

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# **Title V Delinquency Prevention: Program Years 1997-1999**

*A Report of the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Partnership Project*

*Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety  
Programs Division*

**Statistical Analysis Center**

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Most importantly, we express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the 14 Title V program administrators that allowed us to view their program operations. It is our hope that the information contained in this report will assist them in continuing to improve upon services delivered to youth in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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# INTRODUCTION

Title V addresses risk factors associated with delinquent behavior and youth violence within each community. These risk factors exist in several areas, including the community, school, family and peer group, and individual. Examples of risk factors include: the availability of drugs in the community, extreme economic and social deprivation, family conflict, favorable parental and peer attitudes toward problem behaviors, academic failure, lack of commitment to school, and alienation and rebelliousness.<sup>1</sup> The presence of these risk factors increases the likelihood that a child will develop delinquent behaviors later in adolescence.

The Title V Initiative aims to introduce positive factors to protect juveniles either by reducing the impact of risks or by changing the way a person responds to risks. These protective factors can help promote positive behavior, health, well being, and personal success. Examples of these factors include a resilient temperament and natural sociability, positive adult and peer relationships that promote bonding, healthy beliefs, and clear standards.

Upon award notification, each Title V program is required to develop a comprehensive three-year plan for preventing juvenile delinquency in their community. In preparing this plan, the programs are asked to 1) identify and prioritize the risk factors that children, youth, and families within their community are exposed, 2) assess and identify needed resources to address risk factors, and 3) choose specific programs and strategies that address risk factors through the enhancement of protective factors. Continuing programs are required to submit a revised three-year plan based on past progress and revised objectives. In implementing their three-year plans, communities create and provide services that are tailored to the explicit needs of its at-risk population. Each Title V program is typically funded for three consecutive years. In any given year, there are new programs, continuing programs, and programs completing their Title V funding cycle.

In addition to the three year plan, Title V grantees are required to form of a local Prevention Policy Board (PPB) that will have the responsibility for making recommendations to the responsible local agency for distribution of funds and evaluation of funded activities. The PPB must also coordinate with other relevant planning efforts in the community and be able to provide evidence of a community-wide consensus for the services and activities proposed for their project. The PPBs must consist of a minimum of 15 and no more than 21 members from the community, representing a balance of public agencies, private nonprofit organizations serving children, youth, and families, and business and industry. Such agencies and organizations may include: education, health and mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, employment, law enforcement, religion, recreation, child protective services, public defenders, prosecutors, private manufacturing and service sectors, and parent, family and youth associations. The PPB must have youth representation and at least one member must be directly involved with or knowledgeable about services for female and minority juveniles in the community. A specific local agency or entity must have responsibility for support of the PPB.

The SAC has been involved with the Title V Initiative since its inception in 1995. SAC staff reviewed the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) self-evaluation workbook and utilized its data collection strategy in designing the quarterly evaluation reports and instituting the data collection effort. Although data are collected from the programs, to date, there has been no comprehensive assessment of the programs' ability to meet their stated goals, objectives, and activities.

In May 2000, the Juvenile Justice Specialist and SAC staff conducted five regional Information and Technical Assistance Sessions for communities that were applying for FY00 Title V funding. The sessions provided an opportunity to meet with prospective applicants and review the Request for Response, explain how to develop a realistic and coherent proposal, and clarify the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee's review process. To further assist applicants in developing a comprehensive delinquency prevention plan, a number of topics were expounded upon. They included: 1) compliance with the JJDP Act formula grant mandates, 2) the role of the Prevention Policy Board, 3) conducting a thorough risk and needs assessment, 4) identifying the goals and objectives, 5) evaluation and data collection, 6) budget requirements, 7) documenting past progress (for continuation applications), and 8)

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<sup>1</sup> Developmental Research and Programs. (1996). Communities That Care prevention strategies: A research guide to what works. In OJJDP, 1997 Report to Congress Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

quarterly reporting requirements. In total, 52 communities from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts attended these sessions.

In 1999, the Massachusetts Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) received financial support from the Justice Research and Statistics Association to conduct an evaluation of Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended (the Title V Incentive Grant Program) for the fiscal years 1996 through 1998. The short-term goal of this evaluation was to determine how the Massachusetts Title V programs were developed and implemented, identifying any areas in need of fine-tuning or modification. The long-term goal is to improve upon the capacity for the evaluation of juvenile justice programs in Massachusetts. This report provides program administrators at the state and local levels with information regarding individual program efforts and their ability to achieve planned goals and objectives.

# METHODOLOGY

The Massachusetts Statistical Analysis Center utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodology to assess the Massachusetts Title V Program. The SAC utilized program proposals and quarterly progress and evaluation reports submitted by grantees, direct observation of the programs, and interviews with the Massachusetts Juvenile Justice Specialist and local Title V program administrators to determine how the programs were developed and implemented.

## PROGRAM PROPOSAL REVIEW

The goals and objectives stated in program proposals were reviewed and documented for later comparison with actual program operation as reported through quarterly progress reports and observed during site visits. Program proposals were also examined to determine the method by which the program identified its target population. Many programs utilized the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS), administered by the Massachusetts Department of Education, to identify the risk factors exhibited by the target population. Other programs had access to data compiled by individual schools that conducted their own assessment of community needs and youth risk behaviors. Some programs also had access to crime statistics collected by local law enforcement agencies and juvenile courts. The survey data and crime statistics were used to distinguish the target population, and provide a descriptive analysis of the risk factors specific to each community

## DIRECT OBSERVATION

The SAC collected qualitative data through direct observation. SAC staff, accompanied by the Juvenile Justice Specialist and the Juvenile Unit's Program Coordinator, conducted 13 Title V site visits, and one desk review. Prior to each Title V site visit, SAC staff, the Juvenile Justice Specialist, and the Program Coordinator would meet to discuss the program and review questions or concerns that may be raised at the meeting.

The site visits enabled SAC staff to interview project directors and program staff, as well as observe first-hand the overall program operation, thereby enabling SAC staff to better determine the extent to which the programs have achieved their program-specific goals and objectives. Site visits also presented the opportunity for the Juvenile Justice Specialist and SAC staff to provide technical assistance to programs that did not clearly state the method by which they identified their target population. Particular attention was paid to the risk factors identified by each community, to ensure they were appropriately addressed by the program components.

Site visits provided the local Title V program administrator the opportunity to elaborate on the program and quantitative data, as well as, respond to questions by the Juvenile Justice Specialist and SAC staff. The site visits also provided a latent function. Meeting personally with program staff fostered a positive environment that permitted the constructive critique of a program's problem areas. Site visits were approximately two hours in duration, and upon completion of the site visit, the SAC staff completed field notes documenting information obtained and suggestions made for program improvement.

The Title V Site Visit Worksheet (Appendix A) was utilized in interviewing the program administrator and observing the program activities. The following questions are asked during the site visit and are summarized in the final report:

- What are the socioeconomic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in the community?
- Why is the program needed in the community? How did the community identify its risk factors and what are they? Does the program adequately address the risk factors with appropriate protective factors? How many youth exhibit risk factors?
- Who is the program's target population? How does the program recruit youth? Did the program reach the target population? Is participation mandatory or voluntary? How many youth participated in each activity?

- What services were proposed in the design of the program? Were delivery of services consistent with the programs' design specification? What program activities were offered?
- When were services offered to the target population, and at what frequency? Does this correspond with the original program design?
- Have there been difficulties with program implementation? What resolution strategies were implemented to address these problems?

## QUARTERLY REPORT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Title V grantees are required to submit Quarterly Programmatic and Evaluation Reports (Appendix B) during their funding period. The Programmatic and Evaluation Report captures both qualitative and quantitative data regarding program activity, and was an invaluable resource for SAC staff in conducting this analysis. For each of the 14 programs selected for participation in this analysis, SAC staff reviewed each quarterly report and recorded the following information into a database for analysis:

- Number of youth served by age, race, and gender;
- Number of youth who participated in each program component;
- Frequency with which the program component was offered;
- Number of hours the program components were offered;
- The risk factors each program component addressed;
- Number of parents who participated in each program component;
- Number of hours the parent program components were offered;
- The composition of the Prevention Policy Board (PPB);
- The number of PPB meetings held; and
- The average number of members attending the PPB meetings.

In addition, the program goals, objectives, and accomplishments reported each quarter by grantees were compared to the initial goals and objectives stated in program proposals.

## PROGRAM SUMMARIES

Utilizing the data sources described above, programmatic summaries were prepared for all 14 Title V programs, describing each program's community target population, risk factors, programmatic activities, service delivery, and overall ability to meet stated goals and objectives. Each summary describes program activities and accomplishments for each of the program years of operation. Table 1 indicates the time period represented by each program year.

**Table 1: Title V Program Periods**

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Program Period</b>
1997	7/1/97 – 6/30/98
1998	7/1/98 – 6/30/99
1999	7/1/99 – 6/30/00

# BUILDING LOCAL PROGRAM EVALUATION CAPACITY

Following a thorough review of fourteen Title V programs, evaluation staff identified an overall need for individual programs to institutionalize data collection practices and establish more sophisticated methods for evaluating their respective programs. While certain programs have incorporated self-assessment and program evaluation strategies into their overall operation, others are struggling with primary data collection efforts needed to describe their target population. To assist programs in developing program evaluation goals and methods, this section of the report offers practical recommendations for building local capacity for program evaluation.

It is recognized that many program administrators fear the task of completing a comprehensive evaluation of their program. There are many possible reasons for this trepidation including a negative past experience with evaluators, a lack of understanding of evaluation methodology, a fear of losing funding, and a lack of resources. While some of these fears have a logical basis, they can all be prevented through a proper understanding of what is involved in a sound, positive program evaluation.

## WHY DO PROGRAMS NEED TO CONDUCT AN EVALUATION?

First, program evaluation is not a task designed by funding agencies to place further strain on local programs operating with already limited budgets. While quality evaluations do assist funding agencies in developing and shaping program activities, it serves primarily as a benefit to the local programs. To emphasize the importance of self-assessment, Title V and other EOPS Programs Division initiatives require grantees to build an evaluation component into their programs.

Program evaluation can provide local program administrators with answers to critical questions regarding the operation of their programs. Specifically, by conducting a program evaluation, administrators will be able to identify and document:

- The initial goals and objectives of the program;
- If the program is serving the intended target population (e.g., middle school youth);
- If the volume of program participants is what was originally intended;
- If the program components were implemented as they originally planned;
- Problems encountered in implementing the program;
- If the program has achieved its desired impact.

Armed with this critical program information, local administrators can begin to assess if their program needs to be modified, and if so, will have the necessary information to determine the specific changes that need to be made. For example, if a program operating a youth center finds that the majority of participants are middle school aged females, and the initial goal of the program was to reach both male and female high school aged youth, program administrators may decide to offer a weight lifting program that will attract male students and also increase program awareness in the area high school.

As stated previously, program administrators may be hesitant to conduct an evaluation of their program because they fear a loss of funding. In actuality, a program is more likely to suffer funding cuts as a result of their inability to document their progress, regardless of how slow that progress may be. Funding agencies want to see local programs succeed, and are generally understanding when a program can provide documentation that their obstacles to successful implementation are recognized and are being addressed. It is when a program neither achieves its goals, nor provides substantiating information that problems are being handled, that funds become jeopardized.

## **FINANCING A PROGRAM EVALUATION**

While costs associated with program evaluation are allowable under the Title V program, program administrators often do not want to divert valuable resources from program components from which youth can benefit. While this is a logical argument, it is important to remember that resources dedicated towards evaluating a program will result in better program operation (and improved youth services) in the long run. Nonetheless, there are several options for programs that operate on a limited budget or would rather devote maximum resources in other areas.

Massachusetts boasts a wealth of resources in its many institutions of higher education. While many programs utilize local college students as volunteers in program operation, they can also serve as a valuable resource in program evaluation. Furthermore, as most, if not all, local colleges require students in sociology, criminal justice, psychology, and other departments to complete coursework in research and/or evaluation, faculty could utilize funded programs as a class project to demonstrate research and evaluation methodology. In turn, administrators receive no- or low-cost assistance in completing their program evaluation.

Programs can also receive assistance from the program participants. Local administrators can mistakenly envision basic data collection as a daunting task involving lengthy participant interviews and complex data analysis. However, the task can be quite simple if incorporated adequately into the program's operation. Programs can require participants to complete a basic demographic information form upon their entry into the program or collect youth demographic information on parental consent forms that are required by most programs.

Program sign-in/sign-out sheets are a low-cost method for recording program participation among multiple program components. For example, a youth center can require youth to check in and out of the program upon each visit, and record the type of program activity they engaged in. Similarly, program administrators should maintain participant rosters for activities such as field trips or educational activities. Should program staff find this task too time consuming, responsible program participants can be empowered to record the attendance of their peers.

Analysis of program data needs not to be a complex task. Most personal computers purchased today come equipped with software capable for performing this function. Programs that offer computer classes to its participants can utilize computerized entry of program data as a tool for learning typing skills or rarely used software applications. Students of all ages can benefit greatly from the experience these lessons can provide.

## **WHERE TO BEGIN**

Programs interested in developing or improving their existing program evaluation strategy should consult their Title V Program Monitor to discuss future plans and request technical assistance from evaluation staff in the Statistical Analysis Center of the EOPS Programs Division. Evaluation staff can help program administrators determine their evaluation needs, devise a plan for evaluating the program, identify necessary resources, and develop data collection and analysis tools. The EOPS Programs Division can also request technical assistance from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to assist programs in designing and implementing an evaluation plan.

Programs will need to carefully consider their expectations for the program evaluation. If limited evaluation activities have been instituted, programs may want to first focus on describing their program participants and adherence to program goals and objectives. However, program administrator that have an existing familiarity of the quality of program implementation may want to focus their evaluation efforts on determining how their program has impacted its participants. It is important to note that the desired goals of the evaluation will have an impact on the resources program administrators will need to commit.

# TOWN OF AMHERST

## AMHERST-AREA JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

The town of Amherst established the Juvenile Diversion Program in 1997, to offer prevention and risk-reduction services that will ultimately decrease juvenile delinquency and, as importantly, improve the quality of life for youth and their families. The Diversion Program aims to reduce the number of juveniles that are summoned or detained by the Amherst Police Department and to decrease the number of youth suspended from school. By redirecting first time juvenile offenders (ages 10 and 17) to the court diversion program, it is hoped the program will deter youth from committing further delinquent acts. The program accepts both CHINS cases and youth arrested as first-time offenders.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 to the town of Amherst to support a Juvenile Diversion Program.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The town of Amherst is the lead agency for the Amherst-Area Juvenile Diversion Program. Parents of all Amherst school children, and junior high school students, were surveyed in 1997 to identify their major concerns. Both parents and students expressed concern about the increase in drug use and violence among youth. Youth also felt there was “nothing to do” during after-school hours. The illegal use of drugs and violent behavior among Amherst middle school and high school youth rightfully is a major concern for school personnel, the police, and the community. Indicated by Table 2 below, Amherst experienced a sharp increase in juvenile crime, primarily drug and theft-related, from FY94 to FY95, causing the community to grow increasingly concerned about local youth.

**Table 2: Criminal Incidents Committed by Youth Under 18**

FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98
82	129	128	162	122

*Source: Amherst Town Reports*

Evidence gathered by the Amherst Police Department indicates that organized gangs are infiltrating the town of Amherst and the surrounding community. Gang activity is present at the Hadley Malls, where Amherst youth regularly “hang out.” A few incidents of violence, fighting over boy/girl relationships at the Amherst Pelham Middle School, and in the community, occurred during the summer 1998. In the spring 1999, four middle school youth were arrested for a “bomb scare” that resulted in the evacuation of both the middle and high schools. Middle and high school Student Assistant Counselors’ caseload combined is over 300 students who are referred by either the Dean of Students or the Assistant Principal at the middle school, as a result of substance use or abuse.

Around twenty-eight hundred (2800) individuals between 5 – 18 years of age reside in Amherst (Community Health Alliance of Hampshire County, FY 96). Of these youth, over 58% (1600) are from families earning less than 80% median income. Females head almost 40% of households with children, and 50% of female-headed households earn below 80% of the median income for the Amherst area.

Data from the Amherst Town Reports suggest that domestic violence continued to be a major concern for the Amherst community, as well as the Amherst Police Department. The number of individuals convicted of domestic violence continues to increase yearly, as does the number of domestic violence calls, many resulting in no action due to fear of retaliation on the part of the victim. Many of these families have children attending the Amherst elementary schools.

In summary, many participants in the Juvenile Diversion Program are from families who are poor and in need of a variety of services, including adult education, counseling and family support. Many youth have experienced domestic violence, parental neglect and or substance abuse, and perform academically below grade level.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### ***Prevention Policy Board***

During the 1997 program year, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) comprised 16 members from community sectors representing the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, prevention/treatment providers, and local government. An average of 10 members attended a Prevention Policy Board meeting each program quarter.

Membership on the PPB fluctuated during the 1998 program year, between 17 and 19 members. Similar to 1997, Board members continued to represent a cross-section of the community, with the following additions: civic/volunteer organizations, senior citizens, youth members, and parents. Excluding quarter one, during which one PPB meeting was held, two meetings were held during each of the remaining quarters, and attended by an average of 8 members.

During the 1999 program year, the Prevention Policy Board was comprised of 17 board members, representing the following community sectors: the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, prevention/treatment providers, local government, and parents. One meeting was held each quarter, and attended by an average of 9 members.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

Working collaboratively, middle school personnel, Amherst police, and the probation department developed policies for court diversion and referrals, standards of acceptance and compliance, and the termination process. A consensus must be reached between the Amherst Police Department, the Hampshire County District Attorney, the Hampshire County Juvenile Probation Department, and the Juvenile Diversion Project Coordinator that the program is a viable option for the delinquent youth. About 70% of program youth are court referred, the remainder are police and school referred.

The Amherst Juvenile Diversion Program became fully operational in September 1997. The program was slightly modified to include providing services to siblings of program participants, because it was believed that they too were at-risk for becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. Such risk reduction measures were taken with three (3) siblings of program participants, who were matched with a Big Brother/Big Sister to prevent them from “following in the footsteps” of the older sibling.

Once the juvenile is accepted into the program, the juvenile and his or her legal guardian sign a contract for 6 months of services. For each juvenile and their family, a unique service plan is developed, including evaluation services and counseling. At the end of the contracted 6 months, the program coordinator reviews the juvenile’s progress. The juvenile is judged either successfully dismissed from the program (thus having their case dismissed from court), continued in the program for an additional 3 months, or terminated with prosecution of the original offense.

The need for a better referral system with the school and police department was recognized and addressed by the Project Coordinator in the 1998 program year. Regular meetings were established with representatives from the probation department to discuss new cases and the progress of active program participants. The Coordinator also initiated meetings with the Vice Principal of the Amherst Middle School to discuss potential participants for whom the school is considering filing a CHINS petition. Likewise, the Project Director maintains contact with the Amherst Police Department, conferring about potential police referrals.

In program year 1999, youth were primarily referred to the program for offenses including vandalism, shoplifting, and fighting. Once involved in the program, youth express a sense of membership and commitment. One youth was overheard saying, “I can’t fight that guy, I’m in the Diversion Program.” In another instance, a program participant, referred to the program because of an altercation with a fellow student, came to the community service project extremely agitated. After being questioned by the Program Coordinator it was clear that another fight was imminent. The Community Service Police Officer was able to take a walk with the youth and problem solve with him about alternatives to diffuse the situation, thereby avoiding a fight and further trouble. This exemplified the positive relationship formed between the Police Officer and the youth during the community service component.

The Project Director noted that it is difficult to involve youth when the diversion program conflicts with after-school activities and evening homework. Also, due to time constraints and transportation difficulties, parents were unable to attend the parent education groups on a consistent basis. To ensure that parenting education did take place, these services were offered on a one-on-one basis in the home.

Three primary program components were created in response to youth risk factors, and include Big Brother/Big Sister, community-service, and “rap” group sessions to address self esteem, substance abuse, anger management, truancy, violence prevention, and community inclusion. Many participants reported the “rap” groups helped them to learn to make better decisions and acquire skills that are applicable to daily life.

### ***Youth and Family Support Services***

The Amherst-Area Juvenile Diversion Program works in conjunction with community programs to create a network of services for juveniles. The Helen Mitchell Family Outreach Program provides case management services for each family. A case manager completes an in-take evaluation of each youth and family entering the program. This evaluation requires each applicant to supply demographic information including the age of the child, the specific reason for referral, ethnic origin, family income, family situation, and other pertinent facts. The appropriate mental health and counseling services are then offered. Youth also receive mentoring through participation in the Big Brother/Big Sister program.

Under the Juvenile Diversion contract agreement, the parent(s) of the delinquent youth is required to meet with the Parent Support Coordinator. Each family is offered approximately 5 hours of parent education and support, including how best to provide structure and boundaries for their child. Another component offered, the Juvenile Diversion Staff Counselor leads support groups for program participants on anger management, teen girls and violent crimes, teen dating violence, sexual violence, emotions and sexuality, self-esteem, life choices, and conflict resolution. Groups meet biweekly for one hour over a ten-week period, and receive a certificate upon completion.

### ***Community Service***

The Program Coordinator and the Community Service Police Officer coordinate the community service program component. By including the Community Service Police Officer in this endeavor, an opportunity is created for youth and police officers to establish positive relationships, mutual understanding and respect. The Community Service Police Officer also helps drive youth to their community service that may entail one of the following activities: maintaining the ROPES course, cleaning police cars, or working at the Survival Center or Senior Center.

In the 1998 and 1999 program years, community service projects and group activities took place on land owned by the State Department of Environmental Management (DEM) in an Amherst State Park. Participant responsibilities included maintaining and marking trails, working with the horse patrol, completing a painting project at a local church, as well as helping in a crime watch initiative sponsored by DEM. The Amherst Police also developed a “Challenges Ropes Course” as a tool for personal and educational growth. Involved youth help to maintain the ropes course site.

## **PROGRAM DATA**

Program participation increased significantly over the course of the 1997 program year, from 1 youth in the first quarter to 11 youth in quarter 3. The program experienced a similar trend over the 1998 program year, from 4 youth in the first quarter to 11 youth in quarter four, a 175% increase. The 1999 program year was the most successful in recruiting members, with 9 to 10 youth participating in the first three quarters.

### ***Risk Factors***

Table 3 demonstrates that in program year 1997, a large percentage of youth exhibited risk factors for substance abuse, pregnancy, failing grades, police involvement, and gang involvement. Due to the small number of participants, percentage figures inflate the level of severity. Over the 1997 program year, failing grades and substance abuse were the leading risk factors among program youth (50% to 100% of youth and 64% to 90%, respectively). Twenty-seven percent (27%) to 75% of youth were involved in a gang. Over all four quarters of program year 1998, substance abuse was the leading risk factor exhibited by youth (50% to 100% of youth participants). In addition, between 25% and 50% of program participants experienced failing grades. During the fourth quarter of 1998, 82% of youth participants were at-risk for school dropout, police involvement, and gang involvement (Table 4).

