

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF A MULTIAGENCY COMMUNITY-BASED
VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mishaleen E. Allen entitled "A Program Evaluation of a Multiagency Community-based Violence Reduction Program." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Special Education.

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ABSTRACT

A Program Evaluation of a Multiagency Community-based
Violence Reduction Program
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Established through a grant awarded by the Texas Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program facilitates collaboration among several local agencies, city government, and university personnel as well as professionals from the local school district, police department, and juvenile justice system. The multiagency community-based violence reduction program for at-risk youth facilitated both the Boys and Girls Club of Denton (a prevention program providing after-school and summer activities for youth) and the Denton Teen Court (an intervention program providing deferred adjudication for first-time offenders). Both qualitative and quantitative methodology were used to analyze perceptions of key persons within the two programs as well as perceptions of community agency personnel regarding the multiagency collaboration experience. The study analyzes first-year program evaluation results for the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program.

In general, responding program evaluation participants for both the Boys and Girls Club of Denton and the Denton Teen Court felt positive about program impact and were satisfied with the overall programs. Analysis of Boys and Girls Club of Denton group respondents' perceptions regarding the tutoring program impact on

youth participants' school progress differed significantly with program personnel perceiving a greater impact than parent/guardian and youth participant respondents. Comparison of the Denton Teen Court parent/guardian and juvenile defendant respondents' perceptions regarding fair sentencing differed significantly with more parent/guardian respondents believing that their teenager received a fair sentence than the responding juvenile defendants. Multiagency personnel identified limited funding and lack of communication and collaboration among participating community agencies as hindrances to effective multiagency collaboration efforts.

Four critical issues regarding effective multiagency collaboration emerged: (a) the necessary formation of an administrative board representing fiscal accountability of the multiagency collaborative effort that allows active representation and participation of all involved parties, (b) the continuing trend of funding allocations mandating shared responsibilities between community agencies serving similar populations, (c) the need for periodic data collection procedures throughout funding timelines when evaluating dynamic changing subject populations, and (d) the need for continued university support in the areas of grant writing/development, program evaluation, and/or results publication. Program results support previous research regarding multiagency collaborative efforts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Increasing juvenile violence and crime are rated major concerns both at the national and local levels (Juvenile Crime the Top Concern of Local Officials, 1996; Legislators Cite Juvenile Justice Reform as Top Issue, 1995). According to Siegel and Senna (1994), significant evidence exists that many at-risk youths in danger of becoming juvenile delinquents can be assisted with effective prevention and/or intervention programming. A review of literature suggests that there are numbers of interagency programs developed to reduce youth and adolescent violence (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995; Wilkinson, 1994; Wolford, Shipp, & Cutler, 1995). During the early 1990s, the rising national concern about youth violence and crime, both in and around schools, has resulted in the development of such programs (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990). State and local legislators have addressed these issues through legislation and local education agency policies such as "zero tolerance" discipline and "safe school" policy initiatives where school districts and police work collaboratively to reduce school violence (Slate, 1997; Stephens, 1995; Vail, 1995). Likewise, the passage of Senate Bill 1 in 1995 produced a major revision of the Texas Education Code and required consistent interagency collaboration between schools and local juvenile justice systems concerning community violence reduction initiatives (Fikac, 1997; Texas Education Agency, 1995).

Several different types of violence reduction programs were identified through a literature review focusing on interagency efforts

(Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990; Siegel & Senna, 1994; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995; Wilkinson, 1994). Most community violence reduction programs report limited evaluative information concerning effectiveness and appear to be interagency rather than multiagency in design.

Interagency programs are limited to two primary types of programs: (a) a local school district and the police department for a drug reduction program or (b) a local school district and a mental health agency where family services, such as medical or counseling, are provided in a school setting (Texas Education Agency, 1994).

Multiagency programs consist of three or more agencies collaborating to provide services (Barr & Parrett, 1995). Multiagency program development has been encouraged both at the federal and state levels to facilitate cost effectiveness of violence reduction programs and make use of limited community resources. For example, grant applicants applying for funding are encouraged to do so through a city which incorporates schools, police, parks, and social service organizations (Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, 1995). Limited information was reported in the literature review concerning effectiveness of multiagency programs. Thus, there appears to be a need for program evaluation of multiagency community-based violence reduction programs.

Statement of the Problem

A review of literature suggests a lack of program evaluation information regarding current multiagency community-based violence reduction efforts. There appears to be little information available on multiagency community-based violence reduction programs in contrast to programs primarily facilitated through collaborative efforts of one or two organizations. Although encouraged through fiscal initiatives, there

remains a need to conduct a program evaluation to examine the effectiveness of multiagency community-based violence reduction programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to develop and pilot evaluation instruments, and (b) to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program. The DDP/I Program was established through a grant awarded by the Texas Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, and facilitates collaboration among several local agencies to include the City of Denton as fiscal agent, Denton Independent School District, Denton Police Department, Texas Woman's University, Boys and Girls Club of America, and local juvenile justice agencies.

Definition of Terms

At-risk factors--factors/characteristics which place children and youth at risk for school failure including reading one year below grade level, having been retained, low socioeconomic background, and/or attending school with many other poor children (Barr & Parrett, 1995).

Coordinated community-based--prevention/intervention program activities developed through collaborative grant writing efforts with services administered through city management (Barr & Parrett, 1995).

Delinquent behavior--behavior which would be considered a criminal law violation if committed by an adult (Inciardi, 1993).

Effective--"adequate to accomplish a purpose; producing the intended or expected result" (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997, p. 257).

Impact--"individual perception of impact made by program on the life of the participant(s)" (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997, p. 408).

Juvenile delinquency--criminal behavior committed by minors (Siegel & Senna, 1994).

Juvenile Diversionary Program--a "formally acknowledged and organized" program which seeks to "process juvenile and adult offenders outside the justice system" (Siegel & Senna, 1994, p. 523).

Multiagency--the involvement of "more than two" professional agencies for coordinated service delivery (Texas Education Agency, 1994; Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997, p. 526).

Perceptions--personal "keenness of insight, understanding, or intuition" of individual definition regarding program effectiveness (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997, p. 588).

Satisfaction--"personal acceptance of the positive fulfillment from program and willingness to continue within the program" (Webster's Universal College Dictionary, 1997, p. 698).

Limitations

The Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program is a multiagency community-based violence reduction program targeting at-risk youth within the City of Denton and surrounding communities. Study results constitute the first-year evaluation of the program. The following factors have been identified as possible limitations to overall program evaluation as well as study results.

1. The Denton Prevention/Intervention Program is a multiagency program involving collaborative participation from several community-based organizations; therefore, evaluation results may not automatically generalize to violence prevention programs in other areas.

2. Survey research methodology was utilized; so, results are limited by the bias of respondents' perceptions of program participants and the nonrandom sample.

3. Instruments were designed to assess perceptions of program impact/satisfaction and item questions based on program goals. Validity results were limited by the number of items per survey that assess each goal. Participating agencies selected to use limited numbers of questions per goal in order to simplify the data collection process while minimizing required response time and increasing survey return rate.

4. Since participation in the program evaluation was voluntary, the rate of responses was also a limitation.

5. Length of time spent in the program (i.e., 6 weeks to 12 months) as well as amount of time since program participation (for those not currently enrolled and/or participating) may have limited respondents' perceptions of program satisfaction and impact.

6. Due to the transient nature of subgroups within the targeted population and subsequent loss of subjects, study results were limited by the potential bias of the respondents. It was not possible to rule out that unreturned surveys could have demonstrated negative perceptions regarding program impact and satisfaction.

7. Because of the confidential nature of juvenile and youth systems, the principal investigator was unable to directly contact families and youth. Program administrators were responsible for obtaining completed surveys which limited the number of responses from individuals not participating within the program at the time of data collection.

8. The lack of continued collaboration and active participation by professional agencies involved in program conception/development

significantly limited availability of multiagency professionals for the audiotaped interviews. This, in turn, limited the validity of the qualitative analysis portion of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Perspective

Over the past 2 decades, adolescent violence and crime has swept across the nation at an alarming rate. According to U.S. News & World Report ("Killer Teens," 1994), arrests for violent crimes committed by youths under the age of 18 increased a staggering 91% between 1970 and 1992 (i.e., 54,596 arrests in 1970 to 104,137 arrests in 1992). A study in 1995 by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) revealed that, although there was a slight decrease in juvenile offenses involving drugs, there was a 56% increase in crimes against persons while crimes against property (i.e., larceny, theft, burglary, and other property crimes) continued to dominate the juvenile court systems (Caseloads are Up with Violent Offenses Rising Faster, 1995). Unfortunately, professionals in the field of juvenile delinquency do not see the trend decreasing within the next 10 years, but increasing due to the rising number of social, emotional, and physical issues facing at-risk youths in today's society (i.e., violence in the home and community, poverty, school failure, etc.) (Juvenile Crime the Top Concern of Local Officials, 1996; Siegel & Senna, 1994). This forecast is supported through research as educators and professionals seek ways to address the social, emotional, and physical needs of at-risk youth in schools and communities (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995).

Current Research on At-Risk Youth

When discussing "at-risk" youths, professionals need to keep in mind that in today's society "any young person may become at risk" (Barr & Parrett, 1995, p. 2). Numerous professional fields within the social sciences have coined individual definitions for the term since its conception and resultant addition to the national vocabulary. Over the past decade, the population has been described as "socially and culturally deprived," "disadvantaged," and "disengaged" or "disconnected" (Barr & Parrett, 1995, p. 2). For this reason, professionals continue to struggle with developing a clear and concise definition of "at risk."

Approaches for Defining At-Risk

As previously stated, many factors go into play while defining "at risk" in today's schools and communities. Professional background, as well as political and social implications regarding terminology, significantly impact an organization's selection of how to define the population thus taking the first step toward serving these students and their families. According to Hixson and Tinzmann (1990), research supports five general approaches to defining at-risk students in today's schools and communities: the predictive approach, descriptive approach, unilateral approach, school factors approach, and ecological approach. The following section briefly describes each approach and its correlating limitations.

Predictive approach. Based on an early intervention philosophy, the Predictive Approach utilizes available demographic information within the school system to identify students demonstrating characteristics common to at-risk populations. However, early categorization of students could have a significant impact on lowering teacher expectations and does not take into account individual strengths.

and weaknesses within the child and the respective family unit (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

Descriptive approach. Based on a monitoring/intervention strategy, the Descriptive Approach identifies students at risk of failing through evaluation of grades and academic factors contributing to possible school drop out. In attempts to move away from early categorization of students based on demographic information alone, the approach waits for school failure within the regular education system before implementing intervention strategies and/or techniques. A major limitation of the approach is the fact that students are labeled, removed from the "regular" education system (but not placed in special education), and given a "modified curriculum" which often leaves them academically farther behind their peers when they "progress" to the next grade (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

Unilateral approach. The Unilateral Approach accepts the underlying philosophy that all students become at risk at some point in their educational careers. Focus is placed on providing intervention strategies for students at all levels, regardless of strengths, weakness, or identifiable need. A significant limitation to the approach is that its implementation ignores the need to focus attention on systematic structural and organizational challenges which impede the at-risk students' potential for educational progress and success (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

School factors approach. The School Factors Approach supports the philosophy that characteristics within the organizational and structural system of the school significantly impact students' potential success and academic progress. Used often to encourage school accountability and effective program planning, the approach allows the elimination of factors over which the at-risk student has little or no control such as

family characteristics, individual strengths, and weaknesses. However, focus on total school responsibility for academic success and/or individual progress minimizes personal responsibility of the student as well as parent participation in efforts directed toward producing an effective educational program for their child (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

Ecological approach. Based on an ecological systems theory, the Ecological Approach recognizes education as a "process that takes place both inside and outside of the school" (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990). Relationships and interactions between key systems within the at-risk student's life such as the school system, the family, and the community allow analysis of characteristics and/or factors in order to provide appropriate programming and support which maximize positive and minimize negative influences directly impacting the child's educational experience. Although the approach allows for a shared responsibility between the school, family, and community for educational success, program effectiveness directly correlates with available support systems within the school and community (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

Factors Placing Youth At Risk

The process of definition development and population identification is complex in nature and supported by the underlying beliefs/philosophy of individual service agencies. In a national study of at-risk youth conducted by Phi Delta Kappa, researchers Frymier and Gansneder (1989) identified 45 contributing factors for placing students at risk and ranked them according to level of impact from most serious to least serious. Additional research allowed the list to be condensed into 36 factors (the combination of three or more placing a student at risk for dropping out of school) which included the following factors: attempted suicide, substance abuse, negative self-esteem, teen pregnancy, school expulsion and/or suspension, arrest for illegal

activity, and/or school failure (Frymier et al., 1992). Follow-up data analysis allowed the list to be categorized into five general areas (personal pain, academic failure, socioeconomic situation of the family, family instability, and family budgeting) of which researchers reported that schools could only address two: personal pain and academic failure (Frymier et al., 1992).

Research of Barr and Parrett (1995) supports the theory that factors which place children and youth at risk can be divided into two primary categories: (a) those relating to individual, family, and community such as low socioeconomic background and/or attending school with many other poor children; and (b) those relating to school such as reading one year below grade level and/or having been retained. A national study by McPartland and Slavin (1990) showed that students demonstrating significant characteristics in both areas during elementary school have minimal chances of ever graduating from high school. Likewise, according to Siegel and Senna (1994), a significant body of research in the fields of education and juvenile delinquency support not only connection between the delinquent behavior of juveniles and their experience in school, but that dissatisfaction with the educational experience "sets the stage for more serious forms of delinquency both in and out of school" (p. 370) as well.

Individual, family, and community related. A significant body of research supports that individual, family, and community factors impact a student's potential for becoming at risk for school drop out (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Frymier et al., 1992; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990; Knapp, 1995; Levin, 1994; Walker & Sylwester, 1991). Individual strengths and weaknesses (i.e., physical or learning disability, attentional problems, low self-esteem) as well as family characteristics (i.e., ethnicity and/or non-English language background, single parent family, poverty

level household, etc.) combine with community factors (i.e., low socioeconomic neighborhood, minimal support systems, etc.) to increase the likelihood of limited academic progress and educational success (Barr & Parrett, 1995). Interaction of these issues oftentimes compound into a "collision of factors" that overwhelm the at-risk student and precipitate decisions of dropping out of school (Mann, 1986).

