attain by "crashing in a computer game". Also riding uphill is part of the riding experience and creates awareness of ones own physical state and surrounding. The recommendation, for all activities, is to take negative comments relating to bad experiences of physical activities, in particular, with a “grain of salt” realizing the overall benefit teaches more valuable lessons than one incident in one program.

7] Evaluation (sample comments): Strive to associate each year-end evaluation (student and/or leaders feedback) with future years’ programs including rationale provided for why a recommended change, etc. is implemented or not. Attempt to not “start over” each year.

[a] Feedback Loop: Correlate the end of the year evaluation to the description and goals of the proposed activities determined at the beginning of the summer. For instance, if trails were the “Theme” for the year, find out what meaning it ultimately had to the kids;

[b] General comment - If the “Main Projects” for the season include the Youth Trail Map and Digital Story Telling project(s), for example, then request more depth on these topics in

the evaluation summary, beyond just having the participants giving them a “rating.” Consider asking students to write a narrative of their experience instead of simply circling a number, or in lieu of the rating all together;

[c] The summer schedule of 2005, in comparison to summer 2006, seems to be more detailed, why? UTB staff feedback (debrief) for '06 appears to be the most helpful in terms of suggestions for the coming year, since it has staff conclusions and the essence of their leaders observations. Would it help to have the students respond to the “successes and improvements” as indicated by the leaders, as possible amendments for the following year? In terms of “improvements for next year” correlate the 2007 student evaluation accordingly to see if the suggested improvements (from '06) were successfully implemented (i.e., feedback loop).

8] Developmental Youth Outcomes: This document, as used with I-YEL, is a very valuable tool. We were told the UTB program does **not** have this type of model. We strongly recommend this be created for this middle-school program as well.

B. Inspiring Young Emerging Leaders (I-YEL)

This is a solid program overall. Recommendations are embedded throughout this report, additionally a few key suggestions are provided here as mostly structural in terms of program operations:

1] Consider developing a structure that allows for “participatory evaluation” that builds organizational capacity and is collective in nature. As with social justice work, in general, this would involve developing your capacity for assessing strategies and gauging the efficacy of your efforts. Participatory evaluations is an in-house “research” opportunity that could provide the youth with the analytic skills necessary to document their lives, thereby giving programs the means to document the impact of their work with CFC and overall leaderships development. This can also provide a new language for articulating the unique strengths and challenges of their work.

2] Reinstate the “Job Shadowing” component of the program; revitalize this part of the curriculum. I-YEL Alumni mentioned this was a very valuable aspect of their career development. This job shadowing opportunity opened up a new world to these students.

3] Documentation: There is a need for more written/tangible evaluative notes from both staff and participants. More constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement seem to be needed to truly enhance the program moving it into the next 5 years. The Developmental Youth Outcomes document should provide the program parameters in a way that allows for capacity building of I-YEL. That is, such internal evaluation can be remarkably improved by validating actual student experiences to what is desired based on program goals.

4] Staff feedback for students: There is a perceived need for the line of communication to be enhanced between the program coordinator and the I-YEL students. For example, Alumni noted (and all concurred) that they wish staff would have more frequent “check-in’s” with them indicating they would like to have a ‘constant check-in’ with the Center leadership (e.g., at any given time, beyond typical ‘meetings’ and more than a mid-review).

5] Journal/Portfolio: To increase value of these portfolios to the students, there could be a greater connection in the orientation, improve motivation to deliver a better product, and give them more time to devote to this over the course of the year (i.e., possible means of changing the “meaning” of this portfolio to their leadership development):

(Journals, cont'd)

- ✓ Increase level of relevance of this project in the program and in their lives overall.
- ✓ To achieve a higher pay scale (as part of the journal criteria), the quality should be considered more in depth. It seems there could be some improvement and less focus on how much material is included.
- ✓ Reconsider students completing “peer evaluations” of each other’s portfolios through a ‘grading/rating’ system and in written essay form. They could all get something out of this as a result. We were told this occurred during “the first 2 years” (i.e., I-YEL *used to do peer evaluations*). This was noted as being a “good skill for them to learn and great experience”. Consider reinstating this important program component.
- ✓ Staff seems to be somewhat lenient with students fulfilling requirements as noted in the criteria/parameters. Focus may seem to be more on quantity versus quality merely to fill up the binders.
- ✓ If the portfolio is an indicator of the substance/value of the program (which is excellent), then consider raising the standards for the quality/content of these journals as well as increased understanding of true relevance to their overall experience.