**Table 3: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropout		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	1					1	100%						
Quarter 2	4	3	75%	2	50%	2	50%			1	25%	3	75%
Quarter 3	11	7	64%	4	36%					3	27%	3	27%
Quarter 4	10	9	90%	6	60%	5	50%			5	50%	4	40%

**Table 4: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	4	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%	3	75%	1	25%
Quarter 2	6	6	100%	2	33%	2	33%	1	17%	5	83%	4	67%
Quarter 3	10	10	100%	4	40%	5	50%	5	50%	7	70%	6	60%
Quarter 4	11	11	100%	3	27%	3	27%	9	82%	9	82%	9	82%

**Participant Demographics**

Across all four quarters of 1997, the 12 – 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (70% - 100%) (Table 5). The 1998 program year witnessed an increase in 15 – 16 year olds, with this population representing 40% to 67% of program participants (Table 6). In 1999, the 14 – 16 age group represented the majority of program participants during quarter one and quarter three (50%), and had an equal number of participants (44%) as the 11 – 13 age group in quarter two (Table 7).

**Table 5: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12					3	27%	3	30%
12 – 14	1	100%	4	100%	8	73%	7	70%
15 – 16								
17								
Total	1	100%	4	100%	11	100%	10	100%

**Table 6: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12					1	10%	1	10%
12 – 14	2	50%	2	33%	5	50%	5	45%
15 – 16	2	50%	4	67%	4	40%	5	45%
17								
Total	4	100%	6	100%	10	100%	11	100%

**Table 7: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under								
11 – 13	4	40%	4	44%	4	40%		
14 – 16	5	50%	4	44%	5	50%		
17	1	10%	1	11%	1	10%		
Total	10	100%	9	100%	10	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

The majority of youth participants were white (40% to 50%) over the four quarters of 1997 (Table 8). In program year 1998, the “Other” category (i.e. Indian, Biracial, and Hispanic/white) represented the majority of program participants (18% to 66%). This was immediately followed by Hispanic youth (25% to 40%) (Table 9). In 1999, the majority of youth participants were again white (56% to 60%) over the three quarters (Table 10).

**Table 8: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White			2	50%	5	46%	4	40%
African American			1	25%	1	9%	1	10%
Hispanic	1	100%	1	25%	3	27%	2	20%
Asian								
American Indian								
Other					2	18%	3	30%
Total	1	100%	4	100%	11	100%	10	100%

**Table 9: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White			1	17%	1	10%	2	18%
African American	1	25%	1	17%	3	30%	3	27%
Hispanic	1	25%			4	40%	4	36%
Asian								
American Indian								
Other	2	50%	4	66%	2	20%	2	18%
Total	4	100%	6	100%	10	100%	11	100%

**Table 10: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	6	60%	5	56%	6	60%		
African American								
Hispanic	3	30%	3	33%	3	30%		
Asian								
American Indian								
Other	1	10%	1	11%	1	10%		
Total	10	100%	9	100%	10	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

During the four quarters of 1997, slightly more females participated in the program than males (Table 11). However, in 1998 and 1999, more males participated in the Diversion Program than females (60% to 75% males in 1998 and 78% to 80% males in 1999) (Tables 12 and 13).

**Table 11: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	1	100%	2	50%	5	45%	3	30%
Female	0		2	50%	6	55%	7	70%
Total	1	100%	4	100%	11	100%	10	100%

**Table 12: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	3	75%	4	60%	6	60%	7	64%
Female	1	25%	2	40%	4	40%	4	36%
Total	4	100%	6	100%	10	100%	11	100%

**Table 13: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	8	80%	7	78%	8	80%		
Female	2	20%	2	22%	2	20%		
Total	10	100%	9	100%	10	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

# TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

## COMMUNITY POLICING YOUTH RESOURCE, EXCEL: “LEARNING FOR LIFE”

The Bridgewater – Raynham Regional School District, in collaboration with the Bridgewater Police Department, designed and implemented an alternative high school. The goal of the Community Policing Youth Resource, Excel: “Learning For Life” is to offer a juvenile delinquency prevention program, while creating an academic environment where at-risk adolescents (those who could not function within a conventional classroom setting) are provided academic and enrichment sessions leading to a high school diploma.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 to the Community Policing Youth Resource, Excel: “Learning For Life” program.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The town of Bridgewater is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Boston. Socially and economically, it is a middle-class community with an average family income of \$42,000, and comprises single-family and commercial subdivisions. The two closest cities which have an influence on crime in Bridgewater, are Brockton (5 miles north), and Taunton (5 miles to the southwest). The resulting effect has been drug trafficking, violent offenses and gang activity spilling over from these two communities into Bridgewater. In terms of student background, according to the October 1998 Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 5,755 students were enrolled within the school district. In 1998, 309 seniors graduated, with 83 percent participating in post-secondary education. The drop out rate for grades 9-12, during 1996-97 was 3.4 percent. The racial and ethnic profile of students reflects 4% Asian; 8.4% African-American; 9.6% Hispanic; .2% Native American and 77.9% white.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

While there is no documentation of the Prevention Policy Board's (PPB) activities during the 1997 program year, the PPB comprised 18 members during the 1998 program year, representing the following community sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, civic/volunteer organizations, and local government. An average of 6 members attended four PPB meetings held during each program quarter.

During the 1999 program year, the PPB consisted of 19 members representing the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, and civic/volunteer organizations. There is no documentation of the number of meetings held during the program year.

#### *Program Implementation and Administration*

To establish an individualized community-based initiative to counter juvenile delinquency, the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District, in collaboration with the Bridgewater Police Department, and with assistance from the Juvenile Probation Division at Brockton District Court, implemented an alternative high school program: “EXCEL: Learning for Life.” “Learning for Life” emphasizes a proactive approach by fostering prevention, not prosecution, and education, not alienation, as the viable long-term solution to juvenile crime and delinquency.

This program is based on a multi-agency approach, as well as the success of the community policing philosophy, to respond to juvenile delinquency. The Alternative High School addresses those students who have been expelled, dropped out of school, or who are deemed “at-risk,” (i.e., those who are in jeopardy of leaving high school before receiving a diploma). The target population is any Bridgewater or Raynham student who is 16 years of age or older and is not enrolled in school. The Alternative High School assists these students who wish to reenter the high school mainstream, or are more inclined to pursue an alternative education.

A student who is a resident of Bridgewater or Raynham, and has not earned a diploma, may apply to attend the Alternative High School. Also, a student may receive a recommendation from the school's Adjustment Counselor, or the Community Policing Youth Resource Officer, or the student may be court-ordered to attend the program. Students pay tuition of \$150 per semester, in addition to books, and must enroll in a minimum of two courses each

semester. To ease the obstacle of financial constraints, D.A.R.E. tuition scholarships were made available to those students who can verify financial hardship. Also, tuition reimbursement is offered as a reward for perfect attendance. Six (6) students received D.A.R.E. scholarships during the 1999 program year.

Each student is assessed according to his or her individual needs, probation conditions, family situation, and academic status. In addition to academic requirements, the Alternative High School includes programs such as substance abuse prevention, life skills counseling, physical awareness/fitness, and career development. To better assist each student, the following services are provided:

- Assessment by Juvenile Probation regarding terms and conditions and/or requirements for successful completion of the Alternative School Program.
- Development of an individual treatment plan to address problems such as substance abuse, anger management, impulse control, and a propensity for violence.
- Assessment by the Physical Education coordinator regarding appropriate recreational activities and/or stress management programming.

An educational contract is signed by the youth and his or her parents, and monitored by school officials, police department personnel, and juvenile probation. To ensure proper follow-up, the Family Services Plan entails a monthly meeting held with each student to assess his or her progress in the alternative school, their household, and the community. A guidance counselor, juvenile probation officer, parent or guardian, and police officer participate in the monthly meeting and discuss any concerns or problems students may have.

Students in the Excel Program are provided the opportunity to make behavioral changes in their lives. A cornerstone of the Alternative School's philosophy is the citizenship of its students. Students enter Excel with an understanding that their actions in the community directly affect the successful completion of their educational objectives. For this reason, any and all delinquent actions result in a review of their alternative school status, and may lead to their dismissal from the program. Upon successful completion of the program, the student earns a high school diploma with all the rights and privileges bestowed to conventional high school graduates.

In July 1999, there was an expansion of program goals to include the following:

- To provide equal treatment for single unwed mothers in order that domestic responsibility in caring for their children will not preclude or prevent their alternative school attendance.
- To develop a school-to-work partnership uniting Bridgewater Business-Merchant Association with alternative high school students.
- To develop an outreach program for parents of alternative school students.

### ***Staffing***

During the first and second quarters of 1997, "EXCEL: Learning for Life" was in the process of hiring a director and teachers for the Alternative High School. While the program had difficulty in securing a full time math teacher, graduate students from Bridgewater State College were hired to assist in the presentation of math workbook assignments. A director was hired to run and administer the alternative high school, with support from teachers, counselors, police officers, and probation officers.

### ***Education***

Courses were offered in math, science, English, social studies, as well as, stress management and physical fitness. The EXCEL teaching staff, Bridgewater Police Department's D.A.R.E. Officer, and the Youth Resource Officer facilitated the various courses. It has been noted that the attendance rate improved over the course of the program, and this is attributed to students' appreciating the importance of complying with the strict attendance policy.

To further assist students in successfully completing the program, various presentations and lectures were offered that address such issues as employment opportunities, individual finance, college programs, career planning, teen

dating violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and developing self-confidence. In January 2000, the second semester began with the presentation of a domestic/teen dating violence play entitled *The Red Tide*. *The Red Tide* is a short play focusing on dating relationships from the perspective of four adolescent males that confronts the issues of dating violence, sexism, self-esteem, and personal responsibility. Associates of the Women's Crisis Center of Greater Newburyport performed the play.

### ***Assessment***

Beginning in June, the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) will be used as an entrance and assessment tool. This assessment tool is designed to measure students' use of learning and study strategies and methods, and assess their thought processes and behaviors.

### ***Location***

In the second program year, the Alternative High School moved to a new location in modular units.

### ***Other Activities***

All students were served by the following program components: client needs assessment, general studies classes, presentations and lectures, socials and award ceremonies, and workshops. A day care component was added to assist students who are parents, and would not be able to attend school without child-care services. An additional program component, a social group for parents, was organized and attended by 27 parents during the 1997 program year. Student Conflict Resolution Through Mediation and peer leadership programs have also been implemented. These programs are seen as enhancing the shared responsibility for community safety. Students also train for CPR certification, and a monthly cooking night is held at the school for students, parents, and teachers. During the 1999 program year, the program sponsored a trip for students to see the Boston Celtics play at the Fleet Center.

Initially, the Excel program offered an outreach program for parents of the alternative high school students. Program components included substance abuse workshops, responding to truancy and delinquency issues, and developing effective communication skills between parents and children. There were several barriers to formal parent workshops including transportation, time constraints, and employment issues. To accommodate parents' schedules and students' needs, the staff adjustment counselor conducted teleconferences with the parent. This enabled the Adjustment Counselor to address issues such as absenteeism, academic performance, and discipline with the parent as soon as they occur. Also, parents continue to receive invitations encouraging them to attend any class session. This "open door" policy has been successful in bringing parents to the alternative high school.

### ***Program Completion***

Four students graduated from the Bridgewater – Raynham Alternative High School program in May 1998, three of whom planned to attend college. In May 1999, 9 students graduated from "EXCEL: Learning for Life," making it the largest graduating class since program inception. Six of the graduates were accepted to community colleges. All of the graduates had dropped out of school with no plans to either further their education or seek permanent employment. The success of these graduates inspired the interest of other high risk students in the Excel program, leading many to inquire about what they needed to do to go to college and how long it will take them to earn a diploma. The Program Director noted that although students receive this information upon entering the program, it appears they lacked confidence that they would succeed until they witnessed the success of their peers. On January 9, 2000, fourteen students graduated from the "Excel: Learning for Life" program.

## **PROGRAM DATA**

In total, 25 students participated in Excel program in program year 1997. In the second program year, student enrollment increased to an average of 28 students during the four quarters as a result of efforts to reduce the waiting list. However, over the course of the program year there was a fluctuation in the number of students who participated in the Excel program. This is attributed to youth either graduating or terminating from the program. The third quarter of program year 1999 marked the highest number of participants with a total of thirty-three (33) youth.

### ***Risk Factors***

Not surprisingly, Table 14 indicates school dropout was the predominant risk factor exhibited by program students over the four quarters (9% to 23%) in program year 1998. During quarter three, four students were police involved – which facilitated their program involvement.

**Table 14: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	28			1	4%			5	18%				
Quarter 2	28			1	4%			5	18%				
Quarter 3	31			1	3%			7	23%	4	13%		
Quarter 4	23			1	4%			2	9%				

**Participant Demographics**

The majority of students (66% to 84%) participating in the program during the 1997 program year were 17 years of age or older (Table 15). This continued in the 1998 and 1999 program years with 82% to 94% of the students falling into the 17 and above age group in 1998 and 71% to 95% in 1999 (Tables 16 and 17). Interestingly, there was an increase in the percentage of the 11 - 13 and 14 - 16 year old age groups in the third quarter of 1999.

**Table 15: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12								
12 - 14								
15 - 16			4	16%	4	16%	5	34%
17 and Above			21	84%	21	84%	10	66%
Total			25	100%	25	100%	15	100%

**Table 16: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12								
12 - 14								
15 - 16	5	18%	5	18%	2	6%	5	22%
17 and Above	23	82%	23	82%	29	94%	18	88%
Total	28	100%	28	100%	31	100%	23	100%

**Table 17: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under		%		%		%		%
11 - 13		%		%	11	33%		%
14 - 16	4	29%	1	5%	22	67%	5	29%
17 and Above	10	71%	19	95%			12	71%
Total	14	100%	20	100%	33	100%	17	100%

In program year 1997, all students were white, except for one African American student who entered the program during the fourth quarter (Table 18). All of the 1998 program participants were white (Table 19). As indicated by Table 20, throughout all four quarters of 1999, the majority of youth participants were white (90% to 100%).

**Table 18: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White			25	100%	25	100%	14	93%
African American							1	7%
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total			25	100%	25	100%	15	100%

**Table 19: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	28	100%	28	100%	31	100%	23	100%
African American								
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	28	100%	28	100%	31	100%	23	100%

**Table 20: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	14	100%	18	90%	33	100%	17	100%
African American			1	5%				%
Hispanic			1	5%				%
Asian								%
American Indian								%
Other								
Total	14	100%	20	100%	33	100%	17	100%

During program year 1997, more male students were enrolled in the Excel Program than female students (60% to 68% males as compared to 32% to 40% females) (Table 21). This trend continued in 1998, when 58% to 70% of program participants were males (as compared to 30% to 42% females) (Table 22). Over all four quarters of 1999, significantly more males participated in the Excel Program than females (65% to 80% males as compared to 20% to 35% females) (Table 23).

**Table 21: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male			17	68%	17	68%	9	60%
Female			8	32%	8	32%	6	40%
Total			25	100%	25	100%	15	100%

**Table 22: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	18	64%	18	64%	18	58%	16	70%
Female	10	36%	10	36%	13	42%	7	30%
Total	28	100%	28	100%	31	100%	23	100%

**Table 23: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	10	71%	16	80%	24	73%	11	65%
Female	4	29%	4	20%	9	27%	6	35%
Total	14	100%	20	100%	33	100%	17	100%

# CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## **BREAKING THE CYCLE: SUPERVISED VISITATION IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FATHER ABSENCE**

The “Breaking the Cycle” Program is part of a comprehensive delinquency prevention plan designed to break cycles of domestic violence and father absence by intervening with young children who are at-risk for repeating the patterns of their parents. The program offers primary prevention of domestic violence and positive intervention to improve parental involvement with their children.

This program is a collaborative effort between the Cambridge Police Department, Meeting Place: Supervised Child Access Service, and the city of Cambridge Department of Human Services. The delinquency prevention plan for Cambridge focuses on two elements central to the Breaking the Cycle Program: long-term reduction of domestic violence and re-establishing a relationship between absent young fathers and their children. To achieve these goals, supervised child visits are established in domestic violence cases or with absentee fathers.

Since 1998, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded in total, \$37,000 to the Breaking the Cycle Program.

### **NATURE OF THE PROBLEM**

Children whose parents separate or divorce, and children who are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect often share a common problem: how to have a safe, ongoing contact with the parent(s) with whom they are not residing. When a child’s separated parents remain in high conflict, a youth’s intervention is at best stressful and frightening. When there has been a history of partner abuse, the transitions can be dangerous and even deadly to children as well as parents. In Massachusetts in 1993, three children were killed by abusive partners of their mothers during domestic violence between the parents.

An increasing body of research evidence documents the negative impact on children living in a home which one parent is abusing another. Even after an abused partner, nearly always a woman, has escaped from the abusive relationship, if contacts between the abuser and children are to occur, they need to be protected. Otherwise, the children may be used as a means of controlling the abused spouse and are often themselves at risk. Only with the assistance of a neutral visitation service can the risks of coercion and physical danger be reduced.

Currently in Massachusetts, resources to arrange protected access are rarely available, particularly to low-income families. In the absence of services to provide safe access, those who must make decisions for these children, both in the Massachusetts Department of Social Services and the Massachusetts Family Courts, are faced with unacceptable alternatives: either cut off a child’s access to a parent, or order unprotected access, leaving the child and possibly a parent at-risk. The demand for supervised visitation services has been steadily increasing, and at Meeting Place, for instance, the waiting list is three months long. There are numerous reasons fathers are absent in the lives of their children. There may be an interruption in the parent/child relationship due to the father’s failure to become involved because of his immaturity or substance abuse. There is also what is termed “reconnect cases” – those following a father’s hospitalization, incarceration, moving back to the area, or assuming financial support. The Department of Revenue’s child support enforcement policies have financially linked absent fathers with their children. Some fathers have the attitude that “now they are paying – they might as well see the child.” However, reconnecting them directly is often problematic because of animosity, the father’s inexperience with children, and lack of family support.

The foremost question the Breaking the Cycle program encounters from private funders and the general public is “why bother?” “These parents are drug addicts, abusers, child molesters, wife beaters, and alcoholics. They don’t deserve to see their children. They have no rights to contact.” Project Director, Dr. Straus states “children do not want to lose their parents. In most situations, the child wants the fighting or abuse to stop, not to lose a parent. By maintaining contact, we are helping children to come to terms with parents who may be impaired. Otherwise, abused children tend to blame themselves for the loss of a parent as well as the abuse. Without contact, children also tend to idealize the impaired, but absent parent and to repeat their behavior. With safe contact, the child’s

relationship with the parent has the chance to change or at least to be based on a realistic view, increasing the likelihood that a repetition of violence or abuse will be avoided in the next generation.”

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### ***Prevention Policy Board***

During the 1998 program year, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) comprised 17 community members representing the following sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, religious organizations, health services, prevention/treatment providers, business, local government, and youth. An average of 10 members attended each quarterly PPB meeting. During the second quarter PPB meeting, the Board committed a total of 3 hours to address 1) the reasons and situations that put adolescents at-risk for juvenile delinquency, 2) community resources available for adolescents, and 3) to identify gaps in the network of services and to prioritize youth needs.

In the 1999 program year, the PPB comprised 16 representatives from community sectors. Nearly identical to the 1998 Board membership, the 1999 PPB excluded prevention/treatment providers, but included civic/volunteer organizations. A PPB meeting was held during the second and third quarters, and was attended by an average of 12 members.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

Meeting Place: Supervised Child Access Service began in November 1991, and was among the first supervised visitation programs in New England. Proposed by Dr. Robert Straus, the program is designed to address the needs of at-risk children and their parents caught in the middle of disputes over access following parental separation, removal of a child from his/her home, or open adoption. Meeting Place provides supervision of children's contacts with their non-custodial parents at a safe center. Over 70% of cases currently served involve domestic violence situations.

The Breaking the Cycle Program, working in conjunction with the Department of Revenue and the Family Service Office of the Probate Court, devised a system for referral of appropriate cases concerning father-child contact, which led to additional referrals of “father-absent” cases.

Services end “successfully” at Meeting Place when families are able to move safely to unsupervised parent-child contacts. Conversely, certain families leave the program when a parent refuses to continue or when the court determines that continued visits are not in a child's best interest. Occasionally, visits are suspended by Meeting Place when the program feels it cannot meet the needs of the family and/or it cannot provide services without presenting a risk to a parent or a child. While children on their own do not “drop out” of Meeting Place, services can be ended due to a child's refusal or inability to continue contact.

In program year 1999, a goal to expand the Breaking the Cycle Program was initially delayed by the unanticipated departure of the Senior Child Access Monitor and a junior staff member. A Child Access Monitor, who had completed the requisite training, was promoted to the Senior Child Access Monitor position. Simultaneously, a tight job market made further recruitment of child access monitors difficult, which in turn negatively impacted the number of families served. To attract qualified monitors, wages were increased, and in early March 2000, 8 qualified monitors began training.

The primary components of the Breaking the Cycle program are: intakes with parent and child preparation, supervised visitation of domestic violence cases, supportive supervision of “father absent” families, staff training and recruitment, and reporting to court.

### ***Child Preparation***

A new protocol for preparing children and the non-custodial parent was completed in program year 1998. The Project Director, Dr. Straus, presented the protocol at the First International Conference of Child Access Centers in Paris, November 1998.

### ***Supervised Child Access Services in Cases of Domestic Violence***

The Supervised Child Access Services in Cases of Domestic Violence component of the Breaking the Cycle program provides supervised child visitations. “Time slots” that range between 1 and 1½ hours are available for

supervising three families per week that have a confirmed history of domestic violence. The length of time families remain in the program varies and may last for more than one quarter. Safety is provided for both parents and children, allowing contact to continue without risk. Program staff and trained paraprofessionals supervise visits and prepare reports of each visit based on factual observation. The program serves primarily low-income families referred by Family Courts throughout eastern Massachusetts, and fees for service are charged on a sliding scale.

### ***Supervised Child Access Service for Absent Fathers***

Another component, Supervised Child Access Service for Absent Fathers, reintroduces children to their previously uninvolved fathers. This program component strives to have an impact on the young father's link to and sense of responsibility for the "family" they have created, while also giving children back the lost relationship with their fathers. Without a supportive supervised setting, the renewal of contact for these cases would not be possible. In program year 1998, one "father absent" family preparation process was complicated because of language barriers and maternal reluctance about the visits. Further complications arose when the child refused to see his father. Staff assessed whether the child was genuinely afraid of his father, responding to his mother's anxiety, and/or immobilized by conflicting feelings and loyalties. The reason for the child's refusal involved fear and loyalty conflict, and by identifying these underlying reasons, Project Staff were able to continue working with the custodial parent and child.

### ***Staff Training and Recruitment***

The third component of the program entails training and recruiting adults from the community as paraprofessionals to supervise visits. These child access workers mirror the ethnic composition of the community. Breaking the Cycle has also networked with graduate students in the Counseling Psychology program at Lesley College, and offers practicum experience at Meeting Place. In return for volunteering their time, the graduate students receive supervision and educational experience, and some graduate students have become paid Child Access Supervisors at the end of their training. The Cambridge Police Department participates in these training sequences providing instruction on violent offenders, strategies for avoiding problems, and ways of coping with critical incidents should they occur. Meeting Place staff also provide training on the management of domestic disputes and the impact of family violence on children.

### ***Court Reporting***

In program year 1999, Dr. Straus continued to consult with the courts, and together with an interdisciplinary task force, developed precedent setting guidelines entitled "Court Practice for Supervised Visitation." These guidelines will standardize Court visitation practices across the Commonwealth, and have attracted nationwide attention.

