

10 Year Analysis Summary

Social research and theory alike reveal that there is no one path to a thriving childhood and successful adult life. Yet, there are elements of youth development that are regularly associated with thriving and success. Merging the research and theoretical literature with the results of this evaluation allows us to establish some initial inferences about how SOS Outreach impacts the lives of participants in a positive manner. The graphic below lays out a process whereby the SOS Outreach programs set young people on a life trajectory likely otherwise not attainable. We note three sequential and inter-related phases of the programs provided: the introductory program provides for engagement, the first two years of University foster a sense of belonging, and the last two years instill life and leadership skills. While the graphic depicts three distinct phases of development, in practice the curriculum developed by SOS Outreach communicates core values and specific life skills throughout the course of the programs (as presented in the first section of this report).

IPFS Evaluation Results (LTR)

- Measured changes between pre and post-test answers
- The three protective factors that achieved the most positive gains from pre to post-test
 - (1) Perceived Competence
 - The degree to which one likes to do a particular activity and feels that he/she has the skills to participate successfully (I want to keep playing [name activity]).
 - (2) Neighborhood Resources
 - Knowledge of and interest in utilizing neighborhood recreation opportunities, including organized and informal programs and opportunities (e.g., I know lots of safe places to play/hangout).
 - (3) Value in Achievement
 - Interest in and understanding of the importance of doing well in school. Also includes the general idea of being successful and trying to do one's best in any area of involvement (e.g., It is important for me to always do my best).
- Indicates that the Academy program participants:
 - Feel they have achieved a greater level of skill in the outdoor activity (skiing or snowboarding)
 - Have gained exposure to new and safe places to recreate
 - Learned about the importance to always do one's best
- However, research demonstrates that without follow-up, short-term results tend to be **short-lived**

University Evaluation Results

- Measured 1st-year pre-test against 1,2,3,4th-year post tests
- Demonstrate no statistically significant outcomes for the first year of the University program
- By the end of the second year, significant positive change is noted in:
- Community Engagement, Self-Esteem, Acceptance of Diversity and Locus of Control, and these changes persist through the remainder of the program
- By the third year, positive change further emerges in Goal-Setting and Attainment, and Decision-Making Skills. Finally, by the end of the fourth year positive outcomes are apparent in Communication Skills, Frustration Control, and to a lesser degree, Job Skills
- In conclusion:
 - Results gleaned demonstrate both the difficulty and the potential for changing the trajectory of a young person's life through an intentional approach to positive youth development
 - The process requires intent and persistence; intent to change critical beliefs like the extent to which a person believes they have control over the outcomes of events in their lives (locus of control) and attaining the life skills necessary to navigate a successful life (e.g., decision-making, goal-setting), and persistence in providing consistent support over multiple years to ensure each child's ability to thrive.
 - The results of the evaluation confirm that SOS Outreach is capable of providing both

Focus Group Results

- University years 1-4, Jr. Mentors, Mentors, Staff interviewed separately by Colorado State University Prevention Research Center staff
- Youth Results
 - Initially excited about snowsports which serves as a hook that keeps them engaged
 - Program serves as way to make friends during the first 2 years - motivating factor and helps with building sustained relationships
 - Program helps youth develop a "voice" allowing them to be more confident with speaking in public
 - The process of internalizing the lessons from SOS's context (curriculum and social connections) is demonstrated through a shift in youth's perceptions of the program from purely recreational to an increasingly intricate ecology of friendships and life lessons.

Engagement/ Motivation

- The introductory program engages youth through exciting outdoor activities while introducing youth to core values.
- This results in a sense of competency and generates a value in achievement.
- It provides a common experience for participants and serves as a basis for bonding with peers.



Belonging

- The first two years of the University program provide a safe and welcoming environment for youth to feel comfortable with themselves and interact with others.
- This results in greater self-esteem, a sense of self-determination, with a corresponding greater acceptance of others and desire to engage.
- The sense of belonging allows the youth the freedom to look beyond perceived limitations and commit to a course of greater personal growth and community engagement. Bonding to positive peers and adults allows for internalization of core values taught by the program.



Self- Determination

- The last two years of the University program provide the opportunity for personal growth through the refinement of social and leadership skill. At this stage youth become more self-aware and understand that they control their own thoughts and behaviors.
- This results in improvements in various life skills ranging from communications to decision-making to controlling frustration.
- Self-determination implies that the youth understands that he or she can control many aspects of life and exhibits leadership by taking an active role in overcoming adversities in themselves and in their community.