C. Collective Ideas – Both Programs

1] Organization/program operations: As noted under the ‘structural’ category of the results and findings for the document review, the UTB and I-YEL staff may need to be better organized. Examples include: Pages for all documents should be numbered; all documents should be dated (at least by year and whatever else is pertinent such as month and date as applicable; we received a few separate documents with the same information yet they had different file names; activity calendars could be reviewed from year-to-year for consistency for level of detail provided (will assist students preparation, staff review purposes, etc; and ensure annual reporting occurs (e.g., 2004, 2005 UTB end of year/season reports ‘do not exist’, according to staff).

2] Physical Health:

✓ UTB: This seems to be partially incorporated in the valuable aspect of informal “fun and games” and within the various structured activities. There is no tangible evidence of improvement, however, of their physical health as a result of participating in these activities. Backpacking, biking trips, and restoration projects (for example), are explicit physical activities; however student evaluations do not reflect the benefits of these activities to their overall health (not mentioned or revealed). Their overall happiness and well-being is a byproduct based on the physical and mental exercises provided in the schedule of activities in the outdoors. Their “mind-body” connections are not grasped (e.g., not aware of this concept), however, nor is this factor included in the CFC youth evaluations reviewed. The fact that ‘a healthy mind needs a healthy body’ is not recognized by the younger students and this concept could be addressed more deeply through the physical activities offered and engaged in.

Note: The 2005 UTB “measures and outcomes” indicate 81% of the students responded they ate healthier and were more active that summer than normal. How this affects them overall is unknown. Determining alternate measures and ways to assess the health benefits of the programs would take the Center to new levels.

3] Photo-journaling: Given the technology available at the Center, this technique can be used as a way for the youth to gather, record, and analyze data in order to answer questions about their own lives and their involvement at the center. And, disposable cameras can be purchased (or donated) for use. This can be a particularly effective way to involve youth in the documentation of their involvement, and the impact, of the Center programs. Photo-journaling is a method of recording data that utilizes a camera to capture images while the youth keep brief journal notes to document what each picture (or series of pictures) is meant to capture (e.g., meaning).

4] Communicating clear messages about these evaluation research results to the audience you want to reach.

- Strategic messages about these findings can help the CFC approach funders in new ways, work with parents to provide empirical information about what the Center intuitively knows to be true, develop relationships with the community, share results with park partners, and recruit youth to the Center programs.
- Determine the key major messages that will work best for each of the different groups with which you want to communicate.
- Identify the audiences you most want to affect – write the findings in language they can relate to and present in a format they will be attracted to.
- Make a case for the effectiveness and value of the UTB and I-YEL programs based on the “evidence” resulting from this evaluation project (and other previously completed as well as yet to come in the future.)
- The Center can explain that changes in knowledge about the environment and growth in the way the participants connect with one another (and the leaders) are a direct result of your program’s hands-on activities, trainings, and immersion in nature (etc.)
- Choose the best vehicle to communicate your message to the specific audience.

5] Developmental Youth Outcomes and “The Crissy Field Center Way”: Model worksheets and CFC blueprint– It is our perception that staff may not use these documents appropriately (predominantly with I-YEL). It is a suggestion to utilize these great documents to their fullest potential. Do the participants see and know about the content of these documents, understand the connection between them, and does it make sense to them? Are participants (and/or parents) given these documents at the beginning of their involvement? These can also be great “advertising” tools for the program as very impressive information (i.e., can reinforce belief system). This information, from start to finish (outcomes desired, student evaluations) could be compiled in the archives for tracking purposes and longitudinal data on progress/growth of the programs as well as for hiring purposes and staff development. Last, a *Development Youth Outcomes* worksheet (tool) should be created for the UTB program and the above statements would probably pertain more to parents.

6] Evaluations: Staff could consider having more comments and observations about the students' comments in terms of the written evaluations.