### ***Youth and Family Support Services***

In program year 1999, parent support groups and groups for children were designed and piloted, and staff completed the necessary training. Initial efforts to start groups incurred problems with client compliance. Parents were extremely reluctant to make an additional trip to the program, citing work and child-care conflicts. In response, the Program initiated the support groups with families who visit on Saturdays. Despite the difficulties, groups for both custodial and non-custodial parents began during the third quarter. Each parent is expected to attend at least two group meetings. The groups are designed to better prepare parents for using supervised visitation services, to provide information about the response of children to high conflict, to offer community resources, and to assist families in successfully completing the program.

### ***Program Evaluation***

Program evaluation is accomplished by intake and exit questionnaires completed by each family. Outcome measures include child mental health, frequency and length of parent-child contact, levels of inter-parental conflict, and amounts of child support paid. Evaluation of the program prevention strategy focused on immediate monitoring through collection and review of data on the number of families and children served. Short-term outcomes are evaluated by assessment of client satisfaction, reports of critical incidents of violence or threats of violence, and – in the case of previously absent fathers – data on the amount and continuity of contact with their children. Intermediate term outcomes are assessed by evidence of changes in: the child's mental health, levels of family conflict, and observations of parent child relationships. Long-term outcomes, specifically, whether the children from violent families have successfully broken the cycle, and whether restoration of the father-child relationship is mutually beneficial, is beyond the scope of the current program. The data collected are the basis for the first

significant outcome based research in the field of supervised visitation and will provide a model for the assessment of other programs in the State and elsewhere.

In program year 1999, information from intake questionnaires, specifically client demographics and child characteristics, is being entered into a database for analysis. Outcome measures are collected through the second questionnaire to be administered six months after a client begins the program.

## PROGRAM DATA

The "Breaking the Cycle" Program averaged a quarterly caseload of 34 youth in program year 1997 and 40 youth in the first three quarters of 1999. There was a dramatic decline (48%) in the number of youth who participated in the program in 1999, from 56 youth in the second quarter to 29 youth in quarter three. This decline is attributed to the unusual number of families who did not complete the intake process, and several families who successfully terminated from the program.

### *Participant Demographics*

As indicated in Tables 24 and 25, youth under the age of 12 years overwhelmingly represented the majority of program participants in program year 1998 (85% to 95% of participants), and the 10 year old and under age group represented the majority of program participants in program year 1999 (73% to 83%).

**Table 24: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	35	95%	25	89%	28	85%	33	90%
12 – 14	2	5%	3	11%	2	6%	2	5%
15 – 16					2	6%	2	5%
17					1	3%		
Total	37	100%	28	100%	33	100%	37	100%

**Table 25: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	30	83%	43	77%	21	73%		
11 – 13	1	3%	3	5%	1	3%		
14 – 16	4	11%	4	7%	4	14%		
17	1	3%	6	11%	3	10%		
Total	36	100%	56	100%	29	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

The vast majority of youth participants were white (70% to 85% in 1998 and 68% to 76% in 1999) (Tables 26 and 27).

**Table 26: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	26	70%	22	79%	28	85%	30	82%
African American	4	11%	3	11%	2	6%	3	8%
Hispanic	7	19%	2	7%	2	6%	2	5%
Asian								
American Indian								
Other			1	3%	1	3%	2	5%
Total	37	100%	28	100%	33	100%	37	100%

**Table 27: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	25	69%	38	68%	22	76%		
African American	4	11%	6	11%	3	10%		
Hispanic	6	17%	9	16%				
Asian								
American Indian								
Other	1	3%	3	5%	4	14%		
Total	36	100%	56	100%	29	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

In program year 1998, male and female participation was nearly equal (45% to 54% males as compared to 46% to 55% females) (Table 28). However, in 1999, females greatly outnumbered male participants over the first three quarters (55% to 66% females as compared to 34% to 45% males) (Table 29).

**Table 28: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	20	54%	15	54%	15	45%	17	46%
Female	17	46%	13	46%	18	55%	20	54%
Total	37	100%	28	100%	33	100%	37	100%

**Table 29: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	13	36%	25	45%	10	34%		
Female	23	64%	31	55%	19	66%		
Total	36	100%	56	100%	29	100%		100%

\* Quarterly Report due 7/00



# FRANKLIN COUNTY

## FRANKLIN COUNTY COURT AND COMMUNITY JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

In collaboration, the Franklin County Court and Community Juvenile Justice Diversion Program created the Franklin County Court and Community Juvenile Diversion Program, a comprehensive court and community prevention and diversion program that addresses juvenile delinquency risk factors. The goals are to prevent court involved juveniles from entering further into the judicial system and keep at-risk youth and their family out of the court system altogether.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$155,000 to Franklin County, to enhance inter-agency collaboration by establishing a prevention service continuum that draws upon the expertise of the project partners and other community resources.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Franklin County encompasses 26 towns, many of which face significant risk factors for juvenile delinquency. The Juvenile Diversion Program is an attempt to address the issues of school drop out, teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug use, poverty and unemployment. The *Boston Globe* (March 9, 10, and 11, 1997) highlighted several cases and identified a crisis for juveniles, families, and the courts in Franklin County.

In the town of Montague, population 8,506, per capita income is \$13,491. Per capita, more people receive food stamps in Turner Falls, the largest village in Montague, than in Mattapan, Brockton, Lowell, or Fall River. In 1995, there were 16 reported rapes, giving Montague the distinction of having the highest rape rate in the state. The town of Orange, has a population of 7,633 and a per capita income of \$11,106. In the town of Orange, per capita, more teens have been placed in DYS custody in the past decade, than those from Boston, Brockton, or Worcester. Also, twice as many people as the state average are enrolled in public substance abuse programs. A March 1997 Statement of Need for the town of Greenfield reported that, as an urban center for Franklin County, it tends to attract at-risk, runaway and homeless youth from surrounding areas. In addition, Greenfield reported the fourth highest rate of child abuse in the state. Of the under-18 population, 18.5% of Greenfield residents are living below the poverty line-nearly 1.5 times the state average.

The extent of juvenile crime in both Greenfield and Orange (Table 30) was the impetus for the Juvenile Diversion Program.

Table 30: Juvenile Criminal Charges, 1996

	Motor Vehicle	Breaking/ Entering	Larceny	Disorderly Conduct	Assault	Narcotics	Other	Total Charges	Total Complaints
Greenfield	67	59	69	15	100	24	88	422	215
Orange	30	49	95	33	83	14	68	372	226

Source: Annual Report on the State of the Massachusetts Court System, 1996

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

During the 1997 and 1998 program years, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) was comprised of 22 community members representing the justice system/court, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, business, and youth. In 1997, three (3) PPB meetings were held each quarter, and were attended by an average of 10 members. In 1998, three meetings were held during each of the first three quarters, and were attended by an average of 10 members.

The 1999 program year reflects a change in the composition of the PPB. The Board membership slightly decreased to 18 participants representing the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, religious organizations, prevention/treatment providers, youth, and parents. The PPB met once each quarter, and attendance averaged 7 members.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

The Franklin Regional Council of Government, in conjunction with the Franklin County Futures Lab Project (known as Reinventing Justice) created the Juvenile Diversion Program. This endeavor promotes collaboration among agencies in an effort to provide one comprehensive prevention strategy for the county that addresses delinquency risk factors. Furthermore, the Regional Council of Governments is actively involved in serving the area's youth by being the lead agency in the Community Coalition for Teens, which sponsors local initiatives, including Big Brother/Big Sisters, DIAL/SELF and the Franklin Community Action Corps Youth Programs.

The Juvenile Diversion Program emanated from input from the Supreme Judicial Court Commission on Juvenile Justice and four public Town Meetings initiated by the Franklin County Futures Lab Task Force in the fall of 1994. The Task Force's report, *Moving to a Preferred Future: A Reinventing Justice Action Plan*, recommended the formation of a Community Justice Diversion Board that would offer alternatives for juvenile delinquency and CHINS cases. The proposal for a Juvenile Diversion Program received final approval in August 1996, and the program began operating in July 1997. The Juvenile Diversion Program developed two service tracks to assist (1) CHINS (Children in Need of Services) and (2) first-time misdemeanor offenders.

CHINS referrals are sent to the Juvenile Diversion Program the same day they are initiated by the petitioner, unless there are indications for the need of out of home placement, physical injury to a family member, or refusal to cooperate by any party. Collaboration between probation, schools, and the diversion program facilitates this early intervention, and allows families to volunteer for the program's services prior to a school filing a CHINS petition. After the initial intake interview, the diversion coordinator meets with each family, individually and as a unit, and completes a contract outlining all parties' responsibilities. Should the juvenile or family members be unwilling or unable to adhere to the contract, the diversion contract will be terminated. Families can also volunteer for the program's services prior to the filing of a CHINS petition.

In the matter of delinquency cases, the referral process has experienced several changes. Initially, after arraignment hearings, the district attorney, in conjunction with the probation officer, would review all complaints to identify those initially eligible for referral to the diversion program. Beginning the second program year, the Diversion Services Team received delinquency track referrals from the clerk magistrates. In some cases, the diversion program receives the referral well in advance of the scheduled court date, thus streamlining the process. Upon acceptance, the juvenile and his/her family signs an agreement which stipulates the specific conditions and requirements that need to be fulfilled in order for the criminal complaint application to be withdrawn.

Juveniles who successfully complete the six-month program have their cases dismissed. Likewise, juveniles who either withdraw from the program or are terminated for non-compliance, have their cases returned for prosecution.

### ***Restitution and Community Service***

The Juvenile Diversion Program highlights restorative justice and restitution, and, as such, some requirements include: acknowledgment of responsibility for the offense, payment of restitution, letter of apology, curfew, completion of community service, mandatory school and/or work requirements, and participation in counseling, tutoring, and/or mentoring. The local recreation department, animal shelter, Franklin County Action Corporation, and library were solicited for the community service component of the program. This enhances the diversion program's objective to incorporate restorative justice concepts into contracts and programming.

### ***Youth and Family Support Services***

CHAMPS (Children Achieve More with Parental Support) is a program that offers therapeutic and educational support to adolescents and their families through a series of short-term, activity-based groups. The goals are to address substance abuse, provide families with resources to progress towards dismissal of a CHINS petition, develop positive parental control, build individual and family conflict resolution skills, and promote self-awareness, problem solving skills, and positive risk taking. Participation in CHAMPS is available to families of children who have a CHINS petition or have been adjudicated delinquent, and often is made a condition of their court diversion contract.

A mentoring program was also established between diversion program participants and college students from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Greenfield Community College. In addition, in program year 1998, one middle school held parent conferences with the program coordinator, a juvenile probation officer, and families whose children were exhibiting at-risk behavior.

### ***Community Partnerships***

To enhance inter-agency collaboration and increase community awareness and program visibility, meetings were held with police chiefs, school superintendents, and special education teachers, and partnerships were established with the Girls' Club, Girls' Scouts, Greenfield Recreation, Big Brother, Brick House, and Montague Community Partnership.

### ***Other Activities***

Beginning in July 1998, Child and Family Services started an adventure-based program for CHINS. In addition, a number of program components were implemented in the Diversion Program to address risk factors exhibited by youth. Needs assessment, school meetings, client monitoring, multi-agency Staffing, and Referrals for Service were instituted to respond to substance abuse, family conflict, mental health issues, school failure, police involvement, and special education needs that have been identified among program participants. The Juvenile Diversion Program has been successful in addressing these risk factors by continuously reviewing service delivery, thereby ensuring youth remain receptive and services are timely.

### ***Staff Recruitment and Development***

The Juvenile Diversion Project Coordinator was hired in August 1997 and, at the same time, a summer college intern began initial inquiries to local service providers to determine what services were offered to juveniles. In program year 1999, a youth worker was hired to assist with monitoring program participants' adherence to their diversion agreement and work with their families. Also joining the diversion team, was a Fitchburg State College graduate student who offered poetry workshops and outdoor activities for youth in the Orange area.

In program year 1998, diversion program staff attended several training sessions sponsored by the probation department and the local bar association. In addition, the project director and the program coordinator participated in a task force stemming from a conference sponsored by the Northwest District Attorney's Office, titled "Youth Violence: Creating Alternatives."

### ***Program Evaluation***

Program evaluation measures were developed by the Diversion Advisory Board and are monitored by a Board member. To assess program effectiveness and client satisfaction, client questionnaires and interviews were implemented for all closed cases. The following measures are used in the evaluation:

1. Number of CHINS cases and first-time offenders who come to the attention of the court.
2. Number of families referred into the Diversion Program.
3. Number of youths and families accepted into the Diversion Program.
4. Number of successfully completed diversion contracts.
5. Number of youths placed out of the home following services.
6. Identification of reliable services and identification of gaps in service.
7. The development of diversion services options for referred juveniles.
8. Inter-agency cooperation and the program's effect on individual agency caseloads.

In assessing its activities, the diversion program noted a few of its deficits have been the lack of mentors/role models for referred youth, parent education workshops, and counseling for juveniles who commit domestic violence. The program also recognized their delays in delivering mental health and counseling services to youth and their families. Furthermore, program staff reported that it has required a concerted effort to get alienated youth to participate in activities.

In addition, the Project Director identified additional risk factors that were not apparent at the onset of the program. Students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

were more frequently to have a school offender CHINS filed compared to other school students. As a result of this finding, the diversion program now provides information for youth and their parents regarding ADD/ADHD. Poor parenting skills and the parents' failure to recognize the problem were also recognized as risk factors. Despite recognizing these and other risk factors, the Project Director noted it is sometimes impossible to provide necessary protective factors, such as professional counseling or parenting skills, to the youth and their families before a crisis occurs. Ideally, to achieve optimal success, the target population should be younger and less court involved. In response to this issue, the Project Director is attempting to get more referrals for at-risk elementary students whose truancy or behavior problems are not substantial enough to require a CHINS petition.

## PROGRAM DATA

Program participation increased significantly over the course of the 1997 program year from 6 youth in the first quarter to 60 in quarter 4, a 900% increase. The program maintained a high caseload in 1998, with an average of 55 youth participating each quarter. Interestingly, program participation significantly declined by 65% during first three quarters of program year 1999.

Tables 31 and 32 indicate that a total of 62 CHINS and 36 delinquent youth participated in the diversion program during program year 1998. The average age for CHINS and delinquent cases was 13 years and 15 years respectively. CHINS cases had a lower success rate compared to delinquent cases. Twenty-one (21) CHINS cases were returned to the Probation Department as a result of noncompliance or re-offending, compared to 8 cases that were successfully terminated. Regarding delinquent cases, 32 cases were successfully terminated from the diversion program, and 4 were returned to Probation for further action owing to noncompliance or re-offending.

**Table 31: Children in Need of Service (CHINS) Cases, July 1998 – May 1999**

Type of Referral	# of Referrals	Special Education	Average Age	Closing Status		
				Successful	Returned*	Other**
Parent	21	10	13.9	6	12	3
Truant	6	5	12.8		3	3
School Behavior	10	10	13.1	2	6	2
Total	37	25	13.2	8	21	8

\*Cases returned to Probation as a result of noncompliance or re-offending.

\*\*Cases that were closed due to the family moving.

**Table 32: Delinquent Cases, July 1998 – May 1999**

Offense	# of Referrals	Average Age	Contract Requirements			Closing Status	
			Counseling/ School Activity	Community Service Hours*	Restitution	Successful	Returned**
Drug Related	13	15.2	11/5	15.5	-	11	2
Motor Vehicle	2	15	-/-	32.5	-	2	-
Shoplifting	16	15.4	11/15	18.5	-	16	-
Other	5	15	2/1	20.0	\$175	3	2
Total	36	15	24/21	86.5	\$175	32	4

\*Average hours youth participated in Community Service

\*\*Cases returned to Probation as a result of noncompliance or re-offending.

### **Risk Factors**

As indicated in Table 33, throughout the four program quarters of program year 1997, a significant percentage of youth exhibited risk factors for failing grades, police involvement, and (excluding the first quarter) substance abuse. During the first quarter, all 6 participating youth in the Juvenile Diversion Program were police involved (100%) and 3 (50%) had failing grades. Of the 60 total participants during the fourth quarter, 15 (25%) had substance abuse issues, 25 (42%) had failing grades, and 31 (52%) were police involved. The program continued to target at-risk youth in 1998, with approximately 1 in 5 participants at-risk for substance abuse in all four quarters. Failing grades was the most prevalent risk factor for youth during the 1998 program year, and peaked during the second quarter,

with 87% of program participants at-risk for academic failure. Although youth remained police involved, this risk factor decreased from a first quarter high of 32% to a fourth quarter low of 13% (Table 34).

**Table 33: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	6					3	50%			6	100%		
Quarter 2	41	6	15%			29	71%	3		15	37%	1	2%
Quarter 3	39	5	13%	2	1%	21	54%	3	1%	17	44%	1	2%
Quarter 4	60	15	25%			25	42%	3	1%	31	52%	2	3%

**Table 34: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	50	10	20%			19	38%	3	6%	16	32%		
Quarter 2	52	10	19%	1	2%	45	87%	2	4%	7	14%	1	2%
Quarter 3	63	10	16%	2	3%	28	44%	2	3%	16	25%	1	2%
Quarter 4	53	12	23%	3	6%	19	36%	3	6%	7	13%	1	2%

**Participant Demographics**

Excluding quarter two, in program year 1997, the 12 – 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (37% to 67%) and this continued into the second year of the program with this age group representing 46% to 64% of program participants (Table 35). This trend shifted in 1999, with the 14 – 16 year old age group representing the majority of program participants during the first three program quarters (56% to 69%) (Table 36).

**Table 35: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12			9	22%	8	20%	11	18%
12 – 14	4	67%	15	37%	17	44%	28	47%
15 – 16	2	33%	17	41%	14	36%	21	35%
17								
Total	6	100%	41	100%	39	100%	60	100%

**Table 36: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	10	20%	9	17%	6	10%	8	15%
12 – 14	23	46%	30	58%	36	57%	34	64%
15 – 16	17	34%	13	25%	21	33%	11	21%
17								
Total	50	100%	52	100%	63	100%	53	100%

**Table 37: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓10					1	5%		
11 – 13	19	35%	8	44%	5	26%		
14 – 16	32	59%	10	56%	13	69%		
17	3	6%						
Total	54	100%	18	100%	19	100%		

\*Quarterly Reports due 7/00

The overwhelming majority of program participants are white, representing 83% to 100% of participants in 1997, 87% to 94% in 1998, and 77% to 90% in the first three quarters of 1999 (Tables 38, 39 and 40).

**Table 38: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	6	100%	34	83%	34	87%	54	90%
African American					1	3%	1	2%
Hispanic			7	17%	4	10%	5	8%
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	6	100%	41	100%	39	100%	60	100%

**Table 39: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	46	92%	46	88%	59	94%	46	87%
African American		%	1	2%		%	1	1%
Hispanic	4	8%	5	10%	1	1%	2	4%
Asian					1	1%	2	4%
American Indian					2	4%	2	4%
Other								
Total	50	100%	52	100%	63	100%	53	100%

**Table 40: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	49	90%	14	77%	16	84%		
African American			1	6%	1	5%		
Hispanic	3	6%	2	11%	2	11%		
Asian			1	6%				
American Indian	2	4%						
Other								
Total	54	100%	18	100%	19	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Over all program years, only slightly more males participated in the program than females (Tables 41, 42, and 43).

**Table 41: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	1	17%	28	68%	16	41%	35	58%
Female	5	83%	13	32%	23	59%	25	42%
Total	6	100%	41	100%	39	100%	60	100%

**Table 42: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	23	46%	27	52%	35	56%	33	62%
Female	27	54%	25	48%	28	44%	20	38%
Total	50	100%	52	100%	63	100%	53	100%

**Table 43: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	30	56%	10	56%	11	58%		
Female	24	44%	8	44%	8	42%		
Total	54	100%	18	100%	19	100%		



# TOWN OF HARVARD

## STUDENT/COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Responding to the alarming number of youth at-risk for substance abuse, the town of Harvard established the Student/Community Assistance Program, a substance abuse educational and prevention program. The town determined there was a need for an experienced, confidential counselor for students and their families, and more comprehensive activities for youth with “time on their hands.” A counseling office was established at the high school, where students may seek guidance for personal, family, and drug and alcohol issues.

Since July 1996, the Executive Office of Public Safety has awarded a total of \$70,000 to the Student/Community Assistance Program. The Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division did not sponsor the Student/Community Assistance Program in 1998. Funding from EOPS resumed during the 1999 – 2000 school year.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The town of Harvard is a rural, affluent community located about 40 miles west of Boston, with a population of approximately 5,000 residents. The Harvard school system has the highest rating in Worcester County, and is considered the major reason why many families with young children choose to reside in Harvard. At the Bromfield School, Harvard’s school for grades 7 through 12, students scored the highest statewide on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests (MCAS), and are accepted at a variety of prestigious colleges throughout the United States.

During the 1993 – 1994, and the 1994 – 1995 school years, junior and senior high school students anonymously completed the American Drug and Alcohol Survey. Results indicated that the use of alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, and hallucinogens was extremely widespread among Harvard youth, oftentimes exceeding the national average. The results highlighted the serious level of drug and alcohol use, previously unrecognized by the community. Table 44 displays the percentage of Harvard youth in grades 7 through 12, who in the 1994 – 1995 school year, indicated using alcohol or drugs in 30 days prior to the survey.

**Table 44: American Drug and Alcohol Survey, 1994 – 1995**

	<b>7 – 8 Grade</b>	<b>9 – 10 Grade</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>	<b>Grade 12 Nationally</b>
Alcohol	25%	47%	52%	60%	50%
Been Drunk	7%	24%	33%	46%	31%
Marijuana	5%	28%	20%	36%	19%
Hallucinogens	3%	14%	4%	9%	3%

In response, in 1994, the town of Harvard formed a Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force, a coalition representing the community. The Task Force implemented a unique program to reduce youth substance abuse by building community awareness about the extent of the problem, working closely with students to understand why they abuse drugs and alcohol, and educating the community about where and why it happens and how they can effectively respond. The key to this risk-reduction program was the hiring of the Community Assistance Coordinator.

In 1995, the Task Force arranged for a substance abuse counselor from Newport, Rhode Island to visit Harvard and professionally assess the nature and extent of the problem. The counselor interviewed over fifty students in grades 8 through 12, in addition to school personnel and parents. His findings confirmed the survey results, that drug and alcohol use by Harvard youth was rampant, and many parents were either oblivious to or in denial that the problem existed.

The Task Force sponsored community meetings to share their findings with Harvard residents and to elicit their response. Nearly 150 citizens, including a large representation of students, were present, far surpassing the

attendance at any previous meeting devoted to drug and alcohol use. At this meeting, a wide range of speakers, both students and adults, related their personal experiences, perception of needs, and suggestions for improvement. Facilitated by volunteer professionals, meeting attendees participated in small group discussions focusing on areas of need and potential action steps. The need with the highest priority that surfaced among both teenagers and adults was for a counselor available to the residents.

In September 1997, the American Drug and Alcohol Survey was again administered to students and indicated there was a decrease in some drug use (e.g. inhalants, hallucinogens), but an increase in alcohol use. A group of students approached the Community Assistance Counselor about the American Drug and Alcohol Survey, contending that many respondents embellished or “fudged” their answers. In early 1998, two Bromfield senior high school students developed their own school survey, targeting 100 students in grades 7 through 12. The following results were obtained:

- 67% of Bromfield students abuse drugs and alcohol
- The most popular drugs used include marijuana, alcohol, mushrooms, and acid.
- The majority of parents are very unaware of the extent of substance abuse by youth.