School related. Numerous researchers suggest that educational progress significantly impacts a student's likelihood of remaining in school through graduation (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Frymier et al., 1992; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990; Knapp, 1995; Levin, 1994; Walker & Sylwester, 1991). Current research contends that schools can predict (with approximately 80% accuracy) whether a third-grade child will graduate from school (McPartland & Slavin, 1990). According to a 1992 national study on drop-out rates, between 10 to 25% of all students within metroplex areas across the country drop out before completing high school (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Likewise, current juvenile justice research strongly supports the relationship between delinquency and poor academic achievement (Siegel & Senna, 1994). As issues of juvenile crime and violence reach critical proportions in today's cities, the manner in which schools are addressing the needs of these at-risk students become equally important.

Current Trends in Violence Reduction Programs

National, state, and local officials cite rising trends of violence among America's youth as one of the most critical issues facing the country today (Juvenile Crime the Top Concern of Local Officials, 1996; Legislators Cite Juvenile Justice Reform as Top Issue, 1995). A review of the literature suggests that there are three primary professional fields addressing issues regarding adolescent violence and

crime through local programming: the juvenile justice system, schools, and individual local communities which emphasize educational and/or recreational issues (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Knitzer et al., 1990; Siegel & Senna, 1994; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995; Wilkinson, 1994; Wolford et al., 1995).

Juvenile Justice System Programs

According to Siegel and Senna (1994), juvenile delinquency can be defined as "criminal behavior committed by minors" (p. 6). Research supports that youth who demonstrate delinquent behavior are more likely to continue the criminal behavior into adulthood, especially if they have been incarcerated during adolescence (Shannon, 1982; Siegel & Senna, 1994). To combat this issue, juvenile justice agencies of the 1990s seek to find prevention/intervention programs emphasizing diversionary and community-based programs rather than institutionalization. Preventive programs focus on providing community activities for the youth which keep them off the streets, thus reducing unsupervised time available for delinquent behavior. Intervention programs (i.e., diversionary programs) utilize "formally acknowledged and organized efforts" designed to process juvenile offenders "outside of the justice system" (Siegel & Senna, 1994). Through this means first-time offenders participate in deferred adjudication activities which minimize potential entrance into the justice system and reduce the probability of adult criminal behavior.

School System Programs

As with the juvenile justice system, today's schools develop both preventive and intervention programs to address violence reduction. Preventive measures focus primarily on discipline issues with "zero tolerance" and "safe school" policies, as well as restructuring of the educational system through current school reform movements to address

school failures issues (i.e., Effective Schools) (Guerra, 1996; Stephens, 1995; Vail, 1995). Mandated through local, state, and federal legislation, these policies seek to minimize school violence and disruption of the educational environment through structured, consistent punitive measures for violence and/or delinquent behavior within schools (Fikac, 1997; Vail, 1995). Interventive measures include teacher (i.e., violence intervention/prevention) and student (i.e., conflict mediation and social skills) training programs as well as social service programs within schools (i.e., Communities in Schools) to assist in addressing the changing educational, physical, social, and emotional needs of today's student (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Hopkins, 1993; Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, & Killip, 1992).

Educational reform. For the past 2 decades, the educational reform movement has swept across the country as schools struggle to establish accountability standards while meeting the expanding needs of children within our complex society (Owens, 1995). From the 1983 governmental study "A Nation At Risk" to the current "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," national, state, and local focus has been placed on the effectiveness of public school education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Riley, 1994; Special Education Programs, 1994). An extensive review of literature conducted by Purkey and Smith (1985) identifies the following assumptions supporting the effective schools concept:

1. The central purpose of the school is to teach with success being measured by students' progress in knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
2. Creating an environment in which learning and teaching can occur is the school's primary responsibility.

3. For a school to be successful it must be treated holistically, addressing the needs of all students, not only a select few.

4. Attitudes and behaviors of teachers and staff are the most critical characteristics when compared to physical issues such as library size and building age.

5. Above all, schools must accept responsibility for students' academic performance (success and/or failure) regardless of their ethnicity, gender, home/cultural background, or familial socioeconomic status.

In essence, effective schools philosophy moves toward school accountability for low academic achievement rather than "blaming the victim, namely the student" (Owens, 1995, p. 308). This fundamental philosophy change significantly impacts the manner in which schools address programming needs for at-risk populations.

Discipline programs. Across the country educators and police report that school violence is increasing at an alarming rate (Ascher, 1994). A recent Congressional study revealed that more than 16,000 crimes occur per school day across the country (Serrano, 1993). Current national and state legislative measures drive local policies regarding discipline and violence within our public schools. The Safe Schools Act of 1993 (National) and Senate Bill 1 (State) are both examples of legislative measures intended to strengthen schools' ability to create a safe environment conducive for learning (Stephens, 1995; Texas Education Agency, 1995). A number of school districts have formed individual police departments to address the rising need for licensed officers on school campuses to maintain order and improve perceptions of safety by students, parents, and faculty members (Slate, 1997). Likewise, many districts have adopted a "zero tolerance" policy which allows administrators the freedom to expel students for specific behaviors

(Vail, 1995). However, concerns continue to exist regarding appropriate educational opportunities for these students and the likelihood of increased delinquent behaviors when they are not in school (Fikac, 1997; Siegel & Senna, 1994).

Teacher/student training programs. An abundance of literature documents continued effort of schools to provide appropriate violence reduction training to teachers and students (Ascher, 1994; National Educational Service Foundation, 1995; Fikac, 1997; Guerra, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1993; Vail, 1995; Wilkinson, 1994). Teacher training programs focus on crisis intervention strategies/techniques, student identification, improved classroom management and/or discipline policies, as well as personal mentoring (Ceperley & Simon, 1994; Guerra, 1996; Heyman, 1994; Knoff & Batsche, 1994). Student training programs focus primarily in the area of self-esteem and conflict resolution skill development (Ceperley & Simon, 1994; Gallus & Stinski, 1994; Guerra, 1996; Wilkinson, 1994).

School-based social services. As shown through the above literature review, the needs of today's students are becoming increasingly more complex while underlying educational philosophy has shifted to viewing students holistically (Owens, 1995). Likewise, research supports that environments outside of the classroom such as the family and community directly impact educational progress for at risk students (Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990; Texas Education Agency, 1994). For this reason, many states and local school districts have expanded educational services to include school nurses and social workers who have become key support personnel in addressing not only the physical needs of students but the social ones as well (Texas Education Agency, 1994). Likewise, the Communities in Schools model (licensed social workers who function as counselors within the schools to provide social

service support) demonstrates the increasing need for collaboration among state and local agencies with schools and community businesses (Hopkins, 1993).

Local Community Programs

Community programs focus primarily on education, training, and recreation programs (Suren & Stiefvater, 1995). Through personal education youth receive additional support in self-esteem and conflict resolution skill development as well as decision-making (Wilkinson, 199; Wolford et al., 1995). Community youth centers and recreation programs provide tutoring services during the school year and alternative activities for juveniles during non-school hours (Suren & Stiefvater, 1995). Current research, both in the field of education and juvenile delinquency, identifies these preventive measures as key components in effectively meeting the needs of at-risk students and diverting potential delinquent behavior (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Guerra, 1996; Siegel & Senna, 1994).

Collaborative Efforts Among Agencies

Collaboration can be defined as "a process to reach goals that cannot be achieved acting singly" (Payzant, 1992, p. 141). Because the needs of at-risk students today are complex in nature, the solutions are generally complex as well and require cooperation from a variety of service providers (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990). Partnerships between service agencies provide "coordinated services" that utilize valuable expertise and resources from various agencies while contributing to the academic success of at-risk students within the public school system (Texas Education Agency, 1994). However, personal barriers such as control and philosophical differences combine

with institutional barriers that establish program structures which hamper effectiveness of these efforts (Texas Education Agency, 1994).

A significant body of research supports the existence of interagency efforts addressing previously discussed issues, the majority of which are facilitated by one or two primary agencies (Knitzer et al., 1990; Siegel & Senna, 1994; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995; Wilkinson, 1994; Wolford et al., 1995). Analysis of current literature suggests limited evaluative information regarding the effectiveness of these programs (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1991). Likewise, research emphasizes the increasing need for multiple professional agencies to work collaboratively in order to minimize duplication of services and provide more effective programming (Arella, 1993; Guthrie & Guthrie, 1991; Knitzer et al., 1990; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995).

Community-Based Collaborative Efforts

Professionals from various disciplines within the social sciences such as education, juvenile delinquency, and social work agree that no one entity can effectively solve the dilemma now faced in regard to educational success (or the lack thereof) and its impact on juvenile behavior (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Siegel & Senna, 1994). As agencies facilitate preventive and interventive programming in attempts to address the issue, the overlapping of services becomes readily apparent (Knitzer et al., 1990; Texas Education Agency, 1994). Collaborative efforts have become natural vehicles to facilitate effective resource utilization while serving identified populations. According to Payzant (1992), effective collaboration includes the following key components:

1. Jointly developing and agreeing to a set of common goals and directions;
2. sharing responsibility for obtaining those goals;
3. working together to achieve those goals, using the expertise of each collaborator. (p. 141)

Researchers also emphasize that collaboration is not a simple method to utilize but requires time, effective communication, and continued commitment to achieve designated goals (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1991; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990).

Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program

The Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Program is a community-based multiagency violence reduction program for at-risk youth. Established through a grant awarded by the Texas Criminal Justice Division, Office of the Governor, the program facilitates collaboration between multiple local agencies including the City of Denton, Denton Independent School District, Denton Police Department, Texas Woman's University, Boys and Girls Club of America, and the local Juvenile Justice system. Facilitated through Juvenile Diversionary Services, Inc. of Denton (an organization designed to administer the state-awarded grant and directed by a board of members from participating organizations), the purpose of the DDP/I program is twofold: (a) prevention (i.e., recreational and educational) and intervention (i.e., correctional). The City of Denton contracted with Boys and Girls Club of America to provide educational and recreational programming for at-risk youths during the school year and summer months, thus forming Boys and Girls Club of Denton. Juvenile Diversionary Services, Inc. formed the Denton Teen Court which provides correctional alternatives for first-time offenders to divert from traditional adjudication processes.

Conclusion

As juvenile crime rates rise, schools and communities struggle to meet the ever-increasing needs of at-risk youth and their families. Service providers within local communities have begun using collaborative interagency models in efforts to minimize duplication of

services and meet funding mandates (Texas Education Agency, 1994). According to Knapp (1995), movement toward "comprehensive, collaborative services for children and families" (p. 5) has increased the level of difficulty in evaluating programming due to the complex, flexible nature of these programs as well as the divergence of multiple disciplines and/or philosophical backgrounds. Therefore, the apparent need for multiagency collaborative efforts addressing issues of adolescent violence and crime remains consistent and generates a need for program effectiveness evaluation.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The objective of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program for at-risk youth. Based on Stake's Transactional Evaluation Model (Isaac & Michael, 1982; Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991), major emphasis was placed on depicting program processes and the perspectives of key people. Quantitative (i.e., categorical and factor analysis) and qualitative (i.e., open-ended survey questions and audiotaped interviews) methods were used to analyze data in respect to perceptions of participants on program effectiveness.

Program Evaluation Design

According to Isaac and Michael (1982), program evaluation differs from theoretical research in that research focus is placed not on "theory building but on product delivery or mission accomplishment" (p. 2). Thus, the purpose of program evaluation is to "improve" a process rather than "prove" a specific theory. Information collected from program evaluation is both formative for the purpose of revision/modification and summative for the purpose of determining program merit and/or effectiveness (Borick & Jemelka, 1982).

The DDP/I program philosophy centers around community-based violence prevention and intervention strategies. The development of the program emerged through multiagency collaborative needs assessment. Components of the program include interagency collaboration, program implementation, and process evaluation. Therefore, a program evaluation design was the necessary model for the research process to determine

program effectiveness (Borick & Jemelka, 1982; Isaac & Michael, 1982; Shadish et al., 1991).

Based on Stake's Transactional Evaluation Model (Isaac & Michael, 1982; Shadish et al., 1991), major emphasis was placed on depicting program processes and the value of perspectives of key people. Cross-sectional survey research methodology was utilized to collect information from a predetermined population (Wiersma, 1995). Because the purpose of the study was to conduct a program evaluation of participants' perceptions of program impact and satisfaction as well as barriers to effective multiagency collaboration, a survey design including both qualitative and quantitative measurements was selected to be used for this process. Formal permission was granted from the City of Denton (fiscal agent for the DDP/I program) as well as the Texas Woman's University (TWU) Human Subjects Review Committee and the TWU Graduate School prior to the implementation of the program evaluation (see Appendix A).

Instrument item formatting included "selected response" (based on a 5-point Likert scale) to allow for consistency of response across respondents (Wiersma, 1995). For example, a quantitative item on the Boys and Girls Club Parents/Guardians Survey was as follows: "The program has decreased the possibility of my child getting into trouble with the law." Available responses ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree (see Appendix B).

Instrument item formatting also included "open-ended" questions to allow for freedom of response pertaining to perceptions of program impact and/or satisfaction (Wiersma, 1995). Each survey instrument concluded with the following statement allowing for qualitative data collection: "Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below" (see Appendices B-G).

Because respondent background and/or demographic information allows classification for analysis, a demographic checklist was used to identify sample characteristics (Wiersma, 1995). A pilot study was conducted to establish construct validity and internal reliability of the survey research instruments.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to design and validate evaluation instruments for the DDP/I program evaluation. A literature review was conducted to examine the content of current program evaluations for community-based recreation/education after-school programs as well as those of juvenile correction systems using teen courts as diversionary adjudication alternatives for first-time offenders. Likewise, panels of experts from the fields of both education and correction were consulted regarding critical issues to be assessed during the first-year evaluation.

Instrumentation Development

Out of these two modes of research (literature review and expert panel) participant perception rating scales were developed based on two primary goals within the DDP/I program: (a) development of an after-school and summer program to prevent potential delinquent behavior for students targeted as at risk by community agencies, and (b) development of a city teen court to provide diversionary adjudication opportunities for first-time offenders. The following sections briefly describe the program evaluation instrumentation development process for the Boys and Girls Club of Denton and Denton Teen Court Programs as well as the questionnaire for the multiagency interviews.

Boys and Girls Club of Denton. Instruments were developed for the Boys and Girls Club of Denton County to examine program effectiveness of

the after-school and summer program and piloted to establish construct validity and internal reliability. Three instruments were designed to investigate perceptions regarding program impact and satisfaction of parents/guardians, youth participants, and personnel within the program. Survey instruments were submitted to an expert panel consisting of participating agency professionals from Boys and Girls Club of America, City of Denton, Denton Independent School District, Texas Woman's University, Denton Police Department, and local Juvenile Justice System representatives for review and input concerning content. The instruments then were submitted to a panel of university professors for additional review and refined through the pilot study process (see Appendices B-G).