- ✓ Ensure evaluations ask whether the program Handbook and content matches student expectations at the beginning of their experience. Encourage students to articulate this information.
- ✓ Institute a student evaluation system so performance from the leaders side as well as the participant side can be noted and observed; this can be translated through exploring trends over the coming years.



Closing comments

The Crissy Field Center is on the cutting-edge of youth development. With improvements in certain aspects of the organizational structure and reporting, programs can continue to build character, create new leaders, and enhance knowledge and understanding of natural and cultural resources. Additionally, by blending in opportunities to learn about careers, the Center programs can make a key contribution to diversifying the face of the environmental and conservation workforce. Youth have an inherent need for nature. Research shows a growing absence of youth involvement in outdoor activities; programs such as those offered by the CFC and others across the country must continue to break down any existing barriers that contribute to a current “nature-deficit disorder”. Finally, as results of this study convey, the effect of such outdoor education and recreation programs on kids making healthy choices fundamentally benefits the environment, personal spirit, and contributes to best practices and park management decisions.



APPENDICES

PHASE I

- A: Objectives and Desired Outcomes**
- B: Focus Group Questions (by group)**
- C: UTB – Sample Quotations**
- D: I-YEL – Sample Quotations**
- E: I-YEL ALUM – Sample Quotations**

Appendix A

The focus group questions are based on the following objectives and desired outcomes:

Primary:

- * Learn about what is their true relationship to the park. What does the park mean to them? (Real meaning “through the eyes of the youth.”)
- * Understand the outreach influence of youth on their peers? How are kids (high school) experiences with the parks providing influence on participation/involvement on their peers or kids younger than them (middle school’ers)?
- * Understand the influences of experiences obtained at the Center.
- * Understand the impacts of leadership development opportunities at the Center.
- * Understand if and how the program affects their academic and future career choices.
- * Learn how the Center programming enhances life skills development of youth and provides a safe place for youth to connect with the Park.
- * Is CFC/the Park a place where the youth feel comfortable and safe - since it is located in a “special” setting (i.e., Crissy Field Center), and are the kids therefore more attracted to participate?
- * Explore whether the program is really more than “fun and games” for the youth – (i.e., are they bringing the concepts they have learned home and tell their friends and family about it? How does it affect their lives? Does it have any lasting effects, does it change them?)
- * Determine if the youth are applying new knowledge and information to daily life and are they proud of knowing additional or ‘extra’ knowledge about the environment and what the sociological impacts to society are. Understand how the information acquired affects them, if at all.
- * Explore if they want to continue to participate actively in environmental issues even after they are done with their involvement in the CFC programs.

Supplemental:

- * Determine how are the youth are educated – (what kind of learning style? Is it hands on? Is it partially a classroom setting? Is it along the hiking trip?)
- * Understand just what is it that the youth are learning, exactly.
- * Explore how serious or in-depth is the information learned is processed by the youth.
- * Identify how engaged they are in finding information and processing the information they are learning.
- * Desire to participate/join the programs: Is their motivation intrinsic or extrinsic (how and why?). Are they coming because they want to learn/have new experience – or because there are other incentives? (CFC staff has indicated they already know that the answer is either "to earn money" or "for fun.").



APPENDIX B
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
Summer 2006



San Francisco
State University

The following is a revised list of questions to be used during the focus groups relating to youth attitudes/experiences, etc. with programs at the CFC. There will be 4 focus groups for this interview process: I-YEL, 2 Urban Trailblazers, and 1 alumni group.

B. Urban Trail Blazers (middle school) – (n = 2 groups of 12 each)

Tier 1 questions

1. *Icebreaker:* What do you like to do for fun or for recreation (when you're not at school and not here at the CFC?)
2. What does this park mean to you? Describe your connection to the park itself.
3. Why do you participate in this program? What is it about this program that gave you the interest to join?
4. What do you like best about the program/favorite activity, etc.? Least?
5. Describe how you feel when you are at the Center/the Park. What is it like for you being here?
6. What are you learning about the environment? Are you concerned about the environment? If yes, what about? If not, why not?
7. What are you learning about yourself?
8. How does the environment affect you in day-to-day life? How does what you learn at the Center or Park relate to your life at home? School?
9. Do you share what you learn here with your family? Friends?
10. What are you doing in the UTB programs that help protect the environment? Are you interested in continuing to do your part to stay involved with helping the environment even after you're done with this program? If yes, what else can you do in the future?
11. What is your relationship with the "counselors"? – And, we definitely want to hear from you if your counselor is also a high school student in the IYEL program. Do they influence or inspire you in any way? If so, how? Do you learn from each other / can you learn from each other? Do you think they learn anything from you? (If yes, give examples).
12. Are you interested in being part of the I-YEL program when you get to be old enough? Why or why not?