The students concluded that most parents don’t want to think that their child may be using drugs and alcohol, yet the survey results are very clear: they are using drugs and alcohol with frequent regularity. The results of this school survey were the impetus for a Community Forum in April 1998, addressing the drug and alcohol issues in the community of Harvard. Students, many of whom were substance abusers undergoing counseling, discussed their personal experiences at the Community Forum attended by approximately 80 adults. Seven students described their own experiences with drug and alcohol abuse. Their honest discussion and answers to questions were a wake-up call for many parents, and confirmed the prevalence of substance abuse in the community. These same students also met with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to discuss the realities of substance abuse. The Community Forum, which was videotaped, was later shown on the local cable access channel.

The extent of the substance abuse issues in Harvard became apparent with devastating results in May 1998, when a graduating senior, and an admitted addict and strong contributor and supporter of the Substance Abuse Task Force, was killed in an alcohol-related motor vehicle accident. The driver, a Bromfield High School graduate, was charged with Driving Under the Influence (DUI), and convicted of negligent homicide.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### ***Prevention Policy Board***

There was no documentation of the Prevention Policy Board's (PPB) activities during the 1997 program year. In 1999, the PPB comprised 15 community members representing: law enforcement, education, religious organizations, health services, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, media, local government, senior citizens, youth, and parents. During quarter one, 6 meetings of the PPB were held, and attended by an average of 15 members. No meetings were held during the remaining quarters.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

The Student/Community Assistance Program is a drug and alcohol abuse prevention and counseling program for students in grades 7 through 12 that addresses such risk factors as: alcohol and drug use, poor family relationships, low self-esteem, aggressive and acting out behavior, and interpersonal relationships.

The Community Assistance Counselor position was created purposefully for this program, and is considered a primary component to ensuring risk-reduction around substance abuse. The Counselor provides individual and group counseling programs, community education on substance abuse, and guidance for students and their families. The Counselor has an office in the high school, with an open door, drop-in policy that promotes easy access for youth. Also, other students and teachers may refer youth that exhibit at-risk behavior, however program participation is strictly voluntary.

### ***Counseling Services***

The Student/Community Assistance Program began on September 1, 1996 with individual and group counseling sessions available to students. Counseling opportunities were spread via “word of mouth.” Prior to the beginning of the school day, daily counseling sessions are available from 6:30 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. Believing problems do not occur solely between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., the Counselor is available by beeper on a 24-hour basis. Both students and parents alike have felt comfortable to make the most of this availability. The second program year reflected a sharp increase in the number of students seeking individual and group counseling, or advice concerning siblings and friends who were substance abusers. The counseling sessions continued during the 1999 program year, with approximately 20 students regularly attending. The issues that are often discussed concern alcohol and drug use (their own and family members’), family dynamics, self-esteem problems, and other concerns.

An Al-A-Teen program for youth age 12 – 14, who have an alcoholic parent, was organized and attended by five students in the 1996 program year. Likewise, Al-A-Non, a support group for alcoholic teenagers was attended by three youth. Also, five students began attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

In addition to drug and alcohol counseling, discussions with the Counselor also incorporate such topics as Sexually Transmitted Diseases, AIDS, women and men’s issues, stress reduction, sexual harassment, and building self-esteem. Since many students experience stress as a result of pressure to succeed academically, a weight room and an eating disorders group were instituted. The “Eating Disorders Group,” attended by both young women and some young men focuses on promoting healthy eating patterns and also weight control for athletes.

In program year 1997, another support group began for students who were coping with either the separation or divorce of their parents. About 10 students attended this weekly group held on Monday afternoons. The “Cognitive Restructuring Group” was also formed in program year 1997 to help students cope with grief, anger, and unwanted or irrational thoughts.

### ***Peer Leadership***

The Peer Leadership Program provides mentors and tutors to students in grades 7 through 12. Also, scholarships in the amount of \$300 are awarded to three students for their dedication and assistance. During the 1997 program year, forty-two Peer Leaders met weekly, and also tutored and mentored fellow students. They also volunteered at a Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser in September 1997, and helped organize a dance for underclassmen.

The Natural Helpers Program, initiated in program year 1996, teaches youth in grades 9 through 11 how to assist their peers in problem-solving, and making healthy choices. Serving as the trainer for this program, the Community Adjustment Counselor teaches youth to recognize signs that someone may be at-risk for suicide, to inform an adult, and how to approach one’s peers. The training takes place at the University of Rhode Island. The Natural Helpers Program had 3 adults and 9 students participating in 1997. Their training was reportedly invaluable and enabled them to offer support to fellow students when the May 1998 alcohol-related car accident occurred.

### ***Youth and Community Education***

To further increase communication between students and adults regarding substance use, community forums have been periodically organized. The meetings offer an opportunity for adults to view drug paraphernalia, learn slang words referring to drugs, and identify behavior associated with the drug culture. The Community Forums held during the 1999 program year focused on the role parents take in their children’s lives. In January 2000, a meeting on parenting was attended by 70 parents. In March 2000, an event for parents addressed drugs and drug paraphernalia at the high school.

As a result of the Columbine shootings, many students expressed their concern about the potential for violence in the school. During the 1999 program year, violence prevention forums were held for students in grades 7 through 9, and 10 through 12, and their parents to discuss bullying, verbal harassment, student isolation, and violence. These issues were underscored by four students who wrote papers about their experiences as outcasts at the Bromfield School. The papers were brought to the attention of the Community Assistance Counselor who met with the students. One of these students now serves as a Peer Leader.

**Other Activities**

A summer wellness program operates at the school from June through August, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for students who wish to meet with the counselor for personal development, conversation, and substance abuse counseling. For recreation, softball games and cookouts are organized. On average, between 10 and 30 youth show up daily, many coming either prior to or after summer jobs.

For the first time, an “After the Prom Party,” was planned and chaperoned by parents in the 1996 program year, affording students a safe and alcohol and drug free environment. Sixty-three (63) students attended the party. The Bromfield School’s Second Annual “After the Prom Party” was more successful with 140 students in attendance.

**PROGRAM DATA**

Youth participation increased significantly over the course of program year 1997, from 79 youth in the first quarter to 579 youth in quarter four, a 633% increase. Program participation declined to 135 youth in the first quarter of the 1999 program year. However, participation increased to 313 youth in quarter three, a 132% increase.

**Risk Factors**

As indicated by Table 45, the percentage of youth at-risk for substance abuse substantially decreased from 30% in the first quarter, to 4% in quarter four. Likewise, there was a significant decline in police-involved youth from 19% in quarter one, to 3% in quarter four.

**Table 45: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	79	24	30%	2	3%	4	5%	1	1%	15	19%		
Quarter 2	188	41	22%	2	1%	10	5%	1	.5%	14	7%		
Quarter 3	247	51	21%	11	4%	20	8%	11	4%	14	6%		
Quarter 4	579	24	4%	6	1%	9	2%	2	.3%	17	3%		

**Participant Demographics**

With regard to age, across all four quarters of 1997, the 15 – 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (40% to 48%). There was an increase in the percentage of the under 12-year old and 17-year old participants in the fourth quarter (Table 46). Similar to the first year of the program, throughout the three quarters of 1999, the 14 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (38% - 42%), closely followed by the 11 - 13 year old age group (33% - 38%) (Table 47).

**Table 46: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12						%	10	2%
12 – 14	24	30%	43	23%	62	25%	140	24%
15 – 16	34	43%	91	48%	118	48%	230	40%
17	21	27%	54	29%	67	27%	199	34%
Total	79	100%	188	100%	247	100%	579	100%

**Table 47: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	4	3%	6	4%	6	2%		
11 – 13	45	33%	56	34%	118	38%		
14 – 16	57	42%	64	38%	121	38%		
17	29	22%	40	24%	68	22%		
Total	135	100%	166	100%	313	100%		

\* Quarterly Report due 7/00

The overwhelming majority of youth participants were white (86% to 96% in 1997 and 86% to 92% in 1999) (Tables 48 and 49).

**Table 48: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	68	86%	175	93%	224	91%	555	96%
African American	3	4%	4	2%	6	2%	3	.5%
Hispanic	3	4%	4	2%	4	2%	10	2%
Asian	4	5%	4	2%	8	3%	9	2%
American Indian	1	1%	2	1%	5	2%	2	.3%
Other	0		0		0		0	
Total	79	100%	188	100%	247	100%	579	100%

**Table 49: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	117	87%	142	86%	289	92%		
African American	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%		
Hispanic	11	8%	11	7%	11	4%		
Asian	6	4%	6	3%	6	2%		
American Indian			6	3%	6	2%		
Other								
Total	135	100%	166	100%	313	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

As indicated in Table 50, in all four quarters in 1997, more males participated in the program than females (53% to 63% males as compared to 37% to 46% females). In 1999, on average, only slightly more males participated in the program than females (49% to 53% males as compared to 47% to 51% females) (Table 51).

**Table 50: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	43	54%	118	63%	146	59%	307	53%
Female	36	46%	70	37%	101	41%	272	47%
Total	79	100%	188	100%	247	100%	579	100%

**Table 51: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	72	53%	86	52%	153	49%		
Female	63	47%	80	48%	160	51%		
Total	135	100%	166	100%	313	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00



# TOWN OF HOLLISTON

## YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAM

The town of Holliston created the Youth Diversion Program to divert non-violent, first-time offenders from the court system by offering community-based intervention. The Program aims to provide prevention and intervention services for at-risk youth intended to help them learn from their mistakes, avoid future arrests, and deter further court involvement. Youth may also be referred to the program as a result of truancy or by their parents.

Since July 1997, the Youth Diversion Program has been awarded a total of \$56,000 from the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division to respond to juvenile delinquency in Holliston.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In the spring 1998, the Holliston School Department administered the anonymous and voluntary Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, to Holliston students in grades 8 – 12. The survey documents risky behaviors that compromise adolescent health and safety, including alcohol and illegal drug use, physical violence, suicide attempts, and drinking and driving.

The Holliston Youth Risk Behavior Survey confirmed that risk factors such as alcohol and substance abuse exist for many youth in the community, and therefore, intervention was necessary. Three in five Holliston youth (63%) reported some alcohol use, and 44% indicated alcohol use in the past 30 days. Approximately two in five students (39%) reported using alcohol prior to age 13, which is slightly higher than the Massachusetts statewide average of nearly one in three (31%). Also, 12% of Holliston youth reported drinking on school property in the month prior to the survey.

Illegal drug use by Holliston students closely parallels statewide patterns. Almost one-fourth of the students reported using marijuana, and one in twenty indicated using cocaine during the 30 days prior to the survey. One in five students acknowledged they had inhaled glue, aerosol spray, or paint fumes to get high. Holliston students reported in-school violence-related behaviors (e.g., carrying a weapon, being injured or threatened with a weapon, having property stolen or damaged, and fighting) at a higher rate than was reported statewide. Likewise, attempted suicide exceeded the statewide rate. Nearly one in four students reported they seriously considered or made a plan to attempt suicide during the past year, and 12% did attempt suicide.

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

During the 1997 program year, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) was comprised of 17 community members, representing the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, prevention/treatment providers, business, local government, and youth. The PPB held two meetings each quarter, and had an average attendance of 13 members. In program years 1998 and 1999, membership on the PPB increased slightly to 18 community members, and represented community sectors identical to 1997, with the exception of business and local government. In 1998, the PPB held three meetings in quarter one, and two meetings in each of the remaining three quarters. On average, 13 board members attended each meeting. In 1999, the PPB met once during quarters one and two, and was attended by an average of 13 members.

#### *Program Implementation and Administration*

The Youth Diversion Program is a six-month, voluntary program designed for youth, ages 7 to 18, who either reside in Holliston, or attend the Holliston Public Schools. Originally called the “Court Diversion Program,” the Youth Diversion Program services students who have been referred by police, their parents, or who break school rules, and are in need of an alternative to suspension. To enhance the success of the program, a collaborative effort has been formed between the Holliston Public Schools, the Holliston Police Department, the Holliston Recreation Department, Holliston Youth and Family Services, and Juvenile Probation. The Holliston Youth and Family Services is responsible for coordinating program activities and monitoring client progress.

In lieu of arresting a youth for a minor offense, the Juvenile Police Officer may refer a youth to the Program. To ensure the youth is a first-time offender and therefore eligible for the Program, the Juvenile Officer conducts a Board of Probation review for prior arrests before notifying the Youth Diversion Coordinator. The Coordinator also accepts referrals from the public school in cases of discipline or truancy issues, as well as from parents, both situations that previously may have resulted in the filing of a CHINS petition. The Coordinator works closely with the Juvenile Officer, providing periodic updates on a client's progress.

Upon initial contact with a youth, the Youth Diversion Coordinator conducts an intake to obtain a psycho-social history, and to discuss the incident that led to the referral. Other concerns such as suicide ideation, substance abuse, personal or family concerns, and risk-taking behavior are also addressed. A meeting is then convened with the parent to discuss expectations and sign a contract, with the understanding that upon successful completion of the program no further legal action will be taken. Youth who fail the program are arrested for the initial incident and any new charges they may have incurred.

Implementation of the Youth Diversion Program was delayed for the first two quarters of program year 1997, because a special town meeting was needed to appropriate the matching funds. Also, the Youth Diversion Coordinator was not hired until March 1998, further hindering the implementation process. Despite this slow start, by the third quarter of program year 1997, the program began providing services for youth that included substance abuse evaluation, individual meetings, family meetings, and community service.

### ***Restitution and Community Service***

The accountability component of the Program involves youth participating in community service, as well as providing restitution for damaged or stolen property. Community service sites include the food pantry, the Town Hall, and community events. The Coordinator noted that it has been problematic finding community service sites because many adults do not want to supervise teenagers.

### ***Counseling Services***

To address risk factors exhibited by youth referred to the Diversion Program, a counseling component is available and includes any or all of the following: individual counseling, group counseling, family counseling, and substance abuse evaluation. In program year 1998, 64 individual counseling sessions, 52 family meetings, and 16 parent consultations were held. The Coordinator conducted 62 individual counseling sessions and 17 family meetings in program year 1999 (as of March 2000)

Counseling groups are run according to client need, the number of youth in the program, and presenting issues. Typically, two counseling groups are ongoing, "Making Good Choices" and "Teen Awareness Group." In program year 1998, 15 "Making Good Choices" groups and 14 "Teen Awareness" groups were held. The Making Good Choices group is designed for middle school youth and focuses on decision-making skills. The group meets for eight, one hour weekly sessions. The Teen Awareness Group is for high school age youth, and meets for one hour weekly over an eight-week period. Separate groups are held for boys and girls because a previous co-ed group was not successful. The topics to be discussed are determined by the youth, and have included such issues as date rape, relationships, self-esteem, peer pressure, and making decisions about alcohol and drug use. Nineteen group meetings were conducted in program year 1999, as of March 2000

Parent involvement and communication with the Youth Diversion Coordinator is crucial to program success. All families take part in at least two family meetings, the goal being to openly discuss issues, particularly those around substance abuse, depression, and anger management.

For each youth, the Youth Diversion Coordinator conducts a substance abuse evaluation that entails four, one-hour meetings. The final meeting includes the family to provide feedback, especially if there are serious problems. The Coordinator also provides the counseling services, and meets with each youth either weekly or biweekly. However, if time constraints arise, the youth may be referred to a counselor outside the program. Twenty-seven substance abuse evaluations were conducted in program year 1998 and 23 evaluations were conducted by March of program year 1999.

In January 2000, two new program components were made available to youth. A Smoking Cessation program is offered to teens wishing to quit smoking. The Youth Diversion Coordinator offered this program once a week for

eight weeks, which was attended by three youth. Also offered, is the Anger Management for Youth program, for students who are identified as manifesting violent behavior, “acting-out” inappropriately, or who appear depressed. The program goal is to help participants learn safe, alternative methods of coping with anger and/or depression. This program is also available to other juveniles exhibiting the same signs of depression or acting-out behavior.

### ***Other Activities***

Due to staffing changes at Holliston’s Recreation Department and commitment changes from the Holliston High School Drama Department, some planned activities such as strength training, lacrosse, and a dramatic arts program, did not take place. However, the Program was able to substitute some of these activities with an expanded visual arts program. In program year 1998, 22 high school students painted a mural in a stairwell at the high school, a frequent site of graffiti glorifying drug use. The art teacher is an Expressive Therapist, and one activity consisted of youth making face masks expressing who they are. That same year, after-school gym time was available twice weekly at the middle school, and a summer arts program drew 14 youth ages 6 – 16. In its third year, the program offered “Strike Two.” This entailed the Coordinator and the Juvenile Police Officer taking court-diverted youth on tour at the Billerica House of Correction, with the goal of impressing upon youth the possible consequences of delinquent behavior and substance abuse.

### ***Program Evaluation***

The Holliston Youth and Family Services conducted a needs assessment to determine how best to meet the needs of youth and families in the community. The Needs Assessment Survey was sent home to the parents of middle and high school students, and approximately 10 percent were returned. The results of the survey reflect what parents of adolescents in Holliston believe to be the problems and issues facing their community. Three particular issues are highlighted: 1) concerns regarding alcohol and drug use by youth; 2) the need for more structured activities during after school hours (especially for youth not involved in organized sports) and; 3) parent education and support groups to help parents effectively deal with stress.

In program year 1998, a formal tracking mechanism was instituted to examine the recidivism rate of youth that have participated in the program. The Court Diversion Coordinator developed a database of clients, the program components they participated in, and additional delinquent activities as reported by the police department. Results indicate that less than 5 percent were involved in further delinquent activity. To date, only two youth have been terminated from the program for re-offending while in the Youth Diversion Program.

The Program Coordinator noted that the format of the Youth Diversion Program is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the youth referred, and enhance the overall success of the program. An example of this continuing evolution is to establish additional after-school activities now that a Town Recreation Director has been hired. Entering their third year, the Youth Diversion Program staff noted they have successfully demonstrated their ability to hold youth accountable for delinquent behavior, while simultaneously establishing trusting and respectful relationships. Risk factors addressed by the Program continue to include substance abuse, lack of structured activities, delinquent behavior, and poor anger management. The Program has also contributed to a more positive relationship between both Holliston youth and police officers. Several youth that have completed the program have voluntarily returned to seek counseling from the Youth and Family Services staff.

## **PROGRAM DATA**

A total of 38 youth were referred to the Program in 1998, with a significant increase in participation (161%) over the course of the year from 13 youth in the first quarter to 34 youth in quarter four. The number of youth participants has declined in 1999, to 19 youth in the second quarter.

### ***Risk Factors***

In the third quarter of program year 1997, 100% of all participating youth (10) exhibited substance abuse risk factors. However, this number dramatically decreased to one youth by quarter four, a 90% decline. Police involvement remained a serious issue for all youth in both quarters three and four (Table 52). The overwhelming majority of youth participants in the first three quarters of program year 1998 were police involved (82% to 100%); however, by quarter four, no youth exhibited this risk factor. Interestingly, in program year 1998, the percentage of youth that were at-risk for substance abuse significantly decreased from 69% in quarter one to 12% in quarter four

(Table 53). Program administrators may want to improve upon their existing methods for targeting youth to ensure they are reaching youth with substance abuse issues.

**Table 52: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1													
Quarter 2													
Quarter 3	10	10	100%							10	100%		
Quarter 4	11	1	9%							10	91%		

**Table 53: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	13	9	69%			6	46%			13	100%		
Quarter 2	22	11	50%	1	5%	4	18%			18	82%		
Quarter 3	28	9	32%			5	18%	1	4%	23	82%		
Quarter 4	34	4	12%										

**Participant Demographics**

In program year 1997, participants of all age groups were nearly evenly represented in the Program (Table 54). In program year 1998, 12 - 14 year olds and the 15 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (14% to 45% and 23% to 64%, respectively) (Table 55). Similarly, across the first two quarters of program year 1999, the 14 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (79% to 100%) (Table 56).

**Table 54: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12					4	40%	4	37%
12 - 14					3	30%	3	27%
15 - 16					2	20%	3	27%
17					1	10%	1	9%
Total					10	100%	11	100%

**Table 55: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	4	31%	1	5%	1	4%	7	21%
12 - 14	4	31%	10	45%	4	14%	11	32%
15 - 16	5	38%	5	23%	18	64%	12	35%
17			6	27%	5	18%	4	12%
Total	13	100%	22	100%	28	100%	34	100%

**Table 56: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under								
11 – 13								
14 – 16	20	100%	15	79%				
17			4	21%				
Total	20	100%	19	100%				

\*Quarterly Reports due 7/00 and 10/00

As indicated by Tables 57, 58, and 59, since the program's inception all youth participants have been white.

**Table 57: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White					10	100%	11	100%
African American								
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total					10	100%	11	100%

**Table 58: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	13	100%	22	100%	28	100%	34	100%
African American								
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	13	100%	22	100%	28	100%	34	100%

**Table 59: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	20	100%	19	100%				
African American								
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	20	100%		100%				

\*Quarterly Reports due 7/00 and 10/00

In program year 1997, all but one youth was male (Table 60). While more males than females participated in both program years 1998 and 1999, the Program has experienced an increase in the percentage of female participants (42% to 50% females in 1999) (Tables 61 and 62).

**Table 60: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1*		Quarter 2*		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male					10	100%	10	91%
Female						%	1	9%
Total					10	100%	11	100%

\*Program Implementation Delayed

**Table 61: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	12	92%	21	95%	17	61%	15	44%
Female	1	8%	1	5%	11	39%	19	56%
Total	13	100%	22	100%	28	100%	34	100%

**Table 62: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	10	50%	11	58%				
Female	10	50%	8	42%				
Total	20	100%	19	100%				

\*Quarterly Reports due 7/00 and 10/00

# TOWN OF LYNNFIELD

## LYNNFIELD COMMUNITY YOUTH CENTER

In response to increasing juvenile delinquency rates and the lack of structured after-school activities, in September 1996, the town of Lynnfield opened the Lynnfield Community Youth Center for middle school youth. As many youth reside in working or single parent families, they are often unsupervised during after-school hours. The Lynnfield Community Youth Center provides educational and recreational activities to address the rise in alcohol, drug, and tobacco experimentation by Lynnfield middle school youth, loitering and vandalism in the town center, and the lack of adult leadership and youth development.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 to the town of Lynnfield to better serve middle school youth.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The town of Lynnfield is a homogeneous community located 17 miles north of Boston, with a population of approximately 11,327. The downtown area is quite small and consists primarily of a small grocery and variety store, three banks, two realtors, a deli, a small restaurant, a pharmacy, and the public library. There is no public pool, YMCA, cinema or arcade, and public parks are geared toward pre-school and elementary school children. A limited number of youth participate in organized sports, and the lack of MBTA service further minimizes extracurricular options. As a result, prior to the program, numerous middle school youth were hanging out in the downtown area. Local merchants and business people were bombarded with teens loitering on their steps, blocking consumer traffic, vandalizing buildings, and being uncooperative when asked to disperse.

In May 1997, the Lynnfield Public Schools' Health Advisory Committee distributed a Youth Risk Behavior Survey to students in grade 6 at the middle school, and grades 9 and 11 at the high school. The Survey was anonymous, and consisted of 30 questions that focused on behaviors around violence, drug and alcohol use, self-esteem, and peer interaction. Statistics culled from this report, as well as Lynnfield Police Department data, identified several risk factors facing Lynnfield youth.