Denton Teen Court. Existing program evaluation instruments of diversionary adjudication programs for first offenders were identified by the DDP/I Program Director and validated through repeated use within the Teen Court programs around the state; thus, eliminating the need for a pilot study for this portion of the program evaluation. For the DDP/I program evaluation three different instruments were utilized: (a) an instrument designed to examine perceptions of parents/guardians of first-time offenders accessing Denton Teen Court as deferred adjudication (based on validated Teen Court parent/guardian instrument), (b) an instrument to examine perceptions of juvenile defendants accessing Denton Teen Court as deferred adjudication (based on validated Teen Court juvenile defendant instrument), and (c) an instrument to examine perceptions of Denton Teen Court volunteers (see Appendices E-G).

Multiagency interviews. In order to examine perceptions of key persons from agencies involved within the program, an interview questionnaire was developed to identify barriers to multiagency collaboration and communication and obtain recommendations to facilitate

future collaboration within the program. The instrument was submitted for review to a panel of experts from participating professional agencies as well as a panel of university professors. The refined instrument guided the researcher through audio-taped interviews with selected multiagency representatives (see Appendix H).

Sample

A nonrandom sample of 15 subjects from each group of key participants was identified for the pilot study from Boys and Girls Club participants within the surrounding geographical area. The program director identified 45 parent/guardians, youth participants, and personnel and asked them to mail completed survey instruments to the principal investigator. A pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope was attached for that purpose. For the parent/guardian and youth participant populations, 14 surveys were returned yielding a return rate of 93% for each group. Likewise, 13 personnel surveys were returned to the principal investigator yielding a return rate of 87%. Data collection for the pilot study was conducted during a 3-week time period prior to the Spring 1997 semester so that data could be analyzed and the survey instruments modified, if necessary, for the DDP/I Program Evaluation.

Content Validity

Content validity of the Boys and Girls Club instruments was established by designing question items related to specific program goals. Instruments were reviewed by a panel of experts from participating agencies representing individual community-based programs. Individuals from Boys and Girls Club America, City of Denton, Denton Police Department, the local Juvenile Justice System as well as representatives from university faculty and school district personnel served on the panel of experts to review instruments for the program evaluation.

Construct Validity

Factor analysis allows a researcher to determine if variables within a study can be grouped according to "clusters" or specific, identifiable constructs (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Therefore, a factor analysis was conducted on the pilot participants' responses to identify major constructs. Results of parent/guardian and volunteer personnel survey analysis showed items grouped together on two constructs identified by the principal investigator as "impact" and "satisfaction."

Results of the youth participant survey analysis showed all items clustered around one construct identified as "satisfaction." The age and homogeneity of the pilot sample population is considered to be the reason for the one construct identified. Pilot youth participants' ages ranged between 7 and 15 years of age, and the sample was drawn from populations identified as minority at-risk youth by local community agencies. Thus, pilot youth participants appeared "satisfied" with the program. Another reason could be attributed to the small number of subjects available for the pilot study which possibly impacted the distribution of data results.

Internal Reliability

Reliability refers to "the consistency of scores obtained" and can be reported as an alpha coefficient for items that are not scored right or wrong (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Internal reliability of the Boys and Girls Club instruments was established at the .65 alpha level for parent/guardian, .69 alpha level for youth participant, and .76 alpha level for volunteer/personnel survey instruments. Based on the above results, the Boys and Girls Club survey instruments were found to be valid and reliable. No modifications were made prior to utilization for the DDP/I Program Evaluation (see Appendices B-G).

DDP/I Program Evaluation

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program for at-risk youth. Major emphasis was placed on depicting program processes and the value of perspectives of key people (Borick & Jemelka, 1982; Isaac & Michael, 1982; Shadish et al., 1991).

Subjects

Key persons within the Boys and Girls Club of Denton and Denton Teen Court were surveyed and/or interviewed to determine program satisfaction. A nonrandom subject selection was utilized based on program participation so that the number of possible subjects in each group was limited to those actually within the program. Identified subjects included parents, youth participants, and personnel/volunteers within the Boys and Girls Club of Denton; juvenile defendants, parents, and personnel/volunteers within the Denton Teen Court; as well as selected representatives from participating professional community agencies.

Boys and Girls Club of Denton. The following number of individuals was surveyed within each group: parent/guardian (\underline{n} = 98), participant (\underline{n} = 98), and personnel/volunteer (\underline{n} = 15). Subjects within the Boys and Girls Club of Denton program evaluation were identified by program directors based on participation during the Spring of 1996, Summer of 1997, and Fall of 1997 programs. Subjects who had spent less than 6 weeks in the program were identified and removed from the study to limit threats to internal validity of study results.

Denton Teen Court. The following number of individuals was surveyed within each group: parent/guardian (\underline{n} = 132), defendant

($n = 132$), personnel/volunteer ($n = 35$). Subjects within the Denton Teen Court program evaluation were identified by program directors based on program participation between November 1995 and February 1997. Subjects who had not completed the deferred adjudication program were identified and removed from the study to limit threats to internal validity of study results.

Multiagency participants. Two representatives from participating agencies including the Boys and Girls Club of Denton, City of Denton, Denton ISD, Denton Police Department, and the local Juvenile Justice Systems were interviewed to identify perceptions regarding multiagency collaboration methods and program effectiveness. A nonrandom sample was selected based on agency affiliation and director recommendation. Agency directors were contacted by the principal investigator via phone and asked to identify personnel within the organization to participate in the interview process. Recommended personnel were contacted by the principal investigator via phone and asked to voluntarily participate in the audiotaped interview.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected over an 8-week period during the first 3 months of the Spring of 1997. Due to mandated confidential procedures required in juvenile justice systems involving minors, the principal investigator was required to collect data through the Teen Court Program Director and had no direct contact with youth participants and their families. The principal investigator was responsible for direct data collection from participating community agency professionals.

A survey research design was selected for the program evaluation. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993), there are four primary methods of data collection used for survey research: direct group administration, mail surveys, telephone surveys, and individual

interviews. All four methods of data collection were used for this program evaluation. The following section identifies each method and the manner in which it was used for the DDP/I program evaluation.

Direct group administration. Direct group administration was utilized for data collection with the Denton Teen Court Survey for personnel and volunteers, as well as current youth participants and personnel/volunteers for the Boys and Girls Club of Denton. This method involves administering the instrument to all members of the population at the same time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993).

Since the principal investigator was unable to interact directly with program participants in the data collection process, program administrators were trained by the principal investigator in direct group administration to ensure interrater reliability at 90% or better. This format allowed for consistency in administration and data collection procedures when the interviews were conducted by multiple interviewers (Wiersma, 1995). To maintain confidentiality, program administrators identified the subjects from existing program databases, assigned coded numbers such as "A#" for parent and "B#" for the corresponding youth participant/juvenile defendant, and requested that the instruments be completed at one of the activity/meetings. Completed instruments then were collected and forwarded to the principal investigator. All surveys were attached to a cover letter explaining the purpose of the program evaluation (see Appendices I-J).

Mail surveys. Mail survey research involves sending the research instrument by mail to identified subjects and requesting the completed survey be returned to the principal investigator for analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). This method was used to collect data for the parents/guardians and juvenile defendants who had completed the deferred adjudication process, the parents/guardians of current Boys and Girls

Club participants as well as parents/guardians and youth participants not currently participating in the Boys and Girls Club of Denton. To maintain confidentiality, program administrators of both Denton Teen Court and Boys and Girls Club of Denton identified subjects from existing program databases and assigned coded numbers such as "A#" for parent and "B#" for the corresponding youth participant/juvenile defendant since the principal investigator did not have direct access to identifying information concerning participants and their families. Program administrators were also responsible for labeling envelopes involved in the mail surveys. All surveys were attached to a cover letter explaining the purpose of the program evaluation; and a pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope was included for return of the survey (see Appendices I-J).

Telephone surveys. The anonymous surveys were returned to the university in the attached pre-addressed, postage-paid envelopes. The principal investigator collected returned surveys and identified returned/unreturned responses by the "A/B#" coding on the survey instruments. Periodic review of returned instruments allowed program administrators to identify missing surveys. Due to a significant number of unreturned surveys (reported in Chapter IV), a telephone survey administration was then conducted for the Denton Teen Court program evaluation to minimize possible sample bias. The principal investigator trained program administrators in direct and telephone survey administration to ensure interrater reliability at 90% or better. This format allowed for consistency in administration and data collection procedures when the interviews were conducted by multiple interviewers (Wiersma, 1995). Telephone interview procedures included citing information within the program evaluation cover letters detailing

purpose, confidentiality, voluntary nature, and study results availability issues.

Individual interviews. In order to assess perceptions of agency professionals involved with the development and implementation of the DDP/I program, individual audiotaped interviews were conducted with two representatives from Boys and Girls Club of Denton, the City of Denton, Denton ISD, Denton Police Department as well as representatives from the local Juvenile Justice System. A nonrandom sample was selected based on agency affiliation and director recommendation. Agency directors were contacted via phone and identified personnel within the organization to participate in the interview process. Recommended personnel were contacted via phone and asked to participate in the voluntary, audiotaped interview process. Each audiotaped interview took approximately 30 to 40 minutes and was conducted at the participant's place of business.

Data Analysis Procedures

The purpose of this program evaluation was to analyze perceptions of key persons within the DDP/I program regarding overall program impact and satisfaction as well as agency personnel perceptions regarding multiagency collaboration processes and effectiveness. Both quantitative and qualitative methodology was used to analyze data collected during the program evaluation. The following section briefly describes each method and the manner in which it was used during the DDP/I program evaluation.

Quantitative analysis procedures. The data collected from Boys and Girls Club and Denton Teen Court surveys were nominal in nature; therefore, the chi-square test was used to analyze data and provide categorical reporting (Balian, 1994). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993), the chi-square test is a nonparametric technique and "based on

comparison between expected frequencies and actual, obtained frequencies" (p. 201). Statistical analysis was conducted utilizing a computer software package entitled Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical analysis results yielded a chi-square "value" (identified by χ^2) that can be compared to the appropriate statistical table in order to determine the probability of occurrence (Munro & Page, 1993). For the purpose of this program evaluation the "Pearson of χ^2 Probability" was used to determine significance levels (Munro & Page, 1993). Data analysis also included the use of "Crosstabs Tables" (contingency tables) to obtain frequency counts and percentages (Munro & Page, 1993).

Prior to the statistical analysis, raw data were coded by the principal investigator in a manner which allowed the creation of three data files: Boys and Girls Club, Teen Court Survey, and Teen Court Parent/Defendant. Statistical analyses procedures were developed and conducted for the following data analysis: perceptions of Boys and Girls Club respondents by group (parents/guardians, participants, and personnel), comparison of perceptions between Boys and Girls Club parent/guardians and participants, perceptions of Denton Teen Court Survey respondents (personnel/volunteers), and perceptions of Denton Teen Court parents/guardians and juvenile defendants.

Qualitative analysis procedures. For the qualitative portion of the program evaluation, open-ended questions were included on survey instruments and in-depth interviews were conducted with personnel from participating community agencies. Qualitative data received from returned survey instruments were transcribed by the principal investigator, coded, and analyzed for recurring themes. Using the in-depth interview questionnaire as a guide, audiotaped interviews were conducted with two representatives from each participating agency in

order to identify perceptions of barriers to multiagency collaboration and obtain recommendations to facilitate future collaboration within the program. Following the audiotaped interviews, data then were transcribed into a script by the principal investigator, coded, and analyzed for recurring themes and individual perceptions. Interrater reliability for both data analyses (open-ended questions and audiotaped interviews) was established at 97% through the use of a second reader that has had extensive experience working with community agencies as well as at-risk youth and their families as a doctorate-level school psychologist. Data were coded by the principal investigator and a second reader according to thematic relationship (i.e., philosophy, program structure, "turf issues," etc.) and systematically analyzed.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program for at-risk youth. Major emphasis was placed on depicting program processes and the value of perspectives of key people (Borick & Jemelka, 1982; Isaac & Michael, 1982; Shadish et al., 1991). Specific questions for research and data analysis are discussed in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program. The State of Texas-awarded grant funded two community-based programs within the local area: Boys and Girls Club (BGC) of Denton (a prevention program) and Denton Teen Court (an intervention program). Key persons within the two programs were surveyed regarding program impact and satisfaction. Likewise, professionals from participating agencies were interviewed to identify perceptions regarding program impact as well as the multiagency collaboration experience. An analysis of data from the program evaluation follows.

Findings

Boys and Girls Club of Denton

The Boys and Girls Club of Denton is a community-based prevention program designed to provide after-school and summer activities for youth identified as at risk by community agencies. Located at the Fred Moore Learning Center, the program provides free, supervised educational and recreational activities for at-risk youth ages 7 to 18 in the surrounding community. The philosophy of the program supports the belief that if youth are engaged in supervised, productive activities the probability of their participation in delinquent behavior is significantly decreased.

The following research questions guided the principal investigator and expert panel in the development of the BGC program evaluation:

1. Did the BGC program positively impact youth participants' lives?
2. Did the BGC program decrease youth participants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior?
3. Did the BGC tutoring program significantly improve the youth participants' school progress?
4. Did the BGC program impact the youth participants' behavior at home and in the community?
5. Were participating parent/guardian, youth participant, and volunteer/personnel satisfied with the overall program and willing to continue participation?

A 5-point Likert scale was used to survey key persons in the Boys and Girls Club of Denton regarding perceptions of program impact and satisfaction (see Appendices B-D). Individuals were surveyed according to group affiliation such as parent/guardian, youth participant, and personnel. The following section analyzes study results with respect to each participant population.

Population characteristics. The following data describe characteristics of the Boys and Girls Club populations who responded to the program evaluation survey. Because of the confidential nature of juvenile and youth systems, the principal investigator was unable to directly contact families and youth, a situation which limited the number of returned responses. Likewise, the transient nature of parents/guardians and youth participants previously participating in the program significantly impacted the return rate.

The following number of surveys was utilized in the Boys and Girls Club program evaluation process. For the BGC parent/guardian population, 98 surveys were mailed and 58 were returned, yielding a return rate of

59%. For the BGC youth participant population, 98 surveys were administered by the program directors or mailed to past participants and 58 were returned, yielding a return rate 59%. For the BGC personnel population, 15 surveys were administered or mailed by program coordinators and 9 were returned, yielding a return rate of 60%.