Tier 2 Questions

13. Is the group serious or do you think this is fun and games?
14. Do the counselors/supervisors set positive examples for you?
15. Please share any other thoughts, opinions, comments about the program and/or your specific involvement with CFC and/or the Park.



FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS Summer 2006



San Francisco
State University

The following is a revised list of questions to be used during the focus groups relating to youth attitudes/experiences, etc. with programs at the CFC. There will be 4 focus groups for this interview process: I-YEL, 2 Urban Trailblazers, and 1 alumni group.

A. I-YEL (high school)

TIER 1 Questions

1. *Icebreaker:* What do you like to do for fun or for recreation (when you're not at school and not here at the CFC?)
2. What does this park mean to you? Describe your connection to the park itself.
3. What motivated you to join the I-YEL program at the CFC?
4. If someone asked you to describe the Crissy Field Center to them, what would you say?
5. Learning/knowledge gained: What do you learn as a result of participation in the program? How do you learn best (style of learning). How does what you learn through your experience effect you? (Impact). Do you apply what you learn to your daily life in any way? If yes, how. If not, what's missing?
6. What is your knowledge about environmental issues in general? (The Park, Bay Area, California, the Country – *see how broad their knowledge is*). What do you see as most pressing/most serious needs to be addressed?
7. How has your involvement in CFC programs educated you overall about the environment?
8. Has your involvement with the Center helped you in school in any way? If yes, please explain.
9. How has your involvement helped you to become a better "leader"? Explain.
10. How do your experiences with the Center - and the Park as a whole - have an influence on participation/involvement of your friends? On the kids you work with at the Center (supervise)?
11. Have you been able to make a difference in your community, in any way, as a result of your participation in the I-YEL program? If so, how.
12. I-YEL'ers all have different perspectives and opinions; how do you work together to create social change? Environmental change?
13. If you were to participate in shaping and planning the future of the CFC as a whole, and/or the I-YEL program in particular, what would be your goals and vision?
14. Can you learn from younger participants (UTB)? - are you willing to listen and to understand their perspective/point of view? Do you learn from each other? Can you learn from each other? (*e.g., relationship with participants they work with*).

(I-YEL) Tier 2 Questions

15. Is the group serious, or do you think this program is just “fun and games”?
16. Can you work with younger kids (UTB) in a meaningful way? (or is this just a “job”?)
17. I-YEL organizes a lot of activities and events – what is your favorite program and why? What is your least favorite program? Why?
18. Please share any other thoughts, opinions, comments about the program and/or your specific involvement with CFC and/or the Park.

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San Francisco
State University

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Summer 2006

Alumni (former program participants) – August 8, 2006 - 6:00pm

1. *Icebreaker:* What do you like to do for fun or for recreation?
2. Are you in school now? (high school? college?), if so what year? If college, what are you majoring in and where do you go to school?
3. If not in school, are you working? Where? Describe.
4. How long were you in the CFC/I-YEL program?
5. Did your involvement help to shape your attitude about the natural environment and the need to protect our parks? If yes how. If not why not?
6. What are you doing now to contribute to a healthy environment?
7. How has I-YEL made an impact on your family and friends?
8. If you could help market the programs at the CFC and share the success stories, what would you do? (*Technique or Strategy*)
9. How did your involvement prepare you to become a better “leader”? Explain.
10. If you had an opportunity to speak on the radio or do a television interview to talk about your experience with CFC and how it impacted your life, what message would you want people to hear?
11. Do you believe your involvement in the program has had a lasting effect on your attitude about the environment? Changes in your attitude and/or behavior? About working with other people? etc.
12. How did your involvement in I-YEL affect your academic choices in college? How about your career path in general?
13. Did your involvement in I-YEL change your lifestyle? For example, what you do on your free time, have you experienced a change in your values and attitude both for the environment, but also for career decisions, recreation, etc.
14. Please share any other thoughts, opinions, comments about the program and/or your specific involvement with CFC and/or the Park.