In total, 142 middle school students completed and returned the surveys. Risk factors comprising violence, alcohol and drug use, and self-esteem issues were noted concerns. Fifty-five percent (55%) of 6<sup>th</sup> grade males and 18% of females report having been bullied by another student. Regarding alcohol use, 21% of males and 12% of females reported consuming alcohol. More alarming, 13% of males and 9% females noted they have consumed alcohol a few times.

Among the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade high school youth surveyed, 137 and 97 students completed the survey respectively. While many of the risk factors were similar to the middle school youth, high school students' responses indicated an escalation of risk behaviors. Results from 9<sup>th</sup> grade males indicated 25% brought a weapon to school, 36% have had physical threats made against them, and 42% have engaged in a physical fight with another student. Regarding drug and alcohol use, 36% of males consumed alcohol within the last month, and 27% have smoked marijuana in their lifetime. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of 9<sup>th</sup> grade females reported having had physical threats made against them. Similar to 9<sup>th</sup> grade males, 38% of the females reported consuming alcohol within the month prior to the survey, and 27% have smoked marijuana in their lifetime.

Similarly, both female and male 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported risky behavior, albeit at a higher rate. Regarding violent behavior, 45% of the males reported bringing a weapon to school, 53% have had physical threats made against them, and 51% have had a physical fight with another student. Eighty percent (80%) reported having consumed alcohol, and 35% acknowledge drinking several times a month. Concerning marijuana use, 49% of the males have smoked marijuana in their lifetime, and 16% stated they smoke it several times a month. Twenty-one percent (21%) of 11<sup>th</sup> grade female students indicated they have had physical threats made against them, and 16% were involved in a physical fight with another student. Regarding alcohol consumption, 71% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade females reported drinking alcohol within the month prior to the survey, and 31% drink alcohol several times per month. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the females have smoked marijuana in their lifetime, and 20% smoke several times a month.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### ***Prevention Policy Board***

In 1997, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) was comprised of 17 community members who represented the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, religious organizations, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, business, youth, and parents. The PPB met twice each quarter, excluding quarter two during which one meeting was held. On average, 7 participants attended each PPB meeting.

During 1998, the number of participants on the PPB remained fixed at 17 community members, and increased slightly during the 1999 program year to 18 participants. For both 1998 and 1999, community-sector representation remained identical to 1997, except for the addition of health services in 1998, and parent participation in 1999. In 1998, the PPB held one meeting during each of the first three quarters, and two PPB meetings in quarter four, with an average of 8 members in attendance. In 1999, the PPB met once each quarter, with an average of 7 members participating.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

The Lynnfield Youth Center, which is located at the Lynnfield Middle School, opened in September 1996, and offers youth programs and activities that encompass a comprehensive strategy for reducing delinquency. The founding and evolution of the Center has been a collaborative effort between the Lynnfield Police Department, the Lynnfield Department of Public Works, the Friends of Lynnfield Youth, a group of business and community leaders who offer support through fundraising efforts, and the Lynnfield Substance Abuse Task Force.

The Youth Center is housed at the middle school, which affords youth easy access to the Center and its programs. The Center operates from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday during the school year. Middle school youth age 10 – 14, in grades 5 through 8, are welcome to “drop-in.” A concession stand, operated by the youth, sells nutritious snacks, treats, and sodas, thereby eliminating the need to frequent area businesses. In 1998, two new computers, a printer, and a scanner were purchased at a substantial saving through the school department. A Nintendo 64 and Sony Play Station were also added. A monthly schedule of program activities is published so students and staff can plan ahead.

The Center has an open door policy and does not actively recruit youth. However, youth are required to register and follow the rules of the Center. The Director estimates that, on average, between 30 and 40 youth attend the Center daily.

### ***Staff Recruitment***

Some problems were initially encountered in the hiring of college students to work with Center youth. Ultimately, Center staff sent job postings to local area colleges such as Salem State College, Lesley College, North Shore Community College, and Endicott College. The original expectation to have three college students working daily was altered to two, in order to give the students a certain number of hours, and therefore make it monetarily worthwhile for the college students to work at the Center. In addition, two high school students are volunteering at the Youth Center as part of their academic Community Service requirements. The youth operate the concession stand, plan events, clean the center, and monitor their peers.

Program administrators noted that maintaining a consistent staff of college students further complements the success of the Center. Consistency enables staff to identify negative behavior or attitude changes in youth, and immediately intercede before the situation worsens. This fact was highlighted when staff identified a youth troubled by parental separation, and arranged for intervention with the guidance department.

The 1998 program year began with the hiring of a new Director for the Center. The Director was able to provide guidance and leadership, while cultivating relationships with the youth. Unfortunately, the Center Director left the position, and an active search commenced at the beginning of the 1999 program year to fill the position. Program Administrators noted that retaining a director for the Center has been difficult because it is a part-time position, requiring someone to be available to work from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. daily, without benefits. In the interim, a parent who also is a PPB member directed the Center until a permanent director was hired in October. The current Director has experience designing and implementing drug prevention and wellness programs.

### ***Recreational Activities***

At the Center, youth may participate in video games, utilize the computers, play pool, chess, and cribbage, and socialize with staff and friends. In addition, college students provide organized sports activities on a less competitive level than is offered in other after-school sports programs.

In program year 1997, youth had access to the middle school gym three days during the week, as well as activities that included movie days, pool, ping pong and basketball tournaments. This same program year, youth painted a wall mural at the Center, under the guidance of a local artist. In program year 1998, recreational activities included a pool tournament that attracted 22 participants. In addition, youth were able to enjoy free subs and pizza once a week thanks to local businesses that supply these items at a discounted rate to the Center.

During May and June of the 1998 program year, 45 youth played golf at the Lynnfield Public Golf course. Staff reported new friendships were formed and the players exhibited good sportsmanship.

### ***Educational Programs***

In addition to the tutoring, homework assistance, and mentoring provided by college students, in program year 1999, a professor in Computer Sciences and two graduate students from Salem State College taught a computer literacy class at the Center. The Computer Program met each Monday for 10 weeks from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. Ten youth signed up for the class, and each had their own computer mentor to assist them with learning how to design graphics and create a website for the middle school. This aspect of the program enabled at-risk youth to develop personal goals, in addition to becoming computer literate. The Computer Program and other youth involvement at the Center assist staff in addressing the following risk factors exhibited by attendees: poor self-esteem, academic failure, and poor peer relationships.

### ***Project Adventure***

The Youth Center contracted with Project Adventure, a national non-profit organization that uses adventure-based learning techniques to teach lessons in teambuilding, communication skills, leadership skills, group decision-making, developing trust, and positive risk-taking. These goals are accomplished through a series of icebreakers, cooperative games and problem-solving initiatives, including rope-climbing activities. Youth may participate in day or overnight adventures.

In program year 1997, the Project Adventure facilitator conducted a site visit to the Center to familiarize himself with the Youth Center program in order to design a Project Adventure training session for Center staff. In March 1998, 6 staff participated in a weekend training session with the Project Adventure program, in Wenham. The training focused on staff team building, problem-solving and establishing goals and objectives for the Center. The third day of Project Adventure training included 20 youth from the Center. It was noted that several at-risk youth, including one residing in a group home, began to take chances in peer leadership, participate in athletic activities, and discuss problems he/she was experiencing at home and in school.

## **PROGRAM DATA**

While program participation averaged nearly 600 youth in the first two years of the program, participation dramatically decreased in the 1999 program year to an average of 100 youth per quarter.

### ***Risk Factors***

As indicated by Tables 63 and 64, over the course of the first two program years, 3% or less of all youth participants exhibited risk factors for substance abuse, pregnancy, failing grades, and police involvement. No students exhibited gang involvement or risk for dropping out of school.

**Table 63: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	591												
Quarter 2	594	2	.3%			8	1%			7	1%		
Quarter 3	595	2	.3%			13	2%			3	.5%		
Quarter 4	595	1	.2%			10	2%			1	.2%		

**Table 64: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	590												
Quarter 2	594	1	.2%	9	2%					3	.5%		
Quarter 3	591			9	2%								
Quarter 4	592			15	3%					3	.5%		

**Participant Demographics**

Throughout the 1997 and 1998 program years, the 12 - 14 year old age group represented three-quarters of youth participants (Tables 65 and 66). In 1999, the largest percentage of youth participants were represented by the 11 - 13 year old age group (56% to 66%) (Table 67).

**Table 65: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	145	24%	145	24%	146	24%	146	24%
12 - 14	445	75%	448	75%	448	75%	448	75%
15 - 16	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
17								
Total	591	100%	594	100%	595	100%	595	100%

**Table 66: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	146	25%	147	25%	147	25%	147	25%
12 - 14	444	75%	447	75%	444	75%	445	75%
15 - 16								
17								
Total	590	100%	594	100%	591	100%	592	100%

**Table 67: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	35	36%	25	26%	30	29%		
11 - 13	55	56%	65	66%	62	61%		
14 - 16	8	8%	8	8%	10	10%		
17								
Total	98	100%	98	100%	102	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Across all program years, white youth represented 93% to 96% of program participants (Tables 68, 69, and 70).

**Table 68: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	568	96%	570	96%	571	96%	571	96%
African American	16	2.7%	16	2.7%	16	2.7%	16	2.7%
Hispanic	1	.3%	2	.3%	2	.3%	2	.3%
Asian	6	1%	6	1%	6	1%	6	1%
American Indian								
Other								
Total	591	100%	594	100%	595	100%		100%

**Table 69: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	565	96%	569	96%	559	95%	560	96%
African American	15	2.5%	15	2.5%	15	2.5%	15	2.5%
Hispanic	3	.5%	3	.5%	5	1%	5	1%
Asian	7	1%	7	1%	12	1.5%	12	1.5%
American Indian								
Other								
Total	590	100%	594	100%	591	100%	592	100%

**Table 70: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	91	93%	91	93%	95	93%		
African American	7	7%	7	7%	6	6%		
Hispanic					1	1%		
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	98	100%	98	100%	102	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

In program years 1997, female and male participation was nearly equal (Table 71), and in 1998, only slightly more females attended the Youth Center than males (52% females as compared to 48% males) (Table 72). However, as indicated by Table 73, in program year 1999 more males attended the Youth Center than females (57% to 61% males as compared to 39% to 43% females).

**Table 71: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	296	50%	297	50%	296	50%	296	50%
Female	295	50%	297	50%	299	50%	299	50%
Total	591	100%	594	100%	595	100%	595	100%

**Table 72: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	286	48%	288	48%	286	48%	287	48%
Female	304	52%	306	52%	305	52%	305	52%
Total	590	100%	597	100%	591	100%	592	100%

**Table 73: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	60	61%	56	57%	62	61%		
Female	38	39%	42	43%	40	39%		
Total	98	100%	98	100%	102	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

# TOWN OF NATICK

## DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

The town of Natick established the Delinquency Prevention Program to reduce delinquent behavior, improve decision-making skills, and enhance self-esteem in middle and high school youth. A variety of educational, recreational, and preventive program components were implemented to address at-risk factors exhibited by youth.

Since 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 in Title V funding to the town of Natick in support of their juvenile delinquency prevention efforts.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In 1993 and 1995, Natick High School conducted a Health Education Survey in conjunction with the Department of Education's Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS). Youth responses in both years highlighted the need to target youth at-risk for drug and alcohol abuse, criminal activity, violence, suicide, and low self-esteem. Responses to the 1995 Health Education Survey indicated a 7% and 10% increase in the number of youth reporting alcohol use and drug use respectively. There was a 21% increase in first time drug and alcohol use for youth in grades 5 through 8. Students responded they used poor judgment as a result of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the following situations: sexual activity (32%); community behavior (20%); home behavior (19%); school behavior (15%); and job behavior (10%).

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

To address the above risk factors exhibited by program participants, the Juvenile Delinquency Program operates the Outward Bound Program during the school year, the Outdoor Adventure Program during the summer months, community service opportunities, and individual and group counseling sessions. In response to an initial low participation rate, a concerted effort was made to publicize the Delinquency Prevention Program. Flyers describing program activities were distributed to school personnel, the Natick Police Department, the Natick and Framingham Probation Departments, all local religious organizations, human service providers, the Natick Public Library, and the Town Hall.

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

Membership on the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) fluctuated between 15 and 17 participants during the 1997 program year. Board members represented the following community sectors: law enforcement, education, religious organizations, health services, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, business, local government, and youth. The PPB met twice during quarter one, once during quarter two, and three times during the third and fourth quarters. On average, 10 board members attended each meeting.

In 1998, membership on the PPB remained consistent at 17 community participants, and increased slightly to 18 participants in 1999. In both 1998 and 1999, PPB members represented the same community sectors as the 1997 program year, excluding religious organizations. In 1998, the PPB met once during quarters one and two, and twice during quarters three and four. On average, 10 members attended each PPB meeting. In 1999, the PPB met twice in quarter one, and three times in quarters two and three, with an average of 11 members attending each meeting.

#### *Outdoor Adventure Program*

The Outdoor Adventure Program, a summer program for at-risk youth entering grades 6 through 9, takes place at the Pine Ridge Adventure Center in Williston, Vermont. The Program staff accompany youth on a week-long outing, and the Pine Ridge Adventure Center provides sleeping bags, tents, food, and instructional staff for the various program activities. Programmatic activities include the ropes course, rock climbing, canoeing, camping, white water rafting, and team building exercises. The goal of the program is to improve decision-making skills, self-esteem, social skills, and help youth acquire an appreciation of the natural environment. The program runs from Sunday to Friday, however youth may participate longer than one week if space is available.

During the first program year, only one of the four planned Outdoor Adventure Programs was held due to low registration. This was attributed to the lack of publicity regarding the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Program in general, and the Outdoor Adventure component specifically. Nine (9) youth did attend the Outdoor Adventure Program in August 1997, and staff reported an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence level.

The Outdoor Adventure Program was again held for three weeks during the summer of program year 1998, with 29 youth participating. Included in this total were 4 special needs students who improved in social skills, self-esteem, and team participation. Youth who displayed "an attitude," were not team-oriented, were defiant, and displayed indications of low self-esteem also participated in team problem solving and other program activities. Two girls, who were "loners" at the beginning of the week, began socializing with the entire group and displayed a more outgoing demeanor and improved self-esteem following their involvement in the program. Unfortunately, one of the boys returned home with little improvement in his attitude. However, parents of four youth contacted the Program Director commenting the Outdoor Adventure Program had a positive and lasting impact on their son/daughter.

In program year 1999, the Outdoor Adventure Program was held for four weeks during the summer. The youth attending presented with a number of personal issues such as divorcing parents, academic problems, low self-esteem, poor peer relationships, and coping with alcoholism in the family. Again, many parents commented on the positive impact the Adventure Program had on their child. In January 2000, a one-day Outdoor Adventure Program was held for 13 high school students in the Omega Program. These students are most at-risk due to court involvement and/or substance abuse, than youth that participated in the summer program.

### ***Outward Bound Program***

The Outward Bound Program, available to high school youth, is offered twice during the school year. The Outward Bound Program entails a daylong hiking excursion on nature trails to Thompson's Island. Teachers from the Alternative School, the School Adjustment Counselor, the Guidance Counselor, and the Juvenile Police Officer provide supervision and assist with activities. The Outward Bound Program for high school students was held during the fall of program year 1998, with 43 youth (primarily freshman and sophomore) participating. Many students noted in their evaluations that they did not know they had the ability to succeed at their accomplishments, nor be accepted by their peers. Also, an Outward Bound day trip was held in the spring for 12 alternative education students.

### ***Students in Action***

The "Students in Action" program began in September 1999, and emphasizes community service, youth development, and leadership training for high school youth. The program meets twice a month at the police station. A total of seven students are regular participants in this program component. High school students plan and implement community service projects and receive leadership training. Community Service projects include working at the Community Farm, the Natick Recreation Department, and assisting the Special Needs teacher with students. "Students in Action" were also instrumental in raising \$26,000 that went toward the purchase of a handicapped equipped van and the construction of a house ramp for a Natick youth paralyzed in an accident. Youth have also implemented a mentoring program pairing high school students with younger youth who share similar interests. Also in keeping with their community service aspirations, the "Students in Action" is establishing a partnership with Big Brother/Big Sister to mentor younger children. A meeting has been scheduled in the fall 2000 to finalize the details.

The leadership training program component entails government, school, and business officials meeting with high school students to promote personal and business development. In May 2000, the Polaroid Corporation conducted a leadership training for the "Students in Action" participants.

Most noteworthy, on June 19, 2000, the "Students in Action" group attended a Board of Selectmen meeting to present by-laws that would establish a town-wide Youth Advisory Board. Six youth from "Students in Action" made presentations before the Board of Selectmen, who subsequently approved their request for a Youth Advisory Board. Seven (7) youth will be official members of the Youth Advisory Board, reporting directly to the Board of Selectmen. The Youth Advisory Board is required to keep regular meeting minutes, thus maintaining compliance with public meeting laws and public record laws. An Advisory Committee, which is a subcommittee of the Youth Advisory Board, will also be established. Both students (who are at least in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade) and adults, may participate on the Advisory Committee.

**Youth and Family Support Services**

The Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, Inc. (Wayside) provides mental health services to youth and their families. Youth are self-referred or referred by family members, teachers, or police officers to the Program Director, who, in turn, contacts Wayside. Wayside conducts an initial assessment to determine the youths' needs, and offers individual, group, or family counseling sessions, in addition to crisis intervention. Counseling sessions are held at the Wayside Youth and Family Support Network, the Family Works Program, the Natick Library, or Natick Town Hall. Since 1997, there was an increase in the number of families and youth who have received counseling services.

In May 1998, a parent education conference entitled “Natick’s First Celebration of Parenting” was held. A keynote speaker discussed financial goal setting, and participants had 8 topical sessions to choose from. Participant feedback was very favorable. In program year 1998, the Parent Education component faced difficulty in getting parents to commit to a one-night workshop. To increase parents' attendance, the Delinquency Prevention Program, in collaboration with local agencies, hosted three parent education conferences that addressed topics ranging from money management to substance abuse. Youth enrichment programs were offered simultaneously with the parent conferences, and included activities with Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD), and the library staff. In total, 69 parents and 52 youth attended these sessions.

**PROGRAM DATA**

**Risk Factors**

In program year 1997, the Delinquency Prevention Program served youth who were at-risk as a result of the following factors: substance abuse, pregnancy, failing grades, school dropout, and police involvement. Youth at-risk for substance abuse increased from 47% in the second quarter, to 77% in quarter four. Also, youth with failing grades peaked in the second and third quarters (53% and 43%, respectively) before declining in the fourth quarter to 38%. There was a decline in youth at-risk for dropping out of school, from 27% in quarter two to 8% in quarter four (Table 74).

The percentage of youth at-risk for substance abuse increased steadily (from 4% to 38%) between quarter two and quarter four of program year 1998. Also in 1998, youth exhibiting failing grades declined from 39% in quarter one to 14% in quarter four (Table 75).

**Table 74: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	9					1	11%						
Quarter 2	15	7	47%	1	7%	8	53%	4	27%	2	13%		
Quarter 3	14	6	43%	1	7%	6	43%	2	14%	2	14%		
Quarter 4	13	10	77%	1	8%	5	38%	1	8%	1	8%		

**Table 75: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	31					12	39%			1	3%		
Quarter 2	48	2	4%			5	10%			1	2%		
Quarter 3	23	6	26%			8	35%			1	4%		
Quarter 4	21	8	38%	1	5%	3	14%						

**Participant demographics**

In 1997 and 1998, youth 14 and under represented the majority of program participants (Tables 76 and 77). In 1999, there was a decline in the percentage of youth falling into the 11-13 year old age group (from 57% in quarter one to 12% in quarter three). Compared to the previous two years, there was a significant increase in the percentage of 17-year old participants in 1999 (Table 78).

**Table 76: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	7	78%	5	33%	5	36%	6	47%
12 – 14	2	22%	6	40%	9	64%	5	38%
15 – 16			3	20%			2	15%
17			1	7%				
Total	9	100%	15	100%	14	100%	13	100%

**Table 77: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	16	52%	5	10%	7	31%	10	48%
12 – 14	15	48%	31	65%	3	13%	7	33%
15 – 16			10	21%	9	39%	4	19%
17			2	4%	4	17%		
Total		100%	48	100%	23	100%	21	100%

**Table 78: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	10	19%	5	9%	7	17%		
11 – 13	30	57%	3	5%	5	12%		
14 – 16	7	13%	20	34%	13	32%		
17	6	11%	30	52%	16	39%		
Total	53	100%	58	100%	41	100%	*	100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Throughout all three program years, white youth represented the overwhelming majority of youth participants (Tables 79, 80 and 81).

**Table 79: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	30	97%	40	84%	14	61%	20	95%
African American			1	2%	3	13%		
Hispanic			3	6%	1	4%		
Asian			4	8%	5	22%	1	5%
American Indian								
Other	1	3%						
Total	31	100%	48	100%	23	100%		100%

**Table 80: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	8	89%	15	100%	10	71%	11	85%
African American								
Hispanic	1	11%						
Asian					4	29%	1	7%
American Indian								
Other							1	7%
Total	9	100%	15	100%	14	100%	13	100%

**Table 81: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	50	94%	48	83%	32	78%		
African American	1	2%	5	9%	2	5%		
Hispanic	1	2%	2	3%	2	5%		
Asian	1	2%	3	5%	5	12%		
American Indian								
Other								
Total	53	100%	58	100%	41	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Overall, in program years 1997 and 1998, more males participated in the Delinquency Prevention Program than females (Tables 82 and 83). However, this changed in program year 1999, with more females participating in the program than males (56% to 59% females as compared to 41% to 44% males) (Table 84).

**Table 82: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	3	33%	8	53%	11	79%	10	77%
Female	6	67%	7	47%	3	21%	3	23%
Total	9	100%	15	100%	14	100%	13	100%

**Table 83: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	20	65%	26	54%	15	65%	18	86%
Female	11	35%	22	46%	8	35%	3	14%
Total	31	100%	48	100%	23	100%	21	100%

**Table 84: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	25	41%	25	43%	18	44%		
Female	28	59%	33	57%	23	56%		
Total	53	100%	58	100%	41	100%		100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00



# TOWN OF NORTH ANDOVER

## PROJECT NOW

The town of North Andover's Project Now encompasses juvenile diversion, suicide prevention, drug and alcohol education and prevention, and structured after-school activities. These areas have been targeted in response to an increase in local juvenile crime and substance abuse, recent adolescent suicides, and the lack of structured recreational activities in the community.

Since 1998, Project Now has received a total of \$37,000 from the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division in support of these juvenile delinquency efforts.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In the spring 1997, two North Andover middle school youth committed suicide within a two-week period. The suicides compelled the North Andover community to identify and respond to at-risk behaviors exhibited by youth. Worried about a contagion effect, suicide prevention programs were implemented at the middle school, and counseling sessions and workshops were made available to help youth deal with the recent suicides. Ultimately, 24 students were targeted as at-risk for suicide; 7 youth were hospitalized and 17 others received counseling.

In November 1998, the North Andover School District administered the Health Risk Behavior Survey to middle and high school students. In total, 818 high school students responded and identified risk-related behaviors associated with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, violence, suicide ideation, and sexual behavior. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of North Andover high school students reported using alcohol and 46% reported using marijuana. Alcohol use escalated by grade, 49% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported drinking alcohol compared to 81% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, an increase of 39%. Twelve percent (12%) of students indicated they were in a physical fight during school hours within the previous twelve months. A greater percentage of male students (18%) reported being in a physical fight during the school day than female students (5%). Five percent (5%) of North Andover high school students indicated they have carried a weapon<sup>2</sup> in school, compared to 16% outside of school, during the 30 days preceding the survey. Twenty-one percent (21%) of students reported seriously considering suicide during the previous 12 months, compared to 14% who made a plan to commit suicide, and 7% who actually attempted suicide. North Andover female students were more likely than their male counterparts to have considered suicide (26% females, 17% males), planned how to commit suicide (18% females, 11% males), and attempted suicide (10% females, 4% males).