Data presented in Table 1 describe population characteristics of Boys and Girls Club parent/guardian respondents. Of the parent/guardian respondents within the BGC, 79% were parents and 17% grandparents of youth participants. The majority of the respondents were female (81%), and 71% were between the ages of 25 and 44. In regard to ethnicity, the majority of the population was African American (72%), and 24% did not designate ethnicity on the completed survey (no response). Approximately 45% of the parent/guardian respondents came from households with total incomes in the \$19-30,000 range, 16% were in the \$10-18,000 range, and 19% were in households with total incomes below \$10,000.

Data presented in Table 2 describe population characteristics of BGC youth participant respondents. Of the responding Boys and Girls Club youth participants, 79% were African American; and approximately 20% did not indicate their ethnicity on the returned survey. Approximately 79% of the responding youth were between 7 and 12 years of age (31% in the 7-8 year range, 24% in the 9-10 year range, and 24% in the 11-12 year range). In regard to gender, 53% of the responding BGC youth participants were males and 45% were female.

Table 1

Population Characteristics of BGC Parent/Guardian Respondents

Total (N = 58)	Number	Percent
Relationship:		
Parent	46	79.3
Grandparent	10	17.2
Guardian	2	3.4
Gender:		
Male	8	13.8
Female	47	81.0
No response	3	5.2
Age:		
25-34	22	37.9
35-44	19	32.8
45-54	2	3.4
55+	6	10.4
No response	9	15.5
Ethnicity:		
African American	42	72.4
Caucasian	2	3.4
No response	14	24.2
Income:		
< \$10,000/yr.	11	19.0
\$10,000-\$18,000/yr.	9	15.5
\$19,000-\$30,000/yr.	26	44.8
> \$30,000/yr.	9	15.5
No response	3	5.2

Table 2

Population Characteristics of BGC Youth Participant Respondents

Total (<u>N</u> = 58)	Number	Percent
Gender:		
Male	31	53.4
Female	26	44.8
No response	1	1.8
Age:		
7-8 yr.	18	31.0
9-10 yr.	14	24.2
11-12 yr.	14	24.2
13-14 yr.	8	13.8
15-16 yr.	2	3.4
No response	2	3.4
Ethnicity:		
African American	46	79.3
Caucasian	1	1.8
No response	11	18.9

Data presented in Table 3 describe population characteristics of BGC personnel/volunteer respondents. Of the 9 responding BGC personnel/volunteers, 5 were program coordinators and staff while 4 were volunteers. The majority of the responding population was male (7 of 9 respondents), and 6 of the 9 respondents were African American. In regard to age, 4 of the respondents were in the 18 to 24 year range, 3 were in the 25 to 34 year age range, and 2 respondents were ages 35 to 44.

Table 3

Population Characteristics of BGC Personnel/Volunteer Respondents*

Total (N = 9)	Number
Role:	
Program Coordinator	3
Staff	2
Volunteer	4
Gender:	
Male	2
Female	7
Age:	
18-24 yr.	4
25-34 yr.	3
35-44 yr.	2
Ethnicity:	
African American	6
Hispanic	1
Caucasian	1
Other	1

*Percentages were not used to report data due to the small number of participants within each subgroup.

Perceptions of impact/satisfaction by group. Individual survey items were developed for each research question and grammatically formatted to address individual group perceptions. For example, Item 1 on each survey addresses program impact. For the parent/guardian survey the question reads, "The Boys and Girls Club has made my child's life better." For the youth participant survey the question reads, "The Boys and Girls Club has made my life better." For the personnel survey the question reads, "The Boys and Girls Club has made a positive impact on the youth participants' lives." In order to facilitate effective

presentation of data within this chapter, the parent/guardian survey item questions were selected to be used as clarifiers on the following data presentation tables.

Table 4 presents BGC respondents' perceptions of program impact and satisfaction by group based on analysis of survey item response. Of the responding parents/guardians, 95% perceived the Boys and Girls Club program to have a positive impact on the participants' lives while 5% were undecided. Of the responding Boys and Girls Club youth participants, 93% perceived the program to have a positive impact on their lives. All of the responding personnel/volunteers within the Boys and Girls Club perceived the program to have a positive impact on the youth participants' lives. There was no significant difference in group perceptions regarding program impact on youth participants' lives (see Table 9).

Table 4

Perceptions of Program Impact on Youth Participants' Lives by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 125)	Parent (<u>n</u> = 58)	Participant (<u>n</u> = 58)	Personnel (<u>n</u> = 9)
Strongly agree	27 (46.6%)	26 (44.8%)	4 (44.4%)
Agree	28 (48.3%)	28 (48.3%)	5 (55.6%)
Undecided	3 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Disagree	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.9%)	0 (0.0%)

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The Boys and Girls Club has made my child's life better."

Table 5 presents data regarding perceptions of program impact on youth participants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior by group. Of the parent/guardian respondents, 83% perceived that the Boys and Girls Club program decreased the youth participants' opportunity for

delinquent behavior. Only 6 of the parent/guardian respondents perceived that the program did not have an impact on the youth participants' opportunity for delinquent behavior. Of the responding youth participants, 90% perceived the Boys and Girls Club Program decreased their opportunity for "getting in trouble with the law" (delinquent behavior). All of the responding personnel/volunteers perceived the program to significantly decrease the youth participants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior. There was no statistically significant difference in groups regarding perceptions of program impact and decreasing the youth participants' opportunity for delinquent behavior (see Table 9).

Table 5

Perceptions of Program Impact on Youth Participants' Potential Opportunity for Delinquent Behavior by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 125)	Parent (<u>n</u> = 58)	Participant (<u>n</u> = 58)	Personnel (<u>n</u> = 9)
Strongly agree	25 (43.1%)	32 (55.2%)	2 (22.2%)
Agree	23 (39.7%)	20 (34.5%)	7 (77.8%)
Undecided	4 (6.9%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Disagree	4 (6.9%)	3 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	2 (3.4%)	2 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program has decreased the possibility of my child getting into trouble with the law."

Table 6 presents data of group perceptions regarding program impact on the youth participants' school progress. Of the parent/guardian respondents, 64% perceived that the Boys and Girls Club's tutoring program positively impacted the youth participants' school progress while 34% were undecided. Of responding youth participants, 67% agreed that the tutoring program helped their school progress, while 22%

were undecided. The majority of responding BGC program personnel/volunteers (89%) perceived that the tutoring program impacted the youth participants' school progress. There was a statistically significant difference in group perceptions regarding the BGC's tutoring program impact on the youth participants' school progress with BGC personnel/volunteers perceiving the program to have a greater impact on school progress than parents/guardians and youth participants, $\chi^2(8, N = 125), 16.93, p < .05$ (see Table 9).

Table 6

Perceptions of Program Impact on Youth Participants' School Progress by Group*

Total ($N = 125$)	Parent ($n = 58$)	Participant ($n = 58$)	Personnel ($n = 9$)
Strongly agree	10 (17.2%)	21 (36.2%)	1 (11.1%)
Agree	27 (46.6%)	18 (31.0%)	7 (77.8%)
Undecided	20 (34.5%)	13 (22.4%)	1 (11.1%)
Disagree	1 (1.7%)	3 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The tutoring program has helped my child make better grades in school."

Table 7 presents data regarding group perceptions of program impact on the youth participants' behavior both at home and in the community. Of the parent/guardian respondents, 83% perceived the program to have a positive impact on the youth participants' behavior at home and in the community, while 16% were undecided. The majority of the responding youth participants (79%) perceived the program to have a positive impact on their behavior at home and in the community. Of the responding personnel/volunteers, 67% perceived the program to have a positive impact on the youth participants' behavior in the home and

community while 22% were undecided at the time of this evaluation. There was no statistically significant difference in group perceptions regarding program impact on youth participants' behavior in the home and community (see Table 9).

Table 7

Perceptions of Program Impact on Youth Participants' Behavior at Home and in the Community by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 125)	Parent (<u>n</u> = 58)	Participant (<u>n</u> = 58)	Personnel (<u>n</u> = 9)
Strongly agree	12 (20.7%)	18 (31.0%)	1 (11.1%)
Agree	36 (62.1%)	28 (48.3%)	5 (55.6%)
Undecided	9 (15.5%)	7 (12.1%)	2 (22.2%)
Disagree	1 (1.7%)	2 (3.4%)	1 (11.1%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.2%)	0 (0.0%)

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program has helped my child's behavior at home and in the community."

Table 8 presents data regarding group perceptions of program satisfaction and willingness to continue participation. All of the responding parents/guardians of Boys and Girls Club youth participants were satisfied with the overall program and willing to continue participation. Of the responding youth participants, 90% were satisfied with the program and willing to continue participation. Of the responding personnel/volunteers, 89% were satisfied with the program and willing to continue participation. There was no statistically significant difference in group perceptions regarding overall program satisfaction and willingness to continue participation (see Table 9). Throughout the previous section Table 9 presents data regarding chi-square analysis and significance levels for survey item responses.

Table 8

Perceptions of BGC Program Satisfaction and Willingness to Continue Participation by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 125)	Parent (<u>n</u> = 58)	Participant (<u>n</u> = 58)	Personnel (<u>n</u> = 9)
Strongly agree	32 (55.2%)	40 (69.0%)	6 (66.7%)
Agree	26 (44.8%)	12 (20.7%)	2 (22.2%)
Undecided	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.9%)	1 (11.1%)
Disagree	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)

*Groups responded to the following statement: "We would participate in the program again."

Table 9

Chi-square Analysis of BGC Group Perceptions by Item*

Item issue	Significance value (prob.)
Positive impact on life	.22
Decreased delinquent behavior opportunity	.33
Tutoring program improved school progress	.03*
Improved community and home behavior	.32
Willingness to continue participation	.09

* $\chi^2(8, N = 125)$, 16.93 $p < .05$.

Boys and Girls Club parent/guardian, youth participant, and personnel overall perceptions of program impact and satisfaction. On each BGC survey was an open-ended question that stated, "Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below." Only 9 of the 58 responding parents/guardians, 6 of

the 58 responding youth participants, and 2 of the 9 responding personnel answered the qualitative portion of the survey. The following section briefly analyzes this portion of the program evaluation. Quoted responses are the exact words and spelling provided by respondents to facilitate accuracy of transcribed data as well as authenticity.

The majority of the responding BGC parents/guardians and youth participants perceived the program to have a positive impact. Of the responding parents/guardians, 4 of the 9 parents stated the provision of supervised after-school and summer activities to be a primary benefit for the youth participants.

"I like the way they help you on your work" (BGC Youth Participant/13-14).

"I like going to the Boys and Girls Club, because many of my friends go there and we have lots of fun" (BGC Youth Participant/11-12).

"I like the cub [club]" (BGC Youth Participant/7-8).

"I am very pleased with the program" (BGC Grandparent).

"It is a good program for the children. It gives them a chance to experiment things, and learn. When summer comes it is also something for the children to do" (BGC Parent).

"I am very grateful for the club. It gives my child something to do and teaches her to interact with other children" (BGC Parent).

"My son has enjoyed many of the field trips provided by the program. I am grateful as well, because some of the trips I wasn't able to take him" (BGC Parent).

Likewise, several of the responding BGC parents/guardians perceived the personnel and volunteers in the program to demonstrate leadership abilities which had a direct impact on the lives of the youth participants.

"I like the Program. I am very pleased with the leadership"
(BGC Grandparent).

"I like the Boys and Girls club, it give my kids something to do not only after school but during summer and keep them busy instead of being bored all day during summer. I really is glad for the club and C---- is a big help and other staff members" (BGC Parent).

"My child is in the Boys home. He was doing very well a the club. C---- really helped my child very much" (BGC Parent).

In regard to program structure, at least 1 representative from each group responded to the open-ended question with suggestions on ways the program could be improved. Likewise, 1 youth participant (between the ages of 9 and 10) wanted to have more playtime whereas another expressed concern over group discipline procedures (a technique which removed privileges from the entire group of children rather than specific ones who were breaking stated rules). The suggestion that the program provide more outside activities, as well as a greater variety of inside activities to increase participation of the youth, was made by 1 parent. The 2 responding personnel identified the need to provide more structured programming in academics and counseling. In addition, 1 personnel member suggested the need for a Denton Boys and Girls Club that is not affiliated with another city. The current program is directly linked to another Boys and Girls Club in a larger neighboring city which oftentimes dictates special program/activity options rather than allowing these to be developed at the local community level. Funding and transportation issues fall into this category as well.

"I think we have to have more playtime" (BGC Youth Participant/9-10).

"Have more outdoor activities for the kids. Different kinds of indoor games to keep them occupied" (BGC Parent).

"I don't like when the people that get in trouble and the other people that didn't do anything got to sit down" (BGC Youth Participant/11-12).

"I think there should be more academic programs and counseling programs (i.e., hygiene, peer pressure, and Trivia Games, monthly B-Day celebrations). In addition I thing more program coordinators working hands on with the students would be helpful" (BGC Volunteer).

"I have been working with kids for over four years. This is by far the best set of kids. I only wish we had our own club" (BGC Personnel).

Denton Teen Court

The Denton Teen Court is a community-based intervention program designed to provide diversionary adjudication alternatives for first-time offenders. Facilitated through Juvenile Diversionary Services of Denton (an organization designed to administer the state awarded grant and directed by a board of members from participating community organizations), the program allows first-time juvenile offenders (ages 13-18) to serve sentences through community service and voluntary Teen Court jury duty in lieu of fines or other adjudication processes. Minimum and maximum sentences defining the number of community service hours and jury duty terms were established through the board of directors and provide structure to the Teen Court trial process. The philosophy of the program supports the belief that if youth are diverted from entering the juvenile justice system during the first offending process the probability of their continued participation in delinquent behavior is significantly decreased. The following section describes program evaluation results.

Population characteristics. The following data describe characteristics of the Denton Teen Court (DTC) populations who responded to the program evaluation survey. Because of the confidential nature of

juvenile and youth systems, the principal investigator was unable to directly contact families and youth, a situation which limited the number of returned responses. Likewise, the transient nature of parents/guardians and juvenile defendants who had previously participated in the Teen Court program significantly impacted the return rate. Because the data collection was conducted between 1 and 15 months after the deferred adjudication process, a significant number of the subjects was unable to be contacted due to relocation or disconnected phone lines.