Appendix C
Sample, Urban Trailblazer Quotes, Thursday July 27, 2006

Connection to the park

“To me it feels like it is coming together w/your friends and family / it is like a connection with my family”.

~14 year old Hispanic male, one year in program

“I feel connected because when I want to go to the park I can go anywhere in there where some people are not allowed. I like touching things, we go camping and like other things. We go crabbing and play games.”

~ 13 year old Asian male, four years in program

Motivation to participate in the program

“I was told by someone here who has power that I will feel empowered.”

~13 year old mixed-race male, two years in program

“I joined this program because I thought it would be something to give back to the community, kind of. I feel like learning something, kind of hands on learning – restoration work and going to places, not just classroom work.”

~13 year old Asian female, one year in program

“I joined because I have read that all the different things that we would be doing like kayaking, canoeing, camping at Alcatraz or so that sounded really cool because I never done kayaking or canoeing before, and I signed up last year and it was very fun last year, and I like the team leaders, they are really fun, also you get a \$125 after.”

~ 12 year old African American male, two years in program

Emotion when being at the CFC

“In school someone constantly tells me to do better, you try your best here. No one expects you to do more than you can do.”

~ 14 year old Chinese female, one year in program

“I just feel really happy inside because parents are just always putting stress, pressure on you, I am getting away from the pressure.”

~14 year old Asian male, three years in program

Learning about the self

“... like to help because so many people are hurting, it takes only a few people to help it.”

~13 year old Mixed-race male, one year in program

“...Learned that there are other things every day that are making a difference.”

~14 year old Hispanic male, one year in program

“I learned that I extra like helping the environment because I never thought I did until I came to this program.”

~13 year old African American male, one year in program

Effects of environment on day to day life

“I told my parents to eat more organic and not too much processed food because you don’t know what’s in there.”

~11 year old Chinese female, one year in program

“Ever since we went to the dump I have been more conscious of what I am throwing in the garbage and in the compost.”

~13 year old African American male, one year in program

Share gained knowledge with friends/family

“Every night I go home and give my parents a lecture of what I learned”

~13 year old Mixed-race male, one year in program

Involvement in serving the environment

“We also learn to protect the environment by them educating us about different things that affect the environment by doing things or doing more things”

~12 year old Asian male, one year in program

Relationship with the counselors

“They can be friends but they can also be your family members because they can relate to us.”

~12 year old Hispanic female, one year in program

Appendix D
Sample I-YEL Quotes – Saturday, July 22, 2006

Connection to the park

“...Diversity - different people new people everyday...”

~ Chinese & Vietnamese female, 2 years in program

“...Help to make me a better person”

~ Latin/white female, 18 years old, 2 years in program

“I used to be a follower”

“... Color problems and to get away from things, it is something different discovering yourself.”

~African American female, 17 years old, 4 years in program

“They offer things you don’t to get to do otherwise”

~Chinese female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

Motivation to join I-YEL

“I am part of the leadership”

“The first two years here I learned more here than in four years in high school. Here I learn through young people, less press pressure and we are learning from each other not just from a teacher.”

~Nicaraguan male, 18 year old, 4 years in program

“If we want a better world we need to step up and work on it”...

“...helps me to achieve more goals, to approach people, I gained courage and it opened more doors for me.”

~ Bi-racial female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

Connection to CFC and the Park

“It feels like family, every time I come to work here I am happy, I like coming here, coming here wants me to help others.”

~ African American female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

Experiences in I-YEL

“I have to take my own initiative to make things happen I-Yell taught me”...

“I-YEL made it easier to speak in front of an audience, and in presentations I felt alive. It made me a better public speaker ...”

“In my first year here I was progressing in leads and bounds, it helped my self esteem. I-YEL throws you in the cold water in a great environment.”

“In the long run it will put out people opinionated, socially, environmentally, 95% of us all will go to college, we are one step ahead of the game, we come out and contribute more to society because of the learning’s here.”

~ Caucasian female, 17 years old, 3 years in program

“In the beginning it is hard, it becomes more organic to teach friends the longer you stay in the program”.