In total, 969 middle school students, comprising grades 6 through 8, responded to the Health Risk Behavior Survey. Regarding violence-related behavior, 3% report carrying a weapon in school, compared to 21% carrying a weapon outside of school during the 30 days prior to the survey. Twelve percent (12%) report physically fighting in school, and 30% report fighting outside of school. As Table 85 below indicates, substance use among middle school youth increased respectively with grade level. Tobacco use increased by 76% between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, alcohol use by 57%, marijuana use by 100%, inhalant use by 62% and other illegal drugs by 94%.

**Table 85: Substance Use Among Middle School Students**

	<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>
Tobacco	9.9%	26.0%	40.9%
Alcohol	17.8%	27.7%	41.7%
Marijuana	0.0%	4.7%	14.6%
Inhalants	7.2%	14.7%	18.9%
Other Illegal Drug*	0.3%	10.0%	5.0%

\*Includes LSD, PCP, ecstasy, mushrooms, speed, ice, or heroin

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked about a weapon such as a knife, gun, or club.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### ***Prevention Policy Board***

In 1998, the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) fluctuated between 18 and 21 members, representing the following community sectors: the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, religious organizations, civic/volunteer organizations, and local government. On average, two PPB meetings were held each quarter, and were attended by an average of 13 members.

In 1999, membership on the PPB decreased to 15 participants with representatives from: law enforcement, education, youth organizations, religious organizations, health organizations, civic/volunteer organizations, local government, and parent members. One PPB meeting was held each quarter, excluding the second quarter, which held two meetings. On average, 10 members attended each meeting.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

Project Now is a multi-component program addressing adolescent risk factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and suicidal behavior. North Andover Youth Services (NAYS) is the lead agency overseeing Project Now, in collaboration with the North Andover Police Department, the North Andover Public Schools, the North Andover Citizens Against Risky Behaviors (NACARB), and the North Andover Community Assistance and Response Team (NACARE). Students from Merrimack College get course credit by volunteering with the program; two of which provide mentoring to the youth. The program components offered by NAYS include recreational activities, social services, support groups, and a court diversion program.

### ***Youth and Family Support Services***

Support groups are available to middle and high school youth, including the Anger Management group for boys age 10 – 18. Youth meet for an hour weekly, in the course of 12 weeks, to discuss issues around moral reasoning, decision-making and problem solving, anger management, and drug and alcohol use. A Girls Group has been organized for middle and high school girls to discuss concerns around anger, feelings, body image, and media influences. During the second quarter of the 1999 program year, 14 youth participated in a new group called “Informed Choices.” The group began in January 2000, and comprises 12-hours of class instruction on drug and alcohol abuse and decision-making skills. All participants found the program to be very effective and gave it a positive evaluation.

North Andover is a homogeneous community that is predominantly white, with few African American and Hispanic families. The Inclusion Group, targeting middle school minority youth who may be feeling disconnected from the school and community, meets for 10 weeks to discuss feelings of isolation, while helping to build self-esteem and confidence.

Crossroads, a communication conference for parents and seventh grade students was held in March 1999, at Merrimack College. The Conference goals were to promote trust, self-esteem, communication, healthy lifestyles, and improve communication between parents and youth. Workshop topics included conflict resolution, building self-esteem, gender issues, father/son relationships, bullying, substance abuse, and youth violence.

Home-based Counseling and Outreach was implemented in 1999, to provide counseling services for youth and their families who require intervention but do not have the financial resources for therapy. The primary goal is to offer short-term crisis intervention, and in limited cases, long-term counseling – the ideal being a maximum of 6 months. School personnel and the Project Director identify youth and their families who require intervention – with many of the issues pertaining to abuse, establishing boundaries, setting limits, and lack of communication between parent and child. The Counselor meets with the clients once a week, in the home. During the second quarter and third quarter of the 1999 program year, 45 families received counseling services.

### ***Peer Leadership***

Cognizant of the recent suicides in the North Andover community, suicide awareness and prevention training was provided to middle school staff, and middle school youth received training as peer leaders. The Peer Leadership program at the middle school was very successful in that 47 out of the original 53 students completed the monthly conflict resolution training in program year 1997. In June of the same program year, a Youth Appreciation Day was held for 250 students to recognize and honor their leadership and community service.

**Youth Council**

The Youth Council is a program for high school students who must apply, be accepted, and commit to the group for the school year (September – May). All members participate in community service, and must attend an alcohol awareness program, as the Council’s primary aim is to offer peer outreach. In program year 1998, Project Now sponsored an overnight Youth Council Conference focusing on suicide prevention, as well as peer leadership and decision-making skills. In total, 44 high school youth attended the 20-hour conference.

**Court Diversion and Community Service**

The North Andover Youth Services coordinates the community service component of the Juvenile Diversion Program affiliated with the Lawrence District Court. The Juvenile Diversion Program is available to first-time non-violent offenders. The Diversion Program conducts an eligibility assessment and establishes the community service conditions the youth must comply with. Both the youth and his/her parent sign a contract, and NAYS coordinates the community service hours. Community service activities include raking leaves for the elderly, painting, or working at various town departments to acquire proficiencies such as computer skills. In program year 1998, 106 youth were referred to the Juvenile Diversion Program. This program component was highly successful, as all but one youth successfully completed the community service requirements. During the 1999 program year, the Juvenile Diversion Program, operating three days a week, provided services for a total of 93 youth.

**School Suspension Program**

The School Suspension Program was implemented to address school discipline problems, and serviced 34 students. The school principal recommended students for the program that entailed 3 hours of academic work and 2½ hours of community service. Students also attended the Scared Straight program at the Middleton Jail. At the jail, students received a tour of the facility and had the opportunity to meet with two inmates. One inmate, formerly from North Andover, killed someone in a drunk driving incident while attending Brown University. North Andover Public Schools was supposed to continue the School Suspension Program in program year 1999, but was unable to due to financial constraints. The program has been suspended because Project Now does not have available funding.

**Recreational Activities**

To increase recreational activities for youth, an open gym is made available to middle and high school youth one night during the week and on weekends, and supervised by the Police Athletic League. Basketball is offered during the winter season, and volleyball during the spring months. The open gym recreation program was very successful in program year 1997, as the number of youth participating increased from an average of 35 to 85, by the end of the school year. The program continued in the 1999 program year. In May 1999, NAYS co-sponsored a family fun night with NACARB, attended by 42 youth and parents. The family fun night was again offered in September 1999, and was attended by 58 youth and parents. In July and August 1999, the very successful basketball program was also offered five days a week, culminating in a divisional championship.

**PROGRAM DATA**

**Risk Factors**

In program year 1998, components offered by Project Now addressed risk factors including: substance abuse, pregnancy, failing grades, school dropout, police involvement, and gang involvement. The percentage of youth at-risk for substance abuse increased across all four quarters (6% in quarter one to 13% in quarter four). Similarly, youth who were police involved increased from the first quarter (9% in quarter one to 17% in quarter four), peaking in quarter three at 21% (Table 86). In program year 1999, risk factors addressed by Project Now included criminal activity, family conflict, substance abuse, academic failure, and unstructured time.

**Table 86: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	235	14	6%			34	14%	7	3%	21	9%	1	.5%
Quarter 2	252	22	9%	2	1%	44	17%	12	5%	45	18%	2	1%
Quarter 3	295	34	12%	2	1%	69	23%	6	2%	61	21%		
Quarter 4	340	43	13%	2	1%	65	19%	6	2%	58	17%	1	.3%

**Participant demographics**

In 1998, throughout all four quarters, the 12 - 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (45% to 48%) (Table 87). Similarly, in the first three quarters of 1999, the 11 - 13 year old age group characterized the majority of participants in Project Now (Table 88).

**Table 87: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12								
12 – 14	105	45%	117	46%	139	47%	162	48%
15 – 16	60	25%	67	27%	85	29%	95	28%
17	70	30%	68	27%	71	24%	83	24%
Total	235	100%	252	100%	295	100%	340	100%

**Table 88: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under								
11 – 13	183	49%	226	52%	371	56%		
14 – 16	140	37%	150	35%	245	37%		
17	51	14%	56	13%	50	7%		
Total	374	100%	432	100%	666	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

In 1998, the overwhelming majority of youth participants were white (83% to 87%) (Table 89). This trend continued in 1999, with white youth representing the majority of program participants in the three program quarters (86% to 87%) (Table 90).

**Table 89: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	205	87%	215	85%	246	83%	289	85%
African American	7	3%	8	3%	8	3%	9	3%
Hispanic	15	6%	18	7%	26	8%	26	7%
Asian	6	3%	7	3%	11	4%	12	3%
American Indian	1	.5%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
Other	1	.5%	3	1%	3	1%	3	1%
Total	235	100%	252	100%	295	100%	340	100%

**Table 90: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	326	87%	375	87%	574	86%		
African American	19	5%	24	6%	29	5%		
Hispanic	29	8%	33	7%	63	9%		
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	374	100%	432	100%	666	100%	*	100%

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

In 1998, more males participated in the program than females (59% to 62% males as compared to 38% to 41% females) (Table 91). However, in 1999, the percentage of female participants increased to represent 50% to 55% of youth enrolled in the program (Table 92).

**Table 91: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	142	60%	149	59%	183	62%	209	61%
Female	93	40%	103	41%	112	38%	131	39%
Total	235	100%	252	100%	295	100%	340	100%

**Table 92: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	170	45%	218	50%	326	49%		
Female	204	55%	214	50%	340	51%		
Total	374	100%	432	100%	666	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00



# TOWN OF SOUTHBRIDGE

## SOUTHBRIDGE YOUTH CENTER

The town of Southbridge opened the Southbridge Youth Center in an effort to prevent juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, drug dealing, and gang activity. At the Center, youth are provided the opportunity for regular interaction with positive role models and mentors, in addition to educational activities aimed to address risk factors such as failing grades, drug and alcohol use, and neighborhood disorganization.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 to the Southbridge Youth Center.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Southbridge is primarily a working-class community with a population of 17,110 residents. Located in south central Massachusetts near the Connecticut border, it is at the crossroads of drug routes between New York, Connecticut, and major cities in Massachusetts. Consequently, drug abuse and related criminal activities are a principal concern, especially among youth who are alienated, rebellious, and lack social bonds.

The low socioeconomic status of many residents is a contributing factor to the many risk factors exhibited by youth. Twenty-six percent (26%) of families live below the poverty level, and female-headed families with children under the age of eighteen comprise 26%, compared to the state average of 20%. Forty-eight percent (48%) of these female-headed families were classified as falling below the poverty level, compared with the state average of 39%. In total, 43% of students receive school-subsidized lunches. This, combined with parents who are drug or alcohol dependent and/or absent from the home, puts youth at-risk for academic failure, child abuse, teen pregnancy, truancy and school dropout, substance abuse, and criminality. Lacking positive role models and not perceiving education to be important, 7% of youth drop out of school. Having the 5<sup>th</sup> highest teen pregnancy rate in the state, Southbridge is confronted with youth who remain in marginal economic living situations.

Juvenile crime in Southbridge typically involves offenses that are assaultive in nature and drug or alcohol related. Between 1996 and 1998, juvenile delinquents constituted an average of 17% of the arrests. In 1998, 284 youth under the age of 17 were victims of crimes. These statistics are attributed to the insurgence of gang recruitment and organizing, specifically, the Worcester-based gangs "The Untouchable Vice Lords," the "Netias," and the "Latin Kings," within the Southbridge schools and community.

School administrators reported absenteeism and truancy continued to be a serious problem. Table 93 indicates the degree to which school suspensions are cause for serious concern particularly when violence is involved.

**Table 93: School Suspensions**

	Violence-Related Suspensions			General Suspensions		
	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
Elementary	19	25	48	30	25	67
Middle School	63	90	33	215	394	257
High School	37	21	26	317	208	434
Total	119	136	107	562	627	758

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

In 1997, membership on the Prevention Policy Board (PPB) averaged 21 participants, and represented the following community sectors: the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, media, business, local government, cultural/ethnic groups, and youth and parent members. Three PPB meetings were held during the second, third and fourth quarters and averaged 12 members in attendance.

PPB membership fluctuated between 18 and 21 members during the 1998 program year, and decreased to 16 participants in 1999. In both 1998 and 1999, representation of the community sectors remained consistent with 1997. The PPB held three meetings during the first three quarters of 1998, which was attended by an average of 12 members. There is no documentation for the PPB's fourth quarter activities. In 1999, one meeting was held each quarter, with an average attendance of 12 members.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

The Southbridge Youth Center opened in February 1997 on a very limited basis, as they were completely dependent on town funds. Upon receiving the Title V grant in July 1997, the Center was able to hire a full time director, appoint high school mentors, extend the hours of operation, and expand programmatic activities. During July and August of 1997, daily attendance at the Center averaged between 25 – 35 youth. Once school began in September, a membership drive was undertaken, to increase the number of Center participants. During the December school vacation, handicapped accessibility renovations began on the Center. While the building reopened after two weeks, continuing construction limited access to the entire building and programmatic activities, resulting in a decline in attendance. It is important to note that Title V funds were not used to support the construction. By the third quarter of the first year of the program, the number of participants increased to over 400 youth attending the Youth Center.

The Youth Center has a kitchen, a large recreation hall, 13 individual rooms utilized for classrooms and office space, and land for recreational activities. It is physically located in close proximity to the downtown area, characterized by densely populated multi-family housing. The location is within walking distance for many youth, thereby affording easy accessibility. The Youth Center offers an environment that is safe, drug free, and violence free, in which youth can complete their homework, socialize with their peers, and be mentored. The Center also provides an alternative for youth that are not athletically inclined, or interested in the arts.

The Center now operates Monday through Thursday, 3 p.m. – 6 p.m., and targets youth in grades 4 to 12. On Friday evenings, the Youth Center hours have been extended until 9 p.m., thereby providing structured activities during hours youth are at-risk for engaging in criminal activities.

### ***Staffing***

The Youth Center is staffed by a director and high school mentors. All high school mentors have completed 12 hours of peer leadership training through the Massachusetts Prevention Center, in the areas of mediation, substance abuse, violence prevention, and how to plan and present seminars to other youth. In addition to providing homework assistance and tutoring services, the mentors present a biweekly educational component to Center youth on alcohol and drug use, and building self-confidence and self-esteem. Six Peer Mentors from economically disadvantaged families were employed at the Youth Center in program year 1998.

### ***Youth and Family Support Services***

The South County Teen Network, whose primary focus is teen pregnancy prevention, facilitates youth and parent seminars on issues pertaining to high risk behavior, such as teen sexual activity, substance abuse, violence, peer influences, and gangs. In program year 1997, the South County Teen Network presented programs to youth on the following topics: "This is Me, This is My Future," "Who's to Blame? – Responsibility," "Hygiene: What's Good – What's Bad?" "Risk-taking and the Consequences," and "Dating – What to Look For." Southbridge and Webster Against Tobacco (SWAT) and the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program have also presented tobacco-related discussions and activities including "Reasons Not to Smoke – Health Issues," and sewing a tobacco prevention quilt. In program year 1998, the South County Teen Network and the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program held over 50 youth and parent educational seminars on teen pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, and peer influences. Over the first three quarters of 1999, nine seminars for both youth and parents were held on the topics of teen pregnancy, tobacco, and substance use prevention.

In a collaborative effort to increase youth and community knowledge of gang prevention strategies, in program year 1997, the Southbridge Police Department and Southbridge School Department organized a monthly educational program at the Center. Police officers and teachers led discussions with Youth Center members discussing what gangs are, why they exist, and how to avoid their influence. In addition, the Center Director, Chief of Police, and youth mentors organized job skill seminars for both youth and adults at the Center. Presentations included individuals from a variety of occupations such as a chef, fireman, mechanic, daycare worker, and teacher.

On Monday evenings, a family activity is held at the Center from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. in conjunction with “Southbridge Community Connections,” a local organization that works primarily with disadvantaged families. The family activity is offered to all Southbridge families, presenting an opportunity for parents and youth to socialize and have fun. Activities include holiday arts and crafts, movies and pizza, pool, videos, and focus group sessions about at-risk behaviors.

### ***Community Service***

In program year 1997, the Center Director, along with the Southbridge Police's School Liaison Officer, youth, and parents conducted fall and spring clean-ups that included raking, window cleaning, trash pick-up, and painting.

The Youth Center has also established a collaborative relationship with the juvenile probation department at the Dudley District Court to provide community service opportunities for court-ordered youth. The Court Liaison Police Officer and the Probation Officer determine if a youth is eligible for community service at the Youth Center. Selected court-ordered youth are able to fulfill their obligations by participating in community projects and the Center's educational activities. These youth benefit from positive adult supervision, the opportunity to meet new peers, and accomplish specific goals in a constructive environment. The Court Liaison Police Officer determines if a youth has successfully completed his or her community service requirements. During program year 1998, 25 youth successfully fulfilled their court-ordered community service requirements at the Youth Center. In the first three quarters of the 1999 program year, 14 youth participated in Youth Center projects to fulfill their court-ordered community service obligations.

### ***Peer Mentors***

One room at the Youth Center is reserved for daily homework assistance and tutoring. Students who receive tutoring services have been identified by elementary and middle school guidance counselors, and the Center Director also reviews students' quarterly report cards. During the 1998 program year, homework assistance and tutoring was offered Monday through Friday by the Peer Mentors, and remained successful with approximately 75 students utilizing these services monthly. In August 1998, the Peer Mentors participated in 20 hours of training with the Massachusetts Prevention Center. In 1999, the Southbridge Youth Center expanded its tutoring program to include youth in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades.

### ***Computer Program***

Available only during the first year of the program, the Youth Center operated a computer lab, complete with four stations, a network printer, and a scanner utilized to enhance students' academic potential, job skills, and self-esteem. Basic computer classes were offered, including word processing and letter writing, and were supervised by the Director and high school mentors. Educational and recreational software was also available for projects, research, and fun.

The Program suffered an unfortunate accident during the second quarter when the computer room ceiling caved-in, destroying the computers and temporarily halting the computer program. The damages to the computers were not covered by insurance, and as of May 2000, the program did not have the funding to replace the equipment. Fortunately no youth or staff were injured.

### ***Other Activities***

In December 1999, youth from the Southbridge Youth Center participated in "Snow Week" activities that included bowling and a Millennium Party. In celebration of National Women's History Month in March, an event was held at the Youth Center for approximately 30 girls. Women employed in various professions in the community also attended. Many of the young participants prepared a research project on a famous woman to present to all attendees. The girls also had the opportunity to talk about who they are personally, what they like about themselves, and their future goals.

### ***Program Evaluation***

Most noteworthy, the 1998 program year goal to reduce the number of juvenile arrests in Southbridge by 3% (through offering alternative educational and recreational activities at the Youth Center) was far exceeded by achieving a decrease of 10%.

## PROGRAM DATA

In 1997, attendance at the Youth Center increased by 56% between the first and third quarter, but decreased 45% in quarter four. This decline continued through 1998, but sharply increased to the programs' original levels in 1999.

### *Participant demographics*

Across all four quarters of program year 1997, the 12 - 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (43% to 67%) (Table 94). This trend continued in the first and second quarters of 1998 (Table 95). During the first three quarters of 1999, the 11 - 13 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (43% to 60% (Table 96).

**Table 94: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	100	33%	87	25%	107	23%	98	38%
12 - 14	203	67%	230	66%	285	60%	112	43%
15 - 16			33	9%	81	17%	40	15%
17							11	4%
Total	303	100%	350	100%	473	100%	261	100%

**Table 95: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	34	21%	82	35%	64	40%		
12 - 14	77	48%	87	37%	61	38%		
15 - 16	41	26%	49	20%	33	21%		
17	8	5%	19	8%	2	1%		
Total	160	100%	237	100%	160	100%		

\*Demographic Data Not Provided

**Table 96: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	55	23%	121	33%	94	26%		
11 - 13	102	43%	175	47%	213	60%		
14 - 16	72	31%	66	18%	43	12%		
17	7	3%	7	2%	8	2%		
Total	236	100%	369	100%	358	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Throughout all three program years, Hispanic youth consistently represented the majority of program participants (Tables 97, 98 and 99).

**Table 97: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	109	36%	127	36%	181	38%	126	48%
African American								
Hispanic	194	64%	223	64%	285	60%	135	52%
Asian					7	2%		
American Indian								
Other								
Total	303	100%	350	100%	473	100%	261	100%

**Table 98: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	72	45%	76	32%	35	22%		
African American		%		%		%		
Hispanic	88	55%	161	68%	122	76%		
Asian		%		%	3	2%		
American Indian		%		%		%		
Other								
Total	160	100%	237	100%	160	100%		

\*Demographic Data Not Provided

**Table 99: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	58	25%	124	34%	143	40%		
African American								
Hispanic	175	74%	238	64%	212	59%		
Asian	3	1%	7	2%	3	1%		
American Indian								
Other								
Total	236	100%	369	100%	358	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

In all program years (1997 - 1999), more male youth (56% to 76%) attended the Youth Center and the various program components than female youth (Tables 100, 101 and 102).

**Table 100: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	230	76%	240	69%	295	62%	150	57%
Female	73	24%	110	31%	178	38%	111	43%
Total	303	100%	350	100%	473	100%	261	100%

**Table 101: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	115	72%	166	70%	105	66%		%
Female	45	28%	71	30%	55	34%		%
Total	160	100%	237	100%	160	100%		

\*Demographic Data Not Provided

**Table 102: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	144	61%	221	60%	201	56%		
Female	92	39%	148	40%	157	44%		
Total	236	100%	369	100%	358	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00



# TOWN OF STONEHAM

## DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

The town of Stoneham initiated the Delinquency Prevention Program in a concerted effort to provide needed services for middle and high school youth at-risk for delinquency, drug use, and antisocial behavior. To reduce these risk factors, the Program continuously aims to increase the number of participating youth, while reducing student absenteeism rates and improving the grade point average of targeted youth.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded the town of Stoneham a total of \$55,000 to implement the Delinquency Prevention Program.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The town of Stoneham is located 8 miles north of Boston with a population of approximately 22,000 residents. The community is predominantly middle to upper class with both parents usually employed. This leaves a void of adequate supervision between after-school hours and when a parent returns home from work.

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

In program years 1997, 1998, and 1999 there were 18 members of the Prevention Policy Board (PPB), representing the following community sectors: law enforcement, education, youth organizations, civic/volunteer organizations, and youth members. The PPB held three meetings each quarter, for all three years, however the average number of participants is not documented.

#### *Program Implementation and Administration*

Although Stoneham does not have a high rate of juvenile crime, the youth of the community experienced many of the same problems as those in other communities – too much unstructured time and a lack of after-school activities. To prevent these issues from resulting in poor decision-making and delinquent activities, the Stoneham Police Department, in collaboration with Stoneham Public Schools and the Stoneham Boys and Girls Club, developed the Delinquency Prevention Program. The program has three objectives:

1. To offer opportunities for targeted youth to become active participants in programs designed to foster positive social interaction and improved self-esteem.
2. To establish positive relationships between youth and the adult community.
3. To offer educational programs that improve students' academic performance, and aid them in successfully transitioning to the next grade level.