The following number of surveys was distributed in the Denton Teen Court (DTC) program evaluation process. The program director mailed 132 DTC parent/guardian surveys and 9 were returned, yielding an initial return rate of approximately 7%. In addition, 132 juvenile defendant surveys were mailed by the program directors and 9 were returned, yielding an initial return rate of approximately 7%.

The program director then attempted to conduct telephone surveys for all unreturned parent/guardian and juvenile defendant surveys. A total of 24 parent/guardian and 24 juvenile defendant surveys were completed during this process, yielding a final return rate of 25% for both populations. Disconnected phone services accounted for 47 of the unreturned responses and 32 surveys were returned due to incorrect mailing addresses (returned stamped "not at this address") significantly limited the availability of subjects due to family relocations. During the telephone survey administration process, one parent/guardian and two juvenile defendants refused to complete the voluntary survey.

For the DTC personnel/volunteer respondents, 35 surveys were either administered by the program coordinator at activity/meetings (juvenile volunteers) and by the principal investigator during the multiagency direct interviews with agency personnel, or mailed by the

principal investigator to agency personnel. A total of 25 DTC completed surveys was returned, yielding a return rate of 71%.

Table 10 presents data regarding parent/guardian respondent population characteristics for Denton Teen Court (DTC). Of the 33 responding parents/guardians within the Denton Teen Court, 97% were parents and 1 respondent was a guardian. A large percentage of the respondents was female (73%), and 64% were between the ages of 25 and 44. The majority of the population was Caucasian (94%), 1 respondent was African American, and 1 was Hispanic. Approximately 67% of the parents/guardians came from households with total incomes in the \$30,000+ range, and 27% were in the \$18,000 to 30,000 range. Only 1 respondent was in a household with less than \$10,000 total income, and one did not respond.

Table 11 presents data regarding juvenile defendant respondent population characteristics for the DTC program evaluation. Of the responding juvenile defendants, 91% were Caucasian. In addition, there was 1 African American and 2 Native Americans. The largest percentage of the responding juvenile defendants were ages 15 to 16 with the remaining population split equally between the 13 to 14 and 17 to 18 age ranges. In regard to gender, approximately 61% of the responding juvenile defendants were male, and 39% were female.

Table 10

Population Characteristics of DTC Parents/Guardians

Total (<u>N</u> = 33)	Number	Percent
Relationship:		
Parent	32	97.0
Grandparent	1	3.0
Gender:		
Male	8	24.3
Female	24	72.7
No response	1	3.0
Age:		
25-34 yr.	3	9.2
35-44 yr.	18	54.5
45-54 yr	11	33/3
55+ yr.	1	3.0
Ethnicity:		
African American	1	3.0
Hispanic	1	3.0
Caucasian	31	94.0
Income:		
\$10,000-\$18,000/yr.	1	3.0
\$19,000-\$30,000/yr.	9	27.3
\$30,000+/yr.	22	66.7
No response	1	3.0
No response	3	5.2

Table 11

Population Characteristics of DTC Juvenile Defendants

Total (<u>N</u> = 33)	Number	Percent
Gender:		
Male	20	60.6
Female	13	39.4
Age:		
13-14 yr.	9	27.3
15-16 yr.	15	45.4
17-18 yr	9	27.3
Ethnicity:		
African American	1	3.0
Native American	2	6.1
Caucasian	30	90.9

Table 12 presents data regarding population characteristics of DTC survey respondents. Percentages are not reported in the following section due to the small number of participants within each subgroup. Of the DTC survey respondents, 11 were juvenile defendant volunteers within the program (serving jury duty hours) and 4 were from a local Texas Youth Commission facility. The remaining portion of the respondents were representatives from the local city government (n = 3), police department (n = 4), and juvenile justice system (n = 3).

Denton Teen Court Survey. The following data present perceptions of Denton Teen Court Survey respondents regarding overall program impact by group based on analysis of survey item response. Percentages are not reported in the following section due to the small number of participants within each subgroup.

Table 12

Population Characteristics of DTC Personnel/Volunteers*

(Total <u>N</u> = 25)	Number
City Official	3
Juvenile Justice	3
Police Department	4
Volunteers	11
Other (TX Youth Commission)	4

*Percentages are not reported due to the small number of respondents in the DTC personnel/volunteer subgroups.

Table 13 presents data of respondents' beliefs regarding program impact on the juvenile defendants' quality of life and experiences. All of the city officials, juvenile justice, and Texas Youth Commission respondents believed the DTC program to have impacted the juvenile defendants' quality of life and experiences. Of the responding police department representatives, 3 officers agreed with these views as did 14 of the volunteers. There was no significant difference between group opinions regarding impact of the Denton Teen Court program on participants' quality of life and experiences (see Table 19).

Table 14 presents data of respondents' opinions regarding communication between agencies and its adequacy. Of the 3 responding city officials and juvenile justice representatives, 2 from each subgroup perceived that communication between agencies was adequate to meet the needs of the system. The majority of the 11 responding volunteers perceived that communication was adequate to meet system needs. All of the 4 responding TYC volunteers perceived communication between agencies to be adequate. There was no significant difference

between group views regarding interagency communication processes being adequate to meet system needs (see Table 19).

Table 13

Perceptions of Program Impact on Participants' Quality of Life by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	1	1	1	8	2
Agree	2	2	2	2	2
Undecided	0	0	1	1	0

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program impacts participants' quality of life and experience."

Table 14

Perceptions of Communication Processes between Agencies by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	1	1	1	3	3
Agree	1	1	0	6	1
Undecided	0	1	0	1	0
Disagree	1	0	1	1	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	2	0	0

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The communication process between agencies is adequate and meets the needs of the system."

Table 15 presents data of group opinions regarding the program's impact on juvenile defendants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior. Of the DTC survey respondents, all of the city officials and 2 of the 3 responding juvenile justice representatives viewed that the

Denton Teen Court decreased the defendants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior. Within the responding police department subgroup, 2 of the officers agreed with the view while the remaining two were undecided. The majority of the responding juvenile defendant volunteers (10 of 11) and TYC volunteers (3 of 4) perceived the program to significantly impact defendants' opportunity for delinquent behavior. There was no statistically significant difference between interagency group perceptions regarding the program's impact on juvenile defendants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior (see Table 19).

Table 15

Perceptions of DTC Program Impact on the Participants' Potential Opportunity for Delinquent Behavior by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	1	1	1	6	1
Agree	2	1	1	4	2
Undecided	0	1	2	1	1

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program decreases participants' potential opportunity for delinquent behavior."

Table 16 presents data of respondents' views regarding program impact on local community rates of juvenile delinquent behavior. Of the DTC survey respondents, all of the city officials, juvenile justice representatives, and TYC volunteers perceived that the Denton Teen Court program impacts local community rates of juvenile delinquent behavior. Likewise, a large number of the responding juvenile defendant volunteers agreed with these views. Only 1 of the 4 responding police officers believed that the program impacted local rates of juvenile delinquent behavior while the remaining three were undecided. There was no

statistically significant difference between group perceptions regarding the impact of Denton Teen Court on local community rates of juvenile delinquent behavior (see Table 19).

Table 16

Perceptions of DTC Program Impact on the Community Rates of Juvenile Delinquent Behavior by Group*

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	1	1	1	5	1
Agree	2	2	0	5	3
Undecided	0	0	3	1	0

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program impacts local community rates of juvenile delinquent behavior."

Table 17 presents data of respondents' views regarding program ability to address needs of participants regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender. Of the DTC respondents, all of the city officials, juvenile justice representatives, volunteers, and TYC volunteers believed that the Denton Teen Court addressed needs of participants regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender. Within the responding police department subgroup, 2 of the officers agreed with the view while the remaining two were undecided. There was no statistically significant difference between group perceptions regarding the Denton Teen Court meeting participants' needs regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender (see Table 19).

Table 17

Perceptions of DTC Program's Ability to Address Needs of Participants by Group

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	3	2	1	6	2
Agree	0	1	1	5	2
Undecided	0	0	2	0	0

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program addresses the needs of participants regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender."

Table 18 presents data of group opinions regarding the program's benefit to the community and continuation. All of the responding city officials, juvenile justice representatives, volunteers, and TYC volunteers perceived that the Denton Teen Court benefited the community and should be continued. Likewise, 3 of the 4 responding police officers agreed with the perception. There was a statistically significant difference between group perceptions regarding the program's benefit to the community and need for continued support with the city officials, volunteers, and TYC volunteers strongly agreeing that the program benefited the community and should be continued $\chi^2(8, N = 25), 15.67, p = .05$ (see Table 19). Throughout the previous section Table 19 presents data regarding chi-square analysis of survey item responses.

Table 18

Perceptions of DTC Community Benefit and Continued Support by Group

Total (<u>N</u> = 25)	City official (<u>n</u> = 3)	Juvenile justice (<u>n</u> = 3)	Police dept. (<u>n</u> = 4)	Volunteer (<u>n</u> = 11)	Other (<u>n</u> = 4)
Strongly agree	3	2	1	11	4
Agree	0	1	2	0	0
Undecided	0	0	1	0	0

*Groups responded to the following statement: "The program benefits the community and should be continued."

Table 19

Chi-square Analysis of DTC Group Perceptions by Item

Item issue	Significance value (Prob.)
Impacts participants' quality of life	.56
Adequate communication between agencies	.17
Decreases opportunity for delinquent behavior	.71
Impacts rates of juvenile delinquent behavior	.07
Addresses needs of participants	.08
Benefits community and should be continued	.04*

* $\chi^2(8, N = 25)$, 15.68, $p = .05$.

Denton Teen Court volunteers' perceptions of overall program impact and satisfaction. On each DTC survey was an open-ended question that stated, "Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below." Of the 25 Denton Teen Court survey respondents, 13 answered the qualitative portion of the survey. At least 1 individual from each subgroup participated in the qualitative

portion of this study with the majority of respondents being DTC volunteers. The following section briefly analyzes this portion of the program evaluation. Quoted responses are the exact words and spelling provided by respondents to facilitate accuracy of transcribed data as well as authenticity.

Analysis of the DTC survey open-ended questions allowed the data to be separated into three distinct categories: overall program satisfaction, program impact, and program structure. Of the responding volunteers, 4 expressed statements of satisfaction with the overall program such as:

"I have watched the program grow over the past year and I am very impressed" (DTC Volunteer/Police).

"Keep it all up!" (DTC Volunteer).

"Best thing short of Boy Scouts or reform school for a kid" (DTC Volunteer/TYC).

"Good Job!!" (DTC Volunteer).

Likewise, 4 survey respondents answering the open-ended question discussed overall program satisfaction as well as ways in which the DTC program impacted the life of the juvenile defendant and/or benefited the community.

"I think this program gives youth an in-depth look at their behaviors and where they are progressing to if they don't change them" (DTC Volunteer).

"I think the whole program benefits Denton youth and the community and should continue. I feel like everybody get's something out of it" (DTC Volunteer).

I think it's a great program and should be continued because even if it only helps ONE person in 100 years at least one person stopped their delinquate[sp] behavior, and did not have to suffer devastating consequences for worse crimes in the future. (DTC Volunteer)

This has been a growing and developmental experience for the teens. Many have stated that they wish programs like this existed everywhere. It gives all the teens areas of responsibility that many do not get otherwise. It also gives them new areas of thought. The parents are educated, as well. I hope this program continues and expands to other communities. (DTC Juvenile Justice)

This program has turned the life around of one child in particular--my child! My son was running around with the wrong crowd--smoking--mouthy, etc. He has done a 360 turn around and is now an attorney! He dresses entirely better now and is a JOY to be with now! Teen Court changed his life. If Teen Court saves one teenager much less others--isn't it worth it?! (DTC Volunteer/Parent)

In regard to program structure, 1 responding city official perceived a need for increased communication between city officials and juvenile justices as well as increasing the overall community awareness of the program. Of the responding DTC volunteers, 3 perceived that structural changes should be made within the process to allow for more preparation time of cases; and 1 of those respondents addressed the need for stricter punishments for offending juvenile defendants.

"Increased communication between all cities/justice courts and community to let people know" (DTC City Official).

"We should have more time to review the cases that we are going to see, that would help us make a better case for the defendant(s)" (DTC Volunteer).

"We should get our defendants' cases earlier so that we can prepare and have a chance to talk to our defendants sooner" (DTC Volunteer).

Information should be given more previously before the case. This way cases can be prepared and a whole lot QUICKER!! Defendants should have more severe punishment because for some of the people that walk in here 62 hours of community service just ain't cutting it. Either more hours or more strenuous work. (DTC Volunteer)

Perceptions of program impact by parents/guardians and juvenile defendants. The following data describe perceptions of program impact

for responding Denton Teen Court parents/guardians and juvenile defendants by analysis of survey response item (see Appendices E and F).

Table 20 presents data regarding juvenile defendant parents/guardians perceptions regarding program impact. Of the 33 responding parents/guardians of Denton Teen Court juvenile defendants, 70% perceived that the program made a positive impact on their child, and 24% of the respondents were undecided. Of the responding parents/guardians, 79% perceived that the program encouraged a sense of responsibility within their teenager. Of the responding DTC parents/guardians, 76% perceived that the program helped the juvenile defendant to recognize the need to accept consequences for their behavior. The majority (76%) of the responding parents/guardians perceived that their teenager received a fair sentence, while 5% perceived that their juvenile defendant did not receive a fair sentence. A large percentage of the responding DTC parents/guardians (76%) viewed the community service hours as an effective punishment for their teenager while 5 respondents viewed the community service hours to be an ineffective punishment for their teen.

Table 20

DTC Parent/Guardian Perceptions of Program Impact on Juvenile

Defendants*

Total (N = 33)	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Made positive impact	18 (55%)	5 (15%)	8 (24%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)
Encouraged sense of responsibility	17 (52%)	9 (27%)	3 (9%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)
Recognized need to accept consequences of behavior	19 (58%)	6 (18%)	4 (12%)	0 (0%)	4 (12%)

Table 20 (continued)

Total (N = 33)	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Received fair sentence	22 (67%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	4 (18%)
Community service hours effective punishment	23 (70%)	2 (6%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	4 (12%)

*Parents/guardians responded to the following survey statements:

1. Teen Court had a positive impact on my teenager.
2. Teen Court encouraged a sense of responsibility in my teenager.
3. Teen Court has helped my teenager recognize that they must be prepared to accept the consequences of their behavior in a mature manner.
4. I think my teenager had a fair sentence.
5. The community service hours were an effective means of punishment for my teenager.