“After a couple of month in I-YEL my English got better and I can work with people so much better, it is so much easier than before, it helped my confidence.”

~ Guatemalan/American male, 17 years old, 2 years in program

Knowledge about the environment in general

“People would not act if it does not affect anybody, except themselves”...
“... We learn in I-YEL and we take action to inform people about it. We want to leave a message to everyone. If you get to one person you get to more people, it perpetuates.”

~ Chinese female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

“Things should be equal for everyone”...
“It helps me to be a better person, without the program I would not be here”
~Latin/White female, 16 years old, 2 years in program

Involvement helped to become a better leader

“We take action to inform people about the program and environment”
~Chinese female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

“... because of I-YEL I got perks and advantages and leadership skills, I honestly feel I teach the idea and initiative of teamwork.”
~Filipina female, 16 years old, 2 years in program

“We are one step ahead of the game and contribute more to society”
~White male, 17 male, 4 years in program

Fun and Games?

“We work together and get it done...we have fun but we also like to work”...
“... I put a lot on myself I want to make sure it happens, I don’t like to do it but I will, I have to take my own initiative to make things happen, I –YEL
~Chinese female, 16 years old, 3 years in program

Knowledge about the environment in general

“I learned a lot ... I never used to recycle, mom works really hard and worries about food on the table, when I started working here I heard and I learned. Show me and I learn ... now I opened my eyes and I am changing and teaching my mom.”

~ Bi-racial female, 16 years old, 3 years in the program

Thoughts and comments

“I-YEL is the best Sunday ice cream I ever had”

~African American female, 17 years old, 4 years in program

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Appendix E
Sample I-YEL Alumni Quotes, August 8, 2006

Involvement shaped attitude about the natural environment

... “ I YEL made my understanding of what should be socially acceptable... and I wanted to contribute in a good way to the environmental change, regardless of what my social acceptability was amongst my peers”

~19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

...”I wanted it to be completely socially acceptable and something people of my age were concerned about ... and if I hit some sort of a road block I didn’t see that as a reflection... of what was going on with me, but rather them not being informed or not being questioning the situation.”

~19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... It was IYEL that gave me a passion for environmental policy and environmental justice issues and other things, which has led me to my current career choice, I am perusing now.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“I hadn’t felt what it meant to be youth and being connected to the environment ... I did not connect well to people before IYEL ...and this showed me that people are part of the environment and I don’t see them as separate anymore.”

~20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB as Assistant leader

Contribution to a healthier environment

“My contribution on a more personal scale is to inform my folks about the issues that are going on in the environment... though they sometimes don’t make the connection it is still good to inform them”

~ 21 year old Chinese male, one year in I-YEL, three years with UTB as Leader

“I feel my general level of consciousness about my consumption is very different, so if I buy something with packaging I know that it has an effect, where as before I would have just bought it”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... I walk everywhere which is something amazing because I bused my entire live.”

~ 20 year old Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

“... I am doing an internship that is definitely non-paid, but I am out there very day trying to convince legislators to adopt laws to help the environment.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“... I am working with six and seven year olds and these kids here really believe they can change the world, and they believe they are responsible for the environment, and that makes me believe so much more I can give them the tools and really go out there and make the difference....”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

I-YEL's impact on the relationship with family and friends

“... It changed the way I view activism and it taught me that environmentalism does not have to be a pity party for the environment, but there can be real effective activism behind it.”

~19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... It affected our relationship with our family and friends, we really define our family and friends, because we are all very close, I consider this a table of brothers and sisters.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“... I also feel really safe in IYEL so they trust me. When I say I am going out with I-YEL they know I am safe.

~18 year old Chinese male, one year in program

“... I started to realize that some really good people surrounded me. I started to feel save, but not only save but happy. This was actually something really special for me, and I started to become really close to the people here, this was a sanctuary. I began to have more confidence in my self and I began to feel happy wherever I went to and I carried that happiness from IYEL outside, and my parents began to notice changes in me.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

“Santa Cruz is a is known as school for activism ... I thought it would be a place for social change and things like that...these are college students with a lot of resources, but I don't want to get involved because it does not seem to be nearly as effective as what I haven been doing in IYEL.”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... I had some real problems with my parents communicating. The more I changed the more comfortable I got, the more things opened up between us and it helped to build a better relationship with my family.”