#### *Staffing*

Members of the Stoneham Police Department supervise all Title V sponsored programs, and assist with the recreational activities that are supervised by the Boys and Girls Club staff. To better assist both the middle school and high school students, Stoneham Police Officers are assigned to both sites. Officers regularly attend study hall, meet with students in the cafeteria during lunchtime, and assist in physical education classes at the high school. By establishing a rapport with students, the officer is in a better position to discuss safety issues, drug and alcohol abuse, and other pertinent topics.

#### *Boys and Girls Club*

The Stoneham Title V program operates out of the Boys and Girls Club, which offers after-school activities for middle school students age 11 – 13, in grades 6 through 8. A notice is sent to the parents of all middle school youth advising them of program opportunities that include Arts and Crafts, gymnastics, recreational activities, and a Computer Education Program. These recreational activities are important for youth not inclined to participate in

competitive sports. Recreation at the Club provides youth with a constructive alternative to “hanging around,” while developing positive peer and adult relationships.

In program year 1997, the Title V program at the Boys and Girls Club recorded an average daily attendance of 115 youth participating in a variety of programmatic activities. In total, 294 youth participated in activities sponsored by the Stoneham Police Department during the program year at the Boys and Girls Club. Participation increased slightly in program year 1998, with the Boys and Girls Club serving a total of 313 youth throughout the year. In program year 1999, participation increased to approximately 600 youth served by the Boys and Girls Club throughout the year.

### ***Computer Class***

A computer class meets twice weekly from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and is taught by a Stoneham Police Officer. Youth are taught introductory computer skills, as well as, individualized and small group instruction in various software programs. Because this is a very popular activity at the Club, there is often a waiting list. In program year 1998, the program documented 1,379 visits. The computer classes continued successfully in 1999, and as a result, five new computers were added to meet student demands.

### ***Education***

The Delinquency Prevention Program operates a tutoring and Homework Club at the Stoneham Middle School during after school hours. Teachers identify academically poor students who are at-risk for dropping out of school. These students are referred to the program for additional help. While each student’s participation is strictly voluntary, the parent is notified of the student’s referral. Parents are kept abreast of the student’s progress, and along with the student, complete a questionnaire at the end of the program, providing feedback on their experience with the program. Typically, 16 – 20 students receive help on a daily basis from two teachers. Once a student’s grades have improved to the satisfaction of the teacher, he/she terminates from the Homework Club. Students are encouraged to return to the Homework Club if they begin falling behind again and require academic help.

The Stoneham Middle School Homework Club assisted approximately 40 students during the 1997 program year and 47 youth in the 1998 program year. The 1998 program operated with an average class size of 16 – 20 students. The middle school continues to provide academic assistance to students attending the Homework Club in 1999.

### ***Student Police Academy***

The Stoneham Police Department is committed to developing a positive relationship with youth, and implemented the Student Police Academy to accomplish this goal. This is a 6-week program, offered to middle school students, that educates youth on many issues relevant to police work, as well as providing information about alcohol and drug abuse and violence. As part of the program, students tour the police station and the firing range. To impress upon youth the devastating effects of gun violence, police officers shoot a coconut and a gallon of water, simulating the human head and body respectively. To reinforce these messages, participants meet with a youth from Alliance House, a Department of Youth Services (DYS) pre-release center. The Alliance House youth shares his/her experiences, how and why he/she became involved with DHS, and their experience in a secure facility.

### ***Police Explorers***

The Police Explorers program is provided for high school youth, and encourages their participation in community events, such as “Town Day” and parades. Program participants visited the Billerica House of Correction and MCI-Framingham, where inmates spoke to youth about how their anti-social behavior resulted in incarceration. Twice a year, fishing trips to a local pond were arranged for middle and high school youth and their parents, along with members of the Stoneham Police Department. An average of 15 youth participated in the Police Explorers Program in program year 1997.

### ***Other Activities***

To promote parental awareness around students’ substance abuse, in program year 1999, the Stoneham Police Department displayed weapons, drugs, and drug paraphernalia that was found in their possession at “Back to School Night.” This provided an opportunity for the Stoneham Police to reach a large number of parents, and educate them about drug use among youth. Also, via donations from Stoneham’s Community Policing Unit, the middle school now has over 30 pairs of roller blades and protective pads for student use after school.

**Program Evaluation**

Results from a random survey of 20 Homework Club students in program year 1997 indicated that 70% bettered their grade point average by improving in at least two major subjects. Sixty-five percent (65%) of targeted students reduced the number of days they were absent from school by 10% compared to the previous year. Thirty percent (30%) of targeted students reduced their school tardiness rate by 20. Almost 50% of the targeted students are sixth graders, supporting educators' belief that students experience difficulty transitioning from elementary school to middle school. In program year 1998, 60% of the Homework Club students reduced the number of days absent from school by 10 percent, and approximately 50 percent of the students improved their grade point average during the academic year.

**PROGRAM DATA**

Participation in the Delinquency Prevention Program in program year 1997 showed a near equal distribution of participants with respect to age and gender (Tables 103 and 105). In terms of race, 97% of the participants are white.

The Title V program at the Boys and Girls Club no longer documents the demographic information of participants.

**Table 103: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

1997		
Age	Youth	%
↓12	221	35%
12 – 14	217	35%
15 – 16	190	30%
17		
Total	628	100%

**Table 104: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

1997		
Race	Youth	%
White	611	97%
African American	7	1%
Hispanic	5	1%
Asian	5	1%
American Indian		
Other		
Total	628	100%

**Table 105: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

1997		
Gender	Youth	%
Male	318	51%
Female	310	49%
Total	628	100%



# TOWN OF WARE

## PARTNERS IN PREVENTION PROJECT

The town of Ware initiated the Partners in Prevention Project, a delinquency prevention program comprising the Juvenile Community Service Program and the School Suspension Program. Both programs are a collaborative effort to ensure youth complete court mandated community service or a school suspension sanction. The intent is to hold youth accountable for their actions, and to divert them from further involvement with the court system or possible academic failure. In conjunction with the above prevention programs, the Ware Youth Center was opened in response to the lack of structured after-school activities, and offers recreational activities.

Since July 1997, the Partners in Prevention Project has been awarded a total of \$46,000 from the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division to respond to juvenile delinquency in the town of Ware.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Ware is a small rural community in the western part of Massachusetts with a homogeneous population of approximately 9,000 residents. Whites comprise 97% of the population, with the rest consisting of African Americans, American Indians, Asians and Hispanics. A former mill town, Ware has a history of chronic high unemployment compared to the state rate (4.4% versus 3.7%). The number of persons living below the poverty level is 12%, higher than the statewide rate of 9%.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey was given to Ware High School students in 1997 and 1999, to assess their involvement with alcohol, drugs, weapons, and violent behavior. Although Table 106 reflects a decrease in a number of at-risk behaviors first reported in 1997 compared to 1999, intervention and prevention programs are still required. In 1999, in the 30 days preceding the survey, over half of the students reported drinking alcohol (51%), one-third reported marijuana use (32%), and 18% reported carrying a weapon. However, in 1999, students reporting drinking 5 or more drinks in a row remained the same (41%), and there was a 1% increase in youth using a needle to inject illegal drugs (4% in 1997, 5% in 1999).

**Table 106: Ware High School Students' Risk Behavior Survey**

	<b>Drank alcohol in last 30 days</b>	<b>5+ drinks in a row in last 30 days</b>	<b>Ever tried marijuana</b>	<b>Marijuana use in last 30 days</b>	<b>Inhalant use</b>	<b>Carried weapon in last 30 days</b>	<b>Physical fight last 12 months</b>
1997	59%	41%	62%	44%	35%	26%	42%
1999	51%	41%	52%	32%	16%	18%	32%
% Change	-13.6%	0%	-16.1%	-27.2%	-54.2%	-30.8%	-23.8%

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Partners in Prevention Project provides two intervention and prevention components to address risk factors exhibited by youth: the Community Service Program and the School Suspension Program.

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

The Prevention Policy Board's (PPB) activities were not documented until the second quarter of 1997. Board membership fluctuated between 20 and 22 participants, representing the following community sectors: the justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, business, local government, and parent members. On average, three PPB meetings were held each quarter, with an average of 10 members attending each meeting.

During the 1998 program year, an average of 20 members served on the PPB. Membership representation from the community sectors was identical to the 1997 program year. Three PPB meetings were held in quarters one and two, with an average of 10 members attending. PPB meetings and membership participation decreased in quarters three and four, with one meeting held each quarter and an average of 5 members attending.

In 1999, there was a slight increase in PPB membership to 21 participants, representing the following community sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, health services, prevention/treatment providers, and business. One PPB meeting was held each quarter, and was attended by an average of 4 members.

### ***Community Service***

The Community Service Coordinator was hired in October of 1997 and the Community Service Program was implemented in December 1997 to coordinate court mandated community service for first-time non-violent juvenile offenders. The Community Service Program targets youth age 14 – 17, who have typically been arrested for such offenses as trespassing, larceny, drug and alcohol possession, assault, and vandalism. In addition to court involvement, youth also exhibit truancy, academic failure, and substance abuse risk factors. As a condition of probation, community service provides an equitable sentencing alternative that holds youth accountable for their wrongdoing. Community service offers youth the opportunity to provide restitution to the community, thereby minimizing further involvement with the criminal justice system.

Upon completing an intake with the youth and his/her parent, the Community Service Coordinator arranges a community service placement that reflects a juvenile's interests and skills. The youth signs a contract and may receive one of the following assignments: to help with the reading program at the elementary school, painting for nonprofit organizations, filing documents and cleaning cruisers at the police department, or computer work for the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). The Coordinator monitors a youth's progress and, upon successful completion, the criminal charges are dismissed.

Youth who are non-compliant and fail to attend a community service appointment are not immediately terminated. Instead, the Community Service Coordinator contacts a youth the first time he/she fails to show for their community service. A second and third failure to attend community service, the Coordinator writes a letter of warning, and contacts the parent, respectively. If the youth remains non-compliant, he/she will be returned to court, and their probation may be terminated.

The Community Service Program has been met with success, and is regularly utilized by the Ware District Court and Probation. The Community Service Program was expanded in September 1999, to include court-involved youth from the communities of Granby and Belchertown. However, completion of community service hours has been slow due to the maximum number of hours each youth must complete for their community service requirement, the limited space available for youth at the placements, and accommodating school schedules. In addition, the future of the Ware Community Service Program is in question because the Hampshire County Juvenile Court may implement its own community service program that would integrate court-involved youth from Ware, Granby, and Belchertown. In the meantime, the Ware Juvenile Court continues to refer youth to the Community Service Program.

### ***School Suspension Program***

The School Suspension Program links youth suspended from school with community service placements, thereby providing a structured alternative to unsupervised time away from school. This is strictly a voluntary program, and although the school provides the parent with information about the suspension program, there is no formal mechanism to ensure student participation. In program year 1998, the Community Service Coordinator met with the School Superintendent and Principals to devise the School Suspension Program. Upon receiving approval from the School Committee, the School Suspension Program was implemented in January 1999. Initially there was no mechanism to ensure student participation. To enhance the referral process, the school sends a flyer to the parent of the suspended student, encouraging community service participation for the length of the suspension. In the 1998 program year, there was only one referral for the program. In February 2000, the School Suspension Program came to a standstill as a result of the Ware High School implementing an in-house suspension program.

### ***Youth Center***

The Youth Center, which operates from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and until midnight on Friday nights, offers youth a structured environment to engage in educational, recreational and preventive activities. The Youth Center opened in August 1997, and new equipment and supplies were purchased for the Youth Center, enabling youth to select from the following activities: music, basketball, soccer, table games, Ping-Pong, and

computer games. In program year 1998, the Youth Center provided recreational activities during the summer that included basketball clinics, arts and crafts, and an end-of-summer party.

In program year 1997, the Coordinator developed a Violence and Anger Reduction program that was offered to middle school girls at the Center. Prevention workshops on drug and alcohol intervention, teen pregnancy, and violent behavior are also offered at the Center. In program year 1998, the Anger Management group attracted 4 – 6 girls on a weekly basis.

**Education**

Beginning in program year 1997, the Homework Help program was made available to youth at the Center on Monday afternoons, and student participation is either voluntary, or a condition of probation for court-involved youth. The homework area, furnished with computers, is provided for youth to complete their school assignments, in addition to developing computer proficiencies. By June 1998, weekly attendance at the Center averaged 100 youth. In program year 1998, the Homework Help program was increased to twice weekly and averaged 14 students each session. The Homework Help Program was not available from October - December 1999, due to renovations at the Youth Center. When renovations were completed in January 2000 the Homework Help Program resumed assisting students.

**Program Evaluation**

The Partners in Prevention Project reported a decrease in the number of juveniles arrested, and attributed this decrease to the Youth Center and Community Service Program.

**PROGRAM DATA**

As demonstrated below, data for all program components was not consistently available for each program year.

Attendance at the Youth Center was relatively low in 1997, as compared to 1998 levels, and fluctuated throughout the 1998 program year, peaking at 1,634 youth during the third quarter, and decreasing by 14% in quarter four. In program year 1997, an average of 5 youth participated in the court-ordered community service component in each quarter. By the first quarter of 1999, there was a 240% increase in the number of youth involved in community service compared to 1997. However, by the third quarter of 1999, the number of youth who participated in court-ordered community service declined by 76%.

**Risk Factors of Youth Center Participants, 1997 and 1998**

Tables 107 and 108 indicate the risk factors exhibited by youth attending the Ware Youth Center during the 1997 and 1998 program years. In program year 1997, youth at-risk for substance abuse decreased significantly from 25% in quarter two, to 3% in the fourth quarter. Similarly, youth at-risk for failing grades decreased from 50% in quarter two, to 20% in quarter four. Youth at-risk for dropping out of school slightly increased from 6% in quarter two, to 10% in quarter four. In program year 1998, while youth exhibited risk factors for substance abuse, pregnancy, failing grades, school dropout, police involvement, and gang involvement, the percentage of youth exhibiting these factors was relatively low, as compared to the total number of youth served. Youth were most at-risk for failing grades (3% to 4%) across all four quarters. Also, despite a decrease in the number of youth attending the Youth Center, the percentage of youth at-risk for substance abuse increased (.4% to 2%).

**Table 107: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1*													
Quarter 2	100	25	25%	1	15	50	50%	6	6%	15	15%		
Quarter 3	125	15	12%	2	2%	40	32%	12	10%	4	3%		
Quarter 4	150	5	3%			30	20%	15	10%				

\*Risk Factors Not Provided

**Table 108: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	1519	6	.4%			50	3%						
Quarter 2	1555	10	.6%			50	3%						
Quarter 3	1634	15	1%	2	.1%	50	3%	1	.1%	2	.1%		
Quarter 4	1412	25	2%	1	.1%	62	4%	1	.1%	4	.3%	2	.1%

***Youth Center Participant Demographics, 1998***

Across all four quarters of program year 1998, the majority of Youth Center participants were between the ages of 12 and 14 (43% - 99%). (Table 115).

**Table 115: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12			196	13%	329	20%	146	10%
12 – 14	1512	99%	855	54%	698	43%	693	50%
15 – 16	6	.5%	417	27%	443	27%	415	29%
17	1	.5%	87	6%	164	10%	158	11%
Total	1519	100%	1555	100%	1634	100%	1412	100%

The overwhelming majority (84% to 96%) of Youth Center participants was white in 1998 (Table 116).

**Table 116: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	1454	96%	1437	93%	1372	84%	1194	85%
African American	15	1%	101	6%	147	9%	123	8%
Hispanic	50	3%	17	1%	68	4%	95	7%
Asian					22	1%		
American Indian								
Other					25	2%		
Total	1519	100%	1555	100%	1634	100%	1412	100%

Excluding quarter three, in program year 1998, more females attended the Youth Center than males (58% to 66% females as compared to 34% to 42% males) (Table 117).

**Table 117: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	509	34%	634	41%	831	51%	590	42%
Female	1010	66%	921	59%	803	49%	822	58%
Total	1519	100%	1555	100%	1634	100%	1412	100%

***Court-Ordered Community Service Program Participant Demographics, 1997 and 1999***

The 1997 and 1999 demographic data provided below indicate the number of youth who were court-ordered to participate in the Community Service component of the Partners in Prevention Project. Excluding quarter two, in program year 1997, the 15 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (Table 109).

Across the first three quarters of program year 1999, the 14 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (Table 110).

**Table 109: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12							1	20%
12 – 14							1	20%
15 – 16			2	50%	3	60%	3	60%
17			2	50%	2	40%		
Total			4	100%	5	100%	5	100%

**Table 110: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under								
11 – 13	2	12%	4	27%	1	25%		
14 – 16	10	59%	10	66%	3	75%		
17	5	29%	1	7%				
Total	17	100%	15	100%	4	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

The majority of youth participating in the court-ordered community service component in 1997 and 1999 were white (50% to 60% in 1997 and 82% to 100% in 1999) (Tables 111 and 112).

**Table 111: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White			2	50%	3	60%	3	60%
African American								
Hispanic			1	25%	2	40%		
Asian							2	40%
American Indian			1	25%				
Other								
Total			4	100%	5	100%	5	100%

**Table 112: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	14	82%	15	100%	4	100%		
African American								
Hispanic	3	18%						
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total	17	100%	15	100%	4	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

While male youth were the sole participants (100%) of the court-ordered community service component during quarter two and three of program year 1997, there was a sharp increase in female participants during the fourth quarter (Table 113). In program year 1999, more males participated in community service than females (87% to 100% males as compared to 0% to 13% females) (Table 114).

**Table 113: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male			4	100%	5	100%	2	40%
Female							3	60%
Total			4	100%	5	100%	5	100%

**Table 114: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	15	88%	13	87%	4	100%		
Female	2	12%	2	13%				
Total	17	100%	15	100%	4	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

# TOWNS OF WILBRAHAM/HAMPDEN

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

The towns of Wilbraham and Hampden established a collaborative relationship to identify youth in their respective communities at-risk for physical/emotional/sexual abuse, substance abuse, academic failure, delinquency, alienation, and violence. In response to these risk factors, the communities provide intervention and preventive measures that include needs assessment, counseling, academic assistance, adult mentoring relationships, and structured recreational activities.

Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$65,000 to the Wilbraham/Hampden Family Involvement Project.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The two rural communities of Wilbraham and Hampden combined efforts to address problems that put youth at-risk for delinquency, substance abuse, and academic failure. Although neither town has high rates of juvenile delinquency compared to other Massachusetts communities, problems do exist that require attention to prevent escalation.

1990 U.S. Census data reveal Wilbraham and Hampden have a combined population of 18,000 residents, with youth age 5 – 14 years comprising approximately 28% of the total population. Community risk factors were determined from juvenile records, regional school population data, and anecdotal reporting. Post arrest interviews of juveniles charged with criminal offenses indicated a lack of age appropriate activities in the two communities leading them to seek alternative activities including loitering, vandalism, drinking and drugs. The rural location of both communities created a hardship for youth by hindering easy access to youth centers and family-oriented activities.

According to the Director of the Family Involvement Project, for the years 1997 – 1999, 199 juvenile offenders were charged with delinquent acts in the towns of Hampden and Wilbraham. Table 118 indicates the risk factors exhibited by high school youth during 1996 – 1997, furthermore supporting the need for community intervention. Also, 287 students in grades 6 through 12 had failing grades. Many of these youth experience academic failure due to environmental factors, such as poor familial support and structure in which to complete their homework during after-school hours. Such students are considered at-risk because the skills that had been taught in school were neither practiced nor extended outside the classroom. Subsequently, these students frequently lacked “the discipline of learning,” (i.e., skills needed to prioritize, organize, apply and execute school tasks), thus leading to a cycle of underachievement, diminished expectations, and sense of failure.

**Table 118: Risk Factors Exhibited by High School Youth, 1996 – 1997**

Truancy	Suspensions	Expulsions	Substance Abuse	Police Involvement
93	22	9	118	68

Source: Family Involvement Project Data, April 2000

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

In 1997, data regarding the Prevention Policy Board's (PPB) activities are available for only the first quarter. There were 16 participants who represented the following community sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, health services, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, business, local government, and parent membership. One meeting was held and attended by an average of 10 members.

In 1998 and 1999, the PPB membership remained at 16 participants, and members represented the same community sectors as in 1997, with the addition of youth members in 1998. In 1998, the PPB met twice each quarter, with an

average of 8 members in attendance. In 1999, one meeting was held each quarter and was attended by an average of 7 members.

### ***Program Implementation and Administration***

The Family Involvement Project is unique because it involves two towns working in conjunction and utilizing the resources of their respective communities. Youth participation in all programs is on a voluntary basis.

### ***Citizen/Juvenile Police Academy***

The Citizen/Juvenile Police Academy was established in February 1998 as a forum to promote communication and understanding between the residents of Wilbraham and Hampden and their respective police departments. The Academy is open to all residents, with particular emphasis directed at youth who exhibit risky behaviors. Youth are either referred via the Springfield Juvenile Court, or by informal reporting between school officials and police officers. The Academy is held at the Minnechaug Regional High School from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., once a week for 5 weeks. In program year 1997, 30 Wilbraham and Hampden residents attended the February 1998 session of the Citizen/Juvenile Police Academy, and as a result of its overwhelming popularity and success, the program was extended to a sixth week. The program was offered again in April 1998, and attended by 32 area residents. In October 1998, 7 police officers provided instruction at the Citizen Police Academy, which 26 Wilbraham and Hampden residents attended. This program was expanded to include the opportunity for residents to ride-along with police officers on their tour of duty. In program year 1999, 10 youth successfully completed the Citizen's Police Academy held from September through November 1999.

Wilbraham and Hampden police officers participate as speakers on variety of issues, including: Introduction and Patrol Procedures, Investigations and Crime Scene, Domestic Violence, Arrest Procedures, Traffic Enforcement, Criminal and Motor Vehicle Law, Firearms, Special Services (e.g., D.A.R.E. Program, Mountain Bike Patrol), and Court Procedures. At the conclusion of the 10-week session, students receive a diploma documenting their participation.

### ***Adventure-based Programs***

Operation Challenge is a program component offered in collaboration with the Massachusetts National Guard, Wilbraham and Hampden Police Departments, and School Departments. The program offers adventure-based activities to enhance leadership, teambuilding, and the decision-making skills of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The goal is to empower youth to resist peer pressure, especially with regard to alcohol and drug experimentation and abuse. The program operates 2 hours after-school, 2 days a week, for 4 weeks. The final meeting encompasses a Saturday daylong trip to the Massachusetts State Police Academy in New Braintree where youth have the opportunity to use the ropes and obstacle course. In program year 1998, one teacher and one police officer attended a 3-day training sponsored by the Massachusetts National Guard, and were certified as instructors for the Operation Challenge program component.

In program year 1998, 12 students who were enrolled in an alternative education classroom, participated in Operation Challenge with the express purpose to enhance their self-esteem and develop a positive attitude toward school.

### ***Recreational Activities***

The Falcon Dance Troupe is a synchronized dance team comprised of 20 female high school students from Wilbraham and Hampden. The Troupe meets three days each week for 2 hours, to practice routines they perform at sporting events, rallies, and parades. The primary goal is to provide young women, who are not involved in sports, with the opportunity to learn team-building skills, while promoting health and fitness. The Falcon Dance Troupe made their community debut at the Wilbraham Peach Festival in August 1999. The team also attended dance camp at Southern Connecticut State University and received three team awards including the Team Leadership Award, the 110% Award and the Spirit Stick Award for best team spirit. Two of the team's dancers were awarded All Star medals and were chosen to represent the Universal Dance Association in the Millennium Parade in Paris, France on New Year's Day, 2000.