Table 21 presents data regarding juvenile defendant respondents' perceptions regarding the Denton Teen Court program. Of the 33 responding juvenile defendants participating in Denton Teen Court, 73% perceived that the program increased their understanding of the courtroom judicial process, and 27% (9 respondents) were undecided. The majority of the respondents (62%) perceived that they received a fair sentence, while 28% (9 respondents) felt they received an unfair sentence. Of the total responding juvenile defendant population, 73% stated that they would recommend participation in Denton Teen Court to their friends, and 5 would not recommend the process to their friends.

Table 21

DTC Parent/Guardian Perceptions of Program Impact*

Total (<u>N</u> = 33)	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Increased understanding of courtroom judicial processes	13 (40%)	11 (33%)	9 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Received fair sentence	13 (40%)	7 (22%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	8 (25%)
Would recommend to a friend	19 (58%)	5 (15%)	4 (12%)	0 (0%)	5 (15%)

*Juvenile defendants responded to the following statements:

1. My experience in Teen Court has increased my understanding of the judicial process within the courtroom.
2. I feel like the sentence was fair.
3. I would recommend Teen Court to my friends who have received a citation.

Comparison of Denton Teen Court parent/guardian and juvenile defendants' responses by item. Item comparisons between Denton Teen Court parents/guardians and juvenile defendants could be effectively analyzed on only one issue due to the significant difference between the two instruments: fair sentences (see Appendices E-F). Item #4 on the parent/guardian instrument stated, "I think my teenager had a fair sentence" and item #2 of the juvenile defendant survey stated, "I feel that the sentences are fair." When the responding parents/guardians' and juvenile defendants' surveys were statistically analyzed using the Crosstab Method (contingency table), there was found to be a statistically significant difference between group perceptions with parents/guardians perceiving the sentences to be more fair than the juvenile defendants, χ^2 (16, N = 33), 29.43, $p < .05$.

Denton Teen Court parents/guardians and juvenile defendants
perceptions of overall program impact and satisfaction. On each DTC survey was an open-ended question that stated, "Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below." Only 4 of the 33 responding parents/guardians and 4 juvenile defendants answered the qualitative portion of the survey. The following section briefly analyzes this portion of the program evaluation. Quoted responses are the exact words and spelling provided by respondents to facilitate accuracy of transcribed data as well as authenticity.

Analysis of DTC parents/guardians' responses to the open-ended question allowed data to be categorized into one primary theme (program impact) with two parents responding positively and two negatively.

"The program should have been started years ago. Maybe there wouldn't be quite so much violence and theft" (DTC Parent).

I totally agree with the principle of letting the teen go in front of a court of his or her peers. I feel it has much more impact than adult court. I don't feel, however, that a parent should be punished for their child's misbehavior.
 (DTC Parent)

"Community service was a joke. Court was too structured, cut, and dried. No flexibility" (DTC Parent).

In real court juveniles receive much less community service time. The community service given is not that beneficial to the community. Perhaps if there were organized groups to clean up Denton, weed clean up yards of elderly or disabled, help in nursing homes, pick up trash, simple home repairs (paint), etc. (something meaningful) two or three Saturdays, six to eight hours per day. (DTC Parent)

Of the four responding DTC juvenile defendants, three were satisfied with the program and one was not. There was one respondent who perceived the program to be of benefit to both the defendant as well as the children they worked with during community service. Likewise, one

responding juvenile defendant perceived that the program impacted their decision-making process in regard to peer pressure.

"It taught me not to do what other people did" (DTC Juvenile Defendant),

"I really believe it was a great program for the kids on both sides" (DTC Juvenile Defendant).

"I liked its organization" (DTC Juvenile Defendant).

"I got too many hours and it wasn't right" (DTC Juvenile Defendant).

Multiagency Interviews

The purpose of the multiagency interviews was to assess perceptions of agency professionals involved with the development and implementation of the DDP/I program. The following research questions guided the principal investigator through the interview process and allowed consistent collection of data:

1. What do you see as the major impact of the program? Have there been any negative implications of the program? If so, what?

2. In your opinion, how has the program met (or not met) its original goal of preventing delinquency in at-risk youth?

3. What do you see as hindrances to the success of the program? Do you have any suggestions on how to eliminate or minimize these obstacles?

4. In your opinion, how has the involvement of multiple professional agencies impacted the program? Positive? Negative?

Individual audiotaped interviews were conducted with 2 representatives from Boys and Girls Club of Denton (n = 2), the City of Denton (n = 2), Denton ISD (n = 2), Denton Police Department (n = 4) as well as representatives from the local Juvenile Justice System (n = 3) who were selected based on agency affiliation, director recommendation

and willingness to participate. Data from the audiotaped interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for recurring themes by the principal investigator and a second reader. During this process, two distinct thematic groups regarding multiagency collaboration were identified and the data perceptions grouped accordingly: issues dealing with personal barriers and those dealing with structural barriers. The following sections analyze data collected during the qualitative interview process.

Personal barriers to multiagency collaboration. Analysis of transcribed data from the multiagency personnel audiotaped interviews allowed the data to be separated into three distinct recurring themes concerning personal barriers to multiagency collaboration: philosophical differences, "turf" (control) issues, and individual perceptions of acceptance and/or responsibility. Philosophical differences focused primarily on issues regarding recreational planning and youth accountability for the Boys and Girls Club of Denton, and Denton Teen Court referral procedures for the police department.

In regard to procedures within the Boys and Girls Club, there were distinct differences between the School District and Boys and Girls Club program philosophies. The School District wanted the program to be run similar to the After-School Action Sites at other district elementary schools featuring structured programming as well as parental sign-in/sign-out procedures for accountability. However, Boys and Girls Club functions on the philosophy of a "come and go" open-door policy where youth participants are free to enter and leave the program at will as well as select from a variety of activities in which to participate rather than one scheduled event.

There were some issues due to lack of articulation on how students are kept up with while they are in the building. It is important that there is an accounting of children present in our buildings for safety reasons. There was also concern

about the recreational component. We feel that children would come more often if they knew that a particular activity was going to take place. We have met on these issues and, hopefully, Boys and Girls Club personnel are continuing to meet these needs. (BGC/Denton Independent School District)

There's a real difference between our goals of Boys and Girls Club which allows the youth to come/go and the school district who wants the program to run more like an after-school action site. This is not the purpose of the Boys and Girls Club program. It is very different from Parks and Recreation and is made that way for a reason. (BGC/Boys and Girls Club)

In regard to referral procedures for the Denton Teen Court, the participating city officials and the police department disagree on the legality of officers referring first-time offenders at the time of the offense (when the ticket is being written). According to responding city officials, one of the purposes of Denton Teen Court was to reduce the number of cases going through the municipal court system by having the police officers make Teen Court referrals "from the street" (at the time the ticket is being written). However, according to responding police department representatives this policy would be in direct conflict with the right of due process that all individuals are entitled to. By making a Teen Court referral "from the street," the officer is removing the individuals' ability to present their side before the court and participate in due process procedures. One respondent stressed that there was a need to develop consistent referral methods for this process as well.

One of the purposes of Teen Court was to reduce the number of referrals through the municipal court system. The PD is not making referrals. The majority of the referrals are coming from the municipal courts. (DTC/City Official)

There is a thing called due process. By asking a police officer to make a referral from the street you're asking them to play judge and take away the right of due process. That's not our role. This decision is made with parents and on the court of record. (DTC/Police Department)

We need to unify and have a consistent method that juveniles are referred for the adjudication process. All juveniles in

Denton do not have access to this service. A lot of the little small towns are left out as well as some parts of larger cities. Part of this is the difference between full-time courts as opposed to smaller, part-time (i.e., one time a month) courts. (DTC/Juvenile Justice)

A second personal barrier to multiagency collaboration perceived by respondents could be defined as "turf (control) issues" and was attributed primarily to decision-making ability within the program. Perceptions of control issues in both programs (BGC and DTC) were mentioned from representatives in all participating agencies and focused primarily on the lack of cooperation among agencies in achieving a common goal. One responding police officer perceived that money was the underlying issue and whoever controlled the money was the one deciding who would be served.

It's really difficult when agencies have their own agendas and set up turf battles, if you will, instead of working for the good of the project which ultimately benefits the youth in our community. (BGC/City Official)

"We all need to be working together for the good of the kids instead of fighting over issues which can easily be fixed if we cooperate with each other" (BGC/Boys and Girls Club).

"Money. Who controls the money makes a big difference on what decisions are made and who is served" (BGC/Police Department).

I think that clarification and understanding of the Program Director in regards to what each agency does and is responsible for is important. I was invited to a meeting where I felt that the school district was put on a defensive role because we were asking for accountability. This is not a productive method and wastes time that can be used addressing providing more effective services. (BGC/Denton Independent School District)

"If we are going to be asked to be partners we need to be true partners in terms of the planning, the reporting back to us, the collaborative things that can happen with the programs" (BGC and DTC/Denton Independent School District).

There is a distinct opinion that only certain parts of Denton County should have access to the program. I believe

that there should be one for the county, but others believe the county should be divided by the lake. (DTC/Juvenile Justice)

A third personal barrier to multiagency collaboration identified by responding agency personnel could be defined as individual perceptions of program acceptance and/or responsibility. Respondents from both the school district and the police department perceived that their organization was not directly involved in the decision-making processes within the programs. Likewise, both groups did not perceive that they were "partners" in the collaborative effort. However, city officials and Boys and Girls Club representatives perceived that the lack of cooperative participation on the part of the school district and police department is a choice of nonparticipation rather than elimination from the multiagency effort.

I think that clarification and understanding of the Program Director in regards to what each agency does and is responsible for is important. There is a real need for agencies getting together on a more regular basis. If we are going to be asked to be partners in the venture we need to be viewed as partners rather than someone who is providing a facility, some aspect of the program or students for Teen Court. If we are going to be asked to be partners we need to be true partners in terms of the planning, the reporting back to us, the collaborative things that can happen with the programs. (BGC and DTC/Denton Independent School District)

I think it's token involvement in terms of us supporting the program. I don't think so far it's been involvement where we all sit in a room together and come up with a strategic plan to meet the needs of the kids in the county. (DTC/Denton Independent School District)

That's a city program, not ours. We tried to work with them (Boys and Girls Club) before and they did not follow through. Kids who were being served were dropped because they didn't live in the "right neighborhood" and no provisions were made for them to continue to participate. (BGC/Police Department)

"Denton Teen Court. We're not involved in the program at all. Not professionally, anyway" (DTC/Police Department).

I don't know how else to get them (police department) involved. Where some officers are volunteers on an

individual level, they (the department) do not respond to repeated requests for assistance, support, or participation at the agency level. (DTC/City Official)

"There needs to be more cooperation on the part of the school to meet the program goals" (BGC/Boys and Girls Club).

Structural barriers to multiagency collaboration. Analysis of transcribed data from the multiagency personnel audiotaped interviews allowed the data to be separated into four distinct recurring themes in regard to structural barriers to multiagency collaboration: limited funding, adequate staffing, program expansion, continued support/participation from all agencies. The first three barriers were perceived by respondents to be directly impacted by one another, thus significantly impacting the effectiveness of the multiagency collaborative effort.

All agencies directly involved with implementation portions of the DDP/I program perceived limited funding to be a primary structural barrier directly affecting program implementation and effectiveness. Respondents addressing this issue included personnel from the City of Denton (fiscal agent) and Boys and Girls Club of Denton (program directors) as well as the Juvenile Justice system. The funding issues were perceived by respondents to significantly impact critical decision-making processes such as staffing as well as program expansion and implementation.

"One of the major obstacles is the small progress which must be made due to limited funding and factors directly impacted by this shortage (i.e., staffing, programming, etc.)" (DTC/Juvenile Justice).

"Limited funding is a major hindrance to the program. At present we are functioning far short of where the needs are in the community because we cannot fund the facility or staffing necessary to meet demands" (BGC/City Official).

Funding. It's a real problem. We could serve many more youth if we were able to staff the program with the manpower to do so. We also could provide more individual attention which is something many of these kids needs. Programs are also driven by whether or not the transportation is available. (BGC/Boys and Girls Club)

A second structural barrier to multiagency collaborative efforts identified by responding agency personnel was adequate staffing to meet program administrative needs. Respondents addressing this issue included personnel from the City of Denton (fiscal agent) and Boys and Girls Club of Denton (program directors) as well as the Juvenile Justice system. Responding representatives perceived this issue to be directly linked to the limited funding issue and significantly impact the program's expansion ability to meet community needs.

"There needs to be more administrative staff in order for the program to grow. There is only so much that one person can do. Then you either cut programs or increase staff" (BGC and DTC/City Official).

"At present we are functioning far short of where the needs are in the community because we cannot fund the facility or staffing necessary to meet demands" (BGC and DTC/City Official).

Staffing is a real problem. We could serve many more youth if we were able to staff the program with the manpower to do so. We also could provide more individual attention which is something many of these kids needs. This keeps kids off the streets and teaches them how to make good choices. (BGC/Boys and Girls Club)

"We need more staff. There are many youth on the waiting list. If we had more staff we could serve a much larger group of kids" (BGC/Boys and Girls Club).

"K--- is doing a wonderful job, but we know that there should be at least three of her. Programs keep getting added but without additional administrative staff" (DTC/Juvenile Justice).

We would like to continue expanding the program to meet needs of the youth and families in Denton as well as provide more social services. We can't do that until we are able to

add more staff to meet the demands and find a building.
(DTC/Juvenile Justice)

A third structural barrier identified by multiagency personnel was the need for increased programming. Respondents addressing this issue included personnel from the City of Denton (fiscal agent) and Boys and Girls Club of Denton (program directors) as well as the Juvenile Justice system. Although this was the first year implementation of the DDP/I program, responding agencies emphasized the overwhelming need within the community which could be met if program funding allowed for adequate staffing and all participating agencies worked together cooperatively.

At present we are functioning far short of where the needs are in the community because we cannot fund the facility or staffing necessary to meet demands. If the funding was available we could expand to meet the needs of the community on a larger scale. (BGC/City Official)

I would like to see the addition of evening hours as well as weekend activities included into the programs. There is so much more that we could do. Right now we have to transport the youth to another facility for these types activities due to time restraints placed by the school for building use.
(BGC/Boys and Girls Club)

Although we are limited by funding and staffing, we are continuing to expand the program into a more comprehensive social service activity which will do more than divert students from criminal behavior but provide social support as well. The "contract/bonuses program" is one example of this. (DTC/Juvenile Justice)

"I would like to see the service to be provided to juveniles within all of Denton County, not just a select few. This would take a lot of communication between the courts as well as agreement from participating agencies" (DTC/Juvenile Justice).