~20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year in UTB, assistant leader

Help to market the programs at the CFC and share success stories

“I think it is important to reach communities that aren't traditionally users of the park, ... when you look who's running in front of the CFC, you see it's the with upper middle class white people only, and that's what you see pretty much throughout the parks”.

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“... Scholarship students... are getting a lot more out of the program, they are really making the connections you want them to make, and they are the ones who when asked express sadness not being able to come back to the park because they don't have the resources...”

~19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... bring people from certain areas, especially when you consider by what they are normally surrounded with. Especially when you think what you could achieve with the CFC and ugliness in people's life you could alleviate.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB - Assistant Leader

“Scrap the whole ‘Presidi-Go’ program and use those shuttles to get people to come and get out here. It is a good idea in concept but the bus drives around empty all day long ... it would be full if it would go to other parts of the city.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

Involvement of program prepared to become a better leader

“IYEL is not just a program that wants a certain image outwardly but they want to actually reflect that inwardly... throughout the entire program and their life's.”

“It also teaches you to be a better listener, a part of a leader is to be a listener.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB Assistant Leader

“I don't think I had any strong leadership skills before YEL, now I feel comfortable enough to teach a workshop or something that I learned an hour ago if I needed to.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“...public speaking and the ability to perform publicly ... comes from IYEL where you get that great belief in your self.”

~19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“... If you know more you know about learning styles you can become a more effective leader, because you help people learn the best. I think this is the strongest purpose of a leader which is not to hear yourself talk, it is to hear other people talk and to help to express themselves.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB - Assistant Leader

Did participation in I-YEL help in academics?

“... if I never had the opportunity to shadow that Yahoo guy I would have probably majored in computer science and live my life coding. In addition IYEL has some access to fun things for academics, so they bought some SAT books ... I locked myself in a room and read these books.”

~ 20 year old Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB, Assistant Leader

“In terms of education it has given me a passion, a drive of what I want to study”....

“I never have been a fan of busywork. IYEL gave me the courage to make each and every assignment as creative as I wanted it to be. ... Professors were surprised and actually did let me be this creative because they realized that I was actually learning from it. ... I saw the opportunity to make education passionate.

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB, Assistant Leader

Message on radio how I-YEL impacted life

“IYEL really helped me to find myself, not just because I am interested in the environmental field, I think for anybody who goes into the program, it helps you to find out who you are.”

~ 20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“I don’t just act or behave differently, I live differently. And more appropriately I live better than I used to.”

~ 20 year old Mixed-race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB, Assistant Leader

“I think outside the box now, before I was in the box with all my values, thinking of cloth, shoes, fast cars, all that kind of B.S. - Now I think outside the box and about other people.”

~22 year old Chinese male, one year in I-YEL, two years with UTB as Leader

Life style changes based through involvement in the program

“In I-YEL, I focused on consumption and conspicuous consumption, specifically how to address it and how to make it something approachable for the youth. Like, how can you be a youth and not be conspicuously consuming, but still fit in?”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

What makes I-YEL stand apart from anything else?

“It is all about the environment, the bigger picture is for the environment, if it is for your self it is also for everyone else.”

~22 year old Chinese male, one year in program

“... the environment is your social environment, your personal environment, your academic environment, it is approaching it through every single part and component of life ...”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

I-YEL does not necessarily promote itself that way – unless you experience it

“Once you leave this place you come to realization that this was quite something, like when you are submerged you feel it, but you really come to realization when you are gone.”

~20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB, Assistant Leader

“... IYEL is about defining and redefine environmentalism, community, your and leadership, if you had to sum it up that’s what you get, it defines all these four concepts.”

~20 year old Caucasian male, two years in program

“Maybe it is about defining it for your self, maybe it is about how your definition relates to what other peoples definitions are and how you make those two coincide.”

~ 19 year old Caucasian female, one year in program

“[I-YEL] Redefines your reality, maybe you are somehow realizing you are here, all the people you know are somewhere in here, the environment is also in here, so is community and everyone you did not even realize.”