### ***Education***

Homework Centers became operational in December 1997, and have been well attended, with students reporting satisfaction with mentor and peer tutoring. School administrators have anecdotal accounts that academic failure and family conflict students are making progress in school attendance and timely completion of homework assignments.

The Soule Road Elementary School in Wilbraham instituted the Soule Road StudyBuddies program to provide after-school homework assistance for approximately 40 students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, who are at-risk for academic failure due to environmental factors. Specifically, students are targeted who do not have the benefit of a home-based structure in which to complete their homework during after-school hours. Priority was given to students who had the highest rate of missing assignments during the first quarter of the school year, particularly those for whom family resources and environmental support were most limited. To be considered for program participation, students had to meet at least two of the following eligibility requirements: less than 80% homework completion rate, at least one attempted school-home intervention which had not yielded improvement, or documented difficulties in at least one risk-associated area such as attendance, peer relationships, family instability, or other factors contributing to underachievement. Parent-initiated referrals are also considered if need is corroborated by the classroom teacher. StudyBuddies staff includes two teachers and one paraprofessional, who meet with students after school dismissal on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for one hour sessions. Students are expected to arrive at the program prepared to do their homework. For those occasions when no specific homework has been assigned, ongoing assignments such as reading and spelling, or grade-appropriate material for extra skill practice are provided. Snacks are provided by the program and are served at the beginning of each session.

The Homework Center at the Wilbraham Middle School offers one hour of homework assistance on Tuesday and Thursday for students in grades 6 – 8, throughout the school year. The program is available immediately after school dismissal, and is able to accommodate 30 students, who are assisted by middle school teachers and volunteer tutors. Students have the opportunity to work on individual homework and research assignments, as well as group projects. Students are tutored on the use of library materials, the Internet, and other computer-assisted research materials. Both the school library and cafeteria serve as Homework Center sites. Late buses are provided by the school district to take students home.

The Enrichment Academy at the Memorial Middle School in Wilbraham, extends learning beyond the school day by offering enrichment activities in the areas of academics and technology (e.g., planetary science, chemistry, and website development), art appreciation, and promoting health and wellness through gymnastics.

The Homework Club is an after-school program held five days a week, at the Thornton Burgess Middle School in Hampden. This program offers middle school students the opportunity to complete academic assignments in an environment that is structured, quiet, and conducive to learning, while receiving teacher assistance.

“Keyboard Kids” is an after-school computer lab program that develops keyboarding proficiency with an emphasis on phonics and writing skills. This program is offered to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at the Green Meadows Middle School in Hampden, who exhibit poor reading, writing, and fine-motor skills. Students are selected for participation in this program through previous assessments or teacher referrals. The software program, *Read, Write and Type*, introduces speech sounds and associates them with finger strokes on the keyboard. “Keyboard Kids” is offered for two eight-week sessions to a total of 24 students. Each session has a maximum capacity of twelve students.

### ***Parental Involvement***

An educational forum for parents entitled “All in the Name of Rock and Roll” was offered in February 1998, and addressed the effects of music and television on children with regard to drugs, alcohol, sex, and violence, by assessing how song lyrics and television dialogue promote drugs and violence.

### ***Other Activities***

Two students participated in the School to Career Partnership in the Selectman’s Office, and another student completed an internship at the local Cable Television Station. High school students, enrolled in the Alternative Learning Program, also had the opportunity to participate in a Ropes Course Program at Camp Weber for eight consecutive Fridays, April through June 1999. The students set individual goals that enhanced their self-esteem and pride. Students also participated in Whitewater and Rock-Climbing trips.

For six Thursday afternoons in July and August 1999, 30 youth from Wilbraham and Hampden received free golf instructions at the Hampden Country Club from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Wilbraham and Hampden police officers provided instruction for 15 youth from each community, age 10 – 14 years. Instruction included club usage, golf etiquette, and golfing rules. The golf lessons were followed by “rap sessions” between the youth and police officers. The golf program enabled police officers and youth to establish rapport, and gave police officers the opportunity to stay involved with youth during the summer. The program culminated in a successful golf tournament.

## PROGRAM DATA

While the program did not serve any youth in the first quarter of the program, the second quarter of program year 1997 had 593 youth participating in the program, and this number increased by 86% during the third quarter to 1,101. The level of participation decreased by 46% during the fourth quarter to 756 youth. In program year 1998, there was a significant increase in program participation from 286 youth in the first quarter, to 1549 youth in the third quarter, a 442% increase. Participation declined to 778 participants by the second quarter of program year 1999.

### *Risk Factors*

In program year 1998, 6 youth had failing grades, 3 were police involved, 1 was pregnant, and 1 was at-risk for dropping out of school.

### *Participant Demographics*

Overall, the 12 – 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (46% - 100%) in program year 1997 (Table 119). This changed in program year 1998, with the under 12 age group representing the greater part of program participants (43% – 64%), followed by the 12 – 14 year old age group (30% – 42%) (Table 120). Overall, in program year 1999, the 11 – 13 year age group represented the majority of participants (52% - 54%), followed by the 14 – 16 year age group (30%) (Table 121).

**Table 119: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Under 12					371	34%	387	51%
12 – 14			593	100%	717	65%	350	46%
15 – 16					13	1%	19	3%
17								
Total			593	100%	1,101	100%	756	100%

**Table 120: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Under 12	167	58%	206	43%	921	59%	854	64%
12 – 14	119	42%	200	42%	564	36%	401	30%
15 – 16			76	15%	58	4%	74	5%
17					6	1%	6	1%
Total	286	100%	482	100%	1,549	100%	1,335	100%

**Table 121: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	69	10%	88	11%				
11 – 13	381	54%	402	52%				
14 – 16	219	30%	231	30%				
17	40	6%	57	7%				
Total	709	100%	778	100%				

\*Quarterly Reports due 4/00 (not received) and 7/00

The vast majority of youth participants were white in program years 1997 (99% - 100%), 1998 (70% – 88%), and 1999 (85% - 87%) (Tables 122, 123 and 124).

**Table 122: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White			593	100%	1,092	99%	749	99%
African American					9	1%	7	1%
Hispanic								
Asian								
American Indian								
Other								
Total			593	100%	1,101	100%	756	100%

**Table 123: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	254	88%	426	88%	1117	72%	944	70%
African American	20	7%	29	6%	289	19%	279	21%
Hispanic	8	3%	22	4%	132	6%	82	6%
Asian	3	1%	4	1%	5	1%	25	2%
American Indian					2	1%		
Other	1	1%	1	1%	4	1%	5	1%
Total	286	100%	482	100%	1549	100%	1335	100%

**Table 124: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	619	87%	658	85%				
African American	75	11%	94	12%				
Hispanic	15	2%	25	3%				
Asian			1	.1%				
American Indian								
Other								
Total	709	100%	778	100%				

\*Quarterly Reports due 4/00 (not received) and 7/00

With regard to participation by gender, throughout the three quarters of program year 1997, more females were involved in the program than males (56% females as compared to 44% males) (Table 125). In the first three quarters of program year 1998, more males took part in the program than females (51% – 58% males as compared to 42% – 49% females). Yet, by the fourth quarter, an equal percentage (50%) of both males and females participated in the Family Involvement Project (Table 126). For the first two quarters of program year 1999, more males participated in the program than females (57% to 59% males as compared to 41% to 43% females) (Table 127).

**Table 125: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male			261	44%	483	44%	336	44%
Female			332	56%	618	56%	420	56%
Total			593	100%	1101	100%	756	100%

**Table 126: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	166	58%	275	57%	797	51%	669	50%
Female	120	42%	207	43%	752	49%	666	50%
Total	286	100%	482	100%	1549	100%	1335	100%

**Table 127: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3*		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	406	57%	462	59%		%		%
Female	303	43%	316	41%		%		%
Total	709	100%	778	100%		100%		100%

\*Quarterly Reports due 4/00 (not received) and 7/00

# CITY OF WORCESTER

## TRUANCY ABATEMENT PROGRAM

To address the problem of school truancy, the city of Worcester launched a new initiative in 1996 entitled the “Truancy Abatement Program.” The primary goals of the Program are (1) to decrease the rate of truancy among middle school and high school students; (2) to identify and provide services and resources for truant youth and their families; and (3) to assist with school dropout prevention measures.

Committed to reducing truancy rates, the city of Worcester initially implemented this program in 1996. Since July 1997, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division has awarded a total of \$215,000 to the city of Worcester to expand the Truancy Abatement Program. This award enabled the Program to hire a bilingual case manager to work with truants and their families, and establish the Summer Leadership Program for at-risk youth.

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Worcester is the second largest city in New England with a population of 169,759. A culturally diverse community, Worcester has a population represented by 83% White, 10% Hispanic, 4% African-American, and 3% Asian. The primary and secondary school population totals about 24,000 students, of which approximately 50% live at or below the poverty level. The absentee rate at the secondary level for the 1997 – 1998 school year was nearly 11%, or 600 students; the majority attributed to truancy factors. This is considerably higher than the statewide absentee rate of approximately 7% (Table 128).

**Table 128: Worcester Public School Absentee Rate by School Year**

School Year	Elementary	Middle School	High School	System-wide
1995 – 1996	6.1%	10.4%	13.3%	8.0%
1996 – 1997	5.0%	8.9%	11.8%	7.3%
1997 – 1998	5.2%	7.7%	10.7%	6.6%

School truancy is a recognized risk factor for juvenile delinquency. In addition, the total number of Worcester juveniles arrested for crimes during the 1997 – 1998 school year was 912, which represents a 9% increase from the previous year. Compounding the truancy and juvenile delinquency problems are high student mobility rates (e.g., students who frequently move to a new home and school). During the 1996 – 1997 school year, the average rate of mobility for the eight Worcester secondary schools was 33%. This high mobility rate hinders school and neighborhood attachment. Additional identified risk factors include teen pregnancy, academic failure, youth violence, and a Special Education placement rate of 17%. Although 90% of students attend school on a daily basis, school absence remains a valid concern.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### *Prevention Policy Board*

During the 1997 program year, there were 28 members on the Prevention Policy Board (PPB), representing the following community sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, prevention/treatment providers, civic/volunteer organizations, and local government. The PPB held three meetings each quarter that was attended by all 28 members.

In 1998 and 1999, PPB membership increased to 30 participants who represented the following community sectors: justice system/courts, law enforcement, education, youth organizations, child welfare agencies, and local government. In both years, the PPB met twice each quarter, with an average of 25 board members participating.

#### *Program Implementation and Administration*

The Truancy Abatement Program, located at the Student Attendance Center, was established at the beginning of the 1996 – 1997 school year, through the cooperative effort of the Worcester Public Schools, the Worcester Police Department, the Worcester Juvenile Court, and the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office. The Truancy Abatement Program is an outreach mechanism for youth who are truant from school, and thereby, at-risk for

dropping out of school or juvenile delinquency. The Student Attendance Center works closely with the Probation Officers of the Worcester Juvenile Court, Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Department of Youth Services (DYS) to ensure all necessary information is shared when a student enters the Truancy Abatement Program.

The Truancy Abatement Program, focusing on truant youth under the age of 16, in grades 7 through 10, emphasizes the dangers of hanging-out on the street, the value of an education, and explores why youth are truant. Oftentimes the reasons surrounding school truancy encompass pregnancy issues, drug involvement, or neglect or abuse problems in the home. The Truancy Abatement Program is a three-day program that operates Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Student attendance is continually monitored and a database has been compiled on all school truants.

There are three methods by which youth gain access to the Truancy Abatement Program: (1) apprehension by police that does not result in an arrest, (2) arrest by the police, and (3) referral by their school administrator. School policy requires youth arrested or court adjudicated to attend the Truancy Abatement Program before their return to school. Truant Worcester youth are also referred to the Program by police from the immediate surrounding communities, who bring them directly to the Program. However, school administrators, who concurrently file a petition of truancy, refer the majority of youth.

Upon referral, the Truancy Abatement Program contacts the juvenile court to ascertain a youth's status. For youth under the supervision of the Juvenile Justice System, a consultation occurs between the youth, the Juvenile Probation Officer, and the Program staff.

All youth referred to the Truancy Abatement Program meet with the Project Director and the School Adjustment Counselor. In August 1997, a full-time bilingual/bicultural School Adjustment Counselor was hired to provide collaborative case management for truant students, and to facilitate a positive transition from the Student Attendance Center to their home school. The School Adjustment Counselor conducts an initial intake session with the truant youth and parent, at which time a Contract of Enrollment is signed. The School Adjustment Counselor also provides follow-up services at both the home and school.

Repeat truants are required to stay at the Center an hour or two longer daily, depending on whether they are second or third time offenders. During this additional time, staff from both the District Attorney's office and the Department of Youth Services (DYS) speak with the student about what will happen should they become involved with the juvenile justice system. On occasion, a detainee from DYS, who is scheduled for imminent release, will accompany a staff member to speak with the truant student.

If a student is uncooperative with the program, the School Adjustment Counselor may file a Petition of Truancy with the Juvenile Court. Prior to either successfully or unsuccessfully terminating from the Program, the Center teacher completes an evaluation that is shared with the administrators and teachers at the youth's school. Youth who successfully terminate the program receive credit for school attendance.

In the case of an elementary student who comes to the attention of Student Attendance Center staff, an on-going Outreach Program has been established. Elementary students do not attend the Student Attendance Center, but are returned to their school, and receive intervention with the Adjustment Counselor. The Adjustment Counselor determines why the student is not attending school, and works closely with the student and parent. There have been instances when a parent is keeping the student home for babysitting purposes. Also, a cultural barrier may exist, and the parent is unaware of the educational requirements. In circumstances where serious problems exist, a Care and Protection Petition is filed in the juvenile court.

The Truancy Abatement Program is a comprehensive prevention/intervention program, mirroring a school day in length, with components included to address issues particular to truant youth. The Program components comprise Academic Enrichment, Community Service, Character Education (2 sessions), and Peer Counseling. A full-time teacher and an instructional aide work with the truant youth, and the student's home school provides the Center teacher with daily assignments.

### ***Community Service***

All program youth are required to participate in 2 hours of community service daily – even those not mandated by the court. Youth are assigned either to the local nursing home, library, YMCA, or the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Community service offers truant youth the immediate experience of working in positions that would be comparable to a poor-paying job, and the only option for many people without an education. RSVP enables individuals 55 and older to volunteer their skills and time to the community. Many RSVP participants serve as mentors to truant youth.

### ***Character Education***

Character Education addresses numerous issues such as anger, communicating with parents, self-image, drugs and alcohol use, goal setting, respect issues, peer pressure, and gang involvement.

### ***Peer Counseling***

Youth also participate in Peer Counseling, and meet with either a caseworker from the Student Attendance Center, or a peer leader from Assumption College or Worcester State College.

### ***Summer Leadership Program***

The Summer Leadership Program is a component of the Truancy Abatement Program for 20 at-risk middle school youth. The Leadership Program is a 5-week program held in July and August, during the hours of 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. The youth work as peer-leaders and guides at Treasure Valley, a Boy Scout day camp. There is a daily one-hour learning component, and youth are required to read *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*, keep a journal, and discuss their thoughts. This program serves as a bridge for at-risk students from one school year to the next. The Leadership Program affords youth the opportunity to participate in meaningful employment, utilize learned skills, and maintain the student – teacher bond. In program year 1997, 20 students aged 14 participated in the Summer Work and Learning Program at Treasure Valley. In August 1998, 20 at-risk middle school youth again participated in the Summer Work and Learning Program at Treasure Valley.

### ***Program Evaluation***

Since the Truancy Abatement Program was implemented one year prior to receiving Title V funding, school officials determined the project merited assessment at the two-year mark. An independent evaluator was hired in April 1998 to examine the program process. The evaluation included interviews with program administrators, collection and analysis of socio-demographic data for students served, analysis of key indices of student behaviors (e.g., attendance and suspensions), and analysis of written questionnaire data by students regarding their perceptions of the Center and its staff. Data were compiled on students served by the Program during the first two quarters of the 1997 – 1998 academic year.

Major findings from the evaluation show in total, 181 students received services from the Truancy Abatement Program between August and December 1997. Of the youth served, the average age was 15 years, and males outnumbered females by a ratio of nearly two-to-one. With regard to student race, 55% were White, 30% Hispanic, 8% African-American, and 7% Asian. Significantly, the racial distribution was congruent with the racial makeup for the school district. Truant students were more frequently enrolled in the middle schools (65%) versus high schools (35%). Of the total students participating in the Truancy Abatement Program, 59% were enrolled only once, while 41% were admitted on two or more occasions. In terms of referral source, school administrators referred 87% of Program students, while the Worcester Police Department referred only 13%. Examining single versus multiple admissions to the Truancy Abatement Center, results indicate that chronically truant students are more likely to be male (58%) and enrolled in middle school (61%). With regard to school absenteeism, there was a 23% reduction in truancy. Substantial decreases were evident for both single admission (40%) and multiple admission students (36%). School suspensions were almost reduced by half (47%). Students with single admissions decreased by 31%, and students with multiple admissions reflected a 63% decrease. Most noteworthy, students were highly favorable regarding their experience in the Truancy Abatement Program. Students commented the assistance and support received from Center staff, and the program components promoted school attendance.

Over the course of the second program year, 413 students participated in the Truancy Abatement Program. Of the total Program participants, school administrators referred 292 students, 60 were arrested, and 61 were apprehended by police and brought directly to the Student Attendance Center. For the 1998 – 1999 school year, there was a 19% reduction in student absences upon completion of the 3-day Truancy Abatement Program. On average, 2 students

per day were referred to the Center, and an average of 6 students participated in the Truancy Abatement Program each day. The number of repeat truants has dropped from 13% in 1997, to 11% in 1998. Noteworthy, in March 1999, Governor Paul Cellucci proclaimed the Worcester Truancy Abatement Program a model for Massachusetts.

Including all three quarters of program year 1999, 328 students participated in the Truancy Abatement Program. Of this total, 230 were secondary students, and 108 were elementary students who received assistance from the Truancy Program. Four (4) students were apprehended by the police, 29 were arrested, and 202 referred by a school administrator. Although there were a total of 23 repeat offenders, this represents a substantial decrease from the previous two years.

## PROGRAM DATA

### *Risk Factors*

In program year 1997, a significant percentage of youth were police involved, peaking at 93% during the second quarter, and reaching a low of 39% during the fourth quarter. The number of participating youth who exhibited substance abuse increased from 14% in the first quarter, to 47% in quarter four. Youth who had failing grades ranged between 39% and 53% over the four program quarters (Table 129). Although the total number of youth participating in the Truancy Abatement Program decreased over the course of program year 1998, the percentage of youth exhibiting selected risk factors increased substantially during this same period. Youth at-risk for substance abuse increased from 25% in quarter one, to 87% in quarter four. Likewise, youth with failing grades increased from 50% to 91%, police involvement 36% to 71%, while gang involvement had a slight increase from 18% to 22% (Table 130).

**Table 129: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1997**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	44	6	14%	2	5%	19	43%			34	77%	17	39%
Quarter 2	140	39	28%	2	1%	55	39%	30	21%	130	93%	40	29%
Quarter 3	169	74	44%	1	.5%	90	53%	64	38%	103	61%	41	24%
Quarter 4	93	44	47%	2	2%	48	52%	6	6%	36	39%	34	37%

**Table 130: Number of Youth Exhibiting Selected Risk Factors, 1998**

	Total Youth Served	Substance Abuse		Pregnancy		Failing Grades		School Dropouts		Police Involvement		Gang Involvement	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quarter 1	110	27	25%	2	25%	55	50%			40	36%	20	18%
Quarter 2	138	29	21%	2	1%	63	46%			49	36%	22	16%
Quarter 3	74	56	76%	2	3%	56	76%			48	65%	21	28%
Quarter 4	91	79	87%	2	2%	83	91%			65	71%	20	22%

### *Participant Demographics*

Across the four quarters of program year 1997, the 12 - 14 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (50% - 70%). In addition, there was an increase in the percentage of youth under the age of 12 participating in the third quarter (25%) (Table 131). In program year 1998, the 12 - 14 year old age group again represented the majority of program participants (47% to 51%) (Table 132). However, in 1999, the 14 - 16 year old age group represented the majority of program participants (52% - 55%) (Table 133).

**Table 131: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1997**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12					43	25%	21	23%
12 – 14	31	70%	90	64%	83	50%	48	52%
15 – 16	13	30%	50	36%	43	25%	24	25%
17								
Total	44	100%	140	100%	169	100%	93	100%

**Table 132: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1998**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
↓12	42	38%	25	18%	11	15%	20	22%
12 – 14	54	49%	71	51%	38	51%	43	47%
15 – 16	14	13%	40	29%	23	31%	27	30%
17			2	2%	2	3%	1	1%
Total	110	100%	138	100%	74	100%	91	100%

**Table 133: Percentage of Youth Served by Age, 1999**

Age	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
10 and Under	13	15%	32	22%	11	12%		
11 – 13	27	31%	34	23%	35	36%		
14 – 16	47	54%	79	55%	50	52%		
17								
Total	87	100%	145	100%	96	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

White youth represented the majority of program participants over the three program years (50% - 63% in 1997, 51% to 64% in 1998, and 52% to 65% in 1999), followed by Hispanic youth (16% - 34% in 1997, 24% to 33% in 1998, and 24% to 36% in 1999). Despite fluctuation in the number of participants, the race levels remained consistent over the three program years (Tables 134, 135 and 136).

**Table 134: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1997**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	28	63%	77	55%	84	50%	47	51%
African American	3	7%	13	9%	11	7%	12	13%
Hispanic	7	16%	40	29%	59	34%	27	29%
Asian	6	14%	10	7%	15	9%	7	7%
American Indian								
Other								
Total	44	100%	140	100%	169	100%	93	100%

**Table 135: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1998**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	58	53%	70	51%	47	64%	46	51%
African American	8	7%	13	9%	6	8%	13	14%
Hispanic	33	30%	45	33%	18	24%	29	32%
Asian	11	10%	8	6%	3	4%	3	3%
American Indian			2	1%				
Other								
Total	110	100%	138	100%	74	100%	91	100%

**Table 136: Percentage of Youth Served by Race, 1999**

Race	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4*	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
White	56	65%	75	52%	53	55%		
African American	8	9%	15	10%	8	9%		
Hispanic	21	24%	50	35%	35	36%		
Asian	2	2%	5	3%				
American Indian								
Other								
Total	87	100%	145	100%	96	100%		

\*Quarterly Report due 7/00

Over the three program years, more males participated in the Truancy Program than females (47% to 73% males compared to 27% to 53% females) (Tables 137, 138 and 139).

**Table 137: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1997**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	29	66%	76	54%	114	67%	68	73%
Female	15	34%	64	46%	55	33%	25	27%
Total	44	100%	140	100%	169	100%	93	100%

**Table 138: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1998**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	59	54%	65	47%	43	58%	52	57%
Female	51	46%	73	53%	31	42%	39	43%
Total	110	100%	138	100%	74	100%	91	100%

**Table 139: Percentage of Youth Served by Gender, 1999**

Gender	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%	Youth	%
Male	43	49%	70	48%	52	54%		
Female	44	51%	75	52%	44	46%		
Total	87	100%	145	100%	96	100%		