The final structural barrier identified during the multiagency interviews was the need for continued support/participation from all agencies involved with the collaborative effort. All participating agencies perceived this to be a critical issue that significantly impacted program effectiveness. Several respondents emphasized the need

for regular scheduled times that agencies met so information could be exchanged and collaborative planning issues addressed.

All the agencies that are involved don't get together on a regular basis to talk and let the right hand know what the left hand is doing. If everybody directly involved with this program would sit down together it would help. I don't know that I see that there's any real communication between the agencies. (BGC and DTC/City Official)

If we are going to be asked to be partners we need to be true partners in terms of the planning, the reporting back to us, the collaborative things that can happen with the programs. (BGC and DTC/Denton Independent School District)

One of the biggest difficulties is getting the groups to continue with the collaboration. Time is always a factor in trying to get so many different people together. Personnel turnover also plays an important role because as new people come into the group, they may have different beliefs than the other representative and want to change things. This makes it very difficult when agencies have been working together for one goal and then one person's "goal plan" changes. (BGC/City Official)

"There needs to be more cooperation on the part of the school to meet the program goals" (BGC/Boys and Girls Club).

"There needs to be more continued articulation of expectations and communication between professionals for the collaboration to be successful" (BGC/Denton Independent School District).

When Boys and Girls Club moved to the Fred Moore Learning Center area no provisions were made for the youth from the previous site to continue participation. Now we're back to there not being activities for the adolescents to participate in while parents are at work or in the evening and the crime rate has risen significantly (about 30%). If we are going to create programs to help Denton youth we need to include all the youth and not just drop the ones who started the program. (BGC/Police Department)

"There needs to be increased communication between the individual courts on how juveniles are referred and who has access to the services" (DTC/Juvenile Justice).

University personnel as interagency participants. The Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program was developed through collaboration with university personnel. A unique contribution of

university collaboration involved program requirements for an outside evaluation and for program presentation at conferences and/or publication. These requirements enhanced the overall quality and visibility of the program through accountability and public awareness.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program. This state-awarded grant funded two community-based programs within the local area: Boys and Girls Club of Denton (a prevention program) and Denton Teen Court (an intervention program). Key persons within the two programs were surveyed regarding program impact and satisfaction. Likewise, professionals from participating agencies were interviewed to identify perceptions regarding program impact as well as the multiagency collaboration experience. Based on study results, recommendations for the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program as well as implications for future research are discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

An abundance of research supports the fact that at-risk factors significantly contribute to an adolescent's tendency towards juvenile delinquency (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Siegel & Senna, 1994). National, state, and local policies address the necessity for programs which meet the needs of these youths in order to reduce the increasing rates of adolescent violence and crime across the nation (National Educational Service Foundation, 1995; Texas Education Agency, 1995). Many communities have risen to the challenge by creating interagency programs which specifically address the needs of these at-risk youth (Izzo & Ross, 1990; Suren & Stiefvater, 1995; Texas Education Agency, 1994; Wilkinson, 1994; Wolford et al., 1995). However, there appears to be little evaluative information regarding the effectiveness of interagency programs and even fewer program evaluations conducted when multiagency participation is involved.

As juvenile crime rates continue to rise, schools and communities struggle to meet the ever increasing needs of at-risk youth and their families, service providers within local communities have begun using collaborative interagency programming to minimize duplication of services and maximize cost effectiveness (Texas Education Agency, 1994). According to Knapp (1995), movement toward "comprehensive, collaborative services for children and families" (p. 5) has increased the level of difficulty in evaluating programs due to the complex, flexible nature of these programs as well as the divergence of multiple disciplines and/or philosophical backgrounds. Therefore, the apparent need for multiagency collaborative efforts addressing issues of adolescent violence and crime

remains consistent with the understanding that maintaining a qualitative program requires continuous effectiveness evaluation.

Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program

The objective of this study was to conduct a program evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Program, a multiagency community-based violence reduction program for at-risk youth. Based on Stake's Transactional Evaluation Model (Isaac & Michael, 1982), major emphasis was placed on depicting program processes and the value of perspectives of key people (relative to program philosophy) using both quantitative and qualitative methodology. The following section discusses study results according to research categories within the program evaluation: Boys and Girls Club of Denton, Denton Teen Court, and Multiagency Perceptions.

Boys and Girls Club of Denton

In general, the majority of the Boys and Girls Club parent/guardian, youth participant, and personnel respondents of the first-year program evaluation perceived the program to be an effective means of providing educational and recreational activities for community youth and were satisfied with the overall program. The BGC program served an African American population of local at-risk youth, primarily between 7 and 12 years of age, who came from predominantly low to low-middle income socioeconomic level households. The majority of respondents from each group perceived the program to have a positive impact on the lives of the youth participants as well as their behaviors both at home and in the community while decreasing the youth participants' opportunities for delinquent behavior. There was a significant difference between group perceptions in regard to program impact on the youth participants' school progress with responding personnel/volunteers perceiving the

program to have more of an impact than the parent/guardian and youth participant respondents.

Denton Teen Court

In general, the majority of Denton Teen Court parent/guardian, juvenile defendant, and agency/volunteer survey respondents of the first-year program evaluation perceived the program to be an effective means of providing deferred adjudication alternatives for first-time offenders. The DTC program served a predominantly Caucasian population of first-time offenders from middle to high socioeconomic level households, between the ages of 13 and 16, and 60% of whom were male. A large percentage of parent/guardian (60%) and agency official/volunteer (96%) respondents viewed the program as having a positive impact on the lives of the juvenile defendant. Approximately 96% of the agency official/volunteer respondents viewed the program as a benefit to the community that should be continued while 84% believed that the program decreased the juvenile defendant's potential opportunity for delinquent behavior.

A large percentage (79%) of the parent/guardian respondents felt that the program encouraged development of a sense of self-responsibility in their teenager as well as assisted them in recognizing the need to accept consequences for their own behavior. Likewise, a number of the respondents within the parent/guardian group believed that their teenager received a fair sentence (73%) and that the community service hours were an effective punishment (76%).

The majority of the responding Denton Teen Court juvenile defendants perceived that the program increased their understanding of the courtroom judicial process (73%). Likewise, a large percentage (62%) of the population believed they received a fair sentence and would recommend the program to a friend (73%). When parent/guardian and

juvenile defendant perceptions regarding a fair sentence were compared, there was a significant difference with the parent/guardian respondents perceiving the sentences to be more fair than the responding juvenile defendants.

Perceptions of Multiagency Collaboration

Analysis of program evaluation results support current research regarding interagency collaboration processes. Through the qualitative audiotaped interview process and data analysis, both personal and structural barriers were identified as influencing the multiagency collaboration effort. Personal barriers included philosophical differences and "turf" (control) issues between agencies as well as individual perceptions of acceptance and/or responsibility. Structural barriers included limited funding, adequate staffing, and program expansion as well as continued support/participation from all agencies. Likewise, participating agency personnel perceived limited funding as well as lack of communication and collaboration among participating agencies to significantly hinder effective multiagency collaborative efforts.

In regard to personal barriers affecting multiagency collaboration, it is critical to note the significantly differing philosophical views among agencies. This became readily apparent during the agency personnel interview process as individuals expressed concern or perceptions regarding program goals, objectives, and methods of implementation. For example, the school district perceived that the alternative after-school and summer recreational/educational program should be structurally implemented similar to existing after-school programs within the district that required parental pickup and specific, scheduled activity planning. However, this structured programming was in direct conflict with the Boys and Girls Club "open-door" philosophy

which allowed participants to come and go at will without parental signature. The differing perceptions regarding due process and police officers making referrals to Denton Teen Court at the time of the offense is another example of agency philosophical differences. Likewise, agency perceptions regarding "turf" (control) issues and individual acceptance and/or responsibility for program goals and objectives directly correlated with their perceptions regarding the structural barrier of agency support and collaboration. The more involved multiagency personnel were in the program processes, the greater their levels of acceptance and/or responsibility of program goals and objectives.

In regard to structural barriers influencing effective multiagency collaboration efforts, three of the four identified themes were related to funding issues. Due to the continued reduction in social service resources, funding sources mandate interagency collaboration to meet community needs while maximizing cost effectiveness. All participating agencies viewed limited funding as a primary hindrance to program effectiveness due to its direct link to program expansion and adequate staffing. The lack of communication and cooperation among agencies was identified as another significant hindrance to effective multiagency collaborative efforts. This aspect was directly linked with the personal barriers of "turf" (control) issues, as well as individual acceptance and/or responsibility for program goals and objectives. The more directly involved the agencies perceived themselves to be in the decision-making processes, the greater their level of acceptance and/or responsibility for accomplishing program goals and objectives.

Critical issues regarding effective multiagency collaboration emerged from data results that include the following: the necessary formation of an administrative board representing fiscal accountability

of the multiagency collaborative effort that allows active representation and participation of all involved parties, the continuing trend of funding allocations mandating shared responsibilities between community agencies serving similar populations, the need for periodic data collection procedures throughout funding timelines when evaluating dynamic subject populations as well as the need for continued university support in the areas of grant writing/development, program evaluation, and/or results publication. Program results support previous research regarding multiagency collaborative efforts. The following section discusses recommendations to improve program effectiveness based on study results.

Recommendations

Based on the study results, the following recommendations are made to increase overall program effectiveness:

1. The limited return rate of survey responses significantly impacted first-year program evaluation results and must be addressed if accurate results are to be achieved in future program evaluations. Because both Boys and Girls Club and Denton Teen Court are complex, dynamic programs whose subject populations change continuously throughout the year, the data collection time frame is critical. Therefore, it is recommended that data collection procedures become incorporated into individual program processes throughout the year thereby reducing the probability of unreturned responses. In order to collect a satisfactory database and maintain quality control for this program, the following data collection methods are recommended:

- (a) Boys and Girls Club--data collection should take place at the end of each session (Fall, Spring, Summer) with program coordinators using direct group (for youth

participant and personnel) and mail (for parent/guardian) survey administration. Surveys should then be collected by the program director and given to the outside evaluator at the time of the end-of-the-year program evaluation.

(b) Denton Teen Court--all parent/guardian, juvenile defendant, and Teen Court surveys should be completed at the juvenile defendant's completion hearing (the final step in the deferred adjudication process). Surveys should be collected monthly by the program director and given to the outside evaluator at the time of the end-of-the-year program evaluation.

(c) Multiagency Perceptions--at the time of the end-of-the-year program evaluation, the outside evaluator should utilize mail survey procedures to collect data from multiagency personnel regarding program effectiveness and the multiagency collaborative experience. A list of participating agencies, board members, and community program volunteer participants should be developed by the program director throughout the year to identify key people from whom to request program evaluation participation. This list should be provided to the outside evaluator at the time of the end-of-the-year program evaluation.

2. To facilitate communication and cooperation between participating agencies, it is recommended that an administrative board representing the fiscal accountability of the multiagency collaborative group should have representatives from all participating agencies. This board should meet at regularly stated times and involve all agency representatives in the decision-making process.

3. It is critical that participating agencies resolve individual philosophical differences so that program components are clearly defined and agreed upon as attainable goals and objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that training be provided in areas such as multiagency collaboration, problem solving, and decision making as well as awareness of community agency philosophical approaches in order to improve collaborative efforts among agency personnel and develop more effective programming.

4. Multiagency collaboration requires active participation of all involved parties with specified agency responsibilities. Therefore, it is recommended that contractual agreements be negotiated between agencies which allocate personnel time and resources including equipment and/or facilities.

5. Because of the primary source of this state-awarded grant is through the Criminal Justice Department, active participation of the police department is a critical component for its effectiveness. At this time the local police department has demonstrated limited involvement within the collaborative effort. Therefore, it is recommended that the program director, city officials, and police department leadership meet to identify and assign specific procedures through which the police department can become active participants within the collaborative effort.

6. Representatives from the majority of participating agencies identified adequate staffing as a primary concern. This becomes a critical component as the governing board develops and expands current programming to meet the needs of at-risk youth and their families within the community. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to the addition of administrative support staff for the DDP/I program director in order to facilitate the effective expansion of support

programs to meet identified goals and objectives of the community-based multiagency program.

7. The inclusion of university personnel within the multiagency collaborative effort provided a unique contribution of an outside evaluation, as well as program presentation at conferences and/or publication. These requirements enhanced the overall quality and visibility of the program through accountability and public awareness. Therefore, it is recommended that the outside evaluation component continue as developed within the grant requirements as well as maintaining participation of the university as a part of the multiagency collaborative effort.

Implications for Future Research

A significant body of research supports the need for service providers to work collaboratively to facilitate programs designed to meet the needs of at-risk youth both in the field of education and criminal justice (Knapp, 1995; Hixson & Tinzman, 1990; Siegel & Senna, 1994; Texas Education Agency, 1994). The results of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program evaluation support the findings of current research regarding interagency collaboration. However, the continuing trend of funding sources mandating collaborative efforts to maximize cost effectiveness require that professionals in all participating fields actively seek ways to improve methods of interagency collaboration. Therefore, based on study results and a review of current literature, the following implications for future research are identified.

Throughout the local, state, and national levels agencies are being asked to develop more community-based coordinated service delivery programs due to mandated funding constraints (Knapp, 1995; Texas

Education Agency, 1994). Each agency brings to the negotiation table individual philosophies indicative of their respective profession, some of which conflict with those accepted by partner agencies. It is critical that education and training be conducted at all levels to increase awareness of differing philosophies and identify similarities, thus facilitating more effective interagency collaborative efforts.

As agencies increase participation in multiagency collaborative designs for service delivery programs, it is critical that emphasis be placed on effective communication and shared responsibility. Communication becomes a barrier partially due to the fact that agency representatives are asked to combine philosophies with other fields in order to meet specific common goals. Sometimes, as previously stated, the fundamental philosophies differ considerably and where all parties can agree on what needs to occur, participants may strongly disagree on how to accomplish the goal.

Likewise, shared responsibility must be present if effective multiagency collaboration is to be achieved. It is critical that all involved agencies maintain representation and active participation on the governing boards that implement at-risk youth programs. As agencies become actively involved in the collaborative decision-making and the implementation process, their perceptions of effectiveness increase. For this reason, future research should include identification of communication processes and/or barriers in multiagency collaborative efforts as well as structural components that facilitate shared responsibility among all parties.