~ 20 year old Mixed race female, three years in I-YEL, one year with UTB - Assistant Leader

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APPENDIX

PHASE II

Inventory of Materials Reviewed

UTB and I-YEL Document Review Inventory

A. Urban Trailblazers

1. 2004 Sample “High School Intern Debrief” (Rita Alcantara)
2. 2004 Evaluation Summary / End of Summer Program with each copy of student evaluations (raw data attached).
3. 2004 Student Handbook – Summer Program
4. 2004 Final Staff Debrief – Includes recommended changes for 2005
5. 2004 UTB Program Overview - Complete description including: Narrative, Goals, Audience, Main Projects, Additional Projects, Potential Topics, Structure, ‘04 Program Costs.
6. 2004 Weekly Program Schedule of events and activities.
7. UTB 2005 program evaluation sheet with results (2 pages)
8. UTB measures and outcomes from evaluation (2005). Includes concrete data of UTB’s work/activities (2 pages).
9. 2005 Timeframe / Program Calendar - 5 week schedule (12 pages)
10. 2006 UTB Feedback based on Staff Debrief
11. 2006 UTB Student Feedback Results
12. 2006 UTB Summer schedule

B. I-YEL

2001-2006 Participants (names, gender, ethnicity)

2001-2002 IYEL Mid-program evaluation – Summary comments from youth evaluations completed (per question on the evaluation).

I-YEL 2002-2003 final evaluation, summary comments from youth evaluations completed (per question on the evaluation).

Acknowledgment Certificate, 2003, from the City of SF for the I YEL play “Not in My BAAAckyard” (2 pages includes resolution).

San Francisco Chronicle News Article (June 2003): Excerpt about the play “Not in My BAAAckyard” (1 page)

2004 Parent Orientation (Oct) – Agenda

Recognition letter to Michele Gee from the National Park Service Director, Fran Mainella, to Ms. Gee for *Outstanding Volunteer Service*. 2004 George B. Hartzog, Jr. Award. (1 page)

Recognition letter from the NPS Pacific West Regional Director, Jon Jarvis. I-YEL was selected as the Pacific West Region’s 2004 winner of the George Hartzog Volunteer Group Award. (1 page).

EL Tecolote – 2004 News Article. Fashion show at Cell Space: Demonstration of an unhealthy cycle between media, consumerism and natural resources. I-YEL teens are asking individuals to quit needless spending. (1 page)

Online EL Tecolote article (Oct. 2004): “ ‘Self conscious’ to ‘self conscience’ ” : Fashion show report, comments from Ernesto about the learning’s of the I-YEL etc.

√ Article is about negative results of consumerism and the media, mentions that I-YEL speaks in front of 70 people.

√ Includes Ernesto’s observation about I-YEL’s growth. (2 pages).

2004 “What makes a strong portfolio” (updated version)

2004 I-YEL: A] “Audience evaluation” (blank copy) AND B] Xcel spreadsheet of responses

2004-05 Mid-program evaluation - Summary comments from youth evaluations completed (per question on the evaluation).

Environmental Leadership Curriculum – 2004-2005 (2pgs).

VolunteerToday.com – Electronic Gazette for Volunteerism. Federal Government volunteer programs: Description of I-YEL and its effect on the participants (Mar. 2005). Creative solutions from the interns’ point of view improve their connection to the park. The community and creates a strong sense of belonging and social responsibility. (2 pages)

News Hour EXTRA with Jim Lehrer – Special for Students: Maura Blake, I-YEL participant and her essay / thoughts of the CFC and the park site. (Aug 2005)

Journal Portfolios– Reviewed at the Center

2006 - Two (2) videos (presented at the YELL-OUT event) of the summer Yosemite trip.

2006 – Report of Accomplishments: Email sent to various stakeholders in Aug 2006

Personal Statement – IYEL – “Carmen” (2006)

Future Planning Curriculum Calendar (2006-2007)

2006-2007: I-YEL HANDBOOK

MISC:

1. Developmental Youth Outcomes – Matrix
2. Developmental Youth Outcomes in I-YEL (no date): Examples of what IYEL does in each program area to support youth in leading healthy lives...
3. “Step System” (noted as ‘new’, no date) – A] Method to reward youth who are dedicated to the program, making change in their community, and their own professional development; B] Step system, Step 2 Interview sheet (1 pg)
4. “Working with the public connection” handout – 1 page PR sheet

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