A final implication of future research includes active involvement of university personnel to ensure effective program evaluation and assist in publication of results. One of the primary hindrances in identifying program components and effectiveness of current violence

reduction programs for at-risk youth is the fact that few programs incorporate comprehensive program evaluations within the program structure. Likewise, few participating agency personnel are publicizing the evaluation results outside of the community level. With the inclusion of university personnel in the multiagency collaborative effort, support can be given to ensure not only effective program evaluation but assistance in results publication as well. For this reason research should be conducted to identify effective methods of university involvement within interagency and multiagency collaborative efforts and the impact of such involvement on program effectiveness and accountability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Program Evaluation Permission Letter (City of Denton)

Human Subjects Review Committee Approval (TWU)

Graduate School Approval Letter (TWU)

JUVENILE DIVERSIONARY SERVICES

OF DENTON, INC.

91

P.O. Box 1134
Denton, Texas 76202

Telephone (817) 484-0550
Fax (817) 484-0550

MEMORANDUM

To: Mishaleen Allen
From: Tom Josey, Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program Administrator
Date: December 6, 1996

Subject: Evaluation of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program

As program administrator of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program (DDP/I), I give you permission to evaluate the DDP/I program. I understand that you will not deal directly with the human subjects in the program and members of their families. I also am aware that all personal information you collect will remain confidential.

Providing Alternative Programming For Juveniles And Their Families.

TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY
DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

92

HUMAN SUBJECTS
REVIEW COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 425619
Denton, TX 76204-3619
Phone: 817/898-3377
Fax: 817/898-3416

December 17, 1996

Mishaleen Allen
Texas Woman's University
P.O. Box 424006
Denton, TX 76204

Dear Mishaleen Allen:

Your study entitled "Effective Multiagency Community-Based Violence Reduction Programs: A Program Evaluation" has been reviewed by a committee of the Human Subjects Review Committee and appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of individuals' rights.

Be reminded that both the University and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations typically require that agency approval letters and signatures indicating informed consent be obtained from all human subjects in your study. These are to be filed with the Human Subjects Review Committee. Any exception to this requirement is noted below. This approval is valid one year from the date of this letter. Furthermore, according to HHS regulations, another review by the Committee is required if your project changes.

Special provisions pertaining to your study are noted below:

- _____ The filing of signatures of subjects with the Human Subjects Review Committee is not required.
- _____ Other:
- X No special provisions apply.

Sincerely,



Chair
Human Subjects Review Committee - Denton

cc: Graduate School
Dr. Jane Irons, Early Childhood & Special Education
Dr. Lloyd Kinnison, Early Childhood & Special Education

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
P.O. Box 425649
Denton, TX 76204-3649
Phone: 817/898-3400
Fax: 817/898-3412

January 14, 1997

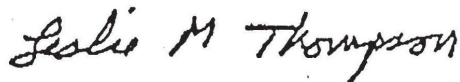
Ms. Mishaleen E. Allen
P.O. Box 24006
Denton, TX 76204

Dear Ms. Allen:

Thank you for providing the materials necessary for the final approval of your prospectus in the Graduate Office. I am pleased to approve the prospectus, and I look forward to seeing the results of your study.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,



Leslie M. Thompson
Associate Vice President for
Research and Dean of the
Graduate School

dl

cc Dr. E. Jane Irons
Dr. Lloyd Kinnison

Appendix B
Boys and Girls Club of Denton:
Parent/Guardian Survey

CODE: A _____

Boys and Girls Club of Denton County Parent/Guardian Survey

Please complete this survey based on your participation in the Boys and Girls Club (Denton County) program. Information will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify possible areas for program adjustment. Thank you for participating in this process.

What is your relationship to the Boys and Girls Club participant?

____ Parent ____ Grandparent ____ Guardian ____ Other (specify: _____)

Check one response in each of the sections below:

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Gender: ____ Male ____ Female
 Age: ____ 18-24 ____ 25-34 ____ 35-44 ____ 45-54 ____ 55+
 Ethnicity: ____ African American ____ Hispanic ____ Native American
 ____ Caucasian ____ Other (Specify: _____)
 Number of adults in household: _____ Number of children in household: _____
 Total household income: ____ Below \$10,000 ____ \$10-18,000
 ____ \$18-30,000 ____ \$30,000+

Circle your agreement with each statement below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Boys and Girls Club of Denton has made my child's life better.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The program has decreased the possibility of my/ my child getting into trouble with the law.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The tutoring program has helped my child make better grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The program has helped my child's behavior at home and in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We would participate in the program again.	1	2	3	4	5

Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below:

I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject in this research.

Appendix C

Boys and Girls Club of Denton:

Youth Participant Survey

CODE: B_____

Boys and Girls Club of Denton County Participant Survey

Please answer the following questions based on your participation in the Boys and Girls Club (Denton County) program. Information will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify possible areas for program adjustment. Thank you for participating in this process.

Check one blank in each area listed below:

GENDER: ☐ Male ☐ Female
 AGE: ☐ 7-8 ☐ 9-10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13-14 ☐ 15-16 ☐ 17-18
 ETHNICITY: ☐ African American ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American ☐ Caucasian
 ☐ Other (specify: _____)

Circle your response to each statement below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Boys and Girls Club of Denton has made my life better.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The program has decreased the possibility of my getting into trouble with the law.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The tutoring program has helped me make better grades in school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The program has helped my behavior at home and in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would participate in the program again.	1	2	3	4	5

Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below:

*I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my
informed consent to act as a subject in this research.*

Appendix D

Boys and Girls Club of Denton:

Personnel Survey

Boys and Girls Club of Denton County Personnel Survey

Please answer the following questions based on your participation in the Boys and Girls Club (Denton County) program. Information will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify possible areas for program adjustment. Thank you for participating in this process.

Check one response in each area listed below:

PERSONNEL ROLE: ☐ Prog. Coord. ☐ Staff ☐ Volunteer ☐ Other (Specify: _____)

GENERAL INFORMATION: Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
 Age: ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55+
 Ethnicity: ☐ African American ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American
 ☐ Caucasian ☐ Other (Specify: _____)

Circle your agreement with each statement below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The program has made a positive impact on the student's lives.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The program has decreased participant's potential opportunity for delinquent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The tutoring program has impacted participant's school progress.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The guidance counseling program has impacted participant's behavior in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would participate in the program again.	1	2	3	4	5

Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below:

I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject in this research.

Appendix E

Denton Teen Court:

Evaluation for Parents/Guardians of Defendants

Please answer the following questions based on your teenager's participation in the Denton Teen Court. Information will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify possible areas for program adjustment. Thank you for participating in this process.

____Parent ____Grandparent ____Guardian ____Other (Specify:_____)

Gender: ___ Male ___ Female
Age: ___ 18-24 ___ 25-34 ___ 35-44 ___ 45-54 ___ 55+
Ethnicity: ___ African American ___ Hispanic ___ Native American
 ___ Caucasian ___ Other (Specify: _____)

Total Household Income: ☐ Below \$10,000 ☐ \$10-18,000
 ☐ \$18-30,000 ☐ \$30,000+
 Number of adults in Household: _____ Number of children in Household: _____

Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Teen Court had a positive impact on my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | (Comment: _____) | | | | | |
| 2. | Teen Court encouraged a sense of responsibility in my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | (Why or why not? _____) | | | | | |
| 3. | Teen Court has helped my teenager recognize that they must be prepared to accept the consequences of their behavior in a mature manner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I think my teenager had a fair sentence. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | The community service hours were an effective means of punishment for my teenager. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | (Comment: _____) | | | | | |

I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject in this research.

Appendix F
Denton Teen Court:
Evaluation for Juvenile Defendants

Denton Teen Court, Inc.

Evaluation for Juvenile Defendants

Please answer the following questions based on your participation in the Denton Teen Court. Information will be used to evaluate overall program effectiveness and identify possible areas for program adjustment. Thank you for participating in this process.

Check one blank in each area listed below:

GENDER: ☐ Male ☐ Female

AGE: ☐ 13-14 ☐ 15-16 ☐ 17-18

ETHNICITY: ☐ African American ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American ☐ Caucasian
 ☐ Other (clarify: _____)

Circle your response and/or answer the following questions:

- | | Strongly
Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
|---|-------------------|-------|-----------|----------|----------------------|
| 1. My experience in Teen Court has increased my understanding of the judicial process within the courtroom.
(Explain: _____) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I feel that the sentences are fair. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I would recommend Teen Court to my friends who have received a citation.
Why? (check as many as apply)
_____ The sentences are easy.
_____ The experiences are fun and you learn about the legal system.
_____ It keeps your record clean.
_____ Other (Specify: _____) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Why did you participate in Teen Court? _____
_____ | | | | | |
| 5. Where did you perform your community service and what did you do there? _____
_____ | | | | | |
| 6. What did you like or dislike about your community service? _____
_____ | | | | | |

Please comment on what you liked and/or disliked about the Teen Court Program in the space below:

I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject in this research.

Appendix G

Denton Teen Court:

Teen Court Survey

☐ City Official
 ☐ Juvenile Justice
 ☐ Police
 ☐ Volunteer
 ☐ Other ()

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	The program impacts participant's quality of life and experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The communication process between agencies is adequate and meets the needs of the system.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The program decreases participant's potential opportunity for delinquent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The program impacts local community rates of juvenile delinquent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The program addresses needs of participants regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The program benefits the community and should be continued.	1	2	3	4	5

Please share any recommendations and/or concerns you have regarding the program in the space below:

I understand that the return of my completed survey constitutes my informed consent to act as a subject in this research.

Appendix H
Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I)
In-depth Interview Questionnaire

Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention (DDP/I) Indepth Interview Questionnaire

The following open-ended questions will be used to guide the investigator through taped, indepth interviews with agency participants within the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program (Denton, TX). The questions are not all inclusive but will be used as probes to guide the interview process. Question selection will be based upon interviewee's participatory role in the program (i.e., Community Agency, Boys and Girls Club of Denton , and/or Denton Teen Court).

What is your primary role in the DDP/I program? Did you participate in one or both of the programs?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boys and Girls Club of Denton

<input type="checkbox"/> Community Agency: | <input type="checkbox"/> Denton Teen Court

<input type="checkbox"/> City of Denton
<input type="checkbox"/> Boys and Girls Club of America
<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Justice System
<input type="checkbox"/> Denton Independent School District
<input type="checkbox"/> Denton Police Department
<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Woman's University |
|--|---|

(Primary Role: _____)

Boys and Girls Club of Denton:

What do you see as the major impact of the program? Have there been any negative implications of the program? If so, what?

In your opinion, how has the program met (or not met) its original goal of preventing delinquency in at-risk youth?

What do you see as hinderances to the success of the program? Do you have any suggestions on how to eliminate or minimize these obstacles?

In your opinion, how has the involvement of multiple professional agencies impacted the program? Positive? Negative?

Additional comments?

Denton Teen Court:

What do you see as the major impact of the program? Have there been any negative implications of the program? If so, what?

In your opinion, how has the program met (or not met) its original goal of reducing delinquent behavior in at-risk youth?

What do you see as hinderances to the success of the program? Do you have any suggestions on how to eliminate or minimize these obstacles?

In your opinion, how has the involvement of multiple professional agencies impacted the program? Positive? Negative?

Additional comments?

Community Agency:

What do you see as the major impact of the program? Have there been any negative implications of the program? If so, what?

In your opinion, how has the program met (or not met) its original goal of preventing and/or reducing delinquent behavior in at-risk youth?

What do you see as hinderances to the success of the program? Do you have any suggestions on how to eliminate or minimize these obstacles?

In your opinion, how has the involvement of multiple professional agencies impacted the program? Positive? Negative?

Additional Comments?

Appendix I
Boys and Girls Club:
Survey Cover Letter

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

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DEPARTMENT OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION
P.O. Box 425769
Denton, TX 76204-5769
Research Advisor: Dr. Jane Irons
Phone: 817/898-2271

I am a student at Texas Woman's University coordinating a program evaluation survey of the Denton Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program to fulfill requirements for my doctoral dissertation. The program provides educational and recreational activities for youth in your community both after-school and during the summer months. Presently, the coordinators of the Boys and Girls Club of Denton are conducting a survey to identify ways in which to better serve program participants and their families. Please take a 10 minutes of your time to complete the following questionnaire and return it within the pre-paid postage envelope that is attached.

Participation in this program evaluation is voluntary and may withdraw from the study at any time. Your name is not requested on the survey to protect confidentiality. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact Kristi Sandel (Executive Program Director, Juvenile Delinquency Diversionary Services of Denton, Inc.) at 817/484-0550 or Mishaleen Allen (TWU graduate student) at 817/382-9611 (daytime)/817/898-4748 (evening). A summary of results will be made available through the Juvenile Delinquency Diversionary Services of Denton, Inc. office upon completion of the program evaluation. We wish to thank you for your participation in this research by completing our survey and returning it to us in the postage paid envelope.

Sincerely,



Mishaleen E. Allen, M.S., M.Ed.
TWU doctoral student

Appendix J
Denton Teen Court:
Survey Cover Letter

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

DEPARTMENT OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION
P.O. Box 425769
Denton, TX 76204-5769
Research Advisor: Dr. Jane Irons
Phone: 817/898-2271

I am a student at Texas Woman's University coordinating a program evaluation survey for the Dento Delinquency Prevention/Intervention Program to fulfill requirements for my doctoral dissertation. The program provides correctional alternatives for first-time offenders within your community. Presently, the coordinators of the Denton Teen Court are conducting a survey in order to identify ways in which to better serve program participants and their families while developing a more effective program. Please take a 10 minutes of your time to complete the following questionnaire and return it within the pre-paid postage envelope that is attached.

Participation in this program evaluation is voluntary and may withdraw from the study at any time. Your name is not requested on the survey to protect confidentiality. If you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact Kristi Sandel (Executive Program Director, Juvenile Delinquency Diversionary Services of Denton, Inc.) at 817/484-0550 or Mishaleen Allen (TWU graduate student) at 817/382-9611 (daytime)/817/898-4748 (evening). A summary of results will be made available through the Juvenile Delinquency Diversionary Services of Denton, Inc. office upon completion of the program evaluation. We wish to thank you for your participation in this research by completing our survey and returning it to us in the postage paid envelope.

Sincerely,



Mishaleen E. Allen, M.S., M.Ed.
TWU doctoral student